SECONDARY SCHOOLS' UNITED NATIONS SYMPOSIUM 2016

Czechoslovakia 1990

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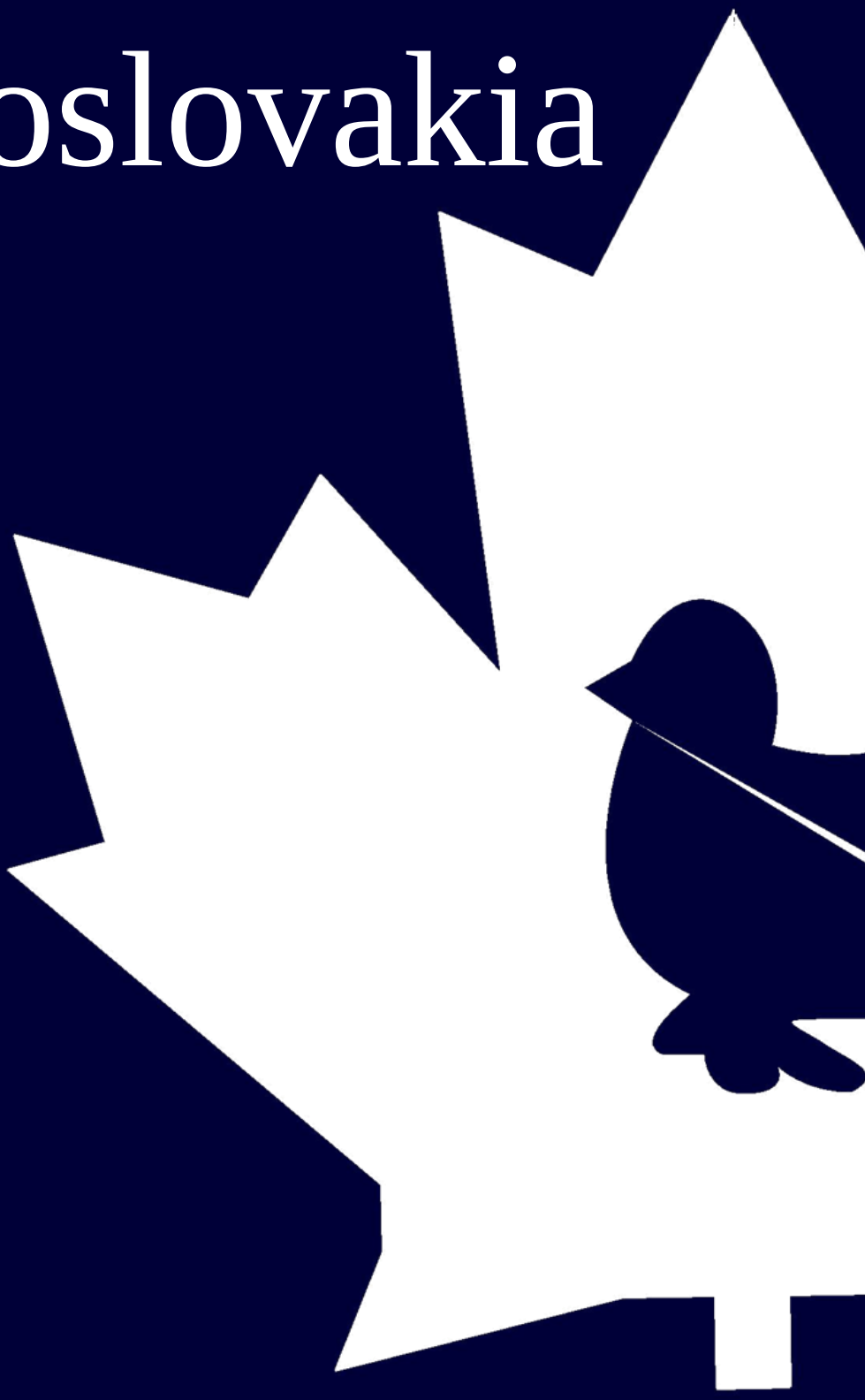

NOVEMBER 10-13, 2016 | MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC

Hello delegates!

Hello delegates!

My name is Malina and I will be your chair for the 1990 Czechoslovak Government committee at SSUNS 2016! This year we have a fantastic dais featuring Amylea and Stevan as vice-chairs. Each one of them has years of experience in MUN at McGill and will bring their strong background knowledge to the table to make this committee one to remember.

The dais has worked hard this summer to bring you a comprehensive background guide detailing the external, historical and social nuances of the Czechoslovak situation. While this background guide provides an in-depth overview of the situation, there is always more information to find and I can therefore only encourage you to do your own research to be at the top of your game when the conference starts!

Given the unique topic at hand, this committee will feature elements of both GA and crisis committees. You must be able to demonstrate their ability to constructively collaborate to produce a collective solution for a country marked by social divide and a time of fundamental change. You will furthermore have to cope with unexpected developments cropping up across the region as Eastern Europe copes with the fall of communism. This background guide will offer a glimpse at Czechoslovakia in 1990, which you can use as a basis for more research as you start thinking of the best way to rebuild this country.

I look forward to seeing the creative solutions that you will bring in approaching this challenging situation. I'm certain that not only will you all bring your best to the conference but that each delegate will walk away from this conference with a wealth of

new knowledge and experience as well as having met friends you'll know for years to come.

See you all this November!

Best regards,

Malina Gilka

Chair

A Brief History of Czech-Slovak Divide

Introduction

Founded in 1918, Czechoslovakia survived for more than four decades under Communist rule before the democratic revolution in 1989.[1] But throughout the twentieth century, the ethnic divide between Czechs and Slovaks increased significantly. By 1990, each group approached the Fall of Communism with different priorities. For the Slovaks, this gave them an opportunity to develop as a sovereign nation, affirming their identity by pursuing statehood.[2] For the Czechs, the dissolution of communism in their country meant they could freely pursue economic reforms, like large-scale privatization, even in the company of the less developed Slovak east.[3]

Unlike neighbouring countries – like Germany, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Austria – Czechoslovakia did not exist as a prior historical entity before being created after WWI. A group of Czech and Slovak exiles in Europe garnered the support of the Allies for a sovereign nation, proposing the idea of Czechoslovakia.[4] In antiquity, the Czech kingdom had died out by the early 17th century, and the Slovaks had never had sovereign territory.[5] For the first two decades of its life, Czechoslovakia experienced relative political stability.

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[1] Pynsent, Robert B. *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1994. Print.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Sørensen, Lene B, Leslie C. Eliason, and Attila Ágh. Forward to the Past?: Continuity and Change in Political Development in Hungary, Austria, and the Czech and Slovak Republics. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1997. Print.
[5] Ibid.

It had stable leadership and foreign policy, and economically it grew to become one of the most developed countries in the region.[6] But despite this, ethnic divisions grew to dominate the country. Within a population of 13.5 million citizens, it was dominated by a Czech majority – 6.5 million – followed by 3.1 million Sudeten Germans, and 2.2 million Slovaks, with small minorities of Hungarians, Ukrainians, Poles, and others.[7] For the Czech majority, Czechoslovakia was a victory for reclaiming the statehood lost at the fall of the Czech kingdom three centuries before.[8] But the two ethnic groups failed to establish a shared history during the early years of Czechoslovakia. For example, the period of political turmoil for the Czechs, from 1938 to 1945 and post-1968, were times when the Slovaks reported high national optimism, focusing on nation building.[9] This difference in mentality only worsened once the tie of communism broke apart in the late 1980s.

Role of Sudeten Germans

Another factor mitigating this rift were the Sudeten Germans, who thought Czechoslovakia overshadowed their Germany identity, especially as a minority within a majority Czech culture.[10] In the late 1920s, the political and economic prosperity in Czechoslovakia was in juxtaposition to Weimar Germany, emphasized later during WWII

[6] Cultural Survival. "Czechs and Slovaks: The Failure to Find a Decent Past." *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*. N.p., 1995. Web. 26 May 2016.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Sørensen, Lene B et al.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Musil, Jiří. The End of Czechoslovakia. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995. Print.

when the Sudeten Germans within Czechoslovakia's borders embraced harsh anti-Czech policies with enthusiasm.[11] So, when WWII ended, many in this minority were expelled back into Germany, but not without leaving an impact on Czech-Slovak relations. The government, seeing the Sudeten Germans identifying themselves by their ethnicity rather than their nationality, tried to create a "Czechoslovak" identity, meshing the Czechs and Slovaks together into one large majority that had, at least on the surface, an overwhelming presence over the Sudeten German minority.[12] But, this was done during a period when Czechs and Slovaks did not have equal footing. The Slovaks were missing an academic culture, and economically, a middle class. The Czechs had "reared" the Slovaks – Prague financially assisted the Slovaks, the Czechs helped them develop schools and public institutions, developed Slovak culture and even the Slovak language.[13] The Czechs did this with the idea that strengthening the Slovaks would benefit their front against the Sudetens. However, this plan of shared "Czechoslovak" identity largely failed, and the two groups continued to see each other as distinct.

Slovak Separatists Predating Communism

While earlier in the century the idea of a sovereign Slovak nation had not been formed, this was not the case by the end of the 1930s. Slovak separatists emerged under

[11] "Hungary's Role in the 1989 Revolutions." BBC News. May 09, 2009. Accessed May 31, 2016. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8036685.stm.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Cultural Survival. "Czechs and Slovaks: The Failure to Find a Decent Past." *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*. N.p., 1995. Web. 26 May 2016.

the threat of Hitler invading Czechoslovakia, listening to rumors from Berlin that the Third Reich might be open to support the birth of the Slovak state.[14] For the Slovaks, it was either this option, or go down with the Czechs. On March 14th, 1939, the Slovaks declared their independence just a day before the Nazis marched in Czech lands, beginning their six-year long invasion.[15] This meant they became wrapped up in a harsh, fascist identity, under the direct protection of Hitler's Third Reich. This contrasted poorly with the origin of Czechoslovakia a few decades before, which had much more democratic beginnings. Slovakia's new status quo included harsh treatment of Jews and Czechs, to the point where the new Slovak government, led by Tiso in 1942, boasted that "Slovakia as the first state in southeastern Europe provided an example to other states for solving the Jewish question."[16] When Tiso stood for trial in restored Czechoslovakia after WWII, he was found guilty of war crimes and executed.[17] But the Slovaks' behavior during the war put stress on Czech-Slovak relations – the Czechs did not blame the Slovaks as a people, but Tiso's legacy certainly carried a dark shadow.

However, a sovereign Czechoslovakia reemerged in May 1945, bringing with it the opportunity to strengthen Czech-Slovak party ties. What was actually prioritized, nevertheless, was the struggle between Czechoslovak democratic parties versus the communists. Left-leaning Slovak nationalists with fled to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in large numbers, who could care less about solving the Czech-Slovak

[14] Sørensen, Lene B et al.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Cultural Survival Inc.
[17] Ibid.

political divide.[18] Their answer was instead in 1948 was to deemphasize these politics, pushing that the Czechoslovakia identity was not important in comparison to their role as an entity in the larger Soviet bloc. During the Stalinist period, those who kept their nationalist sentiments were jailed. But in 1968, relief was offered when Slovak Alexander Dubcek came to power as leader of the Communist Party, just before the Prague spring, which tried to instate some democratic elements into the country.[19] That August, this was forcefully stopped, with Soviet tanks crushing the last hopes for continuing the democratic tradition of early Czechoslovakia.[20] Dubcek's power was called into question, especially since he was closely associated with the democratization of Czechoslovakia. In 1969, he was officially dismissed, replaced by Gustav Husak, who became General Secretary of the Communist party, the country's president, and the person who brought Czechoslovakia back under total Soviet control.[21]

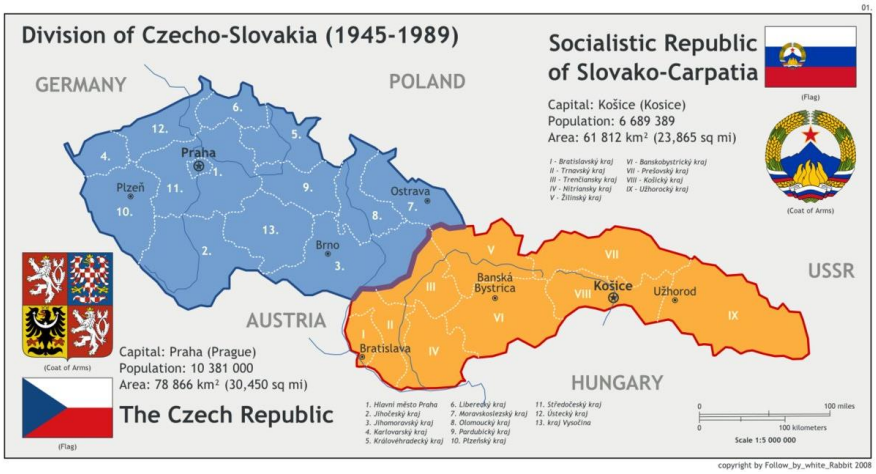

Figure 1: Partial Division of Czechoslovakia during Cold War

[18] Musil, Jiří. The End of Czechoslovakia. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995. Print.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.

Husak's Rule

Husak was a Slovak communist who had been targeted during the Stalinist era: he had been arrested in 1951 and remained in prison for nearly a decade.[22] But, instead of encouraging resentment toward the Party, it instead caused Husak to become a hardline, tough communist leader. In the spring of 1969, he oversaw a "normalization" program, which was essentially a large-scale purge of almost a million Czechoslovak citizens who he deemed not committed to the cause.[23] The government harassed these citizens, causing them to lose their jobs, access to education, etc. It was Husak who pushed to turn Czechoslovakia into a federal state, diverting attention from the grievances of the Soviet invasion.[24] In 1969, Czechoslovakia became a federal state with two republics, Czech and Slovak. Although they shared a President, Foreign Minister, and Minister of Defense, the two republics were otherwise separated, government and administrative structures replicated in each.[25] But, the Slovak Republic quickly came to dominate over the Czech Republic. By the mid-1970s, the President and Party General Secretary were Slovak, as well as other important diplomats and army officers.[26] In comparison, the Czech Republic was trying hard just to sustain itself, receiving the most financial aid from the federal

[22] Cultural Survival. "Czechs and Slovaks: The Failure to Find a Decent Past." *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*. N.p., 1995. Web. 26 May 2016.
[23] Nedelsky, Nadya. Defining the Sovereign Community: The Czech and Slovak Republics. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Internet resource.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

budget.[27] Husak's position did not necessarily produce anti-Slovak feelings in the Czech Republic, as they realized that his communist identity overtook his Slovak one. In fact, Husak caused a lot of harm to Slovakia during his 1969-1989 regime. For example, he oversaw huge industrialization projects there, building industrial plants, chemical factories, and the like. Although this initially caused economic growth, it had horrible environmental effects, and created a massive public health crisis, to the point where Slovakia had the highest cancer rate in the world by the mid-1980s.[28] Similarly, because communism forbids free markets, Husak's businesses went bankrupt, the aftershocks of which still affects the Slovak economy today.[29] So, by 1990 the Czech Republic seemed to be leaving communism in a better economic situation than the Slovak Republic, despite their positions seemingly being reversed during the golden age of communism.

[27] Nedelsky, Nadya. Defining the Sovereign Community: The Czech and Slovak Republics. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Internet resource.
[28] Cultural Survival. "Czechs and Slovaks: The Failure to Find a Decent Past." *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*. N.p., 1995. Web. 26 May 2016.
[29] Nedelsky, Nadya. Defining the Sovereign Community: The Czech and Slovak Republics. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Internet resource.

Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and Czechoslovakia

The dissolution of the Soviet Union occurred December 26th, 1991. Although this was the official end date of Soviet communism, the transition towards democracy had actually begun years prior.

Instability in the Baltic Republics and the Caucuses

The fall of the Iron Curtain began in 1988 when Moscow began to lose control amongst some of the republics in the Soviet Union; the Caucuses were troubled with a civil war and various popular fronts sprung up in the Baltic Republics (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), which eventually led them to declare their independence from the Soviet Union. In the late 1980s, the Caucuses were facing both rebellion and uprising. Nagorno Karabakh, a majority-Armenian Oblast in Azerbaijan, became home to increased demonstrations by a popular front[30].

Figure 2: The Baltic Chain

[30] "Nagorno-Karabakh Profile." BBC News. April 6, 2016. Accessed May 30, 2016. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18270325.

Movements to secede to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia occurred, but these changes were not accepted by Moscow. The rebellions in Nagorno Karabakh caused political movements in Armenia by those who supported the cause for the oblast to secede. The protest eventually culminated to protests with close to one million demonstrators[31]. In 1989 the Baltic Way, also known as the Baltic Chain, was a massive peaceful political mobilization of two million people from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This demonstration involved the protestors joining hands to form a massive human chain extending 600 kilometres in defiance to the Soviet Union[32]. The Baltic Chain took place on the 50-year anniversary of the occupation of the Baltic states in 1940[33].

Eastern Bloc: A Domino Effect

"*In Poland it took the years, in Hungary ten months, and East Germany ten weeks. Perhaps in Czechoslovakia it will take ten days!"*

Timothy Garton Ash, *Revolution of the Magic Lantern*

The Eastern Bloc was composed of the six countries in the Warsaw Pact: Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). The Eastern Bloc played a crucial role in the dissolution of communism in

[31] "Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict." Wikipedia. Accessed May 31, 2016. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_conflict.
[32] "History: The Baltic Way." The Baltic Way. 2016. Accessed May 29, 2016. http://www.thebalticway.eu/en/history/.
[33] Ibid.

Eastern and Central Europe, and the Soviet Union. In 1989, the increasing instability the Soviet Union faced was complemented by rising insurgencies in the Eastern Bloc[34].

Poland and Hungary led the domino effect with high levels of anti-regime mobilization. These two countries demanded concessions from the Soviet Union earlier than Czechoslovakia, Germany, Romania and Bulgaria.

In September 1980 the independent self - governing Trade Union "Solidarity" in Poland was founded with the initial demands for greater availability of consumer goods and better work conditions[35]. Solidarity grew increasingly popular, and became the first trade union in the Warsaw Pact to not be controlled by the Soviet Union. The tipping point for Solidarity was in 1989 when Solidarity won the majority of seat in the Polish senate, allowing Lech Walesa to be elected the first democratic President of Poland one year later[36].

By the 1980s, Hungary was already the most liberal country in the Soviet Bloc thanks to leader, Janos Kadar. Janos Kadar had been in power since 1956 and was known for his openness to reform. Hungary's relative freedom allowed for a smoother transition from communism facilitated by round table talks between the regime and reformers[37]. On

[34]Aron, Leon. "Everything You Think You Know About the Collapse of the Soviet Union Is Wrong." Foreign Policy. June 20, 2011. Accessed May 31, 2016. http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/06/20/everything-you-think-you-know-about-the-collapse-of-the-soviet-union-is-wrong/.
[35] "Solidarity." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. January 27, 2016. Accessed May 31, 2016. http://www.britannica.com/topic/Solidarity.
[36] Ibid.
[37] "Hungary's Role in the 1989 Revolutions." BBC News. May 09, 2009. Accessed May 31, 2016. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8036685.stm.

August 19th, 1989, Hungary disabled its physical border defenses allowing over 13,000 East Germans to escape to Austria through Hungary. This event would increase the domino effect of the transition from communism[38].

Figure 3: Protests along the Berlin Wall

The German Democratic Republic, also known as East Germany, experienced both physically and politically dissolution. Some of the driving forces during the collapse included political, intellectual and religious figures in Eastern Europe and abroad,[39]. On November 9th, 1989, following large protests in Germany and the movements of East Germans into Austria through relaxed border control in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the Berlin Wall collapsed. The Berlin Wall, established in 1961, was a enormous wall that separated East and West Germany through Berlin. Following November 9th, East and West Germany were united[40].

[38] "Hungary's Role in the 1989 Revolutions." BBC News. May 09, 2009. Accessed May 31, 2016. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8036685.stm.
[39] Dodds, Laurence. "Berlin Wall: How the Wall Came Down, as It Happened 25 Years Ago." The Telegraph. November 9, 2014. Accessed May 31, 2016. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/11219434/Berlin-Wall-How-the-Wall-came-down-as-it-happened-25-years-ago-live.html.
[40] Ibid.

Bulgaria experienced a smoother transition from communism. Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Bulgaria's leader Todor Zhivkov was ousted by his Politburo. Todor Zhivkov was replaced by a more liberal communist leader, Petar Mladenov, who December 11th 1989 opened the country to a multi-party election[41].

Romania, however, would face violent civil unrest to expel Communist rule. In 1989, the Romanian Revolution began in the city of Timisoara and spread throughout the country. The leader, Nicolae Ceausecu, was known for extreme repression. Romania had the lowest standard of living compared to other Warsaw Pact countries[42]. The Romanian Revolution led to the deaths of over one thousand civilians, and the execution of Ceasescu and his wife on December 25th, 1989. Romania was the last of the Eastern Bloc countries to revolt against communist[43].

[41] "Revolutions of 1989." Wikipedia. Accessed May 31, 2016. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutions_of_1989.
[42] "BBC News | EUROPE | Romania's Bloody Revolution." BBC News. December 22, 1999. Accessed May 31, 2016. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/574200.stm.
[43] Ibid.

Czechoslovakia in the Cold War

Immediately after World War II, Czechoslovakia was recognized with pre-Treaty of Munich borders, (with the exception of Zakarpattia Oblast, which was annexed by Soviet Ukraine). The Sudeten region, formerly ceded to Nazi Germany, was cleansed of Germans through one of history's largest forced migrations. As a result, the new Czechoslovakia was a relatively homogenous country. In parliamentary elections held in 1946, the Communist Party of the Czech Republic led by Clement Gottwald, legitimately received 38% of the vote. A coalition between the Communist Party and other democratically elected parties led the country in the immediate years following the war. When the United States offered up the Marshall Plan to assist Europe's rebuild, Czechoslovakia was the only country to publicly consider acceptance. A dispute over the acceptance of the Marshall Plan led to the government's collapse and in February 1948 a new Communist government was established. Under new leadership, Czechoslovakia became a member of COMECON, the Soviet equivalent to the Marshall Plan in 1949 and the Warsaw Pact in 1955. Czechoslovakia's role in the Cold War was marginal besides being an active member of the Warsaw Pact. Czechoslovak forces took part in the bloody suppression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, but remained inactive members of the Pact until its dissolution in 1991.

Although Czechoslovakia did not end up accepting financial assistance from the United States, its first years of socialism saw the country turn into one of Europe's fastest growing economies. Swift economic turnaround was powered by heavy industry in the

mineral rich region of Moravia-Silesia. Initial growth spurts quickly plateaued as other European nations turned away from post-industrial revolution economies and strived for quality over quantity. This resulted in an unfavourable position for the Czechoslovak state. Whereas neighbouring Austria had a GDP-per-capita of $19,200 in 1990, Czechoslovakia's reached a mere $3,100. Inflation reached its highest in the mid-1980s when it became clear that the Communist government could no longer sustain growing subsidies to the populace. With the demise of one party politics, the country now has the opportunity to flip a new page and rebuild an outdated economy on the principles of free market competition. This will not be an easy task as 99,8% of Czechoslovak industry is state owned and 78% of foreign trade is tied to the former socialist block. In addition, foreign debt had reached over 3 billion dollars and last attempts to curtail the debt did not affect much.

Following the Velvet Revolution and the substantive beginning of the committee timeline, Czechoslovakia has been reformed to a democratic federal state set to have their first free elections for President in June of 1990. Although Czechoslovakia is one of the few Eastern Bloc countries where the Communist Party (CP) had genuine support of nearly 35% of the population, it seems apparent that a reformed CP will not achieve significant results. Vaclav Havel, dissident and founder of the Civic Forum, seems the most likely candidate for president after playing a crucial role in the 1989 Velvet revolution. Public Against Violence (VPN) is the Slovak equivalent to Civic Forum. The party's leadership with Jan Carnogursky and Fedor Gal seem to be disagreeing on the direction the VPN should take. Pundits believe Carnogursky's background as a member of the clergy may

clash with Gal's social democratic principles. These elections are a key cornerstone for the direction of Czechoslovakia that will shape the appearance of Czechoslovakia's first democratic government and have long lasting impact on how history unfolds.

Lastly, the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia has seen various social changes. In the lead up to the revolution the country saw the beginning of religious freedom demonstrations, carried out primarily by opposition forces. These demonstrations were material evidence of the state's increasing orientation towards Western liberal values. These pro-Western values that would soon manifest in Eurocentrism in the state were fuelled by glimpses of what capitalism had to offer, despite Czechoslovakia being more economically prosperous than neighbours, such as Poland and Hungary, who were failing to succeed under the perestroika economic structure reforms pioneered by Gorbachev. The Czechoslovaks still believed that their economic prosperity was being restricted relative to the rest of Europe. This momentum towards westernization, in terms of economy, society and politic, is set to play a significant role in shaping the future of Czechoslovakia and the rest of Eastern Europe.

Character List:

Alexander Dubček – Chairman of the Federal Assembly. Dubček spent his youth in the Soviet Union, but returned to Czechoslovakia to fight the German occupation of Slovakia. For his role in the 1968 Prague Spring, Dubček was ousted from politics and outlawed to work in the forestry service. During the Velvet Revolution he openly

supported the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence movements, and was considered by many to be the first President of Czechoslovakia.

Marian Čalfa – Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia. A former Communist Party member, Čalfa became the first Prime Minister of a democratic Czechoslovakia. A Slovak, Čalfa joined the Public Against Violence movement and openly supported Havel's Civic Forum in the 1990 elections. Although criticized for his communist past, Čalfa was instrumental in leading the Velvet Revolution as an interlocutor between Havel's Civic Forum and the Communist Party.

Jan Čarnogursky – Deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia. From December 1989 to April 1990 he was the first vice-prime minister of Czechoslovakia. He was a co-founder and, since February 1990, the chairman of the Christian Democratic Movement of Slovakia. He was an important figure in the secret church in Slovakia and, between 1987 and 1989, he published illegally the magazine Bratislavské listy (Bratislava Papers). He represented the Christian Democratic wing within the Anti-Communist opposition in Czechoslovakia.

Vaclav Klaus – Minister of Finance. Educated at Cornell, Klaus entered Czechoslovak politics during the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Klaus served as an economic advisor to the Civic Forum, whose purpose was to unify the anti-authoritarian forces in Czechoslovakia and to overthrow the Communist regime. Klaus became Czechoslovakia's Minister of Finance in the "government of national unity" on 10 December 1989.

Petr Pithart – Prime Minister of the Czech Republic. After the Velvet Revolution, Pithart took charge of the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. Pithart was member of

Communist Party of Czechoslovakia since 1960, was active in the Prague Spring and left the party after the Soviet invasion; later he was one of the most prominent dissidents against the communist regime. He was imprisoned for this activity including being one of the first signatories of Charter 77. In 1989 he was one of the prominent leaders of the Civic Forum founded at the start of the overthrow of the regime.

Vladimir Mečiar – Minister of the Interior and Environment of Slovakia. As a member of the Slovak Public Against Violence, Mečiar was seen as Dubček's right hand man in the internal affairs of Slovakia. As a former communist, Mečiar was a strong proponent of the Czechoslovak union.

Ladislav Adamec – Chairman of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Joined the Presidium of the Communist Party in March 1987 and served as the prime minister of the Czech Socialist Republic from March 1987 to 1988. On 12 October 1988, he assumed the role of the last Communist prime minister of Czechoslovakia. It was under his rule that the parliamentarianism was reinstated.

Jiří Dienstbier – Minister of Foreign Affairs. A renowned dissident, he is one of Czechoslovakia's most respected foreign correspondents. Following the Prague Spring he was barred from publishing and became an icon for *samizdat* works in Czechoslovakia.

Jan Strasky – Head of the Central Bank. A former member of the Communist Party who left the CP, following the Prague Spring.

Petr Miller – Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. A hardliner of the Communist Party since 1960.

Milan Čič - Milan was Justice Minister in the Slovak republic. Though a communist, Milan was part of the movement that pushed for a post-Communist Slovakia and would join the Slovak Public Against Violence Party.

Jiri Machalik - Leader of the Czech KSC party, a popular political group with the second highest support going into the first democratic elections. The KSC is Czechoslovakia's communist party and were in power until the Velvet Revolution.

Boleslav Barta - Leader of the Czech HSD-SMS party independence party. Barta and his party seek independence for the region of Moravia, representing 30% of the Czech population. His party is aligned with the movement to overthrow the communist regime.

Josef Bartoncik - Leader of the Czech Christian and Democratic Union (KDU) party. Bartoncik is aligned with the anti-communist movement and aspires for his Christian Democrat party to emulate its German equivalent.

Milan Kňažko - One of the original faces of the Slovak Public Against Violence Party. An actor by trade, Kňažko was one of the leading popular personalities of the Velvet Revolution in Slovakia.

František Mikloško - Speaker of the Slovak National Council (parliament), Mikloško was one of the most prominent members of the Slovak Christian Democrat movement.

Ludovit Cernak - Minister of the Economy for Slovakia. Cernak is a businessman and politician that comes to power through Meciar's Slovak National Party.

Lubomir Strougal - Former Prime Minister of the Communist Czechoslovakia, Strougal finds himself vying for party leadership after the Velvet Revolution but faces large levels of unpopularity.

Miloš Jakeš -General Secretary of the Communist Part until the Velvet Revolution, he continues to oppose a post-communist Czechoslovakia.

Peter Colotka -Czechoslovak ambassador to France, Colotka is formerly the Prime Minister of the Slovak Socialist Republic and deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia until 1988. Colotka is a career politician hoping to escape the post-communist backlash.

Rita Klimova - Ambassador for Czechoslovakia to the United States. Prominent figure during the lead up and actualization of the velvet revolution. She was responsible for being the face of the Civic Forum movement in the English speaking world and holds longstanding preference for Western economic organization.

František Tomášek - Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church of Bohemia. A prominent social figure with significant influence among Czechoslovakian Catholics at the time. A longtime reform supporter, he has had a significant impact in building support for the move away from communism.

Karel Urbánek - Last leader of the Communist party and the figure who removed the party's supremacy from the constitution.

Ludvík Zifčák - Member of the Secret Police responsible for staging events inciting unrest in the buildup to the Velvet Revolution. He is a staunch proponent of the Communist Czechoslovakia and refuses to accept alternatives.

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