

Czechoslovakia (The Czech Republic after 1992)

Rice

The Czechoslovak Republic is considered as a democracy from 1918 to 1939 (POLITY gives score of 7 from October 28, 1918 to March 17, 1939). The Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed on October 28, 1918, and a provisional constitution was adopted on November 13, 1918. COW codes the country as an independent state from this date until March 15, 1939. The period from 1918 to 1938 is commonly known as “the First Republic.” Note that Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) codes the presidents as effective leaders during this period. However, our regional expert suggests that we should code a pure-parliamentary system for this period. Thus, we code the PMs as effective leaders. Our primary source of the PMs is WSM. We also use scholarly sources to confirm the PMs, their SOLS and their entry dates and exit dates.

Based on the Constitution of 1920, Czechoslovakia was conceived as a parliamentary democracy, guided primarily by the National Assembly, consisting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies (US Library of Congress 1989). The first prime minister of the First Republic was Karel Kramár of the Czechoslovak National Democratic Party (CND)¹. (Note: WSM codes CSD (Czech Constitutional Democracy) as his party, but we find that most sources list his party as CND). He led the National democratic cabinet from January 1918 to July 1919 under the provisional constitution (Kerner 1949, 146). We do not have exact information that confirms whether he formed a coalition government.

Parliamentary elections were held on June 15, 1919. Kramár resigned on July 8, 1919, and gave way to the coalition government headed by Vlastimil Tusar of the Social Democratic Party (CSDS) as prime minister. This is a SOLS change. The Tusar’s first cabinet was composed of the Social Democrats (CSDS), the Agrarians (RSZML: the Republican Party of Farmers and Peasants), the National Democrats (CND), and the National Socialists (CNSS: the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party) (see Smetanka and Pranter 1920, 225).

The National Assembly approved a constitution on February 29, 1920, which provided for a president and a bicameral legislature. Parliamentary elections were held on April 18-25, 1920.² As a result of the social democratic election victory, Tusar was able to form his second cabinet on May 25, 1920 (Kerner 1949, 461; Rothschild 1974, 103; Van Duin 2009, 369) in which the Social Democrats (CSDS) held over one-half of the cabinet posts. The second cabinet of Tusar’s included CSDS, the National Socialists (CNSS), and the Agrarians (RSZML) (see Capoccia 2005, 249; Kerner 1949, 147; Miller 1999, 68).³ This is a minor SOLS change. This coalition is known as a center-left “Red-Green” coalition (Miller 1999, 194).

¹ Tomas Masaryk was elected president by the National Assembly on November 14, 1918.

² President Masaryk was re-elected on May 28, 1920.

³ Tusar’s second cabinet also contained three experts, including Foreign Minister Benes (Miller 1999, 68) (social democratic/national socialist/agrarian).

Tensions between CSDS and RSZML made Tusar's coalition difficult. But, as no other political constellation was feasible, a non-political administration was formed under Jan Cerný, a bureaucrat, on September 16, 1920 (Crampton 1997, 62; Rothschild 1974, 103). Crampton (1997, 62) describes that "[his government] had no political will or voice of its own and to provide these missing factors the leaders of the five major parties met regularly to give advice and at times direction to the prime minister." There are two sources that claim it as an interim government (Táborský 1945, 46; Čapek 1931, 100). In addition, there are several sources which describe it as "admittedly a provisional." We consider Cerný as an interim leader and code no SOLS change.

Edvard Benes of CNSS suddenly appeared as prime minister on September 26, 1921. The basis for the new government was the Petka (PSZMAL, CSDS, CNSS, CSL, and CND) and four nonpolitical experts (Capoccia 2005, 249; Miller 1999, 79). Benes stayed on as a foreign minister, and he retained three experts from the previous government, including the interior minister Jan Cerný (Miller 1999, 79). This Benes' cabinet is considered as an interim (Rothschild 1974, 106) until new elections. Several other sources describe it as "semi-parliamentary" (e.g., Miller 1999, 78) or "semi-political" (e.g., Capoccia 2005, 249) government. We consider his cabinet as an interim and code no SOLS change. According to Miller (1999, 79), his cabinet included CNSS, RSZML, CND, CSDS and CSL.⁴

On October 8, 1922, Benes fell from power to be replaced by a new coalition led by Antonín Svehla of the Agrarian Party (RSZML). The emergence of Svehla was no surprise, since he was a leader of the Petka and had been prepared to assume the post before Benes. The composition of his cabinet was simply the version of the All-Nation Coalition, shelved by the Petka in 1921, that had served as the model for Benes' coalition. Each Petka leader stood at the head of his party's ministerial delegations: RSZML, CNSS, CSDS, CND, and CSL (Capoccia 2005, 249; Miller 1999, 122). This is a SOLS change.

The first Czechoslovak Parliament, after having lived out a six-year mandate, was dissolved in the autumn of 1925 and elections were set for November. Svehla led a second cabinet from December 9, 1925 to March 18, 1926 to deflate the Social Democratic and National Democratic representation in the coalition (Kerner 1949, 157). In his second cabinet, the coalition parties expanded the All-National Coalition (of RSZML, CNSS, CSDS, CND, and CSL) to include the Small Traders Party⁵ (CZOSS) and two experts (Capoccia 2005, 249; Miller 1999, 146). This is a minor SOLS change.

On March 18, 1926, Svehla became ill and scheduled a vacation. A cabinet of experts took over, with Jan Cerný as prime minister and the minister of the interior, along with Benes as

⁴ His cabinet included the Agrarians, two Czech Populists, one National Democrat, five socialists: two Czechoslovak Socialists, and three Social Democrats (Miller 1999, 79).

⁵ The Small Traders Party is also known (in English) as Party of Business and Commerce (Miller 1999, 146)

foreign minister (Miller 1999, 149). Hoch (1936, 65) describes about this cabinet that "[A]ll the members were officials except for Benes, Englis, and Kallay." Similar to Cerný's first cabinet, this is described as an interim cabinet, which run by those picked for their professional expertise rather than party affiliation (Michálek et al. 2006, 431; Táborský 1945, 46). This is not a SOLS change.

On October 12, 1926, Svehla returned as prime minister. One major change was the absence of the Social Democrats (CSDS) from forming the government, who remained out of office until 1929. It was the only period throughout the First Republic when they were not party of the administration (Capoccia 2005, 249; Crampton 1997, 68; Milner 1999, 149-150). This transition from Svehla's second cabinet is a minor SOLS change. The parties within this government were RSZML, CSL, CZOSS, and most surprisingly, two German parties: German Agrarians (BdL) and German Christian Social Party (DCVP). This coalition is known as the "Green-Black coalition" or "the Gentlemen's coalition" (Miller 1999, 151). The most striking feature was that Czechoslovak, Czech, Slovak, and German parties were all presented. On January 15, 1927, Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSL'S) became a participant in the government (Capoccia 2005, 249; Toma and Kováč 2001, 99). This is a minor SOLS change. On April 28, 1928, CND entered into the cabinet once again (Capoccia 2005, 249; Miller 1999, 159). This is another minor SOLS change.

On February 1, 1929, Svehla retired because of illness and was succeeded by Frantisek Udrzal of RSZML. Udrzal's first government remained in power until further the October 1929 elections, when he formed a new coalition cabinet (Miller 1999, 176). Udrzal's first cabinet consisted of RSZML, CND, CSL, CZOSS, BdL, DCVP, and HSL'S (Capoccia 2005, 249). This is not a SOLS change. On October 8, 1929, HSL'S left the coalition because it was upset by the ongoing court proceedings against party ideologue Vojtech Tuka (Miller 1999, 178; Pánek and Tůma 2009, 417; Oddo 1960, 211). This is a minor SOLS change. On December 7, 1929, Udrzal formed his second cabinet. He completed the cabinet with a coalition of RSZML, CSDS, CNSS, CSL, CND, CZOSS, in addition to the German Agrarians (BdL) and Social Democrats (DSAP) and two experts (Benes) (Capoccia 2005, 249; Miller 1999, 179; Kerner 1949, 160; Felak 1995, 65). This is a minor SOLS change. In April 1932 (the information regarding the exact date could not be found), reflecting economic depression, CZOSS, which sought to avoid new sales or excise taxes, withdrew from the coalition and led the replacement of its cabinet member by non-political experts (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs 1948, 2; Kerner 1949, 161; Rothschild 1974, 124). This is a minor SOLS change. Owing to the friction between the Agrarians and the Socialists over the economic programs, Udrzal resigned on October 9, 1932.

Udrzal turned over nearly his entire cabinet to Jan Malypetr of RSZML. Malypetr headed three governments between 1932 and 1935. His first cabinet was composed of RSZML, CND, CSL, CNSS, CSDS, DSAP, and BdL (Capoccia 2005, 249). This is not a SOLS change.

From February 14, 1934, he formed second cabinet (Hock 1936, 66; Kerner 1949, 161) with a coalition of RSZML, CSL, CNSS, CSDS, DSAP, and BdL (Capoccia 2005, 249). This is a minor SOLS change because CND left his cabinet. As a result of the national general elections, Malypetr formed his third government on June 4, 1935 (Kerner 1949, 464; Hoch 1936, 66). CZOSS joined again in his cabinet (Kerner 1949, 164), which is a minor SOLS change. Thus, his third cabinet consisted of RSZML, CSL, CNSS, CZOSS, CSDS, DSAP, and BdL (Capoccia 2005, 249).

Malypeter resigned on November 5, 1935 and Milan Hodza became prime minister. Hodza formed four cabinets until 1938. His first cabinet included RSZML, CSL, CZOSS, CNSS, CSDS, DSAP, and BdL (Capoccia 2005, 249) (No SOLS change). On Dec. 18, 1935, he formed his second cabinet (Hoch 1936, 66), with a coalition of RSZML, CSL, CZOSS, CNSS, CSDS, DSAP, and BdL (Capoccia 2005, 249). This is not a SOLS change. On July 21, 1937, Hodza formed his third cabinet which included RSZML, CSL, CZOSS, CNSS, CSDS, DSAP, BdL, and DCVP (German Christian Social Party) (Capoccia 2005, 249). DCVP joined in the coalition (Auswärtiges Amt 1949, 2), and this is a minor SOLS change. On March, 1938 (the information regarding the exact date could not be found), Hodza formed his fourth coalition of RSZML, CSL, CZOSS, CNSS, CSDS, and CND (Capoccia 2005, 249), which is a minor SOLS change. Hodza resigned on September 22, 1938, over the Sudetenland capitulation. This is the end of the First Republic.

A new cabinet, under General Jan Syrový, was installed and on September 23, 1938 a decree of general mobilization was issued. There are some sources which claim that he was an interim prime minister (e.g., Sandor 1992, 15; Webb 2008, 168). This is not a SOLS change. He was also named as acting president (after the resignation of Benes) from October 5 to November 19, 1938. Under pressure from its Sudeten German minority, supported by neighboring Nazi Germany, Czechoslovakia was forced to cede its Sudetenland region to Germany on October 1, 1938 as part of the Munich Agreement. Although COW codes the country an independent state until March 15, 1939, it seems that the country was in crisis in 1938.

Rudolf Beran of RSZML became prime minister on December 1, 1938. He was the last prime minister before the Nazi occupation on March 15, 1939. It appears that he formed a coalition government. However, we could not confirm his cabinet composition. While Beran and Hodza (the last regular leader) were both from RSZML, it is possible that their cabinet compositions were slightly different, and thus we code a minor SOLS change for the entry of Beran.

During the Nazi occupation, Emil Hácha, who was a nonpartisan, served as the state president of a German protectorate. After the Second World War, the leadership of Czechoslovakia was transferred to Edvard Benes, who had been the president of the

Czechoslovakian government-in-exile during the war. This is a SOLS change. Benes, who was a member of CNSS, ruled with the support of a group of five other parties which were collectively known as the National Front. The National Front was composed of both Communist and non-Communist parties. Benes was in office until 1948, when the Communist parties in the National Front (led by KSC, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) staged a coup from within the Cabinet—forcing the non-Communist ministers to resign and holding mass strikes—the largest of which rallied one-sixth of the country’s population (Heimann 2009, 173). With the resignation of Benes, KSC leader Klement Gottwald took his place as president, which is a SOLS change.

From 1948 until 1989, Geddes classifies Czechoslovakia as a single-party state, under the control of KSC. Gottwald was in power until his death on March 14, 1953. He was replaced (though a vote by the National Assembly) by Antonín Zápotocký. This is not a SOLS change. Zápotocký was in office until his death in 1957. For six days (November 13-19), the acting president was Viliám Siroký, a prominent politician. On November 19, Antonín Novotný, the First Secretary of KSC, took over the presidency, without resigning his position as First Secretary. Novotný was in power until 1968. On March 22, 1968, after years of concentrated effort by the leader of the Slovak Communist Party (KSS), Alexander Dubček, Novotný was accused of not implementing reforms fast enough, and was forced to resign (Heimann 2009, 232). According to Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009), he was replaced first by Dubček himself, then briefly by Ludvík Svoboda until Gustáv Husák took power. None of these are SOLS change given that the same single-party retained power.

Husák remained in power until 1989. The government collapsed after months of demonstrations against the Communist regime, and Husák resigned on December 17, 1989, according to Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009). For 19 days before elections were held, the interim President was Marián Čalfa. Eyal (2003, 147) writes that “Havel took Husák’s place as president, and while communists still ran the country as caretaker prime ministers, true power resided with the Czech Civic Forum and the Slovak Public Against Violence (PAV)...this control was solidified by a resounding popular mandate produced by the first post-communist elections in June 1990.” On December 29, Václav Havel, one of the leaders of the revolutionary movement and a member of the Civic Forum, was elected president. According to Banks et al. (2011, 368), before the election, Čalfa had resigned from KSC on January 18 and became a member of PAV. On June 12, President Havel reappointed Prime Minister Čalfa and asked him to form a new government. On June 27, a 16-member coalition cabinet was sworn in: four from Civic Forum, three from PAV, one from Christian Democratic Movement (CDM; called KDS-CSL by WKB) and eight independents (Europa World Yearbook 2011, 1405). We code a minor SOLS change here. PAV was dissolved in April 1991 when a founding member of PAV, Vladimír Mečiar (the Slovak PM), was removed from the party and Ján Čarnogurský, the Chairman of CDM, replaced him (Europa Publications 2011, 1508). After the dissolution of PAV, Čalfa became a member of

the Civic Democratic Union (CDU, also called ODU-VPN by Cahoon 2013). CDU was created by the remaining members of PAV in October 1991 (“Czechoslovakia” 2013). This is a minor SOLS change.

In the post-Communist transition period following 1989, problems began to arise between the Czechs and the Slovaks. Havel stepped down from president in July 1992, following the Slovakian Declaration of Independence. In July 1992, Jan Stráský (Civic Democratic Party) became a federal premier with all presidential powers except the power to appoint and recall the Federal Government. He essentially was the acting leader (Casper 1997, Cahoon 2013) of the federal system until the “Velvet Divorce” was finalized. Though Stráský was from a different party than Havel or Calfa, we have chosen not to code his time in office as a SOLS change because he was only in power for a short time to oversee the dissolution of the country.

The leadership of the Czech and Slovak Republics repeatedly attempted negotiations to find a federalized solution between the two groups. However, these negotiations failed, and on November 25, 1992, the constitution was amended to make the Czech and Slovak Republics into separate states. As of 1 January 1993, Czechoslovakia no longer existed. Its successor states were the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic (Slovakia).

Although the Czech Republic is a mixed system, with both president and prime minister, the prime minister is the head of state (even though in the former Czechoslovakia, the president was the head of state). The Czech Republic had its own functioning government before the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (as did Slovakia). After it became independent, the Prime Minister Václav Klaus of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), who was in power before the split, continued in office. He ruled with a coalition of the Civil Democratic Alliance (ODA) and the Christian Democratic Union-Czech People’s Party (KDU-ČSL). This coalition continued in power until 1997. In 1996, the coalition failed to gain an absolute majority in elections, but managed to negotiate a return to power (Stroehlein et al. 1999).

In 1997, the Czech Republic suffered from several unfortunate events. First, the economy was in a severe downturn. Second, there was widespread damage from flooding in Moravia. Lastly, the ODS was becoming increasingly divided. In November, after a corruption scandal involving the ODS and Klaus slowly losing popularity, he was forced to resign. President Havel then appointed the former chairman of the Czech National Bank, Joseph Tosovsky. Although Tosovsky’s government was seen to be an interim one, it did enact several important policies, including the approval of the Czech Republic’s entry into NATO. Tosovsky himself was nonpartisan, and his cabinet was chosen by Havel, but he was able to make policy decisions because he was not bound by ideological constraints (Stroehlein et al. 1999). His time in office is still considered “interim.” Therefore, it is not coded as a SOLS change.

Elections were held in 1998, and Milos Zeman, the leader of the Czech Social

Democratic Party (CSSD) won the office of prime minister. This is a SOLS change. Zeman was in office until he stepped down as the CSSD chairman in 2002. He was replaced by his first Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Spidla, who led the coalition government with the KDU-ČSL and US-DEU (The Freedom Union-Democratic Union). Spidla was in office until 2004, when he resigned and was replaced by his Deputy, Stanislav Gross, which is not a SOLS change). Gross, in turn, left office in 2005 after a series of corruption scandals came to light. He was replaced by high-ranking party member Jiri Paroubek. This is not a SOLS change, either.

In the parliamentary elections of 2006, the CSSD finished second behind the ODS. The ODS then formed a minority government under Mirek Topolánek, which is a SOLS change. There was a minor SOLS change in 2007 when the ODS entered into coalition with the KDU-ČSL and the Green Party (SZ). Topolánek remained in office until 2009, which is outside of the year range for this study.

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