COMPARISON OF THE PARTY SYSTEMS OF SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Introduction

The central question of the presented scientific monograph comparison of the party Czech, Hungarian and Slovak party systems is the identification of the affinity of the Slovak party system to the Hungarian and Czech party systems. The legitimacy of the question is because Slovak political parties as organized political groups began their activities in the period shortly after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867. Of them, only the Slovak National Party (SNS) was the only one that was not until the beginning of the 1st Czechoslovak Republic organizationally independent. More precisely, it did not form any partnerships with Hungarian or foreign political parties, for example by merging or creating electoral coalitions. During the period of Hungary, the oldest Slovak political party chose a fundamentally different political strategy, such as people or socialists, who first gained political experience in all-Hungarian political parties – the Catholic People's Party and the Social Democratic Party of Hungary. The Slovak social democrats gradually tried to achieve their organizational independence only at the beginning of the 20th century, but without success. After a short existence, they rejoined the Social Democratic Party of Hungary. The Slovak People's party worked towards political independence for a longer time. From the end of 1905, the so-called the Catholic wing of the Slovak National Party. They did not create their own party until shortly before the World War I in 1913.

After the creation of the first Czechoslovak Republic, to which the main representatives of the then existing Slovak political parties signed up at a meeting in Turčiansky svätý Martin, a short period of cooperation with Czech political parties began. The beginning of the 1920s was spent in the spirit of efforts to create coalition-party cooperation before the elections. Some Slovak and Czech politicians tried to create Czechoslovak political parties, but as it turned out, parties that preferred an ethical or national character were more viable and successful in political life. The celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the republic were carried out partly in an embarrassed spirit. Political representatives of the Slovaks became more and more committed to their autonomist goals. By the 1930s, it was already clear that Czechoslovakia remained a constitutional ethos from the founding days rather than a political reality. After the international political dictate in the form of the Munich Agreement, the existence of the so-called of the Second Republic, but also with autonomy for Slovakia, where the main political force became Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, which even in 1938, with varying degrees of opposition from other political parties, managed to create a single political party – the Slovak National Unity Party, while part of the political parties she banned straight away. According to the criteria of the theory of political parties, the year 1938 represented several fundamental typological changes for Slovak politics and also for its party system. On the one hand, the competitive system with

several political parties turned into a party system with one totalitarian political party. Nevertheless, with such a radical change, a situation arose when the Slovak party subsystem as perceived by the theory of political parties remained not only an independent party system (disregarding the circumstances that the first Slovak Republic was not a sovereign state, which is not assumed by any theoretical criteria for the definition of party systems and that system of one totalitarian party), apart from the Party of Slovak National Unity – Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, ethnic political parties of Hungarians and Germans also operated in Slovakia. Czech and Jewish political parties do not exist for racist and nationalist reasons.

Under the pressure of the communist power, the Czech, Hungarian and Slovak party systems changed from a pluralist to a one-party totalitarian system. The monograph also touches on this historical-political period, which did not have the same course in individual countries despite the fact that they were all part of the same geopolitical bloc. Economic and political collapse naturally led to the restoration of party plurality. The monograph therefore follows the form of party systems with regard to the types of political parties that were established mainly in the years 1989–1990. The secondary aim of the monograph is to answer the question on the border between political science and history regarding the relationship of the Slovak party system to the Czech and Hungarian ones – that is, to which of them is the Slovak party system more similar.

In Trenčín, November 2023 Miroslav Řádek

Slovakia's party system

The first Slovak political parties in the era of Hungary

Civilizational and political changes caused by geographical and technical discoveries, which brought Europe a series of revolutions and wars from the end of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century, did not escape even Hungary, which since 1867 represented an autonomous part of the Habsburg Monarchy. The so-called the dualistic polity headed by the Austrian emperor and the Hungarian king arose because of the powerful rise of nationalism. The latter had its origins in the revolutionary times of the late 18th century, accelerated during the Napoleonic Wars, and until the middle of the 19th century, hand in hand with liberalism, was the main ideological force of political revolutions.

Therefore, national-emancipation groups grew stronger in Hungary, which tried to change the position of the monarch from absolutist to constitutional but were mainly interested in creating their own political self-government in their ethnic territory. The dominant nationality of Hungary was the Hungarians, who in the second half of the 19th century focused on promoting the idea of a unified Hungarian nation and later the so-called the Germanization of other nationalities of Hungary. National emancipation naturally also concerned the remaining ethnic groups. The beginning of the Slovak national emancipation process dates to the 1880s. Anton Bernolák took the first step towards the cultural self-awareness of the Slovaks with the first codification of the literary Slovak language based on the West Slovak dialect in 1787. His work together with the so-called the Bernolák's enabled the second codification of the Slovak language in 1843, initiated by the by a group of Ľudovít Štúr (štúrovci), based on the Central Slovak dialect. The younger group of Štúr, unlike the older national stimulators of the Bernolák's, was also politically active and in the revolutionary period of 1989-49 formulated political demands in the name of the Slovak nation in the form of the Demands of the Slovak Nation, which formally placed the Slovaks among the modern nations of Europe.

The requests provoked political repression by Hungarian political elites, and nothing came of the document. This, together with the defeat of the revolution not only in Hungary in 1849, directed the development of political activities into forms of more passive political action. However, the Austro-Hungarian (Hungarian) settlement in 1867 again caused revival in the Slovak political environment. "The Štúr and matica[1] generation centred around Viliam Pauliny-Tóth, Ján Francisci, Štafan Marko Daxner, Mikuláš Štefan Ferienčín and Martin Čulen founded the **Slovak National**

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[1] Matica slovenská is a Slovak national and cultural institution founded in 1863, whose activity was suspended by the Hungarian authorities in 1875. Its activity was resumed only after the First World War.

Party in Martin on June 1871. Its integration into the political system of the state and into the overall policy was marked by both internal and external factors. Initially, the Slovak representation tried to develop the struggle for national political demands, as well as for other reforms of political and public life through its deputies on the floor of the Hungarian parliament. However, this activity was characterized by low organization of the voter base and uncoordinated electoral contests. The SNS did not participate in the elections as a traditional parliamentary party, did not develop a wider campaign base, but supported individual candidates. The dominance of Hungarian elements and the application of the Hungarian state idea led to the suppression of the political activity of non-Hungarian peoples and nationalities, whose activity was contrary to the ideology of a unified political nation. Under the increasing Magyarization pressure, the SNS entered electoral passivity, which it left only at the beginning of the 20th century. Its importance lay in the tasks it performed within the Slovak national community. It became the centre of his national emancipation movement." (Roguľová, 2012)

Although the SNS was formally established in the early 1870s, the political program it promoted was created a full 10 years before its founding. In 1861, a committee of the Hungarian Diet was preparing a draft of the nationality law, the philosophy of which was based on the idea that all the inhabitants of Hungary, regardless of language, are members of the unified Hungarian nation. This caused a political reaction in the Slovak environment. "6. In June, about 200 activists of the national movement and over 2,000 guests gathered in Martin. (...) The assembly discussed individual points of demands, which were supposed to ensure Slovaks national rights, but also their own autonomy in the form of the Upper Hungarian Slovak Region. Pragmatic nationalists and the Slovak nobility did not agree with autonomy, but despite their arguments, the assembly also accepted this point." (Mrva – Segeš, 2012) The political program of the SNS was already clear at the beginning of the 1860s, but its fulfillment became the subject of efforts even during the time of the first Czechoslovak Republic, which, until the turbulent events of 1938, was formed, like Hungary, on the ideas of a unified – in this case, Czechoslovak nation.

After creation the dualistic establishment of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1867, the SNS adopted a strategy of political passivity shortly after its formal establishment in 1871, which resulted in the continuation of the national oppression of most non-Hungarian nationalities. It can be concluded that this political style of the nationalists, together with its conservative leadership, had a fundamental influence not only on the position of the party in the Slovak party (sub)system (SNS was a small party with irregular participation in the parliament even in the 21st century), but also on the overall shape of the party system in Hungarian and Czechoslovak conditions, extending to the period of Slovakia's independence after 1993. "The core of SNS supporters was made up of members of the lower and middle classes or the church and secular intelligentsia. The SNS leadership did not focus on the interests of broad popular movements. It did not extend its activities to rural agricultural workers or peasants, because it did not consider them to be an active factor in national struggles. Polarization grew stronger between the Slovak intelligentsia and these population groups, which strengthened the elitist character, but

also a certain isolation of the SNS. Absent from the Slovak national movement were strong socio-economic groups that would have helped to develop other active forms of struggle. (Roguľová, 2012)

The passive political line of the SNS soon took its revenge. The increasingly strong modernization of society and the natural stratification of the interests of the Slovaks first brought dissatisfaction within the SNS. "Initially, these were latent manifestations of disaffected individuals, which gradually acquired organizational forms and grew into a grouping of opposition factions. (...) Opposition groups were convinced of the need to reactivate political activity. They wanted to activate nationally conscious social forces with new initiatives and to create a much wider social base of the national political movement by developing work more massively in the regions as well. (Roguľová, 2012)

"Conservative passivism" caused the SNS to become an environment for the seeds of new political groups and parties (vocalists and agrarians) and also a temporary organizational refuge for related political parties (Slovak People's Party). In the case of the first group, they were national political activists who, through their studies, were connected to the Czech environment, which shaped their mental and value equipment into a more progressive form compared to the domestic more conservative and closed understanding. "The most important position was the group centred in Prague around the Detvan association, the so-called "hlasisti", represented primarily by Vavro Šrobár and Pavol Blaho. They were ideologically influenced by the Czech intelligentsia of the realist wing, represented mainly by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, and the method of small-scale agitation work among broad sections of the population." (Roguľová, 2012)

At the same time, in cooperation with the SNS, a nationally conscious Catholic--clerical political direction was formed in which younger Catholic clergy were involved. "It was mainly represented by Andrej Hlinka and Martin Kollár. The activity of this trend in Hungarian and later also in Slovak politics, when it became part of the development of the SNS, reflects a significant movement of the nationally conscious, especially the lower Catholic clergy. (Roguľová, 2012)

Despite several negative facts – almost half a century of political passivity, limited political possibilities, low national awareness and minority representation within Hungary – it managed to gain parliamentary representation three times since its establishment, and only in the 20th century after the first 30 years of its existence, when due to its own electoral passively had no legislative representation. Simultaneously with the entry of the SNS into the Hungarian parliament, the national parties of the Serbs, Romanians and, in the 1906 elections, the Saxon Party also entered the Hungarian parliament.

Tab. 1 Election results of the SNS in the elections to the Hungarian Parliament

election year	number of deputies	percentage gain
1872	–	–
1875	–	–
1878	–	–
1881	–	–
1884	–	–
1887	–	–
1892	–	–
1896	–	–
1901	4	0,97%
1905	–	–
1906	7	1,69%
1910	3	0,72%

Source: Csaba, S. P. – Kálmán, B.

After the outbreak of the WWI, the SNS did not carry out public political activities. Like other political parties, it avoided open confrontation with the state power during the state of war and thus formally maintained loyalty to Hungary from a state-building point of view. The last significant step of the SNS, not only in the era of Hungary, was the convening of a well-known meeting to which representatives of all important political currents were invited. "Political activity centred around the idea of creating the highest national political body in which all political and social groups of Slovak life were to be represented. After urgent appeals addressed to the leadership of the SNS from all corners of Slovakia, its chairman Matúš Dula convened a meeting in Martin on October 30, 1918, at which the Slovak National Council (SNR) was created." (Roguľová, 2012) Signing up for Czechoslovak statehood at a meeting called by nationalists ended the period of formal political dominance of the SNS in the environment of the Slovak party (sub)system, after which Slovak political parties began to organizationally differentiate, regroup and temporarily establish cooperation with Czech political parties.

The second most important party formation was the Catholic-Clerical People's Party. Its creation was prompted by the encyclical of the Roman Pope Leo XIII. Rerum novarum, which is generally considered to be the document establishing Christian social doctrine in 1891. The document in 50 points characterized the basic views and positions of the Catholic Church in the field of socio-economic issues brought about by the dynamic 19th century. The industrial revolution, first

symbolized by the building of railroads and factories, had uncompromising effects on the functioning of society. The authority of traditional secular and religious authorities gradually declined. Politically engaged groups create the impression of representatives of the entire public opinion, they demanded new freedoms and a distributed profit from work and business. It was precisely the 19th century when the greatest egalitarian initiatives began. Large social differences, even under the influence of nascent socialism, ceased to be generally acceptable. Her final points became a guide for believers to engage in a working-class environment. Point 44 of the encyclical reads unequivocally: "More than ever before, the most diverse communities are being formed today, especially from among the workers. For many of them, there is no place to investigate the origin, goals and procedures. However, it is a generally widespread opinion, supported by many indications, that they are mostly led by hidden leaders and their leadership is against the Christian spirit and the general good. And these, thanks to the monopoly of representation in individual companies, force those who refuse to join them to pay dearly for it.

In such a state of things, Christians are left with only two options: either to associate themselves with societies that are dangerous to religion, or to create their own, and thus join forces and decide to resist this unjust and inadmissible coercion. So how can anyone who does not want to endanger the highest good of man hesitate and not choose this second option? Praiseworthy are those priests and lay people who devote themselves to social apostolate." (Rerum Novarum, 1891) Although these words were originally formally directed by the head of the Catholic Church to activities in the trade union environment, believers began to found not only Christian trade unions, but also their own political parties. However, the combination of social teaching and faith was not the only impetus for the political activities of believers. The liberal legacy of the 19th century revolution was anti-clerical, and the church was aware of the secularizing trends in society and politics.

In the Slovak conditions of the 19th century, national and social issues were linked. The position of Slovaks in Hungary was a minority, people claiming to be of Slovak origin had a lower social status and mostly lived in the countryside. "The upper rungs of the social ladder have traditionally been reserved for strata with different ethnic affiliations, the Hungarian ruling element, from which powerful political and economic elites continued to form. (...) Behind the high proportion of the population belonging to agriculture, however, there were not only masses of numerous and differentiated peasantry and village poverty, but relatively few upper classes, which consisted of medium and large landowners together with the traditional elite, noble latifundios." (Jakešová, 2004) Under these conditions, the lower Catholic clergy began to engage socially, especially in the countryside and smaller Slovak towns. Back in the 1870s, the Society of St. Vojtech, which practically became the only major national organization after the closure of Matica slovenská. He mainly developed Enlightenment and educational activities.

The Slovak People were originally active in the all-Hungary Catholic People's Party (KĽS), which was founded in 1894. "The new party was close to them with its Christian-oriented program and declaration of a conciliatory attitude towards non-Hungarian peoples with the recognition of their rights according to the

Nationality Act of 1868. (…) Although the Catholic People's Party was able to arouse increased interest in public and political events by the elements and targeting of its campaign, especially by organizing public meetings, it lacked the persuasiveness of its actions to realistically meet the expectations of the Slovak population in the area of its national interests. For the Slovak supporters of the KĽS, the procedures of its leadership became increasingly unacceptable, which in practice began to deviate openly from program goals and led the party, even in its understanding of the nationality question, to the chauvinist platform of other Hungarian political parties. As a result, in the Slovak environment, there were expressions of disapproval of the activities of the KĽS and the creation of a group which based its programmatic orientation on the defence of the popular layers in harmony with national interests." (Jakešová, 2004)

For mass political parties whose foundation was laid in conditions of Slovak politics at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, party newspapers were a key communication tool not only for members, but especially for sympathizers and voters. Several political parties were still issuing them in the 1990s, and at the beginning of their era, only the Internet put an end to them. In the case of the People's Party, it was a newspaper with the characteristic name The Folk Newspaper (Ľudové noviny).

Due to the dissatisfaction of Slovak Catholics with the real national policy of the KĽS, they looked for their political background in the SNS, where at that time there was also a group of young Slovak intelligentsia with foreign studies or life experience, mainly in Prague, but also in Vienna and Budapest, etc. They were united by their activity in publishing their own newspaper Hlas or their activity in the Detvan association. As more liberal-oriented pro-national activists criticized the electoral passivity of the SNS, this changed and in 1901 the SNS was not only successful with its own candidates for the Hungarian Diet, which brought remarkable results. "The SNS fielded 10 candidates and, in addition to them, decided to support six candidates from the Catholic People's Party, three candidates from the Liberal Party, one from the Independence Party and one with a non-partisan program. (…) The election results were relatively favourable for the SNS, as it won four mandates (…) In addition to them, with the support of the SNS, another five deputies entered the Diet." The combination of the national, liberal and Catholic streams had positive results. However, it was still dominated by the nationalist element, while political Catholicism was still in its infancy.

Slovak Catholic activists did not formally achieve organizational independence even at the end of 1905 at a meeting in Žilina, when they adopted a manifesto for the creation of the **Slovak People's Party (SĽS)**. "In the justification of this action, the argument is based on the fact that the Hungarian KĽS misappropriated its program on the national issue and in a chauvinistic spirit opposed Slovak members who actively defended Slovak national interests. (…) The proclamation of the creation of the Slovak People's Party in 1905 was a clear signal that there had been a definitive separation of the Slovak followers of the Catholic People's Party in an attempt to firmly anchor themselves in Slovak political life. However, the question of the further constitution and maturation of the Slovak People's Party

was not easy, because the main problem of the leading personalities of the Slovak People's Party was its establishment within Slovak politics towards an independent political entity, i.e. political party. From this point of view, it was rather an ideological and political trend within the Slovak National Party, since the creation of functional components within the party structure did not take place. Within the Slovak People's Party, it had to be taken into account that it is not possible for the Slovak People's Party to prepare itself organizationally in such a way that it will act independently before the upcoming parliamentary elections." (Jakešová, 2004)

Similar to the elections to the Hungarian Diet in 1901, the Slovak candidates recorded a positive result in 1906 as well. Seven nationally conscious Slovak deputies (F. Juriga, P. Blaho, M. Kollár, F. Jehlička, F. Skyčák, M. Hodža and M. M. Bella), of which five were elected with the program of the Slovak People's Party." (Letz, 2006)

Until the end of the era of the monarchy, members of SĽS tried to cooperate not only with similarly nationalistic politicians and forces in Slovakia, but also gained their first experience with international political cooperation. In the elections to the Hungarian Diet in 1910, they pragmatically cooperated with the Croatian ban and supported the candidacy of Hungarian government politicians, but they also cooperated in the Diet itself with Romanian and Serbian deputies. (Letz, 2006) In the same period, disputes between nationalists and members of SĽS came to a head at the folk meeting at the end of 1912 in Ružomberok. Thus, at the end of peacetime in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Slovak People's Party decided to become independent.

In contrast to its actions two decades later, it's appropriate to recall its original program from 1906: "It demanded universal, equal and secret suffrage, strict laws against usury, the actual practice of the nationality law, complete freedom of assembly and association, the defence of the workers against the exploitation of big capital, a fair distribution of the tax burden." (Letz, 2006) The same party violated its original program in 1938, when totalitarian views and practices definitively prevailed in the originally democratic party.

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The aforementioned socio-economic trends of the 19th century, which had an impact on the composition of society in Europe, naturally brought political changes with them. More and more people from the countryside found their employment in the expanding cities. However, they did not provide sufficient conditions for a dignified life for a long time. The hard work and poor living conditions of the workers led to the need to unite. This has been happening since the middle of the 19th century, not for ideological motives with ideological goals, but for practical reasons. An increasing number of workers were initially in joint "treasury" or financial institutions, where they set aside part of their wages as savings for possible incapacity for work or a period without work and thus without income.

This began to change in Hungarian conditions at the end of the 1860s. The first workers' organization was established in Budapest – the General Workers' Union, which was connected to the First Socialist International. "On the territory of Slovakia,

the first significant workers' association with a socialist focus was established. February 15, 1869 in Bratislava, with the support of the workers of the local factories under the name Workers' Educational Association. (…) On March 29, 1869, with the participation of more than 1,000 workers from Bratislava, as well as several representatives of the General Workers' Union from Budapest, the first public socialist assembly in Hungary took place in Bratislava, which adopted a program that went far beyond the scope of self-help and educational workers' associations. The program was determined by Lassalle's teachings, especially his demand for a 'free people's state'. Based on the existing position of the Hungarian workers, he established, in addition to organizing self-help, the requirements for the political equalization of workers, the introduction of universal suffrage, unrestricted association and assembly rights, complete freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the dissolution of the standing army, general arming of the people and, in a national sense, the right of nations to self-determination (Hronský, 1996)

The next phase of the rise and boom of workers' activities dates back to the 1890s. During this period, there were already 26 local labour unions operating in Slovakia. Especially in the western part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the public and union activities of the workers were more widespread and represented a model for the activities of the proletariat in Hungary. The first important activists who initiated the creation and organization of social democracy were Leo Frankel (Party of People Without Voting Rights) and Viktor Külföldy (Workers' Party of Hungary). In 1880, the workers' parties were united into the General Workers' Party. Despite the fact that political representations of workers existed in Hungary earlier, the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, founded in 1890 in Budapest, is considered the first party. "The party adopted the principles of the Hainfeld program of Austrian social democracy into its program. According to this program, the party was supposed to lead the Hungarian proletariat in the fight against exploitation, for the expansion of political principles, for the legal regulation of its interests, for popular enlightenment and to take care of the expansion of the ideological-political exit of the working class. However, the program did not deal with the internal organization of the party, it did not take enough account of the specificity of Hungarian conditions, and even though the party also claimed internationalism, it did not consider the solution of the national question very much." where Slovak workers had the largest concentration of all worker communities. Others were in Košice and Bratislava, where the centre of Slovak workers gradually moved in the following decades. Another peculiarity was the social democrats' ideological approach to solving the nationality question.

The European labour movement was ideologically settled with the national question based on internationalism. In general, he formally proclaimed the equality of nations, but practical political life brought nationalist conflicts even among European socialists. In comparison to the nationalists and the populists who were forming at the same time, the Slovak socialists could not fully expect the fulfilment of their own national political ambitions in the Hungarian social democracy, because the Hungarian Social Democratic Party referred to internationalism and the real status of non-Hungarian nationalities was not a primary political issue for it.

This already led to the gradual organizational emancipation of Slovak socialists in the early days of all-Hungarian social democracy. "At the beginning of the 20th century, the centre of gravity of the organized Slovak labour movement gradually began to shift from Budapest to the territory of Slovakia. Its centre became Bratislava, where Slovak workers had a strong representation and capable functionaries in the workers' organizations. In addition to the advantageous geopolitical location of this city, the fact that the hegemony of the Budapest leadership weakened the influence of the Austrian and Czech social democrats, especially from nearby Vienna, was also important. After the formation of permanent regional organizations and secretariats of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary at special conferences held at the end of 1905, such secretariats were also established in Bratislava and Košice.

The situation among social democrats in Hungary and especially in Slovakia was complicated. Several groups of social democrats were active here. She was very publicly involved in the so-called The Upper Hungarian Social Democratic Party of Hungary, which represented the interests of Hungarian socialists in Budapest. At the same time, the West Slovak Social Democracy, which had a German ethnic orientation, also operated here. The Slovak social democrats gained legitimacy and a better organizational background after the XI. Congress of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary in 1904. "It was the largest convention up to that time, and in addition to Hungarian and German, discussions were also held in Slovak, Serbian and Romanian." The Slovak delegates were the most active, and already on the first day of the convention, they founded the Central Committee of the Slovak Workers' Organization, headed by E. Lehocký, with campaigning powers for the whole of Hungary." (Hronský, 1996)

In the beginning, the Slovak socialists mainly tried to publish their own press, which was supposed to help not only to enlighten the workers in various areas of life, but naturally to turn them mainly into voters and ultimately informed members of the party. Unsatisfactory attitudes of the Hungarian social democracy towards the national emancipation demands of the Slovak socialists (as in the Catholic Party of Hungary at the same time), led to efforts for party separation. Already in 1905, **the Slovak Social Democratic Party of Hungary** was founded in Bratislava, mainly by delegates from western Slovakia, but also Moravia, Hungary and Austria.

Slovak socialists approached organizational independence reluctantly. After the creation of the central committee in 1904 and the declaration of Slovak social democracy in 1905, its co-founder Emanuel Lehocký emphasized in his speech the connection with both Hungarian and Czechoslavic social democracy. The first congress of Slovak socialists did not even develop a separate program and continued to focus on the Hungarian program from 1903, and it was the same with the organization of the party. Since the operation of the socialist parties was due to the long-term operation of the trade unions, which in the Hungarian conditions were oriented towards Budapest, a few months later the Slovak socialists reconsidered their decision from the 1905 congress. "It soon became clear that the newly founded party of social democrats did not have enough strength to break through the mountain of obstacles: the underdevelopment of Slovak conditions, the system of national oppression and persecution of the ruling regime, the small number,

programmatic immaturity and organizational inexperience of the leading cadres, the hegemony of the Budapest leadership of the All-Hungarian Party and trade unions, the lack financial resources and others. There was not much space left for it to assert itself as the leading force of the workers' movement in the whole of Slovakia, and as an independent proletarian party it also did not have a great perspective within the entire Hungarian workers' movement. Its leadership soon realized this, and that is why the Slovak social democrats already at II. at the congress on March 18, 1906, they decided to re-merge with the all-Hungarian social democracy." (Hronský, 1996) The Social Democratic Party of Hungary accepted its Slovak colleagues back and formally approved the party's new organizational rules, which enabled the functioning of central committees of social democrats of non-Hungarian nationalities. This was not a new thing, given that similar groupings had been accepted by the party since 1904. However, the overall attitude of the Hungarian Social Democracy to the national question remained irrelevant and in practical life it continued to be dominated by the Hungarian trade unions and social democrats. Despite formal membership in the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, the Slovak Social Democrats continued to organize their own political activities and pan-Slovak congresses. In addition to the promotion of universal suffrage (which would also allow workers to vote), the labour-legal status of workers, they kept reminding of the unresolved status of non-Hungarian nationalities in Hungary (within the All-Hungarian Social Democratic Party they preferred an organizational reform modelled after the Austrian Social Democracy) and at the end of the first decade of the 20th century began to warn of the rise of militarization. Opposition to war, even in the form of the practical abolition of the army, was part of the initial program theses of socialists since the creation of the Social Democratic Party.

Although the Slovak socialists belonged to the youngest and least experienced political groups in Slovakia, and their position was also made difficult by state and national persecution, they became an accepted political force in the Slovak environment in May 1914 the consequent limitation of the activities of political parties. Although the initial reaction of the Austrian and Hungarian socialists was anti-war, soon the leaders of the Austrian and Hungarian social democracy stood up for their government. Similar attitudes of other national social democracies ultimately led to the collapse of The Second International in 1916. During the First World War, finally, under the pressure of militarism and nationalism, many, especially younger socialists, such as Benito Mussolini and the radicalized part of European socialists after the war belonged to supporters of fascism.

The basic attitudes of the Slovak socialists – i.e. the effort to democratize political life, improve the living conditions of workers, national-emancipatory perception (together with the orientation towards cooperation with the Czech socialists) and anti-militaristic reflex – which exposed the Slovak social democrats to almost 30 years of political oppression, they world war and the creation of a new world and European order brought a stable position in the party and government system of the first Czechoslovak Republic, which would have become almost dominant if the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had not been established in 1920.

Summary of the Hungarian era of the Slovak party subsystem

By the end of Austria-Hungary, or rather by the beginning of the First World War, the foundations of Slovak political parties were established, which, apart from the totalitarian periods of 1938–1945 and 1948–1989, have organizational continuity to the present day. The Slovak political camp was divided into standard ideological families, similarly to other European countries since 1914. Nationalism was represented by the Slovak National Party, which in its beginnings provided the organizational background for the penetrating Christian-democratic Catholic People's Party. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Slovak socialism had a specific character because it represented a "foreign import" in the Slovak political environment. As it follows from the previous text, both nationalists and peoples had their natural background in Upper Hungary. The socialist movement had its foundations in Budapest and only moved to Bratislava in the second decade, where it still had competition in the form of Hungarian and German socialists. Until the end of the monarchy, southern and eastern Slovakia was under the influence of the Budapest-oriented Social Democratic Party of Hungary and Hungarian ethnic nationalism.

The group of main Slovak political parties in the Hungarian era did not include any liberal or agrarian political party, as was the case in countries with a longer democratic tradition and existing parliamentarism. The answer to the question why it was so is found in the socio-demographic composition of the population. People from northern Hungary with lower education and socio-economic status claimed to belong to the ethnically Slovak population. At the same time, liberal parties and social elites in Western societies came from an environment with higher education and property-income ratios living in larger cities. Similarly, economic determinants played a role in the absence of agrarian political parties. Slovaks had the prerequisites to be inclined to engage in agrarian parties, given that Slovakia was a predominantly agrarian country until the 1960s. But Slovaks living in the countryside engaged in agriculture as laborers who did not own the cultivated land. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, there were few wealthy owners of agricultural land claiming to be of Slovak origin, and they were involved in the SNS. The formation of an independent agrarian current in Slovak politics was only associated with the creation of the first Czechoslovak Republic, and its strength or independent existence would be more questionable without its cooperation with Czech agrarian politicians.

Finally, it can be concluded that by the end of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1918, neither a separate system of political parties nor a party subsystem or a regional system of political parties had emerged. On the one hand, Slovakia did not have a clear territorial definition until the establishment and recognition of the first Czechoslovak Republic, and therefore there was no Slovak regional parliament in which Slovak political parties could apply for representation. Formally, there was only one the SNS, which, due to the nuances of its political activity (electoral passivity and cooperation with different ideologically oriented political groups), was not among the relevant political parties. The other two political groups that developed activities in a party environment – that is, the People's Party and the Socialists – both had unsuccessful attempts at organizational independence, while

the Socialists can be considered more a part of the all-Hungarian social democracy and the People's Party as close or even coalition partners of the nationalists. It is therefore possible to agree with the words of Lubomír Kopeček: "There were no truly relevant regional actors operating on the territory of Slovakia ... It can therefore be concluded that in the Hungary era it is not possible to speak of the existence of a Slovak party system, but only of a party subsystem, and that was still largely undeveloped." (Kopeček, 2006)

Completely different character and dynamics had Slovak pollical parties after 1918. The establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic put Slovak political elites in a qualitatively different situation compared to the Hungarian period.

Activity of Slovak political parties in the 1st Czechoslovak Republic

The establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 and its international political acknowledge at the Versailles Peace Conference the following year meant a fundamental qualitative change for Slovak political parties. If under the conditions of the monarchy, due to the political and national circumstances, the Slovak party formations represented the seeds of political parties, which were not viable without the all-Hungarian parties in which, except for the SNS, they were formed, while it itself was in a state of political and electoral passivity for most of its existence in the Austro-Hungarian era.

The introduction of universal suffrage as an elementary requirement of all Slovak political party formations was confirmed by the adoption of the first Czechoslovak constitution in 1920. The relationship of all Slovak political forces to the creation of Czechoslovakia was positive after four years of war in the war-weary Habsburg Monarchy. Although there were no signs of resistance or resistance in Slovakia to the extent that was the case in the Czech environment, the SNS, after some hesitation, convened a meeting of the representatives of the Slovak National Council (SNR) in Martin, where the Slovak political representatives adopted the Declaration of the Slovak Nation, and the Slovaks later, without information about what was happening in Prague, they expressed their will to become part of the Czechoslovak Republic. But as it became clear in the following year, the ideas about the position of Slovaks in the republic were not identical with the next idea of a unified political nation – this time Czechoslovakian. Slovaks in the first Czechoslovak Republic achieved all democratic political rights. However, Czech ideas about its functioning were based on the idea of a unitary state. Over time, the Slovaks gained political freedom more and more emboldened to articulate more and more self-confident national ambitions. Their source was mainly the Slovak People's Party, which was renamed Hlinka's Slovak People's Party in 1925 due to its distinction from the Czech People's Party and was the dominant political party for most of the time until 1938.

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(Hlinka's) Slovak People's Party was a political association of dominantly active Catholics (laity and clergy) who, at the time of the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, had a common political history from the time of the Habsburg Monarchy. Its representatives did not create new party structures but restored the original ones and gradually established themselves on the conditions of the new Czechoslovak state. Its basic program pillars were formed by Catholic confessionalism, nationalism and Christian-social ethics. The membership and electorate of the people during the first Czechoslovak Republic was also found mainly in broad popular strata with lower education in the religious countryside – that is, the same personnel substrate as in the Austro-Hungarian period. The relationship to the nationality question in the People's Party had its own specific development. The party naturally identified itself as a representative of Slovak national interests, but, especially in the first years of the republic, part of its membership did not have a clear opinion on incorporation into the Czechoslovak Republic under state law and was partly inclined towards pre-war Hungary, not only because of its personal ties with Hungarian politicians in the Hungarian People's Party, but also for the liberal orientation of the Czechoslovak state. "Certain political parties or specific deputies already in the first, i.e. the Revolutionary National Assembly (it operated from November 14, 1918 until the first parliamentary elections on April 18 or 25, 1920) tried to enforce the separation of the state from the churches in such a way that they wanted to include the draft law on separation as one of the points in the upcoming constitution of Czechoslovakia, which the deputies were preparing and were supposed to adopt even before the parliamentary elections, i.e. for April 1920. (...) A serious obstacle in enforcing the requirement of separation of the state from the churches into legal standards, especially to the Czechoslovak Constitution itself, was the situation in Slovakia. Members of the Slovak Parliamentary Club were clearly against the separation of churches from the state. (...) The battle for separation took place on the grounds of the constitutional committee of the National Assembly. Finally, under the pressure of the Slovak Club of Deputies, the deputies changed the draft paragraph on separation and did not include its solution in the draft constitution. In the end, the deputies of the constitutional committee stated that this decision symbolized the heated internal political conditions in the state and, in particular, considerations of the specific situation in Slovakia." (Bartlová, 2006)

The most important politician of the People's Party, who de facto led it for most of its period until his death, was the Catholic priest Andrej Hlinka. At the time of the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, he had been an established and well-known politician for two decades. From the point of view of public opinion, he had the image of a martyr, which also originated in the events of 1907 connected with the consecration of the Catholic church in Černová (currently part of the city of Ružomberok). Hlinka was among the main leaders who attended the SNR meeting in Martin in October 1918, where he co-expressed loyalty to Czechoslovakia on behalf of the Slovak nation. But it soon began to disappear in his practical political actions, not only due to the more liberal character of the republic in the eyes of the Catholic conservative. At the end of 1918, the Czech journalist and writer František Peroutka expressed the development of Andrej Hlinka's attitudes as follows:

"A deputation of Rožomberok's Catholics under Hlinka's leadership also came to Žilina to greet the Slovak government. Setom Watson tells that it was from there that Hlinka returned badly offended. He was asked to remove himself from one important meeting that was declared confidential. How is it that he, the blood of the blood and the flesh of the flesh of Slovakia, he, his old and famous voice, he who so many times whispered and thundered its glory and the suffering for which he was sued, is he supposed to stand behind the door where Slovakia is concerned? About his Slovakia? Where is such an insolent Slovak who should be trusted when it comes to the well-being of this country? He judged that he was not warmly received. The first bitterness was not caused by the Czechs, but by the Slovaks." (Peroutka, 2003)

Different cultural and ideological ideas about the character of the Czechoslovak Republic were also reflected in the loyalty of some members of the SĽS to the new state. In the first years of the republic, several of them came closer to Hungarian statehood despite the national oppression that Slovaks experienced since the revolutionary years of 1848–1849 and especially after the Austro-Hungarian (Hungarian) settlement. The attitudes of the SĽS towards Czechoslovak statehood finally culminated in the trial of Vojtech Tuka, who was convicted in 1929 of espionage for the benefit of the Republic of Hungary. The guilt of the future prime minister of the wartime Slovak state in the so-called Tuka affair is the subject of research by historians, while his guilt was also questioned by some Czech politicians at the time.

SĽS was an opposition political party for most of the time during the Czechoslovakia. It was part of the government coalition only in the second half of the 20s. It also behaved constructively during the election of the second president of Czechoslovakia, Eduard Beneš, who would not have become the head of state without the support of the HSĽS deputies. At the beginning of the 1920s, she also had experience of cooperation with Czech Catholics within the Czechoslovak People's Party. "ČSL thus (by merging with other ethnic people's parties on the territory of Czechoslovakia, author's note) represented the only nationally organized Catholic party. In the initial period between 1919 and 1921, it also cooperated with the Hlinka People's Party, whose deputies and senators were members of the joint parliamentary club. The main reason for the creation of a unified bloc after the First World War was primarily the post-war situation in the new Czechoslovakia, when many wanted the Catholic Church and its believers to lose their previous status in society. Post-war antagonism towards the Catholic Church gradually subsided, and more pressing problems came to the fore. In November 1921, deputies from Hlinka's party left the joint club and joined the opposition. This led to the de facto disintegration of the united Catholic club. The main reason for this step was unresolved nationality issues. Unlike the Czech people's party, the Slovak Hlinka's people's party were supporters of Slovak autonomy." (Pehr, 2006) Therefore, the party unity of the Catholics in Czechoslovakia was never restored. After 1921, the ČSĽ sought political activities in Slovakia as well. Since 1925, the Czechoslovak People's Party in Slovakia was formally active in Slovakia, led by Martin Mičura (according to him, the party was given the informal nickname "Mičuráci"). SĽS representatives responded to this move by renaming the party to Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, so that voters

could clearly distinguish between the parties, especially during elections, when voters could naturally confuse people's parties on ballots.

HSĽS was the political party with the highest support of Slovak voters until the end of the 1930s. She regularly won a third of all electoral votes. A smaller drop-in voter support was recorded only in the parliamentary elections of 1929, which was preceded by the political performance of the HSĽS in the government coalition. "The decline compared to the previous elections was caused by coalition politics, when the HSĽS was a member of the right-wing coalition in the years 1927–1929 without achieving more visible results in the field of state law and social affairs and lost the original radicalism of its program, but also the so-called The fat affair, which ended the coalition experience of the party and placed it in the light of support for the Hungarian irredentism. The internal crisis of the HSĽS in the years 1928 and 1929 was the deepest crisis of this party in its interwar history." (Pehr, 2006) The decline of voter support for the HSĽS in the 1929 elections had its causes in the aforementioned reasons as named by Michal Pehr as well as other historians examining the period in question, but from a political point of view it can be added that the operation of political parties in a government coalition is often naturally accompanied by lower voter support, especially in the case of political parties with radical rhetoric. Thus, the HSĽS could not avoid the voter outflow. When considering the relevance of the reasons, it should also be remembered that the folk people also managed to stabilize the position of the Catholic Church in cooperation with other folk people, whose position has been stabilized since the creation of Czechoslovakia. Slovak political elites, especially from the HSĽS environment, after 10 years of Czechoslovakia's existence, did actively demand political autonomy, but the participation of the HSĽS in the so-called the autonomist bloc in the 1935 elections did not bring better electoral results to the party. When identifying the reasons for the decline in voter support for the HSĽS, there were mainly social aspects. The year 1929 was the year of the outbreak of the Great Depression, while the social situation in Slovakia was not good even before it, and economic conditions did not significantly improve in the following years either. The standard of living of Slovaks in the first Czechoslovakia, interpreted by social demagoguery about the responsibility of Jews for economic problems, later led, at best, to the passivity of Slovaks towards anti-Semitism, later also to the active alienation of Jewish property and even to cases of local pogroms after World War II against returning Jews from concentration camps.

At the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, the HSĽS gained political experience with parliamentary politics. The party found that cooperation with Czech parties in the government coalition (1927–1929), but on the other hand, even the promotion of the autonomist program (1935) did not bring the desired electoral results (this finally led to a formal break with the SNS, in which its representatives found refuge during the Hungarian era and at the same time created the conditions for the political liquidation of the CIS in 1938). HSĽS therefore underwent a certain internal redefinition of its political identity in the mid-1930s. "The long-term stay in the political opposition, open and covert attacks on the HSĽS by the government and centralist parties, the official spread of Czechoslovakianism, the vacillation of the SNS policy

regarding the legislative autonomy of Slovakia, the failure of the autonomist bloc – all this confirmed the HSĽS's belief in its exceptionality in the nation. It considered itself to be the only party that consistently defends the interests of the Slovak nation. In the imaginations of its protagonists, it was like a small national microcosm, a safe haven for the most precious values – the Slovak nation and God." (Letz, 2006)

Due to the development of political events in the mid-1930s, HSĽS became practically the last constructive actor in Czechoslovak politics. At the end of 1935, T. G. Masaryk resigned as president, and the Czechoslovak parliament, where the leadership of the political parties held a strong position due to the imperative mandate, was to elect his successor. However, the government coalition could not agree on the support of one candidate, so radical and national political parties also joined in this high political game. The chances of the main candidates, who became E. Beneš and B. Němec. "Hlinka's Slovak People's Party achieved its goal – it became the proverbial tip of the scales. On December 14, Masaryk submitted his resignation, and the election act was set for December 18, 1935." (Holák, 2006) However, the situation with the vacancy of T. G. Masaryk's successor was not easy internally, even for the HSĽS. In the end, however, she sided with E. Beneš during the election itself. However, the subsequent negotiations on the entry of HSĽS into the government coalition failed, and the party remained out of fear of a repeat of the situation when it was part of the so-called virgin coalition and that its program will not be fulfilled anyway, in the political opposition and until the acceptance of autonomy in October 1938 pursued autonomist goals. However, the HSĽS simultaneously expressed loyalty to Czechoslovakia, and until 1938 it was difficult to find totalizing tendencies in it.

In the summer of 1938, the founder and leader of the party, Andrej Hlinka, who led it for almost 40 years, died. Jozef Tiso, who took a pragmatic stance, naturally came to head it, while in the competition for succession to the leadership of the party, his competitor was Karol Sidor, who was considered the spokesman of the younger radical part of the party. The Munich Agreement of September 1938 not only had an impact on the international and state-law arrangement of Central Europe, but also initiated the change of the HSĽS into a totalitarian party, which adopted and promoted the totalitarian program of National Socialism during the World War II.

Even though ĽSNS was an opposition political party, it cannot be classified as a protest or anti-system political party in the period of the first Czechoslovakia. It operated within the limits of Czechoslovak parliamentarism while striving for the political autonomy of Slovakia. It defined itself against Marxism and the Soviet Union, but except until the creation of the wartime Slovak Republic under "German protection", it did not have a strong foreign policy orientation.

This changed first with the autonomy in October 1938, when already in the following month HSĽS formally merged part of the political parties (including the SNS) and banned some of the associations and associations with different orientations. On this occasion, for the second time in history, it was renamed HSĽS – Slovak National Unity Party (SSNJ). Apart from it, only political parties of Germans and Hungarians operated legally in Slovakia until 1945. Five months later, Nazi Germany

occupied the Czech part of the second Czechoslovak Republic, and the Slovak Diet declared the independence of Slovakia the day before. The latter, despite international political recognition, was not a sovereign state, the expression of which was the defence agreement with the German Empire and the simultaneous involvement in the war campaign by its side against Poland and later the USSR.

The HSĽS-SSNJ was the initiator of the political persecution of the political opposition, its persecution and especially the adoption and introduction of the Jewish Code in the spring of 1941. However, the further strengthening of the totalitarian regime failed due to the development of the military situation. Nazi Germany was on the defensive from the turn of 1942/43. "The ethos on which the regime was built in the early days has practically disappeared now. On the contrary, his significant compromise in the eyes of most of the society was manifested, due to the foreign policy and military defeats of Germany, which dragged Slovakia connected to it by the umbilical cord into disaster, as well as controversial domestic political steps (Jewish deportations). The result was the delegitimization of the regime and its disintegration. This is probably best documented by the activation of the resistance, which quickly strengthened its influence in the state apparatus, including the security forces. The army, whose loyalty to the regime was quickly disappearing, also got into motion. From the beginning of 1944, a group of high-ranking army officers connected with the resistance intensively prepared a plan for an armed uprising. It broke out at the end of August 1944, when the Germans, aware of the impotence of the regime, began to occupy Slovakia." (Kopeček, 2006) And it is precisely with the Slovak National Uprising and its suppression in the fall of 1944 that it relates to the end of the HSĽS-SSNJ and humanity as such. It was ended personally by the president and priest Jozef Tiso in one person, as well as the highest representative of the party, by handing state awards to German soldiers who also participated in the massacre of the Slovak civilian population.

In the post-war period, courts were held with the representatives of the people's regime, and several of them emigrated, and some even disappeared, such as Augustín Morávek – architect of the Arization in Slovakia. Some of the engaged people were persecuted after the war, but a significant part, on the contrary, later cooperated with the communist regime. Paradoxical situations occurred when, for example, former whistleblowers and guards managed to obtain confirmation of their participation in the so-called anti-fascist resistance.

Tab. 2 Election results of the HSĽS in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies

election year	number of deputies	percentage gain
1920 (ČSL-SĽS)	33	11,3%
1925 (HSĽS)	23	6,9%
1929 (HSĽS)	19	5,8%
1935 (Autonomistic bloc)	22	6,9%

Source: Statistical manuals of the Czechoslovak Republic

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The Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party (ČSSDSR) was created from the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party and organizations of social democrats in Slovakia. The position of social democracy in Slovakia after the creation of the 1st Czechoslovakia was complicated by the revolution that prevailed for four years of war and famine, and at the same time social democrats organized in German and Hungarian-oriented socialists operated in the same territory. Since the beginning of the century, Slovak socialists have been organized in the Slovak Committee of Hungarian Social Democracy. Therefore, their formal break with the Hungarian social democrats first took place. "The union with the All-Hungarian Social Democratic Party was severed at the beginning of December 1918. The renewed Slovak executive committee convened on December 25, 1918, in Litovský sv. Mikuláš first post-war convention. After the speeches of the members of the executive committee, Emanuel Lehocký, Michal Korman, Ferdinand Benda, Ján Pocisko and Adolf Horváth, E. Lehocký read a declaration at the end, in which the representatives of the Slovak social-democratic workers from all regions of liberated Slovakia, on behalf of the organized Slovak workers, solemnly declared: on the Martin Declaration of October 30, 1918, in Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, unanimously accepted by representatives of all layers of the Slovak nation. As loyal sons of the Slovak nation and at the same time convinced social democrats, we join and at the same time salute the established Czechoslovakia headed by the deserved President Masaryk and promise that we are ready to defend our new hard-won freedom against all its enemies and counterfeiters with all our might. The declaration was accepted by the assembly with a demonstrative singing of the hymn Hey Slovaks, our Slovak language is still alive! After the election of the new executive committee, directly from the meeting, twenty-five Slovak delegates left for the XII. (Šuchová, 1996) The Slovak delegates acted as Czechoslovak social democrats and the goal was to create a unified Czechoslovak social democratic party, which at the same time became the governing political party.

During the duration of the 1st Czechoslovakia, social democracy belonged to the so-called state-forming political parties. In the first ever democratic elections to the National Assembly in 1920, she received the highest number of votes and was

the winner of the election. "In the April parliamentary elections, social democracy in Slovakia received 510,341 votes cast in the Chamber of Deputies (38.1%) and 21 out of 74 social democratic parliamentary mandates. She won 6 mandates for the German and Hungarian social democrats. The results confirmed the elections to the senate, in which 57 social-democratic senators sat, of which 13 were elected in Slovakia. These numbers surprised everyone, including the Social Democrats themselves. They expected less than they got and "they filled only the first places of their candidates with valuable people, the truth regardless of nationality and faith" – states K. Sidor and aptly adds: "It was really an international company (Jews, Czechs, Hungarians) that was in Slovakia caused by an international phenomenon – hunger and poverty of the broad masses." (Šuchová, 1996) Unsettled conditions in the newly formed republic in the immediate post-war period, in which information about the Bolshevik revolutions came immediately from around the world and in a geopolitically changing region, had an impact precisely on the Czechoslovak social democracy, which could become the dominant party in the party system of Czechoslovakia. But it was prevented by its "schism" shortly after the first democratic elections. To the disintegration of social democracy – or the departure of the radical part of the party and the establishment of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) – did not happen immediately but was preceded by a two-year process. Meanwhile, the Slovak part of the ČSSDSR was mired in internal national problems. It turned out that Hungarian socialists prevail within the National Party leadership. At the same time, the relationship of the party to the III. Communist International. Within a few months, a part of the socialists joined the Marxist left, while relatively the largest number of members and organizations joined the emerging communist party from Slovakia. Until 1925, when the next parliamentary elections were held, the party sought internal consolidation, which was helped by the calming of social conditions thanks to the post-war economic boom. However, the Social Democracy did not regain its original political strength and in Slovak conditions, even the Communist Party surpassed it in terms of electoral support. "The parliamentary elections in November 1925 brought a significant weakening of the position of social democracy. The party in Slovakia received only 60,635 votes, which meant a significant weakening of its position compared to 1920. It was in Slovakia that the party suffered the biggest losses, which the leadership explained by the fact that "part of the working class did not realize the value of the acquired conveniences." She succumbed to demagoguery; she was led astray." (Ruman, 1996) As a result, the ČSSDSR won only two deputies in Slovakia. However, the turn of the mid-1920s also belonged to a period of stabilization of the membership base, which was helped by the reorganization of the party's activities in the regions of Slovakia outside Bratislava.

In the second half of the 20s, the ČSSDSR became an opposition political party, which represented an exceptional period when it could devote itself to internal consolidation. She did not return to the government until the end of 1929. "Throughout the entire 1930s, party worked closely with the National Socialist Party in coalition governments, with which she created a favourable climate for the defence of the liberal-democratic organization of Czechoslovakia – together with the castle group,

the parties of the democratic left were its main pillars. This was clearly confirmed by the background and course of the presidential election of E. Beneš in December 1935." (Kuklík, 2005) After the fading of post-war ideas about the progress of the international revolution, the social democrats significantly succeeded in increasing the number of members precisely in the 1930s. There was also the creation of new party structures, when, in addition to district organizations, so-called district committees. In the second half of the 1930s, the process of professionalizing the work of the party leadership began with the establishment of expert commissions that assisted the party in the executive and legislative processes.

Social Democracy was also among the parties with several partner organizations. During the culmination of mass political parties before World War II, other political parties also had related party organizations. In addition to labour unions, however, women's organizations, youth organizations, physical education unions, and the Workers' Academy itself, which was restored after 1989 and focused on the ideological leadership and intellectual background of social democrats, also supported social democracy. "The branches of the Workers' Academy had well-equipped libraries and organized a whole range of cultural events: theatre performances (especially volunteer theatres), film screenings, literary evenings, etc. (...) The fact that in the spring of 1938 it had a total of 84 branches with 11,742 members was proof of the ever-increasing importance of the Workers' Academy." (Kuklík, 2005) Teachers, students, and small property owners also had their own organizations under social democracy, self-employed etc.

The portfolio of social democracy's political activities also included the publication of a party press. It had the task of explaining and promoting the positions of the Social Democrats among party members, voters and the general public. These included Workers' Letters, People's Rights, New Times, Guard of Socialism, Spirit of Time, Worker's Newspaper, Nettles, Women's Newspaper, Young Socialist, Youth, Our Youth, Golden Gate, Gym Movement, Democratic Self-Government and Self-Governing Correspondence, New Freedom, Strike and Attack. The ČSSDSR also published Der Klassenkampf in der Tschechoslowakei and Internationaler Nachrichtendienst in German. (Kuklík, 2005) The titles were published in different periods and with different frequency. Among them were mainly dailies, weeklies and fortnightlies.

Back in 1938, because of the Munich Agreement and the creation of the 2nd Czechoslovakia, the Social Democratic Party merged with the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party to form the National Labor Party. Formally, however, it lasted only until the end of March of the following year, when it was banned by the decision of the government of the newly established Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

During World War II, some of its members became members of the anti-Nazi resistance, and the party was part of the government-in-exile, which, after the demise of pre-war Czechoslovakia, also operated in London with President E. Beneš. After the World War II, social democracy was restored, but among the non-communist parties, the largest pro-communist wing was active in it, led by the first post-war president Zdeněk Fierlinger, who was also an NKVD (Soviet secret service) agent in the 1930s.

Tab. 3 Election results of the ČSSDSR in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies

election year	number of deputies	percentage gain
1920	74	25,7%
1925	28	8,9%
1929	39	13%
1935	38	12,5%

Source: Statistical manuals of the Czechoslovak Republic

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The Republican Party of the Agricultural and Small Peasant People, or agrarian party for short, was one of the key political parties from a national point of view. Thanks to some of its Slovak exponents, it also had a significant presence in the Slovak political environment and among Slovak voters. They mainly included representatives of young nationalists who gained foreign experience especially during their studies, while most of the future agrarians were concentrated around the Prague association Detvan. After the war, they subscribed to the idea of Czechoslovak statehood and did not support the autonomist ideas of the people. Without confessional definition and support for Slovak autonomy, the party in Slovakia therefore achieved relatively weaker election results than in the Czech regions. The emergence and operation of the agrarian party in Slovakia during the entire duration of the 1st Czechoslovakia was natural given the socio-demographic composition of Slovakia, which at that time was a distinctly agrarian country. "While in Great Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands the share of people employed in agriculture fell below 20 percent at the beginning of the 20th century, in Germany to 35 percent and in France to 40 percent, in Central Europe more than half of the population was employed in it." (Hanula, 2011) Almost 60% of the population employed in agriculture were already addressed by the national and people's party with their national and confessional program – the countryside was Slovak and religious. Slovak farmers led by two experienced politicians Pavol Blaho and Milan Hodža created the Slovak Peasants' Union (SRJ) in Martin in 1919. Slovak farmers at that time found political allies at the national level (Republicans) and also in Slovakia (SNS). Already during the renewal of the activities of the SNS in the post-war period, questions were raised about possible cooperation with the agrarians, while the National Republican Peasant Party (NRSR) was formed, but the nationalists renewed the activities of the SNS. Despite mutual contradictions and a certain antagonism, which arose between agrarians and nationalists due to a disagreement about the character and the name of the post-war national party, they decided to jointly advance to the 1920 parliamentary elections with the compromise name Slovak National and Peasant Party (SNRS).

The election results were disappointing for SNRS, which had an impact on the further activities of nationalists and agrarians. After blaming each other for the disappointing election result. In the following year, the SNS resumed its activity as an independent party, and the agrarians looked for possibilities of cooperation with the Czech agrarians (republicans). Milan Hodža was the architect of the cooperation of Czech and Slovak farmers, and the merger into one party became a reality in the middle of 1922. "Officially, it was a merger of four entities. In addition to the RSČSV and SNaRS, a new party was also created by Slovak Homeland, the party of small farmers, on behalf of which Petrovič spoke at the convention, and the Herdsman-Republican Party Subcarpathian, for which Juraj Balog delivered a ceremonial speech. The election of the new executive committee of the united party was also held. 30 seats were reserved for the Czech Republic, 13 for Moravia and 17 for Slovakia." (Hanula, 2011) The division of mandates in the executive committee thus created parity between the Czech and Moravian-Slovak halves. Voting the Czech part of the executive committee was thus not possible from a national point of view. Slovaks and Moravians could, in the best-case scenario, achieve maximum balanced voting with mutual cooperation.

Ideologically, Czechoslovak agrarians defined themselves against not only liberalism and socialism but also against confessional conservatism, although Czech conservatives were looking for a conservative "recipe" for post-war social radicalization. "The principles of political agrarianism were elaborated theoretically in detail in the program. He declared the soil to be the original source of all life, from which all material goods arise. According to the party, the happy and permanent development of the state should only be possible in a "healthy, safe" distribution of the land, which meant its appropriate distribution among the peasants who worked on it. Industry and cities were blamed by the program for destroying the moral and physical strength of the nation and for upsetting its natural social balance. On the contrary, he reflected on the opposite when defining himself against the main political opponents. He declared liberalism and socialism to be movements contrary to the natural order. The opponents on the right side of the spectrum – political clericalism – were also condemned. The program described him as a tool of the Catholic Church to achieve political power. On the contrary, he emphasized the role of religion in the life of a peasant and preached the equality of all faiths. The program was based on the principles of private ownership." (Hanula, 2011) However, the agrarians did not respect the principle of private ownership in the upcoming land reform. They agreed to the nationalization of the land after the nobles and its distribution among the peasants.

After the collapse of the original social democracy, political parties had the opportunity to redistribute power in the national assembly in the 1925 elections. Czechoslovak agrarians became the strongest political party in the entire republic. However, the analysis of the electoral results of the second free parliamentary elections is more complicated. The party could claim the championship thanks to the Slovak votes, because the communists became the winners in the Czech regions. At the same time, the result in Slovakia did not meet the optimistic expectations of the party leaders. "In the elections to the Chamber of Deputies, with a gain

of 248,034 votes, the agrarians gained only less than 6,000 new voters compared to 1920, which is significantly less than in the county elections two years ago. As in the first elections, it was enough to win 12 mandates. The dream of becoming the most successful party, which had already been shaken by the 1923 elections, vanished. In fact, almost twice as many voters gave their vote to the People's Party – 489,111. The agrarians did not manage to defeat the HSĽS in a single electoral region." (Harna, 2005) However, the results must also be seen in the context of the candidacy of the SNS, with which they formed one party in 1920 and which ran independently in the 1925 elections. while I lost completely in the elections with a gain of 35,000 votes. Other ethnic parties such as the Jewish Party and several German political parties received more votes.

After internal political problems between political parties with the formation of a coalition government and the operation of official governments, the so-called lord's coalition, which operated until 1929. It was at the end 1920s that the party programmatically and personally stabilized. It was the support of the government system of Czechoslovakia. "In 1929, the number of votes cast, which reached 1,105,000 (15%), testified to the growth of the agrarian party's preferences, and finally, even in the last parliamentary elections in 1935, a slight increase in the number of its voters was evident. In percentage terms, however, the achieved result of 1,176,000 votes (14.30%) meant a certain loss. Due to specific circumstances, the Sudeten German Party was ahead of the agrarians in the number of votes. Only thanks to recalculations in the next election scrutiny did the agrarian party maintain its lead in the number of parliamentary mandates." (Harna, 2005) Despite the fact that agrarians were part of the so-called castle five and were part of the executive almost throughout the Czechoslovak Republic, they had strained relations with the president of the republic and were part of several corruption scandals, which not even the only Slovak head of the Czechoslovak government, Milan Hodža, had to face at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s because of them temporarily withdraw from active political life.

The agrarian party, as essentially the central force of the political system, was also the most important actor in the epilogue of democratic Czechoslovakia. During the short period of the Second Czechoslovak Republic, the agrarians initiated the creation of an authoritarian political system with the limitation of parliamentarism and, naturally, therefore also a party system. The National Unity Party was established, which was the formal successor of the Agrarian Party. The fate of Czech and Slovak agrarians who joined the path of far-right politics or chose to emigrate to the West was also characteristic of the agrarian movement. The operation of the Republican Party was not renewed after World War II, and the movement was represented only by small political parties due to socio-economic changes after 1989. They later merged with other parties that declared interest in the agricultural sector or disappeared.

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The Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) was the only political party with un-interrupted organizational continuity, except for the period 1938–1945, when its existence was banned by the emerging totalitarian populism. But its activity was interrupted only for a short time and in fact it passed into the so-called illegality. The hundred years of its existence alone represent a broad research base. Already at the time of the first Czechoslovakia, the KSS went through an extremely complicated development full of contradictions, which were indelibly written into its political DNA and foreshadowed its same operation in the future.

From the beginning of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), the KSS was part of the republic-wide communist party until 1992, when it was definitively split into separate Czech and Slovak parties due to the division of Czechoslovakia and the creation of the successor states of the Czech and Slovak Republics.

The emergence of the Communist Party in the 1st Czechoslovakia in 1921 was a natural result of post-war radicalization reflecting political, economic and social realities not only in Central Europe, but also on socio-political developments in Russia, where in 1917 there was a Bolshevik coup d'état and civil war. "The founding of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was the result of the long-term efforts of radical socialists and communists in the years 1918–1921, who created several groups and these finally, under the pressure of the Communist International (e.g. a secret meeting in Dresden in April 1921 etc.) on the so-called at the unifying congress in Prague, held on October 30 – November 2, 1921, it merged into an international party with the official name Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – a section of the Third International. In this sense, the Communist Party differed from other similar groups in the Czechoslovak Republic, which was constituted on a national basis. Another specific feature of the Communist Party was the fact that its activities and policies were directed and directed from abroad, which pursued the idea of spreading the socialist revolution regardless of the real conditions and the specific situation in individual countries. Compared to other communist parties in Central Europe, the KSČ was established late, in the period when the post-war revolutionary wave was waning it was a consequence of national differences between individual communist factions." (Marek, 2005) Dependence on foreign countries and de facto disloyalty to the Czechoslovak state Czechoslovak communists also openly declared at their convention in 1924, when the process of the so-called bolshevization of the party. At its end, in the late 1920s, the Communist Party was organizationally and personnel different than at the time of its founding. Thus, under Soviet supervision, in the first decade of its existence, the Communist Party was established as an anti-systemic political party that did not respect the existence of Czechoslovakia and its democratic establishment.

Slovak communists did not represent a separate national group from an organizational point of view. The KSČ was originally created after a longer integration process following the merger of the four most important Bolshevik-oriented groups, which were to varying degrees under the control of Moscow, or even arose on its initiative – the Group of Czech and Slovak Communists from Soviet Russia, the Czechoslovak Communist Party in Russia – sections of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the Anarcho-Communist Party, former members of the

Czech Progressive Party and Marxists from national social democratic parties in Czechoslovakia.

The position of Slovak communists was very variable from an organizational point of view. "At the time of the founding congress, Slovakia formed the seventh county as a whole, later four regions were constituted (Bratislava, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Košice). All-Slovak authorities existed until 1922, then they were liquidated, but in 1930 they were de facto re-established in connection with the creation of the so-called of the regional (provincial) leadership of the Communist Party of Slovakia in Slovakia, the regions were abolished again, and Slovakia as a whole was rebuilt into one region, 10 regions were managed from the Slovak headquarters, which had their own regional committees and secretaries." (Marek, 2005) The difference of the Communist Party from other political parties was highlighted by also a different organizational structure. According to the instructions of the Communist International (Comintern), the basic organizational structure of the KSČ should be the so-called plant cells in industrial plants and larger enterprises. But the KSČ never fully fulfilled this assumption, which was one of the points of tension between the Russian Czechoslovak communists, who were inclined towards political tactics that were culturally closer to Czechoslovak conditions and not to the ideological ideas of the Comintern.

In the second half of the 1920s, despite the good election results in the parliamentary elections of 1925, the Communist Party was in a serious internal party crisis, which was caused by the stabilization of international but especially political and social conditions in the republic. The initial enthusiasm for revolutionary changes and the hopes placed in them gradually declined in the face of parliamentary routine, although throughout the entire duration of the 1st Czechoslovakia official governments often alternated in the executive branch. Important in the life of the Communist Party at this stage of its development was the 5th congress held in 1929, at which the group centred around Klement Gottwald gained power. "The reaction of the membership base to the convention meant a considerable shock for the party, as it resulted in a mass exodus of party elites and members: on March 27, 1929, 26 deputies and senators of the Communist Party, headed by V. Bolon, B. Jílek and A. Neurath, issued a statement criticizing the results of the 5th. congress and the 'ultra-left' policy of the new leadership, which will necessarily bring the party to ruin." (Marek, 2005) The executive committee, after consulting with the KI, excluded opponents of the new leadership and the decisions of the congress from the party. This had an impact not only on the drop in membership by up to 4/5 of the membership, but naturally also on voter support in the parliamentary elections of 1929. Some of the expelled members who temporarily joined the opposition communist associations finally joined the social democrats. The sectarian character of the internal party life of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic, in which different party factions, which had different attitudes towards the political directives of Moscow, resisted each other, were ultimately a permanent part of the party and ultimately had international political effects not only on it but also on the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak statehood.

Just as the communist party had a specific position in the party system of the 1st Czechoslovakia due to its Moscow background, so can the activity of Czechoslovak communists in Slovakia be considered. "At first glance, the 'Slovak' character of this party can be questioned. Due to the connection to the pro-communist wing of social democracy, most of the "founding" elite at the beginning of the 20th century were not Slovaks, but Czechs, Hungarians or possibly Germans. But the Communist Party quickly took root in Slovakia, and the Slovak component quickly prevailed in the national composition of its leadership. (…) In addition, it is interesting that, in addition to the members of national minorities, a part of the poorest Slovak rural strata also voted for the Communists, which distinguished the Communists from the 'urban' and many distinctly 'workers' social democracy. The loyalty of the communist electorate was relatively high. This is reflected in the elections in 1929, when, after the advent of the sectarian Gottwald leadership promoting a new course of Bolshevization, there was a sharp electoral collapse of the Communists in the Czech lands compared to the elections of 1925. In Slovakia (and Subcarpathian Russia), the electoral collapse of the Communist Party was significantly lower." (Kopeček, 2006) Despite the fact that the KSČ in principle did not hold pro-national political positions, as we can see with other political parties operating in Slovakia, the KSČ had a stable membership base and voter support, which was higher even compared to social democracy.

The Stalinist and sectarian political course of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic, which manifested itself in its internal life as well as towards other political parties and the Czechoslovak Republic, temporarily changed at the beginning of the second half of the 1930s. It was related to the forced departure of Klement Gottwald to Russian emigration, but also to a partial change in the political tactics of the KI, which began to realize the risks associated with the rise to power of Nazism in Germany.

After new personnel conflicts within the party, the Communist Party became a more constructive party in the second half of the 1930s and faced the Nazi threat.

Tab. 4 KSČ election results in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies

election year	number of deputies	percentage gain
1925	41	13,2%
1929	30	10,2%
1935	30	10,3%

Source: Statistical manuals of the Czechoslovak Republic

Summary of the Slovak party subsystem in 1st Czechoslovakia

In addition to Czechoslovak or Slovak political parties, there were also political parties of national minorities – Hungarian, German, Jewish, and Ruthenian parties in Subcarpathian Rus (smaller political formations of Poles also operated in the Czech part of the republic). In the case of the party system in Slovakia, minority parties did not have organizational continuity for two decades and did not gain relevant voter support, which did not exceed more than 3%.

By the end of the 1930s, Slovakia's party system was stabilized and significantly emancipated compared to the Hungarian period. If by the end of the Habsburg Monarchy, none of the Slovak political parties had gained relevant representation in the Hungarian Diet, due to the lack of universal suffrage and the position of the Slovaks as an incomplete nation within Hungary, the year 1918 represented a radical qualitative change.

In the first democratic elections of 1920, Slovak socialists and peoples ran for the National Assembly as part of Czechoslovak candidates, and practically the only ethnically Slovak entity was the coalition of Slovak agrarians and nationalists. In the 1929 elections, which were also held separately in the so-called In the Slovak Land, independent populists and nationalists applied for the votes of Slovak voters, while agrarians, socialists and communists were organizational parts of Czechoslovak parties. Therefore, even in the period of the 1st Czechoslovakia, one cannot talk about the creation of a party system. Not only its full-fledged democratic development, but also the typology is complicated not only by the presence of only two authentically Slovak political parties and two "Czechoslovaks" parties, but also by the activity of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic and, from the 1930s, the Regional Christian Socialist Party (Hungarian National Party and Spiš German Party), which represented anti-system party entities whose political line was influenced by foreign countries.

Given the fact that most of the political parties operating in Slovakia were organizationally integrated "under" the Czechoslovak party and the presence of pro-totalist parties, it can be concluded that the development of the party system in Slovakia "stuck" in the middle of the development from a subsystem to a full-fledged party system and, moreover, it was awaiting a diversion from a competitive to a non-competitive one-party system. And that according to Giovanni Sartori's totalitarian criteria. The one-party totalitarian system as an ideal type describes the actions of the HSĽS-SSNJ (1938–1945) and the KSČ-KSS (1948–1989), despite the fact that formally, within the HSĽS-SSNJ, there were ethnic political parties of Hungarians and Germans living in the territory of the first Slovak Republic and after a year 1948 within the so-called The National Front under the KSČ-KSS also includes the Party of Freedom and the Party of Slovak Revival (within Slovakia).

People's and communist monopartism in Slovakia

It is appropriate to divide the half-century period of totalitarian monopartism into two qualitatively different periods, which differ not only in terms of duration, but also in terms of one of the basic questions of this monograph, which is the attempt to identify the form of the party system in Slovakia from the point of view of its independence – subsystem, regional system, separate system.

The autonomy of Slovakia in the fall of 1938 and the establishment of the Slovak state in 1939 occurred because of international political circumstances. Apart from them, it is likely that the political emancipation of the Slovaks from Czechoslovakia would probably have occurred even without the pressure of Nazi Germany and the subsequent alliance with it through the so-called protection agreement. The Slovak Republic is therefore considered a satellite state of the German Empire, whose interest was the political representation of the people loyal until the end of the war, while it did not attempt to withdraw from this alliance, such as e.g. Hungary or Romania, and showed a high degree of her own agility when it came to racial issues. Considering these circumstances, we therefore believe that the operation of the only totalitarian party of **Hlinka's Slovak People's Party – the Party of Slovak National Unity HSĽS-SSNJ** (the name since October 1938 after the integration or banning of other (Czecho)Slovak political parties), even in the absence of democratic elections, the totalitarian party system of wartime Slovakia can be considered the first full-fledged party system.

Totalitarian parties do not lose their importance even after gaining power in the state. For a totalitarian government, after creating its own political monopoly, its own totalitarian party is still important for maintaining power in the state. This is an inherent part of all totalitarian regimes and is also confirmed by the Slovak experience during the World War II. "In 1942, the Law on the People's Party emphasized even more the connection between the state apparatus and the People's Party, directly prescribed the combination of some party and state functions and dedicated a 'leader' to the head of the party and the state." (Lipták, 2000) They were members and officials of the HSĽS-SSNJ, who were responsible for all political decisions within domestic politics. The interference of the Nazi protectors was manifested only in the case of the appointment of Vojtech Tuka as Prime Minister and Alexander Mach as Minister of the Interior, which were important executive positions, but the pro-Nazi wing they represented within the People's Party was in the minority. The majority Christian-conservative part of the People's Party, as well as various profiteers who joined the party after 1938, ultimately defended the same totalitarian and racist principles.

Although the party system of wartime Slovakia can be characterized as totalitarian, the HSĽS-SSNJ failed to totalize the entire society, also thanks to the pragmatic political style of the Christian-conservative representation of the party, which until 1944 did not consistently fulfil the ideological ideas of national socialism pushed by the group around Tuka and Mach. It would take more time for Slovakia to become a totalitarian state modelled after Nazi Germany. To a certain extent, it is also

possible to debate the possibilities of applying the ideological maxims of National Socialism, given the strong position of the Catholic Church in Slovakia. "However, the creation of an ideological base was necessary for the real transformation of the HSĽS into a totalitarian party. However, what the people's regime was based on was a mentality (according to Linz's definition, author's note) rather than an all-consuming ideology. This is evidenced by a look at the ideological and political foundations of the regime. By 1940, it was possible to identify efforts aimed at creating a regime based on three basic pillars: Christian, corporate-Catholic and national. At least that was the idea of the conservative-Catholic wing of the HSĽS. From the beginning, there were some problems that hindered the building of these pillars." (Kopeček, 2006) As the author himself mentions, this was the beginning of the ideological profiling of the ĽSNS-SSNJ during the Slovak State, which developed relatively quickly. The radical part of the party, led by Vojtech Tuka, was unable to enforce the national-socialist model for the ideology of the state, and the Christian-conservative wing reacted to strengthening its position by linking the party to the state more closely, while organizations led by the radicals were tactfully eliminated.

In the first half of the existence of the first Slovak Republic, there were attempts to totalitarianize society, but this effort of part of the people's movement was consistently unsuccessful. "The conservative-Catholic elite could not and did not want to replace the 'Christian' pillar with Nazi ideology. However, to the dismay of the Vatican and the opposition of the domestic church hierarchy, she attempted a kind of synthesis of Christianity and National Socialism. (…) Also in this respect, the regime has moved from mentality to ideology. However, the resulting "product" was more than strange." (Kopeček, 2006) The authentic repressive nature of the regime became apparent in the middle of its duration. Deportations of Slovak Jews to concentration camps began in March 1942, culminating in October of the same year. They were restored only after the suppression of the Slovak National Uprising at the initiative of the German occupation authorities. The organization of the death transports was organized by members of the HSĽS-SSNJ, just as the party leaders were responsible for accepting the so-called the Jewish code – that is, a set of rules by which Jews were deprived of their basic civil rights. In addition to Jews, the regime was also hostile to Czechs and Roma, against whom repression was created in the form of pressure to evict and internment in labour and concentration camps.

The end of the people's regime and the HSĽS, which was a banned political party after 1945, was mainly decided on the so-called the eastern front. After the defeat of the Axis troops, the regime's legitimacy was in crisis. "Overall, the regime showed a regression from a 'retained' totalitarian regime to a different, much less ideological and mobilizing form. However, the exact typology of the regime from the end of 1942 to August 1944 is basically excluded, but there is no doubt about it (still) authoritarian character. The reason is its rapidly progressing erosion (…) The ethos on which the regime was built in its beginnings has now practically disappeared." (Kopeček, 2006)

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The second part of the period of totalitarian monopartism was the activity of the **Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ)**, which included the **Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS)**. As stated in the previous chapter of the monograph, the Communist Party was founded shortly after the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1921 because of the Bolshevik coup in Russia and the poor post-war social situation in Europe. However, after the demise of the Second Czechoslovak Republic in March 1939, a new political situation arose, to which the Slovak communists responded by founding the KSS in May 1939, while due to its formal ban, it operated underground until 1945.

Nevertheless, during the period of the Slovak State, the KSS tried at various times to preserve the network of its members and sympathizers and to participate in diversionary activities, at least in the form of anti-regime press, establishing contacts with other opposition political groups (the Christmas agreement and the creation of the illegal SNR) up to active armed resistance with other resistance groups during the Slovak National Uprising (SNP) in 1944.

The shape of the future Czechoslovakia and the role of the Communist Party were indicated already in the Košice government program from April 1945. The totalitarian goals of the communists, which they openly proclaimed during the period of the First Czechoslovakia, began to be gradually fulfilled already in 1944 in the environ-ment of political parties. Even at the beginning of the SNP in September 1944, the KSS successfully established social democracy in Slovakia. The KSS thus achieved much earlier what the KSČ achieved with the Czechoslovak social democracy at the national level, and that only after the communist coup d'état in February 1948.

In 1946, the first post-war elections were held. Compared to the last parliamen-tary elections in 1935, agrarians and nationalists no longer took part in them. Due to their ban, part of the activists of these political parties agreed to cooperate within the newly founded Democratic Party (DS). It also won the most votes in Slovakia at a ratio of 62% (14.1% nationally), while the KSČ "only" received 30.4%. But the Communists became the overall winner of the election, because they won 37.3% of the total (KSS won 6.9% from the national point of view). They were already talk-ing about the Czechoslovak path to socialism before the elections, for which they also had broad political options after the elections. But the Communist Party never ceased to be under the political leadership of Moscow, and this was also reflected in the preparation of the coup d'état at the turn of 1947–1948. After the resignation of the so-called democratic ministers (at the same time the democratic commis-sioners in Slovakia were dismissed), the Communist Party of the Czech Republic gained a political monopoly, which was later reflected in the party system. Political parties were integrated into the National Front (NF) and free elections were not held in Czechoslovakia for the next four decades. After ten years, the party system changed again from pluralistic and competitive to mono-party non-competitive.

Until 1990, the KSS was formally a territorial component of the Communist Party headed by its own secretary and congresses, but it was subordinated to the deci-sions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which was not changed by the Czechoslovak Federation Act, which in 1969 changed the state establishment of Czechoslovakia to a federation.

In the conditions of totalitarian monopartism, it was impossible for the party system to function naturally. The restriction of political rights caused the party system to "freeze" and began to function freely again only after 1989, when the activity of some parties from the period of the 1st Czechoslovakia was "revived".

Emancipation of the Slovak party system 1990–1992

The government of the communist totalitarian regime suppressed the natural party plurality, and its collapse also symbolized the emergence of new parties or the effort to revive not directly the organizational continuity but the political ethos of political parties and movements whose names or statutes referred to political parties active in the interwar period of the First Czechoslovakia. Since the last months of 1989, several groups of political activists have been working on the so-called the renewal of the activity of the SNS and the creation of the KDH, which, with its confessional focus, was vying for the political heritage of the People's Party. But the people's party could not be restored in its original form due to its totalitarian and wartime past, and therefore KDH compared its confessional and conservative focus to Western Christian Democratic parties, especially in Germany and Austria. Similarly, the historical brand was the DS referring to the year 1946 and the last democratic elections before 1990. However, unlike the SNS and the KDH, it was fundamentally Czechoslovak and liberal conservative, which in the period of the 1990s, when nationalism was also on the rise in Slovakia, significantly limited the electorate. (Ušiak – Jankovská, 2019) This is also why DS did not win more than 3% after 1990 and since 1998 it mostly ran in coalitions with other political parties and in 2002 it supported SDKÚ and withdrew from the elections, which was its last political step as a relevant political brand. The last historical party brand was the SDSS, which, like the DS, did not belong to the preferential or electorally numerous parties. It obtained a more significant result in 1992, when its leader was Alexander Dubček, and in the 1994 and 1998 elections it was part of wider electoral coalitions. Later, it went through an internal political crisis, which resulted in its merger with the Smer party.

The first half of the 1990s was (not only in Slovakia) marked by a significant rise in nationalism. This brought with it tension between nationalities. In the framework of Slovak parliamentary politics, it was a natural representative of the Slovak national interests of the SNS. "The politicians proclaimed, among other things, their interest in integrating the inhabitants of marginalised Romani communities, reducing the unemployment rate of Romanies, or improving Romani children's access to education. Most of the political parties presented the issue in the politically correct language, but representatives of some political parties – especially the ultranationalist SNS." (Štefančík – Stradiotová, 2022).

To the left of the SDSS, the KSS went through its "social democratization", which first formally separated from the KSČ, and later some of its members decided to act as the SDĽ, thus rejecting the revolutionary Marxist ideology and focusing on

democratic socialism. During the 1990s, it belonged to the relevant medium-sized political parties, while until 1998 it was active in the opposition. Entry SDĽ into the first government of Mikuláš Dzurinda brought, in addition to internal disintegration, the electoral debacle in 2002, after which SDĽ met the same fate as the SDSS – integration with the Smer party.

Parties of national and ethical minorities can also be included in the group of historical political parties. After the World War II, the Jewish and German minorities in Slovakia, for generally known reasons, did not remain in such numbers that would make them politically relevant population groups. However, this criterion was preserved among the Roma and Hungarians, and while the Slovak Roma were never able to unite politically, the difference in opinions and ambitions between the political representation of the Slovak Hungarians managed to be overcome. Since 1994, the most important Hungarian political party in Slovakia has been the Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK) and later Most-Híd, which was organizationally created after internal disagreements in the SMK. However, political disagreements between Slovak Hungarians and participation in the government coalition in 2016–2020 meant that the Hungarian community does not have its own parliamentary representation.

New political parties and movements also operated alongside the "revived" political parties. The first significant political movement that failed to reorganize into a democratic political party was the Public against violence (VPN). It was a grouping of the first "anti-communist" activists and politicians who, on the one hand, negotiated the takeover of power after the KSS after November 1989 and, simultaneously with this movement, ran for the first democratic elections in June 1990. Great internal ideological and opinion heterogeneity, high concentration of intellectuals and significantly different views on political priorities and solutions to problems already in the first months after the 1990 elections caused the movement to fall apart (like revolutionary movements in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe). A large part of its members and activists founded the HZDS in the following year. Apart from the political style of its only leader, Vladimír Mečiar, who was at its head for two decades, this movement represented an ideological hybrid in its ideological essence, which was often affected by the split and departure of members who founded new political entities – 1993 Democratic Union, 1998 Leftist block, 2002 Movement for Democracy etc. Even though from the beginning of the 21st century the movement adopted the name People's Party, it was later part of the Liberal International, which is atypical for parties with this name and was rather the result of political pragmatism.

DÚ was the first Slovak political party, which, by joining the Liberal International, declared itself to be a liberal political orientation, which, however, was complemented by nationalism, also considering that it was founded by some former members of the SNS. The elections in 1994 were the only elections where DÚ ran independently, and in 2000 it split into SDKÚ. Liberalism in the SaS advisory board had a similar character after the departure of some members after 2012, which was noticeable in attitudes and rhetoric during the so-called migration crisis in 2015 and remained a part of the party's opinion even later.

In the following decade, the SDKÚ tried to achieve a similar value mix of conservatism and liberalism to which the DS approached in the 1990s, which succeeded in integrating smaller moderate conservative and liberal entities such as the DS and DÚ and a part of the KDH. Since its foundation in 2000, it has represented a medium-sized political party with electoral support above 15% and in polls during this period it did not fall below 10%. She changed it until the so-called the gorilla case in 2012, which first meant an electoral collapse and then an internal party crisis, after which she did not defend her parliamentary performance in the 2016 elections.

Considering the brief description of the development of the most important actors of the party system after 1989, it can be concluded that in Slovakia among the individual party families mainly socialists, conservatives, nationalists and liberals managed to establish themselves, but with a limitation of organizational continuity. Different political "brands" dominated the individual ideological camps. Among the socialists, it was first the SDĽ and the less relevant SDSS, but after 2002 Smer continuously dominates here. Until 2016, the KDH was a symbol of Slovak confessional conservatism. Twice in a row (2016 and 2020), however, he failed to cross the threshold to enter parliament, and it is not the same even at the time of writing this monograph in the summer of 2023 getting closer to movement the Ordinary people and independent personalities (OĽaNO). Among nationalists, the SNS was considered the main political force, which was also referred to as the oldest Slovak political party in terms of marketing. Frequent internal conflicts after which it split and political scandals regularly sent it out of parliament (2002, 2012, 2020) and before the 2023 elections it has the same problem as the KDH. DS and DÚ can be mentioned as the main Slovak liberal entities. None of them openly considered themselves to be liberal parties, and they are mainly linked to liberals by economic liberalism, while in ethical issues they declared themselves to be cultural conservatism. Since its foundation in 2009, SaS has considered itself a liberal party, whose ranks initially included economic (right-wing) but also social liberals. After 2015, SaS declares liberal positions on ethical issues, but its appeal in this area is less emphatic than in socio-economic issues, with the rejection of economic migrants on the domestic labour market and an ambiguous foreign-political orientation.

Political parties in Slovakia form a separate system since 1990. However, the discussion about its nature as a subsystem or a regional system is not only due to the creation of independent Slovakia in 1993. Thus, the "renewal" of political parties declaring a historical identity or referring to the references of interwar political parties and personalities, and at the same time the profiling of new political parties in a very short the period from November 1989 to June 1992 represented the final stage of the establishment of the Slovak party system.

After 1989, none of the relevant parties represented the regional or territorial part of the Hungarian or Czechoslovak political parties. A symbolic exception was the candidacy of the Czech Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in coalition with the DS in the parliamentary elections of 1992. The problems of its stability and inclination towards moderate or even extreme multi-partism (1998–2006) and, on the other

hand, towards the dominant party system (2012) represent problems related to with the legislative and electoral system and may be the subject of research in another monograph.

Party system of Hungary

The face and program of the political parties of Hungary were closely connected to the specialities of the different political systems or regimes followed by each other. First organised political parties appeared before the 1848 revolution and new constitution. In the age of Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy Hungary had a very special political system, from this emerged the most important speciality, a „parallel party system", because in the focus of political life was the so-called „public law system", the relation to the 1867 Compromise. After the defeat of the World War I the independent and smaller Hungary became an authoritarian, right-wing political system („Horthy era") with a powerful and unchangeable governing party with other oppositional parties. After 1945 in the shadow of sovietisation the democratic parties wanted to stop the communists, but it was unsuccessful, from 1949 Hungary became a Soviet type dictatorship, a one-party system. Some political parties re-established in the years of 1956 revolution, after the soviet occupation until the end of 1980s we cannot speak about political parties. In the years of transition formatted a new party system with three poles: liberalism, conservativism, social democracy. This party system was permanent until the new political changes („second transition") of 2010.

In what follows, we are making an attempt to give an overview of the development of the party system in Hungary from the mid-19th century to the end of the 20th.[2] From several aspects, Hungary displays similarities with the emergence of West European party systems while some fundamental characteristics can be revealed in most historical periods. Our overview is based on the assumption that party structure is closely related to the constitutional structure and political system of the relevant country. The landmarks in Hungary history (1867, 1920, 1945, 1989), which can be defined well chronologically, arose following such historical events which, at the same time, involved the total transformation of political systems, i. e. real changes of regime. Accordingly, the most important conclusion is that in the past, the Hungarian party system usually did not develop in an organic way but only followed the political changes mostly forced on the nation, which made an attempt to adapt to them.

If political parties are primarily regarded to be such organised social groups the purpose of which is to grab power (majority in parliament), it is obvious that the parliamentary system, the room for manoeuvring of the executive power is closely related to what strategy they select to obtain the majority of votes. The changes

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[2] About the theories of the party systems and political structures for this work we have used: Hloušek – Kopeček, 2010; Cabada– Hloušek– Jurek, 2014. The introductions and methodological chapters, the case studies gave a very good frame for the historical viewpoint and comparisons.

of regime rapidly following each other in 19th and 20th century Hungarian history also led to the emergence of political party structures of a totally different character.

The 'glory days' of party formation[3]

"The public opinion as a big question mark asks every party with the voice of con-science: »Party! Tell us: Who are you? What do you want?« And the parties know, they have to answer these questions. And respond all of them on his own way. That is true, only who respond, can count on the appreciation of the invisible power: the public opinion." – wrote Lajos Kossuth, famous Hungarian politician in 1847, his paper „Interpretation of the Hungarian political parties".

As an outstandingly important event in the period of the 1848 revolutions, the monarch practically gave a new constitution to Hungary on 11 April, 1848. The acts declaring the abolition of serfdom, the abolition of noblemen's privileges and civic equality of rights created a new political system for the country, also defining a constitutional parliamentary system and an independent national government. The first political parties were formed as a part of the political process leading to the April acts. First, the **Conservative Party** (Konzervatív Párt) was established in November 1846, setting as its basic objective the preservation of the political system in addition to safeguarding the traditional conservative values. They formulated such economic objectives, mainly striving to improve living standards, which did not affect a social system based on privileges and Hungary's positions within the Habsburg Empire. As a reaction, liberals established the **Opposition Party** (Ellenzéki Párt) in March 1847, the programme of which was completely implemented with the acts of April 1848. The new Parliament and government organised following the change of the political system in 1848 grew out of this Opposition (liberal) Party. A few months was not enough for a new party structure to evolve. From September 1848, a war of independence was going on under the leadership of Lajos Kossuth, in which Hungary fought for the protection of the April acts. The Viennese court suppressed the war of independence with Russian assistance in August 1849 and cancelled the country's constitutional independence. At the time of the civil war, the liberals, supporting the Hungarian government, were not organised into an independent political party (and it was not necessary for political stability, either) but a **Radical Party** (Radical Párt) was established in April 1849, wishing to carry the revolution further, e.g. by proclaiming the republic. On the other hand, the **Peace Party** (Békepárt) comprised those representatives who argued for a compromise with Austria.

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[3] The political programs of the pre-revolution years in details see: Dénes, 2006. For the conservatives e.g.: Fazekas, 1998.

After 1849, the Viennese court introduced authoritarian rule in Hungary (Bach regime). There was no public life up to the end of the 1850s. It was then that Ferenc Deák became a central figure in Hungarian political life. He suggested that instead of another revolution the nation should await the proper moment to enforce its demands. It was then that the slogan expressing Hungarian political ambitions very well was coined: "Nem engedünk a 48-ból!" (We will never give up the results of 1848.) This meant that Hungarians expected the complete restoration of the acts of April 1848.

After the collapse of the authoritarian system, Austrian emperor and King of Hungary, Franz Joseph I of Austria summoned the Hungarian parliament to meet in order to clarify the legal relations between the Habsburg Empire and Hungary. At the time of the session of Parliament, two political parties were established, not along ideological divides but in the strategic issue in what way to achieve the restoration of the 1848 constitution. The **Resolution Party** (Határozati Párt) thought it to be proper to submit a demand to the monarch while the **Petition Party** (Felirati Párt), led by Ferenc Deák, wanted to submit a request to him. Unable to resolve this political dilemma, the leader of the Resolution Party, László Teleki committed suicide before the vote was cast and thus, the Petition Party won but the monarch refused to accept even this and dissolved Parliament.

After lengthy negotiations between Ferenc Deák and the court in Vienna, the period of political uncertainty ended with the Compromise of 1867. The Austro--Hungarian Monarchy, formed as a result, created considerable constitutional independence for Hungary (the country had its own government and parliament), which, however, did not mean the complete restoration of the April acts.

The Age of Dualism (1867–1918)[4]

The Compromise of 1867 between Austria and Hungary resulted a very specific type of constitutionalism and parliamentarism in the Eastern part of the Empire. In the centre of the political life and the organising element of the race between political parties was not founded on political ideas or ideological political programs. The power which established the governmental and oppositional positions was so-called „public law question". It means the relation to the system of the system of the 1867 Compromise. The oppositional parties were not satisfied with the independence of the country and criticized the Compromise, on the other hand the government wanted to keep the system without any change. The opposition wanted to change the system and felt, Ferenc Deák and followers gave up important points of 1848 Constitution. In the circumstances of „public law question" there was no chance to develop a Western type political party system. There were not

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4   About the transformation of the liberalism and the political parties in the era of dualism see: Szabó, 2006. In a shorter form and comparison for the Austrian parties: Fazekas, 2008.

e.g. „clear" liberal or conservative political parties, a lot of conservative politicians supported the liberal governmental policy. We can speak about a special „parallel party system" during the 51 years when Hungary existed as a part of the dual monarchy. There were a lot of political parties and associations which wanted to represent different ideological attitudes or interests of social groups – but they could not take part in parliament life, or partly, because the political life was founded on the special „public law question". For these viewpoints we to count that the Hungarian electoral system was very retrograde in compare with the development with Western countries. Less than 10% of the adult population had right for vote and up to the end of the monarchy there was opened and not secret electoral system in Hungary.

The party which gathered round Ferenc Deák (Deák Party, Deák Párt) was not strong enough to efficiently counter those opposing the „public law question". Between 1867 and 1875 the Hungarian political system was characterized by a lot of instabilities. The new political parties could not make quite and safe political atmosphere in the parliament. Kálmán Tisza, leader of an important oppositional party, **Left Middle** (Balközép) had left behind his oppositional sentiments and joined to the Deák Party. Tisza established a new **Liberal Party** (Szabadelvű Party), the official name was the Hungarian version of „liberal", they called the new party „free-thinker". With fusion of Left Middle and Deák Party in 1875 Tisza managed to realise the kind of stabilization. He recognized the importance of a large governing party which guaranteed the majority in the parliament. Up to 1905 the Liberal Party won all the elections with big majority. Tisza's strong government, which enjoyed the firm support of parliament, made it possible for the numerous acts on modernisation, while it integrated the conservatives who wished to preserve the Compromise unchangeable. The major force of the „public law" opposition, **Independence and 48 Party** (Függetlenségi és 48-as Párt) often stood on the same liberal platform as the government. The strong foundation of the party system on „public law" illustrated by the fact after the defeat of the Liberal Party in 1905 (and ensuing traditional government crisis) Sándor Wekerle became the prime minister of a cabinet dominated by the Independence and 48 Party. Wekerle was a politician of the Liberal Party, and the emperor Francis Joseph I did not allow to format a government which not accept the system of 1867 Compromise. In 1910 István Tisza (son and follower of Kálmán Tisza) reorganized the Liberal Party under the name of **National Labour Party** (Nemzeti Munkapárt). The new name of the party shows alone that after the turning of century conservative, national attitudes became more important, e.g. growing intolerance towards national minorities.

Among the „parallel parties" one of the most important was the foundation of **Social Democratic Party of Hungary** (Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt, MSZDP) in 1890. The Western influence was obvious, the Hungarian workers" movement had very close connections to Austria. The Hungarian social democratic party fight for the general and secret right for voting but did not play a substantial part in parliamentary politics in compare with Austrian party. Due to the specialities of the social structure of the country, parties such **the Independent Socialist Party of Hungary** (Magyarországi Független Szocialista Párt), the objective of which was

organise agricultural workers and peasantry, were accorded at least as much importance as the social democrats.

On the right wing of the political life appeared and became popular for a short period **the National Anti-Semite Party** (Országos Antiszemita Párt), which connected the critique of modernisation and capitalism with the anti-Jewish attitudes of the society, especially the poor nobles and representatives of the losers of the social changes. The (Catholic) **People's Party** ([Katolikus] Néppárt) from 1895 organised the religious society and wanted to represent the ecclesiastical interest in public life. Catholic politics represented a conservative attitude and was loyal to the Habsburgs.

They expressed their allegiance to the system provided by the Compromise, which led to their participation in government between 1906 and 1910. **The Hungarian Christian socialists** followed the Austrian example and formed a political association in 1907.

Approximately from the beginning of the 20th century a group of intellectuals tried to renew the liberalism. The „old" liberal politicians moved to nationalistic directions, because they feared from the national minorities the Hungarian supremacy in the country. **The National Civic Radical Party** (Országos Polgári Radikális Párt) in opposite of this viewpoint wanted to open to the interests of non-Hungarian nationalities and keep the territorial unity of the country with some federative elements. The nationalities (Romans, Slovaks, Serbs etc.) organised special national political parties, but usually boycotted the Hungarian parliament elections.

The years of the World War I resulted some changes in the party system of Hungary. A group of opposition from the Independence and 48 Party in 1916 made a new formation and declared to exit from the war, new democratic reforms etc. The so-called **Károlyi Party** (KárolyiPárt) was formulated with the leadership of Mihály Károlyi, who became the leader of the revolution in the end of October 1918. Károlyi and his followers recognized the anachronistic structure of the monarchy and believed that Western type democratic reforms could save Hungary after a loosed war, e.g. the general and secret suffrage. This could be renewing and modernizing the party system, too. In the Autumn of 1918 the independence from Austria and the declaration of republic did not was enough to keep the territorial loses of Hungary. Károlyi wanted to organise new elections but he did not have time to make it. After the war the extremists became more powerful, among them the **Communist Party of Hungary** (Kommunisták Magyarországi Pártja, KMP) who wanted to follow the example of the Russian Bolsheviks. In 21 March 1919 the communists with a coup d"état got the power and for a few months made the first dictatorship in the 20th century. It was a one-party system, the communists (with the help of unified social democrats) made the forbidding of all political parties and tried to organise an extremist dictatorship by a party state.

The interwar Hungary (1919–1945)

Hungary was a looser country after the World War I. After the two big change of system (democratic republic and the Soviet type council republic) there was a big political crisis. The only one power centre was erected around the person general Miklós Horthy. The interwar Hungary is often characterized as „Horthy system" or „Horthy regime" because Horthy was the head of state, as the governor of the re-established Hungarian Kingdom. Hungary in the Trianon peace treaty (4 June 1920) loosed the two-third of the former territory and several million of the inhabitants included almost three million Hungarians. In the independent but smaller Hungary in 1919–1920 Horthy and his followers made a totally new political system. In Hungary there were a lot of historical debates about the real character of the Horthy system, because it is clear that the system had a lot of democratic, modern elements, but had a very strong autocratic character.[5]

In the Horthy era, Hungary can be described as being under an authoritarian political system, operated under a multi-party parliament and government. At the same time, the rule concerning the right to vote were far from democratic, with State institutions serving the governing conservative party. After a hectic period of stabilization in 1921 the prime minister István Bethlen recognized the necessity of a powerful governing party. He incorporated the two big major winner parties of the 1920 elections: **Christian Nationalist Unity Party** (Keresztény-Nemzeti Egyesülés Pártja) and **National Smallholders Party** (Országos Kisgazdapárt). The new party was called in the public life as **„Unity Party"** („Egységes Párt").[6] The name of the governing party was changed two times until the end in October 1944, but the party system did not. From 1922 to the end of the period, the governing partyhad an overwhelming majority in the parliament, which made it practically impossible to transform the existing political system. Between the two world wars, the history of Hungary was basically determined by its defeat in World War I, the consequent taking over of a considerable part of both the territory and the population of the country by the neighbouring states as well as its new small country status. The governing party and Miklós Horthy kept the power in strong hand, and the political system was totally unchangeable. From 1922 the government set back some elements do the anachronistic election system. (E.g. opened elections in the countryside, higher census etc.) In the party system there were a lot of political parties and formations most of them could get parliamentary mandates, but it was unimaginable that an oppositional party get into governmental position after an election.

The regime had its own official ideology, too, called "Christian nationalism".[7] The starting-point of the forefathers of this ideology was that the liberal legislation of the period before 1918 was to be blamed for the weakening of the "spiritual unity" of the Hungarian nation, which could only be guaranteed by Christianity. Therefore,

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[5]   For the interwar Hungary in general with the face of political system and parties: Macartney, 1961; Rotschild, 1974; Sakmyster, 1994; Fazekas, 2015.
[6]   The formation of the government party and István Bethlen's policy: Batkay, 1985. Romsics, 1995.
[7]   About the "Christian nationalist" ideology: Hanebrink, 2009.

after 1920, church and state worked closely intertwined with the whole of the regime having a "Christian character", which meant nothing else but the assumption of a total sharing of interests between the historical Christian Churches (Roman and Greek Catholic, Protestant, Lutheran) and the Hungarian state. This „Christian nationalism" included a moderate Anti-Semitism from the very beginning. Religiousness and the presence of the churches, and especially, that of the Catholic church, penetrated the whole society and public life – in opposite with the former „liberal" historical period.

Near the governing party grew up different types of political parties. An own group was the different

„Christian" (Christian Socialist etc.) parties, which had very interesting position.[8] The governing party proclaimed himself as a political representor of Christianity, so the other organisations and associations usually supported the governing party in the parliament, sometimes drew up oppositional opinions about the policy of government. The most important „Christian" party was **the Christian Economic and Social Party** (Keresztény Gazdasági és Szociális Párt).

Democratic critiques of the Horthy regime appeared on the site of **the Social Democratic Party of Hungary** (Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt). Liberalism was a marginal phenomenon of the Horthy era. Liberal formation was e.g. National Liberal Party (Nemzeti Szabadelvű Párt), around Károly Rassay's person, but in the parliament, there were only a few representatives in every period of the regime.[9] Right wing and democratic opposition was only the re- established **Independent Smallholders Party** (Független Kisgazdapárt) from 1930. In the years of the World War II a new anti-Fascist cooperation came into being between the smallholders and social democratic party.

The biggest opposition in the Horthy era – especially in the second half of the 1930s – we can find on the extremist right side. There were most than hundred parties or political organisation which were dissatisfied with the level of anti-Semitism, wanted to force the government to do more radical steps in the building of autocracy. In the first decade the most important extremist party was **the Hungarian National Independence** („race-defender") Party (Magyar Nemzeti Függetlenségi [„fajvédő"] Párt). In the wide-spread name of the party the „race" meant Christianity, with no regard to the concrete (Catholic, Calvinist or Lutheran) Churches. After the successes of the Nazi dictatorship of Germany Ferenc Szálasi's political party, **the Arrow Cross Party – Hungarist Movement** (Nyilaskeresztes Párt – Hungarista Mozgalom) became more and more popular. The arrow cross followers wanted to copy the methods of Hitler's Germany and the Nazi Party. (E.g. wearing a uniform, using the symbols etc.) Nevertheless, Szálasi's party declared a lot of „Hungarian" specialities, differences from Nazis, e.g. accentuated the strong Christian roots of his party. When the governor, Miklós Horthy wanted to exit from the World War II and the German alliance on 15 October 1944, his attempt became unsuccessful.

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[8]   For the "Christian" parties in general: Fazekas, 2001. In the 1930's in details: Petrás, 2011.
[9]   For the position of liberalism and liberal parties in the Horthy Era: L. Nagy, 1983.

Germans removed Horthy and gave the power to Szálasi, who build a German type dictatorship on the territory which was not occupied by the Soviet army. It was an extremist one-party system; all the other political parties were persecuted by the arrow cross authorities.

The years of limited democracy (1945–1949)[10]

The Hungarian National Independence Front was founded in early December 1944 with the aim of gathering democratic progressive anti-fascist forces and providing them with the organisational framework necessary for their united action. Its members were the MKP, the SZDP, the FKGP, the NPP – including the PDP until the summer of 1945 – and the free trade unions. The essence of the organisation was that it represented the government coalition and the dominant parliamentary forces as a body, and filled the national committees, the people's courts and the certifying commissions with members on a parity basis. This did not cause any problems during the martial law period, when the Provisional National Assembly was in operation, as the parties agreed on the decisive issues. Later, however, in the light of the election results, they increasingly felt that the organisation was in fact a shackle maintained by the Communist Party.

The largest and most heterogeneous political organisation active in the country was **the Independent Small Peasants**, **Peasants and Citizens Party**, which could be considered a truly large umbrella party. It was able to unite and unite the bourgeois camp, in which the new farmers with a few acres found their values and interests as well as the small town officials, small traders and the big bourgeoisie. The party's strongest group was the centre, which was marked by the names of Ferenc Nagy, Béla Kovács and Béla Varga. The right wing of the party was represented by Dezső Sulyok, Zoltán Pfeiffer and István Vásáry, while the left wing included Lajos Dinnyés, István Dobi and Gyula Ortutay, who later openly sided with the Communists. The party had 900 000 members before the elections to the National Assembly, and its newspaper was called Kis Újság (Little Newspaper).

The Hungarian Communist Party could rely on the votes of the industrial workers and the urban poor in the elections. Its membership grew progressively, reaching 500 000 by the autumn of 1945, and its newspaper was Szabad Nép. The party leadership included leaders who had returned home from exile in Moscow (Mátyás Rákosi, Imre Nagy, Zoltán Vas, József Révai) as well as politicians who had led the illegal movement in Hungary (László Rajk, János Kádár, Antal Apró, Gyula Kállai). **The Social Democratic Party**, which had 400 000 members and published the Népszava, was able to count on the support of a section of the small bureaucratic and petty bourgeois class, in addition to the working class. In the party leadership, left-wingers (Árpád Szakasits, György Marosán, Sándor Rónai) were initially

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[10]   For the history of this period including the history of political parties see: Řádek, 2016.

in a minority compared to politicians who followed the European social democratic tradition (Károly Peyer, Anna Kéthly, Antal Bán). The leaders of **the National Peasant Party**, which was radically left-wing and aimed at the penniless poor peasants, came from the intellectual movement of popular writers (Péter Veres, Imre Kovács, Gyula Illyés, Ferenc Erdei), but the later influential legal philosopher István Bibó was also active in this organisation. The party newspaper was the Szabad Szó.

Of the smaller left-wing parties, **the Civic Democratic Party** and **the Hungarian Radical Party** (MRP) stood in the 1945 parliamentary elections. The newspaper of the PDP, led by Géza Teleki and with 70 000 members, was Világ, edited by Géza Supka. The MRP's leading politicians were Imre Csécsy and Béla Zsolt, and its newspaper was Haladás. The SZEB received two applications for the name Democratic People's Party (DNP), but finally granted permission to István Barankovics, who was considered more left-wing, to set up the DNP, rejecting the request of Count József Pálffy. The party was no longer able to organise, so it did not take part in the elections and encouraged its supporters to support the FKGP, with which it had concluded an electoral agreement. In the new National Assembly, two people represented the DNP, leaving the small farmers' group.

As a dress rehearsal for the elections to the National Assembly, the elections to the Budapest Legislative Assembly were held on 7 October 1945. Just over 90% of those eligible to vote exercised their right to vote. The result was an absolute victory for the Small Peasants' Party, which won 50.54% of the vote. The Workers' United Front, a joint list of the MKP and the Social Democrats, won 42.76%. In October 1945, an inter-party meeting was held with the participation of Marshal Vorosilov, President of the SZEB, to discuss the possibility of the political organisations that had joined the MNFF to run on a single, common list and to allocate seats among themselves by preliminary negotiations. The reception was mixed, but in the end the plan failed. The US and British governments informed Hungarian political leaders that the renunciation of the common list was a necessary condition for diplomatic recognition of their governments.

92.4% of the voters (4 774 653 people) turned out at the elections to the National Assembly on 4 November 1945, of whom 4 730 409 cast a valid vote. The Small Peasants' Party won an absolute majority in the national elections, but the coalition government was maintained under pressure from Voroshilov. In fact, the communists managed to ensure that the winning small farmers were given seven ministries in the government formed on 15 November 1945 under Zoltán Tildy, while the left-wing parties were also given seven (MKP: 3, SZDP: 3, NPP: 1), including a significant one for the MKP, such as the Ministry of the Interior, which had control over the police and the administration.

One of the events of the communists' salami-salad policy to eliminate the small farmers' party, or at least weaken its position, was the expulsion of 20 right-wing MPs from the parliamentary group. Under the leadership of Dezső Sulyok, these politicians organised the Hungarian Freedom Party, which, however, was not granted a licence to operate and thus operated for a long time as a national parliamentary organisation. In November 1946, it started to organise its members, but it did not stand in the 1947 parliamentary elections because its chairman and several

of its leaders had lost their electoral rights. In addition to the governing parties, several parties – calling themselves opposition – competed for votes and seats. The Hungarian Independence Party (MFP), led by Zoltán Pfeiffer, which had split from the FKGP, had a strong political base, but the Democratic People's Party, which had been gradually organised and growing since 1945 and of which István Barankovics was the chairman, could also count on the votes of citizens disillusioned with the coalition.

Among the smaller opposition parties, the Hungarian Radical Party, which included Károly Peyer and a small independent social-democratic group led by Peyer, stood in the elections alongside the parliamentary Civic Democratic Party. Supporters of Christian radicalism and political Catholicism could support the Christian Women's Camp (KNT), which was merged with the Catholic People's Party and led by the nun Margaret Slachta, the first female member of parliament. An interesting role was played by the Independent Hungarian Democratic Party (FMDP), which defined itself as the custodian of the values and traditions of the 1945 small farmers' party. Its chairman, former State Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office István Balogh, campaigned on civic and conservative values, but intended his organisation to play the role of a loyal opposition to the government.

The election was overshadowed by the fact that the Communists, in addition to their vote-cutting tactics through legislative amendments, also committed organised electoral fraud. For those who knew that they would not be in their place of residence on election day, the local electoral commission issued a voters' register extract certifying that they had the right to vote and could do so at any polling station in the country. These 'blue slips', which were used repeatedly, were used to cast 62 000 votes for the MKP in an organised manner, according to a confidential report by Gábor Péter.

The first step to control the opposition was the annulment by the Electoral Court of the 49 seats of the MFP, shortly after which the Minister of the Interior, László Rajk, dissolved the political organisation. This situation also forced the DNP into passivity, and after a long agony, on 4 February 1949, its chairman having fled abroad, it declared its dissolution. Margit Slachta was also forced to emigrate to the West.

The informal political institution of the coalition years is the inter-party meeting. The inter-party meetings were attended by the leaders of the four coalition parties, but in many cases representatives of the PDP and MRP were invited, as well as members of the government and the Bureau of the Provisional National Assembly. On several occasions, the Prime Minister took the initiative to convene them. The purpose of the inter-party meeting was to allow the coalition parties to discuss differences of opinion among themselves in an internal forum, rather than in public through their party press, and to jointly define a common political strategy. In this respect, the period of the Interim National Government was a special one, as the government had no opposition and all members of the government were members of the National Assembly, and thus there was no separation between lawmaking and implementation, in line with the classic principles of power-sharing. To complicate matters, the People's Courts, which had jurisdiction over political

matters, were also organised on a party basis, thus undermining the independence of the judiciary.

There was no debate on fundamental issues in the inter-party meetings. The parties united in the Hungarian National Independence Front agreed on the need to end the state of war, to put an end to fascism, to implement land reform, to build the broadest possible democracy, to rebuild the country and to bring war criminals to justice. Even after the end of the MNFF's position in government and the elections to the National Assembly, there is still a place for coalition talks in political life. Inter-party meetings were held regularly between November 1945 and 15 May 1949, as long as the coalition officially existed.

After lengthy negotiations, a peace treaty was signed between the Hungarian state and the Allied powers, victorious in the Great War, in Paris on 10 February 1947. This was enacted into law by the Hungarian National Assembly on 16 July 1947 (Act XVIII of 1947). Although the mandate of the SZEB had expired, 50,000 Soviet soldiers remained in the country to provide a link between the Soviet Union and the occupied Austria. Hungary then applied for admission to the United Nations, but was refused by the Security Council.

On 5 March 1946, the Left Bloc was formed with the participation of the MKP, the SZDP, the NPP and the trade unions. This marked the final and symbolic polarisation of the coalition. It became clear that the left-wing parties did not agree with the bourgeois values represented by the small farmers' party. They demanded the removal of the right wing of the FKGP, i.e. the elimination of the 'enemies of the people' from politics, but in practice the aim was to divide and dismember the largest governing party as soon as possible, aided by the work of the crypto-communists (Gyula Ortutay, István Dobi) active in the party. Shortly afterwards, the small farmers' leadership, under duress, expelled twenty of its members of the National Assembly from the party and the parliamentary group. On 25 February 1947, the party's general secretary, Béla Kovács, was kidnapped and deported to the Soviet Union. Zoltán Pfeiffer and several of his colleagues resigned from the small farmers' group in reaction to the lack of strong government action and protest against this.

In addition to crushing the Smallholders' Party, the MKP also sought hegemony within the left. On 12 June 1948, the SZDP and the MKP declared a merger at a joint congress attended by 149 Social Democratic delegates and 294 Communist Party delegates. In reality, this meant that communists had absorbed the left wing of the social democrats (after those who had clung to European social democratic traditions had been removed from the organisation). The next day, 13 June 1948, the Hungarian Workers' Party held its first congress, with Árpád Szakasits elected president, Mátyás Rákosi as secretary general and Mihály Farkas, János Kádár and György Marosán as deputies. Similarly, in the spirit of unification, the Democratic Association of Hungarian Women (chairman was Lászlóné Rajk) and the People's Association of Hungarian Youth (chairman was György Nonn) were formed by the merger of the women's and youth organisations of the political parties. The leaders of both organisations were originally members of the Communist Party.

The final stage of the unity movement, after the complete restriction of political pluralism, was the revival of the traditions of the People's Front. On 1 February 1949, **the Hungarian Independence People's Front** was founded. Its President was Mátyás Rákosi, its Vice-Presidents István Dobi and Ferenc Erdei, and its Secretary General László Rajk. Its member organisations were initially the ruling parties, the MDP, the FKGP and the NPP. However, it was soon joined by the alliance of the Civic Democratic Party and the Hungarian Radical Party, which had already merged, and the Independent Hungarian Democratic Party. Thus, political unity – under communist control – was finally ensured. In the 1949 parliamentary elections, only the MFNF list could be voted for, there was no election.

After World War II, the attempt of a democratic restart was fundamentally limited by the fact that the country was under Soviet military occupation. Only such parties were allowed to take part in the first parliamentary election which had not got compromised in the Horthy regime. It was the debut of the allies of the Soviets, the Hungarian Communist Party (Magyar Kommunista Párt, MKP) on the political scene. Besides this party, the Social Democratic Party (Szociáldemokrata Párt, SZDP) and the National Peasant Party (Nemzeti Parasztpárt, NPP) were considered left wing formations. The Independent Smallholders Party (Független Kisgazdapárt, FKGP), which was first an opposition party and then persecuted in the Horthy regime, got 57% of the votes but under Soviet pressure, it had to set up a coalition government together with the left-wing parties. In this government, a dominant role was played by the communists. The result indicated that a large part of the society voted for the Smallholders Party for lack of another alternative. The communists were unable to seize power only with democratic methods as it was shown by the results of the 1947 elections, as well. In this election, several other non-left-wing democratic parties could also take part.

For example, **the Democratic People's Party** (Demokrata Néppárt, DNP), following the patterns of western Christian democrats, got almost 15% of the votes, and the Hungarian Radical Party (Magyar Radikális Párt, MRP), the Christian Women's League (Keresztény Női Tábor, KNT) etc. could also send some representatives to Parliament. The Smallholders Party was put under considerable pressure: the communists achieved that this party, having strong support, broke up into several parts. (This was the communists" notorious "salami-slicing" tactics.) The communists committed electoral fraud on a large scale, eliminating several thousand votes under transparent pretexts, and still had only slightly more support than in 1945.

After this, several democratic politicians left the country and emigrated to the west. The communists" total takeover could not be prevented in the parliamentary elections. Under Soviet pressure, in 1949, the parties took part in the parliamentary elections together in an umbrella organisation named Hungarian Independence People's Front. In this, the remaining parties only played a minor role besides the communists. In the period of dictatorship that followed, the non-communist parties crumbled and their leaders who had not left Hungary were persecuted.

From the communist one-party system to the change of the political system

As early as in June 1948, the Social Democratic Party was forced to unite with the Hungarian Communist Party. Thus, a Soviet type state party was established under the name Hungarian Working People's Party (Magyar DolgozókPártja, MDP). In August 1949, a Stalinist type dictatorship was introduced in Hungary under the leadership of general secretary Mátyás Rákosi. („Stalin's best Hungarian follower.") During the hardest years of Stalinist dictatorship, there was no pluralism whatsoever in the country. After Stalin's death, a reformist group was formed around communist Imre Nagy, which could temporarily take steps towards some kind of "humanised socialism".

On 23 October 1956, a revolution broke out in Hungary against communist dictatorship. After the victory of the revolution, the party-state system collapsed, and the government set up under reform communist Imre Nagy's leadership declared the independence of the country, leaving the Soviet bloc and establishing a new, democratic political system. The revolution was suppressed by Soviet military invasion on 4 November. This was followed by the restoration of communist dictatorship, led by János Kádár. The bare 12 days of the revolution was not enough to establish a new political system so one can only guess exactly what kind of political system could have been formed in the country leaving the Soviet bloc. (It is for certain that the dominant personalities of the revolution had a vision of a special Hungarian democracy and did not intend to return to the system of pre-war Hungary.) It is important, however, that during those few days of freedom, there started the process of forming a new party structure, which primarily involved the restoration of the democratic parties that had existed after 1945. The Independent Smallholders Party, the Social Democratic Party and the National Peasant Party were re-established (the latter adopted the name Petőfi Party in the spirit of a new beginning) but in the beginning, the democratic change of the political system was also accepted by the communist party. On 1 November 1956, they announced reestablishment and a total break with dictatorship under the name **Hungarian Socialist Workers Party** (Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt, MSZMP) with János Kádár's leadership (At that time, Kádár said: "We are going to be a small but honest party." Later, neither half of this sentence proved to be true.) However, in this short period, the determining institutions of the revolution were not the political parties, but the self-government and interest groups formed from workers: workers" councils and national committees. Although the party leaders of the period between 1945 and 1949 reappeared in political life, there was simply no time to reorganise the parties and establish a new, democratic political system.

Following the suppression of the revolution, Kádár restored the one-party system and many of the leaders of the democratic parties emigrated to the west for good. After this, no attempt to establish new parties can be mentioned until the change of the political system. However, it is important to note that keeping the framework of communist dictatorship, Kádár created a special type of socialism in Hungary.

In order to avoid the breakout of another revolution, he formed an alliance with the society, and considerably raised living standards with artificial methods. The system of „Goulash Communism" had repercussions on the Hungarian Socialist Workers" Party, as well. The composition of the party, having as many as about 800,000 members in the 1980s, was extremely heterogeneous. Platforms were formed within the party, particularly there was a dividing line between „reformist" communists and "old" communists, rejecting any reforms. The "reform circles" formed from the former had a significant role in the erosion of the regime and a peaceful transition to democracy. In 1988, they achieved that Kádár resigned, and a reformist government was set up under the leadership of Prime Minister Miklós Németh. Unlike other East European regimes, in Hungary, there were no revolutionary events leading to the change of the political system and the collapse of the party state.

There was a long transformation process in which the reformists of the communist party also took part. In the years preceding the change of the political system, democratic political organisations were already formed or re- established. In the beginning, they did not even intend to participate in the process of democratic restructuring as parties but rather as movements or associations. The Hungarian Democratic Forum (Magyar Demokrata Fórum, MDF) was established in September 1987 while the Network of Free Initiatives (Szabad Kezdeményezések Hálózata, SZKH) was formed in March 1988. From them, the largest political parties of the transformation process: the conservative **Hungarian Democratic Forum** and the liberal **Alliance of Free Democrats** (Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége, SZDSZ) arose. At the beginning of 1989, well before the adoption of the democratic constitution and the first elections, Hungary practically became a country with a multi-party political system again. (For example, there were already formal meetings between the leaders of the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Hungarian Socialist Workers" Party.)

During 1988 and 1989, basically two patterns of party formation could be seen: the re-establishment of the old, "historical" parties and the emergence of completely new democratic parties, born under the political conditions of the late 1980s. As regards the former, the re-establishment of the Independent Smallholders Party (Független Kisgazdapárt, FKGP), the Christian Democratic People's Party (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt, KDNP) and the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (Magyar Szociáldemokrata Párt, MSZDP) were important events at the end of 1988 and the beginning of 1989. These parties had massive historical traditions and it was precisely these traditions that represented serious difficulty in the way of the formulation of political programmes that could have proven useful in the 1990s. It is no coincidence that in these parties, there were divisions and breaches after the first free elections. The Social Democratic Party was unable to get into Parliament. Its place was occupied by the Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Párt, MSZP), having been formed from the state party and monopolising the representation of social democratic values for long. Among the new parties, besides MDF and SZDSZ, **the Alliance of Young Democrats** (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége,

FIDESZ), established in March 1988 as a political organisation of the young generation, played an important role from the beginning.[11]

The amendment of the constitution providing the base for the change of the political system in Hungary was elaborated in the negotiations between the old and new democratic parties and the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party in autumn 1989. A new, democratic constitution was passed, the first free elections were scheduled for the spring of 1990, and on 23 October 1989 (on the anniversary of the revolution in 1956), the republic was proclaimed. It is characteristic of the Hungarian conditions that the powerful party of state socialism was not dissolved after the change of the political system but already as part of the transformation process. The Hungarian Socialist Workers" Party declared its dissolution on 7 October, 1989. The Hungarian Socialist Party, which was established subsequently, came into being mainly with a social democratic programme as a party committed to democracy. The "old" communists established a left-wing extremist party with the later name Workers" Party (Munkáspárt) and were the only political actors who rejected the change of the political system.

The structure of the modern Hungarian party system (1989–2010)

The biggest change in Hungarian political life came about in 2010 involving a total transformation of the party system. One can even speak about a kind of "second transformation of the political system" with regard to the fact that the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz, in association with the Christian democrats: Fidesz-KDNP), led by Viktor Orbán, won the election with extraordinary support and passed a new constitution, which led to the complete change of both the 1989 constitution and the political system of the "third republic".[12]

After 1989, the basis of the Hungarian party system was determined by the struggle of three political poles, having approximately the same weight: 1. Right-wing – conservative pole: here belonged the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP). 2. Left-wing – social democratic pole: Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP). 3. Liberal pole: Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz). The structure and balance of these three poles basically remained intact until 2010 in spite of the fact that considerable rearrangements took place. Among these, the most important was the change of profile of Fidesz. After 1994, the party led by Viktor Orbán clearly gave up its liberal programme.

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[11] The years of the transition was represented in detail e.g.: Stumpf, 1995. Bába, 2011.
[12] About the party systems of the post-Communist countries we have used for this work: Spirova, 2007. The cleavages and transformation of the Hungarian party system after the transition see e.g.: Tóka, 1997; Márkus, 1998.

It not only went over to the right wing having national, Christian and conservative slogans but became its leading force parallel with MDF losing popularity and the Smallholder and Christian Democratic Parties hit by internal crises and being able to preserve their political weight only temporarily, with the help of Fidesz. In the 2000s, from among the right-wing initiatives independent from Fidesz, only MDF could achieve – short-lived – success in the 2006 elections.

Further general characteristics of the party system between 1990 and 2010:

1. Although there were several cases of the replacement of the governing co-alitions in office in the elections (1994, 1998, 2002), the political system remained unchanged. The branches of power operated in a balanced way, and the Constitutional Court supervised legal order firmly. In other words, the rearrangements between the parties, the shifts in some party profiles and their break-ups or losses of support had no repercussions on the political system. The democratic state preserved its stability and the political crises could not make it stagger either, for example, no by- elections had to be held.

2. The balanced character of the political system was reinforced by the fact that after the elections, every government was set up in the form of coalitions (this was so even in 1994, when the Hungarian Socialist Party could have formed a government alone). In other words, no party was able to dominate the whole of the political system alone.

3. The extremist political parties could not gain considerable support. The extreme left-wing party (communists) never got enough votes to get into Parliament. The Workers" Party was continuously present in public life and took part in every election with decreasing popularity. (In 1994, it was the Hungarian Socialist Party that profited from the upsurge of the nostalgia for the Kádár regime.) From among the extremist right-wing formations, the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja, MIÉP), formed by politicians leaving MDF, got into Parliament for a cycle, but overall, extremists remained marginal all through the period.

4. In addition to the large parties of the above three poles, smaller political parties, for example "occupation parties" (e.g. Agrarian Alliance, Agrárszövetség), regional parties (e.g. For Somogy County Association, Somogyért Egyesület) etc. were continuously formed. Although they were able to get a few mandates but any attempts outside the large parties remained superficial phenomena in the period with the new formations being unable to exert an influence on the party system.

What kind of party system is or will be in Hungary? Will what has been the case so far change, or will the dominance of the governing party and the fragmentation of the opposition continue? In the following section, I will take an unconventional approach when discussing the governing party and the opposition, but will approach their roles from the perspective of the party system. This is rarely examined because the party system is a much more abstract concept than party X or Y. But

it does exist. This is also indicated by the fact that it has changed many times over the past thirty years, even if it is difficult to name it precisely.

In 1990, a multi-party system was created, which first evolved into a two-bloc system, before becoming the dominant party system after 2010. In other words, we have had three distinct types of party system over the last 30 years. The question is whether the municipal elections on 13 October 2019 will have an impact that could change the structure of the party system again, for example by creating a two-bloc system again, or even a two-party system that has not yet existed.

In the following section, I would like to briefly review the best known study of the party system, namely Csaba Tóth's 2001 paper.[13] In it, the author attempts a dynamic analysis of the first ten years of the party system. However, since he does not go further, nor do others after him, it will be useful to expose the problematic itself. In the second part, I will examine the impact of the first big 'party explosion', the MSZP's 54% electoral victory in 1994, on the further development of the party system. In the third part, I will look at how, after the failure to build a balanced two-party system, the demand for a dominant party emerged after Viktor Orbán's speech in Budapest in 2009 proclaiming a central force field. In the fourth part, I outline the challenge to the dominant party system on 13 October and suggest that this offers a chance for further development of a two-party system. Finally, I examine the whole evolution of the party system after the regime change in a historical comparison and draw conclusions on this basis.

Csaba Tóth, who wrote a pioneering study on the Hungarian party system in 2000, notes that although many Hungarian political scientists wrote about Hungarian parties and the party system between 1990 and 2000, "most of the works on the party system do not reveal the direction of the transformation of the party system, nor do they make the process of this change tangible". I very much agree with him, and even with his statement that 'there is no work in the literature that reflects the direction of the party system's ten-year development. This may, of course, be because there is no such direction at all, i.e. because the party system – whether as a result of the decisions of political actors or as a consequence of electoral and parliamentary mathematics – changes 'ad hoc' and does not follow any immanent trend'. The author was right: ten years after the change of regime, something really had to be said about the direction of development and change, since the party system around 2000 was nothing like it was around 1990, when it was first set up. I find it appropriate that the author used the term concentration to describe the party system. By this, Tóth wanted to express the fact that, on the one hand, the number of parties has decreased and, on the other hand, a kind of two-block system has emerged. He was right, but unfortunately, neither he nor anyone else continued to study the party system. And he should have done so, because (as we shall see) the concentration was far from over at the end of the 1990s, and there was further concentration with great turbulence later on.

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[13]   Tóth 2001.

The great merit of Csaba Tóth's thesis is that he considers the party system as an independent entity and draws attention to the fact that it is never static, but dynamically changing. Such dynamics and change is more than the change of the individual parties that make up the party system; the party system as a whole is not the sum of the movements of the individual parties, but a pattern. The really interesting question (because it is not only related to the parties, but also to other factors) is why and how this pattern changes.

If we look at the change in the pattern, we see that the party system of the start has undergone a number of changes over time. Csaba Tóth may have registered the first big change, but not the subsequent ones. That is why my study follows the subsequent movements throughout, and also draws attention to different circumstances than Tóth's regarding the early movements.

The period 1990–1994 was one of instability in transition and did not create a model party system for the long term. Perhaps unexpectedly, the Hungarian party system took shape in a longer-term model in 1994, when the MSZP returned to government with a large parliamentary majority. Moreover, together with the SZDSZ, it achieved a much larger majority than two-thirds. Against this 72% government coalition, there was only a 28% opposition.

Such a change was obviously a surprise, even though it had been known since 1993 that the MSZP's popularity was growing rapidly. It is worth looking, however, at the reflexes triggered by this kind of 'power shift', i.e. at the ideas that were formulated about how to run a party system that was now asymmetrical. In this situation, there were politicians who became reflective and, thinking about the evolution of the party system, raised the possibility of a two-party system.

One of these politicians was János Kis, who had also made a significant contribution as a theoretician. In an interview for the 18 August 1994 issue of Beszélő, he outlines two possible party-political scenarios. The first is still a tripartite political space, in which the SZDSZ can expect to enjoy a centre-party support (around 20 per cent). The second is that the political space will become bipartisan in the future. But this could also happen in two ways. Either the MSZP will be replaced by the MDF and the KDNP, or the SZDSZ will become the MSZP's replacement party. „If you ask me," Kis answers a question, „what would be preferable in a bipolar system, the SZDSZ or the Christian-national parties playing a key role, I would say that today the SZDSZ is the party that most strongly represents the civilisation of Hungarian society, and therefore, as a direct extension of the current situation, I would prefer us to be the centre-right party in a bipolar system".

The idea of a two-party or two-bloc system was also raised by Viktor Orbán in an interview in 1995, which, as far as I know, is not published in Hungarian. In this interview, as the chairman of Fidesz, he talks about the reorganisation of Hungarian politics after 1994, and concludes that two strong poles should emerge, one dominated by the MSZP and the other by Fidesz. What the two ideas have in common is that both are responding to a major party challenge, but neither of them expects the major party to remain in place and a dominant party system to replace the multi-party system.

It is clear that there is nowhere near the concentration in 1998 as there is after 2010 (if the term can be applied to this newer situation), but it is clear from the 1998 election results and the decline in the number of parties that the multi-party system that emerged during the transition is about to change.

The Hungarian party system has been in a dynamic state of change since the mid-1990s, and remained so after the publication of Csaba Tóth's study.

In the 2000s, however, a new type of concentration emerges, which Csaba Tóth has not yet been able to interpret. He saw the concentration of the party system, as we have seen, in the reduction of the number of relevant parties and the emergence of a two-block system instead of a multi-party system. In this sense, however – the reduction in the number of parties – concentration did not continue in the decade 2000. On the contrary, by the end of the decade, the two-bloc concentration is replaced by a dominant-party concentration. What is leading to this? Why is there a concentration that now permanently elevates one party while 'relegating' the others?

To answer this question, we need to look at the cycles of government. In 2006, there is a concentration of power that is characterised by an increase in the number of 'single-party' government cycles. The MSZP-SZDSZ duo will win the 2006 elections, after 2002. This would not be a problem in a well-established democracy, as developed Western European countries often produce governments with several terms of office. In Hungary, however, this was a hitherto unknown option. In 2006, the MSZP is the first party able to break this trend, and thus to achieve a concentration of power in which those in government can permanently (even for an unforeseeable period) usurp government power. The possibility has therefore arisen that the new variant of the party system will institutionalise not short but long government cycles, and the balanced MSZP-Fidesz relationship that prevailed until then will shift in favour of the former, while the latter will be subordinated.

An analysis of the process in terms of the logic of the cycle thus shows that in Hungary it was not Fidesz (as one might superficially think) but MSZP that carried out a new concentration for the first time, namely by increasing the length of the government term. If we do not see this as the most significant development in recent Hungarian party history, we will not understand the right-wing reaction of the second half of the 2000s, including everything that will happen after 2010. After all, after the MSZP changed the two-bloc system in 2006, it challenged the right. From then on, the dynamics of the party system will depend on whether and how the right can respond to this challenge.

We now know that the answer was born in 2009, in Kötcse. It was there that Viktor Orbán first spoke of the central power as an adequate counter to left-wing governance. It is well known that in that year it was already quite obvious (for many reasons) that Fidesz would win the 2010 elections, so this speech is a clear projection of how Fidesz will govern, and on what ideological premises the government will be based. I would like to highlight only one element of the speech (more closely related to our topic), and that is that Fidesz, once in government, will not have to govern against it. Counter-governance would perpetuate (but in a reversed role) the dual power structure, i.e. the two-tier system that existed until 2009, and which

Orbán has a very low opinion of. He is wrong because the dual structure leads to „unproductive" value disputes.

In contrast, in the centralised force field (the party president believes) there is an opportunity to transcend value disputes and „govern national affairs". Central power thus means an end to the constant (and, in his view, unproductive) party political struggle: instead of 'constant struggle', there is 'constant government'. When „there is a realistic possibility that the next fifteen to twenty years of Hungarian politics will not be determined by a dual power field….but by the emergence of a major governing party, a central political power field, which will be able to articulate national issues – and not in a constant debate, but by representing them in its own natural way".

And so it did. In 2010 Fidesz won the election with a two-thirds majority. This meant that the MSZP's chances of becoming the dominant party were over for good, and it also meant that the balanced party system that had operated from the 1990s to the mid-2000s was tipped in Fidesz's favour. In 2018, it seemed clear that Fidesz was the undisputed governing party in Hungarian politics. But the local elections of 13 October 2019 gave the party contest a new dynamic.

The period 2010–2019 can be described as rather static in the sense that there were no spectacular changes in the nature of the party system.

First, there has been no increase or decrease in the number of parties. Second, there has been no change in the sense that a strong governing party is accompanied by a fragmented and ungovernable opposition composed of many elements.

In the past decade, the Prime Minister's vision, expressed in 2009, of Hungarian party politics without value disputes and with a centralised power structure, seems to have been realised.

During this decade, the parties in opposition have consistently failed. On the one hand, they have failed to establish an orderly relationship with each other, to clarify internal hierarchies and, as a result, to make the opposition effective. On the other hand, the opposition en bloc failed to become effective against the governing coalition. The lost elections in 2010 could be explained by the functioning of the Gyurcsány and Bajnai governments and their unpopularity. In 2014 and 2018, however, the opposition would have had a chance to improve its position and even take over the government. However, as the aforementioned internal strife prevented unity of action, the opposition was effectively left without a chance against Fidesz.

On 13 October 2019, however, there was an unexpected development: opposition parties achieved excellent results in several large cities and in Budapest. The reason for this is essentially the same: the opposition fragmentation that was constantly talked about (and actually existed) between 2010 and 2019 has been countered by a real unity. This can be particularly appreciated if we look back at the period 2010–2015, when opposition parties became (strangely enough) quite unpopular among the broader electorate with oppositional sentiments. Today, perhaps few people remember: this is the period when various self-organising groups in 'civil society' were presenting an alternative to the opposition parties and seeking to take over the role of the ailing opposition parties. Perhaps the plaid-shirted teachers' movement was the most representative civil initiative of this period, and

in this period civil movements did not even consider opposition parties very desirable at their events. All this is important to know if we want to make sense of the opposition victory on 13 October 2019. This not only required the opposition parties to unite and make it appear that they were worthy opponents of the ruling party, but also to make civil society believe once again that they, and not the civil movements, would be the challengers to the Orbán regime.

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But we must remember one more factor, and this time it is very much a party political one. Namely, that after 2014 Jobbik gradually abandoned its former national radicalism and essentially repositioned itself. Given the fact that Jobbik had become the strongest opposition party by the mid-2010s, it was not indifferent whether it wanted to capitalise on this popularity by 'supporting the government from outside' or by advocating a radical opposition policy. It is clear that the party leadership opted for the latter, completing the tripartite (left, liberal, right) opposition palette.

In response to Fidesz's third (2018) two-thirds majority, this „new" opposition (now enlarged to include Jobbik) is not only acting in unity, but also creating a new strategy compared to the previous one, which we can call political resistance. In order to create this, it needs to create an image of the whole system as a system run by Fidesz that is no longer a democracy. And if it is not a democracy, and especially not a liberal democracy, then it is no longer possible to exercise the established opposition roles, and there is no longer any room for not only opposition to the government, but almost no room for opposition to the system.

The first organised action of the entire Hungarian opposition in the Hungarian Parliament on 12 December 2018, protesting against the so-called „slave law", shows how conscious this strategy is. Those who witnessed the event will remember that the opposition essentially paralysed the Parliament when its members surrounded the President's rostrum and did not allow the President to speak. In the weeks that followed, there were major street demonstrations and other actions, all intended to demonstrate that the opposition no longer seeks to present an alternative within the institution of parliamentarianism, but is shifting the centre of its politics to the streets, street actions and political performances broadcast on the Internet.

It is also important to note that this new 'street politics' and the 'street politics' of previous years are not the same. Whereas before 'street politics' meant mobilising a civil society with a very uncertain contour, and the philosophy behind it was that civil society was dissatisfied not only with the government but also with the opposition, from the end of 2018 the initiative is clearly in the hands of the opposition parties, with which various groups of civil society can at most join. The essence of the change is that party politics has regained its identity, which also means a new role for the opposition. The actors of the Hungarian opposition, as leaders of political and social resistance, have also taken on the task of developing a new model of oppositional coalition. And this led to success in the local elections of October 2019.

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But it is not just about the success of the opposition. The question is how 13 October will affect the party system and whether it will be able to reshape it. As I have shown: since 2010, Hungary has had a dominant party system, which – and this is important – is not only the result of Fidesz's quest for power, but also of its response to the power structure that emerged in 2006 (the extended government term of the MSZP-SZDSZ government). The political achievement of Fidesz is that its response to the challenge is also the creation of a new party system. Will there be a new party system after October 2019? And what are the arguments against a fragmented opposition and in favour of a two-party system?

As the above shows, the Hungarian party system has come a long way in the last thirty years. It has had a multiparty system, a two-bloc system, a dominant party system, and now the two-bloc system seems to be reviving.

But how can all this become a two-party system in the long term? And in general: would it be good for Hungarian politics to have a two-party system?

We can answer these questions in a contemporary and a historical reading.

For the contemporary answer, it is worth briefly returning to earlier thought experiments on the two-party system. Let us see again what János Kis and Viktor Orbán had to say on the subject. János Kis, the main ideologue of the SZDSZ in the mid-1990s, argued that the SZDSZ could be the future successor party to the MSZP, given the circumstances of the time. This option did not materialise then, and today it is irredeemable. His little logic was that if the party system became unbalanced and a large party emerged, its power and influence could only be counterbalanced by a party of its size. According to Kis, this could have been the SZDSZ, but the SZDSZ's entry into the MSZP as a minor coalition party cut it off.

And now let's look a little more closely at how Viktor Orbán expressed his views on this issue, also in the mid-1990s. He also argued for the beneficial effects of the two-party system in an interview he gave in 1995–1996 to the president of his party family at the time, the Liberal International, the Dutchman Frits Bolkenstein, which has not been published in Hungary. The interview was published in Bolkenstein's book in 1998. Orbán says of the Hungarian party system: 'Our parliament is unstable. There is a constant swing between the left and the right. If we want to put an end to this, we have to develop a two-party system with a centre-left and a centre-right party. Fidesz's task is not only to win more seats in parliament, but also to contribute to a more stable party system. We would like to create a kind of centre-right, liberal-conservative bloc... We are seeking long-term cooperation with the political forces. The free democrats and the socialist party should form an alliance and create a stable centre-left party. A centre-left party is needed to prevent the communists from gaining too much ground. And the task of the centre-right is to contain the extreme right".

These sentences are extremely interesting in several respects. Firstly, because they coincide with what János Kis said: we need a party of alternation, or in other words a two-party system. Secondly, because Kis and Orbán see the two-party system very differently: Kis wants to separate the SZDSZ from the MSZP, and Orbán wants to unite them. Third, because Orbán has an important content element: stabilisation. That is, that a multi-party system creates unstable situations, while

a two-party system creates stability. Finally, Mr Orbán's statement is also interesting because we know from later events that the processes took a completely different direction, and in 2009, in Kötcsé, the aim was no longer to build a two-party system, but the opposite, to build a dominant-party system.

The interviews of the leaders of the two liberal parties of the time were thus consistent in that Kis and Orbán in 1995–1996 did not rule out the possibility of forming a large opposition party to counterbalance the MSZP's dominance. But politics took a different turn, and as the SZDSZ became a permanent complementary party to the MSZP, it became clear that only Fidesz would be able to create such an opposition party in the future. However, it also became clear before the 2010 elections that the party system would become even more unbalanced than before. The reason for this is not only that Fidesz has created a central force, but also that the left-liberal space has been emptied. On the one hand, the SZDSZ has disappeared and on the other, the MSZP has split. The possibility of a two-party system has been off the agenda for a long time and, as we have seen, it will only be possible to talk about it again after October 2019.

But as I indicated, there is a historical dimension to the issue of the two-party system. Hungary has never managed to create such a constellation. There are many reasons for this, including undemocratic electoral systems or even electoral corruption. But we should also not forget that the Hungarian party system between 1867 and 1945 has consistently produced massive dominant-party systems. János Kis and Orbán in the mid-1990s don't talk about this historical trend at all – they just instinctively realise that if there is a big party, it should be counterbalanced. But how do you counteract something that is more than an accidental derailment, and which seems to be the 'normal' arrangement of Hungarian party politics?

So, in conclusion, if a large opposition party is formed alongside Fidesz between 2020 and 2022 (or after 2022), it will not only be a response to the current imbalance, but also to a longer historical trend. But of course, we can again raise the issue of stability mentioned above. In the history of Hungarian politics, for decades, the big dominant parties have been stable, and it was a common perception that if they did not govern, there would be instability. But there is no historical experience that shows what happens when the opposition is not fragmented but organised into one party. This has never been done before, which is why it has not been possible to test what happens when the dominant party is not the one that stabilises.

Today, therefore, we can come to the following conclusion. The „big governing party – fragmented opposition" formula is changing. This change is a far cry from Viktor Orbán's 2009 speech in Budapest, but not far from Viktor Orbán's 1995–1996 interview, and not far from János Kis's 1994 opinion. If anything, a concentration of opposition can bring real innovation to the system. But the way to do this is to overcome the opposition's internal dissent and organisational resistance.

A two-party system could not only be a means of redressing the imbalances of the post-1990 period, but also a counter to a century-long trend of party development. As I see it, the opposition is only halfway there if it does not integrate itself organisationally.

Tab. 5 Political parties in Hungary between the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 and the Ausgleich (1867)

English name	Hungarian name	Active	Ideology
Address Party	*Felirati párt*	(1861–1865)	Ideology of the ‚48ers National liberalism
Resolution Party	*Határozati párt*	(1861)	Ideology of the ‚49ers Radical liberalism
Left Centre	*Balközép*	(1865–1875)	Ideology of the ‚48ers (before the Ausgleich (1867)) Ideology of the ‚49ers (after the Ausgleich (1867))

Tab. 6 Political parties in Hungary during the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867–1918)

English name	Hungarian name	Active	Ideology
Principled Left Centre	*Elvhű Balközép*	(1873–1874)	‚48 ideology
Far-Left	*Szélsőbal*	(1861–1874)	‚49 ideology (before the Ausgleich (1867)) ‚67 ideology (after the Ausgleich (1867)))
Deák Party	*Deák Párt*	(1865–1875)	‚48 ideology (before the Ausgleich (1867)) ‚67 ideology (after the Ausgleich (1867))
Liberal Party	*Liberális Párt /* *Szabadelvű Párt*	(1875–1906)	classical liberalism ‚67 ideology
Independence Party	*Függetlenségi Párt*	(1874–1884)	‚48 ideology

English name	Hungarian name	Active	Ideology
Independence Party of 1848	*Negyvennyolcas Függetlenségi Párt*	(1874–1884)	,48 ideology
National Antisemitic Party	*Országos Antiszemita Párt*	(1883–1892)	Antisemitism
Party of Independence and ,48	*Függetlenségi és 48-as Párt*	(1884–1945)	Classical liberalism ,48 ideology
MSZDP	*Magyar Szociáldemokrata Párt*	(1890–?)	Social democracy
Catholic People's Party	*Katolikus Néppárt*	(1894–1918)	Christian socialism
National Constitution Party	*Országos Alkotmánypárt*	(1905–1918)	Classical liberalism ,67 ideology
National Party of Work	*Nemzeti Munkapárt*	(1910–1918)	Classical liberalism ,67 ideology
Radical Civic Party	*Polgári Radikális Párt*	(1914–1919)	Civic radicalism
48-er Constitution Party	*48-as Alkotmánypárt*	(1918)	,48 ideology Classical liberalism
Independent Socialist Party	*Független Szocialista Párt*	(1897–1905)	Socialism Agrarian socialism

Tab. 7 Political parties During the First Hungarian Republic (1918–1919, 1919–1920) and the Kingdom of Hungary (1920–1945)

Name		Abbr.	Active	Ideology	Political position
Hungarian Communist Party *Magyar Kommunista Párt*		MKP	(1918–1948)	Marxism Communism	Far-left

English name	Hungarian name	Active	Ideology
Christian National Party	*Keresztény Nemzeti Párt*	(1919–1920)	Legitimism Christian conservatism National conservatism
Christian Social and Economic Party	*Keresztény Szociális és Gazdasági Párt*	(1919–1920)	Social conservatism Christian democracy
Christian Socialist Party	*Keresztényszocialista Párt*	(1920–?)	Christian socialism
National Democratic Party	*Nemzeti Demokrata Párt*	(1920–?)	Liberalism
Civic Freedom Party	*Polgári Szabadságpárt*	(1921–1944)	Liberalism
‚48 Smallholders Party	*48-as Kisgazda Párt*	(1922–?)	Agrarianism National conservatism
Alliance of Christian Unity	*Keresztény Egység Tábora*	(1922–?)	Christian democracy
Christian National Agricultural Workers' and Civic Party	*Keresztény Nemzeti Földmíves és Polgári Párt*	(1922–?)	Agrarianism Christian democracy

English name	Hungarian name	Active	Ideology
Christian Agricultural Workers and Craftsmen Party	*Keresztény Földmíves és Iparos Párt*	(1922–?)	Agrarianism Christian democracy
Christian Women's League	*Keresztény Női Tábor*	(1918–1922)	Christian democracy Christian feminism
Christian National Economic Party	*Keresztény Nemzeti Gazdasági Párt*	(1925–1926)	Christian democracy Royalism
Christian Economic and Social Party	*Keresztény Gazdasági és Szociális Párt*	(1926–1937)	Christian democracy
Christian Opposition	*Keresztény Ellenzék*	(1922–1939)	Christian democracy
Hungarian National Socialist Party	*Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista Párt*	(1920s–1944)	Nazism Antisemitism Hungarian Turanism
Unity Party	*Egységes Párt*	(1922–1944)	Szeged Idea
Agrarian Party	*Agrár Párt*	(1926–?)	Agrarianism National conservatism
Christian National Opposition Party	*Keresztény Nemzeti Ellenzéki Párt*	(1931–?)	Christian democracy National conservatism
United Opposition	*Egyesült Ellenzék*	(1931–?)	
Christian Economic Opposition Party	*Keresztény Gazdasági Ellenzéki Párt*	(1931–?)	Christian democracy
United Hungarian National Socialist Party	*Egyesült Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista Párt*	(1933–1940)	National socialism
National Legitimist Party	*Nemzeti Legitimista Néppárt*	(1935–1937)	Christian democracy

English name	Hungarian name	Active	Ideology
Arrow Cross Party	*Nyilaskeresztes Párt*	(1935–1945)	Hungarian Turanism Fascism Nazism
Christian National Front	*Keresztény Nemzeti Front*	(1935–?)	Christian democracy
Reform Generation	*Reformnemzedék*	(1935–?)	
Christian National Socialist Front	*Keresztény Nemzeti Szocialista Front*	(1937–1940)	National socialism

Tab. 8 Political parties During the Second Hungarian Republic (1946–1949)

Name		Abbr.	Active	Ideology	Political position
	Civic Democratic Party *Polgári Demokrata Párt*	PDP	(1944–1949)	Liberalism National liberalism	Centre-right
	Hungarian Radical Party *Magyar Radikális Párt*	MRP	(1945–1949 1989–1998)	Social liberalism Anti-communism	Left-wing
	Hungarian Freedom Party *Magyar Szabadság Párt*	Szabadság párt	(1946–1947 1956 1989–1999)	National conservatism Anti-Communism	Right-wing

Name		Abbr.	Active	Ideology	Political position
	Hungarian Independence Party *Magyar Függetlenségi Párt*	MFP	(1947 1956 1989–1990)	National conservatism Anti-Communism	Right-wing
	Independent Hungarian Democratic Party *Független Magyar Demokrata Párt*	FMDP	(1947–1949 1989–2011)	Liberalism	Centre
	Christian Women's League *Keresztény Női Tábor*	KNT	(1947–1949)	Christian democracy Christian feminism	Centre-right

Tab. 9 Politcal parties During the Hungarian People's Republic (1949–1989)

Name		Abbr.	Active	Ideology	Political position
	Hungarian Working People's Party *Magyar Dolgozók Pártja*	MDP	(1948–1956)	Marxism Stalinism Communism	Far-left
	Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party *Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt*	MSZMP	(1956–1989)	Kádárism Marxism Leninism	Far-left

Tab. 10 Poltical parties During the Third Republic (since 1989)

Name		Abbr.	Active	Ideology	Political position
Green Party of Hungary *Magyarországi Zöld Párt*		MZP	(1989–2011)	Green conservatism	Right-wing
Democratic Coalition Party *Demokrata Koalíció Párt*		DKP	(1990–2001)	Christian socialism	Centre-left
Democratic Party *Demokrata Párt*		DEMP	(1993–1994)	Democratic liberalism	Centre
Green Alternative *Zöld Alternatíva*		ZA	(1993–2000)	Green politics	Centre-left
Hungarian Justice and Life Party *Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*		MIÉP	(1993–2021)	Hungarian nationalism National conservatism Hard Euroscepticism	Right-wing to far-right
Hungarian Democratic Forum *Magyar Demokrata Fórum*		MDF	(1987–2011)	Conservatism	Centre-right
Alliance of Free Democrats *Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége*		SZDSZ	(1988–2013)	Social liberalism Economic Liberalism	Centre
Holy Crown Society *Szent Korona Társaság*		SZKT	(1989–1990) as Party	Monarchism	Right-wing
Republican Party (Hungary) *Köztársaság Párt*		SZKT	(1992–2003)	Conservative liberalism	Centre to centre-left

Name		Abbr.	Active	Ideology	Political position
	Social Democratic Party (Hungary) *Szociáldemokrata Párt*	SZDP	(1989–2013)	Social democracy	Centre-left
	Centre Party (Hungary) *Centrum Párt*	Centrum	(2001–2013)	Centrism	Centre
MDNP	Hungarian Democratic People's Party *Magyar Demokrata Néppárt*	MDNP	(1996–2006)	Conservatism Christian democracy	Centre-right
	Humanist Party *Humanista Párt*	HP	(1993–2003–2012)	Anti-globalization Neohumanism	Centre-left
	Alliance of Green Democrats *Zöld Demokraták Szövetsége*	ZDSZ	(2000–2009)	Green politics	Centre-left
	4K! – Fourth Republic! *4K! – Negyedik Köztársaság*	4K!	(2012–2016)	Social Democracy Left-wing Nationalism	Left-wing
	Unity Party *Összefogás Párt*	ÖP	(2009–2018)	Centrism Third Way	Centre-right
	Green Left *Zöld Baloldal*	ZB	(2009–2018) as Party	Eco-socialism	Left-wing
EGYÜTT BÁTRAKÉ A JÖVŐ!	Together (Hungary) *Együtt – A korszakváltók pártja*	Együtt	(2013–2018)	Social Democracy Social Liberalism	Centre
moma	Modern Hungary Movement *Modern Magyarország Mozgalom*	MoMa	(2013–2019)	Liberal conservatism Pro-Europeanism	Centre-right

Name		Abbr.	Active	Ideology	Political position
	Hungarian Gypsy Party *Magyarországi Cigánypárt*	MCP	(2013–2019)	Ethnic party	Centre
	New Hungary Party *Új Magyarország Párt*	ÚMP	(2013–2019)	Third Way	Centre
	People's Front *Népi Front Párt*	Népi Front	(2012–2021) as Party	Marxism-Leninism Kádárism	Far-left
	New World People's Party, *Új Világ Néppárt*	ÚVN	(2020–2022)	Liberal conservatism Economic liberalism Pro-Europeanism	Centre-right
	Party of Greens *Zöldek Pártja*	Zöldek Pártja	(2006–2022)	Green politics	Centre-left
	Community for Social Justice People's Party *Közösség A Társadalmi Igazságosságért*	KTI	(2013–2022)	Third Way	Centre
	Romani Alliance Party *Magyarországi Cigány szervezetek Fóruma*	MCF	(2002–2023)	Ethnic party	Centre
	Civic Conservative Party *Polgári Konzervatív Párt*	PKP	(2013–2023)	Liberal conservatism Economic liberalism Pro-Europeanism	Right-wing

Party system of the Czech Republic

Czech honorary parties in the monarchist period

The party system of the Czech lands during the period of the Habsburg Monarchy 1848–1918 was characterized mainly by the fact that the Czech political parties were not fully and formally embedded in it. Based on this, they found themselves in legal uncertainty and were forced to formally use various non-political organizational forms. The way in which political parties functioned changed in 1848. This was the "germ" period of political parties and followed the year 1861. It was in 1861 that parties already functioned as parliamentary factions within the Chamber of Deputies of the Reichstag, without further organization – as the first honorary or elite representation. Honorary parties were parties without a firmer organizational structure, which were concentrated around parliamentary clubs in the Reichsrat or the Land Diets. However, the situation changed with the advent of the right to vote at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries. It was during this period that the original honorary parties were transformed into mass parties. So it was already about parties that had a certain vertical structure, a more solid and formalized membership base and basic programmatic. (Balík, 2007)

It is therefore possible to say that the first political parties in the Habsburg monarchy were born in cooperation with the changing electoral system. The electoral system determined the gatekeepers – it limited the possibility to vote for everyone. It was therefore a closed system, which was characterized by a limited electoral census and a complex electoral geometry. Based on a complicated geometry, citizens were divided into two categories – privileged (voters) and non-privileged (non-voters). Developing parliamentarism and the rise of public opinion were also essential circumstances based on which the modern system of political parties built on a nationalist basis was built. This was mainly reflected in the names of the relevant and most successful parties, which had "national" in their name, etc. The parliamentary factions formed after the elections to the territorial assemblies, along with the press and associations, became the cornerstone of political parties in the territory of the Habsburg monarchy. (Malíř, 2005)

Until the end of the 1880s, there were two dominant and nationwide political parties in the Czech part of the Habsburg Monarchy: the National Party (Old Bohemia) and the Free National Party (Young Bohemia). The mentioned parties and many others belonged in terms of value orientation to the system, or camps of political parties. These were the following camps: the national-liberal (e.g. the National Party and the Free-thinking National Party, the Czech Progressive Party – Realists), the Christian-conservative (e.g. the Christian Social Party, the Catholic National Party in the Kingdom of the Czech Republic), the social-democratic (e.g. Czechoslovakian

Social-Democratic Labor Party), agrarian (e.g. Czecho-Slavic Agrarian Party) and national-social camp (e.g. Czech National-Social Party). (Balík, 2007; Malíř, 2005)

As part of a closer description and analysis, there will be a characterization of selected and relevant political parties from the period in question – the National Party, the National Free-Thinking Party, the Christian Social Party, the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Labor Party, the Czechoslovak Agrarian Party and the Czech Progressive Party.

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The National Party (Staročesi) represented the so-called within the typology of political parties from a developmental point of view. honorary political party. However, its members did not come together directly in the parliamentary corridors like similar parties in older parliamentary democracies in Western Europe, but before entering parliamentary politics. Even though representatives of the Czech bourgeoisie were not invited to its meetings, they took advantage of the gradual relaxation of internal political conditions to form the National Party, which was supposed to include all important representatives of Czech political life and claimed to be considered the spokesperson of the entire nation. At the time of its resumption of activity in 1860–1861, it consisted of two main ideological currents – conservative and liberal. The first of them (more significant at the time of creation) was represented by the so-called large landowners and the second more radical oriented Czech bourgeoisie. In addition, the composition of the original National Party was supplemented by the specific interests of the Moravians, which were partially manifested in other Czech political parties at various times. In the Moravian environment, the German ethnic presence was more pronounced, especially in larger urban settlements. Paradoxically, in this environment, the Moravians and the Germans found a way of life that was less conflicting compared to the Czech-German political representation. (Cibulka, 2005)

Manifesto of this party had its roots in the revolutionary years of 1848–1849 and the considerations of the Czech political representation not only about its own political position and interests but perceived these in the context of the geopolitical and national organization of Central Europe. Despite the anti-Habsburg national sentiment, the Czechs were aware that the "dungeon of nations" in the form of the Habsburg monarchy represented a certain shield, especially against pan-Germanism at that time. In the spirit of these considerations, the "father" of the modern Czech nation, František Palacký, "arrived at the idea of a federation of nation states, or historical groups of countries, which would leave the central government with enough powers to fulfil its great power role in Europe. The basis of such a state was supposed to be respect for the principle of national equality. The representatives of the National Party in the 1860s also thought in a similar spirit, while F. L. Rieger considered it necessary to create national equality not only for the Czech nation, but originally for the Czechoslovak nation, which included Slovaks, to preserve and strengthen the monarchy in 1860. Half a year later, a new version of the Czech political program was published in the first issue of Národné listy on January 1, the sole

author of which was again F. L. Rieger. This program contained the requirements of national equality, extensive self-government and basic civil liberties. This time, F. L. Rieger declared the individuality of the Czech nation based on historical law. He did not consider the participation of the nobility in national life to be necessary. He spoke out for Slavic reciprocity and no longer connected the political fate of the Slovaks with the Czechs, which resulted from the historical and legal basis of this statement. The so-called in international terms, the ancient Czechs mainly focused on cooperation with the so-called German autonomists, Galician Poles and Slovenians. (Cibulka, 2005)

The National Party had a conservative focus, which it maintained throughout its existence. Socially, it was oriented towards cooperation on the so-called the federalist-oriented Czech nobility, which still had an important socio-political position even in the second half of the 19th century. The Moravian Old Bohemians also belonged to the National Party, but with their National Party, they had different positions on sub-issues compared to the Czech Old Bohemians. In 1868, however, the National Party rejected the dualistic arrangement of the monarchy, which it called unconstitutional, by submitting a parliamentary declaration by 81 Czech deputies, in which the signatories justified their decision not to participate in the regional parliament. The settlement of the relationship between the Czech nation and the empire was conditioned by the conclusion of a contract between the sovereign and the regional assembly, elected by a fair electoral system. Even the Moravians were not satisfied with the settlement. They joined the declaration, while defending the existence of their own Moravian Margraviate and fearing merging with the wider Cisleithania. (Cibulka, 2005)

The party concentrated on the creation of a de facto federalized monarchy, and during 1871 its representative's negotiated with the Prime Minister. Their result should be the so-called fundamental articles, which were rejected by the monarch František Jozef I. This led the Old Bohemians to the passive resistance of the Czech members of the Regional Assembly. In the National Party, however, there was not enough approval for this principled position, according to the more conservative members. This soon split the party. The immediate impetus for the split was the approval of the law on direct elections to the Chamber of Deputies in 1873, which strengthened the independent position of the Reich Council, which thus ceased to be dependent on the election of Reich deputies by the regional assemblies. In response to this reform of the electoral system, the Moravian National Party abandoned passive tactics when its deputies first convened the Brno Diet in November 1873 and the Chamber of Deputies in January 1874, where they joined the conservative Hohenwart Club of the Party of Law. This procedure caused a rift not only with the Old Bohemians, but also with the Moravian conservative nobility – they were only partially settled in 1879. (Cibulka, 2005)

The virtually split Czech national movement confirmed the formation of the Free-thinking National Party at the end of 1874. Somewhat paradoxically, the honorary National Party initially resembled an "election party". The party became more active before the elections, when the party was managed by the so-called election committee. He proposed individual candidates to the regional assembly

and possibly also to the Reich Council. The members of the election committee also approved pre-election statements published in the Czech press together with the list of recommended candidates. Since the party had a specific organization, as it was internally divided into Czech, Moravian and Silesian parts, the number of electoral committees, which were politically autonomous, corresponded to this. During the time outside the election campaign, the parliamentary clubs of the party (land and empire) were important. The connection of the party with the wider public and with the electorate was represented by meetings of confidants, who were party activists from geographically different parts of the country. Trustees also provided connections with local honoraria at the communal or municipal level and sought to transmit the political line of the party leadership towards the lower party ranks. The National Party, as an honorary developmental type, "hid" within itself the germ of mass. Later mass political parties were also characterized by the existence of their own professional associations (youth associations, women's associations, lawyers' associations, teachers' associations, etc.). These gradually appeared in the younger period of honorary parties. In the case of the National Party, it was the Czech Club as a free social organization. (Cibulka, 2005)

The key communication tool of the 19th century was the press, which at that time served both the public and party members and sympathizers. In the case of the National Party, it was the relatedly named Národní noviny, which was effectively controlled by F. L. Rieger. After the split of the National Party into old and young Czechs, the newspaper sided with the young Czechs, and the old Czechs responded by founding the newspaper Národ. Just a year before its publication, the Old Czechs began to publish in a German-language newspaper called Politika, through which they tried to win the favour of the Czech population, which, however, was not nationalistically defined and in the cultural field preferred German. In the case of the Moravian National Party, there was a similar situation in party journalism. The National Party in Moravia published Moravské noviny, later Moravan and Moravská orlice, which was published almost until the middle of the 20th century. German-written newspapers of the Moravian Old Bohemians such as Stimmern und Mähren Brünner Beobachter also appeared. Finally, the party press, as at that time practically the only information channel, was also involved in mutual party disputes and political attacks after the split of the original National Party. The ancient Czechs achieved much greater success in the field of the so-called grajciar's journalism. In 1874, the cheap Czech political paper Brousek (1874–1879) was founded, on whose pages J. S. Skrejšovský attacked the Young Bohemians with indiscriminate means. The newspaper quickly reached an unprecedented circulation of 10,000 copies for its time. Young Czechs tried to counter the cheap folk daily Obran, but it lasted only two years (1874–1876, and from 1875 as a weekly). J. S. Skrejšovský targeted both Young Bohemian "kolkhozniks" and later Old Bohemian passivity. After he left the editorial office, the paper later disappeared. (Cibulka, 2005)

In addition to the gradual differentiation of the Old and Young Czechs, the National Party was made up of the Czech and Moravian parts (after the split of the Czech National Party into its Old and Young Czechs parts, a similar fate awaited its Moravian part as well). The Czech and Moravian National Party were

mutually autonomous, and their relations were fundamentally strained by the return of Moravian National Party deputies to the Regional Assembly. The year 1874 can be considered the end of the activity of the original National Party, when the Young Bohemia part separated from it, which founded the free-thinking National Party. The operation of the National Party can be considered as the beginning of party life in socio-political conditions after the end of the absolutist regime with a minimum of democratic and parliamentary experience. The era of limited political plurality forced the political elite of the non-majority nations of Austria-Hungary to purposeful alliances and cooperation, which would not have been possible in the absence of national self-government. At the same time, the gradual demographic changes of society, the political decline of the influence of the traditional nobility, the effort to expand the so-called by the bourgeoisie and the rise of the so-called of the proletariat gradually naturally fragmented the national unity into political parties defending the bourgeoisie, farmers, workers and believers – even in the form of various party and ideological hybrids. (Cibuľka, 2005)

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The National Liberal Party (Mladočesi) was first founded in Bohemia at the end of 1874 and was a political party called young Czechs. This political nickname, somewhat paradoxically, probably had its origin in the German political press and journalism. Young Czechs represented the political wing of the original National Party, but they came into conflict with the political strategy of political passivity. In addition, they questioned the position of the historical Czech nobility, which at that time still had a fundamental influence on politics and had a rather anti-clerical orientation. They advocated a deeper democratization of the electoral system and the constitution than the ancient Czechs allowed. The events connected with the Polish January Uprising in 1863 also contributed to the visible – because they were widely ventilated on the pages of the press – mutual differences. The Old Bohemians, fearing the weakening of the Slavic factor in European politics, supported the Russian advance against the Polish insurgents, while the Young Bohemians expressed their sympathies and support. (Malíř, 2005)

Despite their partially different attitudes, the more democratically radical young Czechs were a loyal part of the National Party. However, they were not willing to accept the policy of political passivity (resistance) promoted by the Old Bohemians since 1873. The split became inevitable when in November 1873 a total of 27 Young Bohemian state deputies left the joint club in protest passive resistance tactics. When in January 1874 four leading young Czechs – K. Sladkovský, J. Grégr, E. Grégr (1827–1907) and Jakub Škarda (1828–1894) – were expelled from the joint board of trustees of the National Party. On top of that, seven Young Bohemian deputies out of 84 of all Czech regional deputies re-entered the Czech Regional Assembly in September. This opened the way for the young people to find their own party – the National Party of Freedom. This finally happened in Bohemia, but in the case of Moravia, the separation of the Moravian Young Bohemians did not happen until the beginning of the 1890s. However, its position turned out to be relatively weaker

compared to Czech conditions, mainly due to the demographic composition of the Moravian population, where the church, farmers and nobility maintained their position. Municipal honoraria were demographically less represented in Moravia. (Malíř, 2005)

The liberal orientation of the young Czechs progressives was already evident from the programmatic principles at the time of the party's founding. She advocated basic political freedoms for all – especially universal suffrage, the consistent exercise of the right to education and greater economic prosperity, which was especially important after the economic crisis of the early 1970s. In connection with the functioning of the party, it should be noted that despite its democratization program appeal, it was a party entity that had not yet moved towards mass membership. In addition to the members of the representative bodies, another part of the party was the so-called confidants, further associations and party press. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, it was not yet a political party with a structure that would more thoroughly unite sympathizers and ensure standard communication within itself. This happened already at a time when competing party entities on the Czech political market behaved more systematically. Despite its organizational shortcomings, the Young Czechs Party was the main political force after the parliamentary elections of 1891. Their Old Czechs competitors gradually lost influence in the second half of the 1880s. In the end, however, the young Czechs suffered the same fate as the old Czechs – their political influence began to decline at the beginning of the 20th century due to the segmentation of the party system, although they tried to modernize at the end of the 90s. It was mainly about the transformation of the trustee system into a system of local organizations, which he initiated. (Malíř, 2005)

Young Czechs also remained a broadly focused political party. They united several layers of society. In addition to entrepreneurs, young intelligentsia, also pro--nationalist workers. The political strategy and goals of the party were dominantly determined by the Grégr brothers. Their main argument against political opponents in the Czech environment was insufficient defence of Czech interests. A practical example is F. L. Rieger's reservation of insufficient defence of the Czech minority during its Germanization in the borderlands. As a political entity that radically advocated the reform of the electoral system in favor of universal suffrage, the Young Czechs at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries can be considered that part of the political representation of that time, without which its enforcement would not have been possible. The question remains whether the young Czechs were aware that this would bring about the gradual demise (together with the old Czechs) of their honorary political party in favour of mass political parties aimed at defending the partial interests of part of society (the nation). (Malíř, 2005)

Just before the First World War, Young Czechs were part of the Czech-German negotiations on the use of the language and the reform of the electoral system. They turned out to be a failure, and the party, like the others, soon had to face new wartime circumstances. During the four war years, the Czech political representation, depending on the circumstances, underwent an internal evolution between loyalty to the monarchy and its own national interest. The two most important political

representatives who tried to suppress the pro-monarchist loyalty and activity of the Czechs and who later became important figures of the first Czechoslovak Republic were the young Czechs Karel Kramář and Alojz Rašín. Finally, in the course of 1917, the so-called anti-activist wing. At the beginning of 1918, a new political party, the Czech State Democracy, was founded and Karel Kramář became the first head of the Czechoslovak government. Finally, Tomáš Garrique Masaryk, the future first president of the Czech Republic, was also involved among the young Czechs as a member of parliament. Even about the new political conditions after the creation of the 1st Czechoslovak Republic and the fulfilment of basic democratic rights, the existence of the National Party of Free Thought lost its significance and only ideologically defined political parties entered the political arena. (Malíř, 2005)

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Christian Social Party in Bohemia represented the beginning of Christian political Catholicism in the 1840s. During this period, the first Catholic associations were founded, which offered their members educational and support activities, charitable work, as well as the articulation of interests in the public and political sphere. It was the Catholic political federal sphere as a whole that tended towards two centres until the early 1990s: the National Party and the Catholic-Political Unity for the Kingdom of the Czech Republic. This fact caused the Czech Catholic political movement (from the end of the 19th century until the end of the World War I) to develop in two streams: conservative (Catholic-national parties, e.g. National Catholic Party in the Kingdom of the Czech Republic) and socially oriented (Christian-social parties, such as the Christian Social Party in Bohemia). (Marek, 2005)

The formation of the comprehensive Christian Social Party in Bohemia dates to 1894, when the first convention was held in Litomyšl. At this congress, the basic program theses were also adopted and at the same time a proposal for the institutional organization of Christian-social activities was discussed, which was to lead to the creation of three separate organizational committees of the Christian-social organization in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. In its activities, the Christian Social Party was mainly inspired by the ideals of the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII – Rerum Novarum from 1891. This encyclical represented the opposite pole to the atheistic socialist movement and called for the organization of Catholic political parties. In addition, she also analysed the problems of the world at that time and considered the independent action of Catholicism in politics to be necessary. (Marek, 2005; Urban, 1982)

Among the most prominent representatives of the Christian Social Party were priests Tomáš Škerdle and Rudolf Horský. In addition to them, the Christian Social Party was also formed by Matěj Procházka (author of the first Christian-worker program in the Czech part of the Habsburg Monarchy – 1872), Tomáš Jozef Jiroušek (founder of the first Christian-social magazine Robotník and territorial organization in Bohemia) and Ján Šrámek (founder of the regional organization in Moravia). It was Rudolf Horský, Tomáš Škerdle and Tomáš Jozef Jiroušek who laid the foundation stone for the creation of the Christian Social Party. (KDU.cz, 2023; Marek, 2005)

At the program level, or in the basic program, representatives of the Christian Social Party in Bohemia proposed, among other things:

- the adoption of universal suffrage and the demand for fair wages for workers,
- equalization of Czech and German as necessary languages in the administration,
- the autonomy and self-government of the countries of the Crown of St. Wenceslas and the decentralization of the Habsburg monarchy,
- replacing capitalism with middle-class production and adjusting working hours,
- nationalization of banks, insurance companies, post offices, railways, mines, or taxation of large assets,
- expansion of educational opportunities and appropriate employment for women in the professions and public life,
- rejection of liberalism and the introduction of old-age, unemployment, accident or sickness insurance,
- enforcement of measures to support healthy families. (Marek, 2005; Urban, 1982)

As for the party press, Catholic political parties were dependent on financial support and donations from the high church hierarchy, the Czech nobility, or various businessmen. Following the example of the ideological anchoring of Catholic parties, the press was divided into two camps – Catholic-national and Christian-social. From the ranks of the press, which started from 1869 and were connected directly with the Christian Social Party in Bohemia, it is necessary to mention: Našinec (originally Catholic-national, later Christian-social), Brno (cradle of Christian-social journalism), Obecné noviny, Robotnícke noviny, Dělník (became an official organ of the party in 1894), Obrana práce (as another party organ) Sozialistische Brünner Rundschau and Arbeiter (aimed at keeping Catholic workers in the Catholic Church), Lidový list, Obrana práce a dělníků (continuation of Robotník and in 1904 it was renamed Budoucnost and was published until 1938), Nové proudy (theoretical revue), Lidové listy (1901–1904) and many others of a smaller scale. (Marek, 2005)

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Czechoslovakian Social-Democratic Labor Party was part of the pan-European phenomenon of the emergence of a left-wing political movement formed in the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Among other things, they represented the main force and political representation of the labour movement. In connection with the social-democratic parties within the Habsburg monarchy, it was true that the leadership of the social-democratic parties until the beginning of the 1990s it had the character of publishers of legal German or Czech workers' magazines, because social-democratic organizations were not officially permitted. (Kořalka, 2005)

The emergence of the full-fledged Czechoslovan Social-Democratic Labor Party relates to the illegal congress in 1878 in Břevnov (part of Prague), at which the Socialist Czechoslovan Party in Austria was established as an autonomous part of the all-Austrian social democracy. The Czechoslovan Social-Democratic Workers' Party became the second most important and, in order, the second largest party-political group, right after the Austrian Social Democracy. (Kořalka, 2005; Balík, 2007)

The separation from the All-Austrian Social Democracy ended in 1893, when it was separated from the All-Austrian Social Democracy Council, which was followed by the change of its name to the "Československá sociálnodemokratická strana robotnícka". It was in 1893 that Social Democracy became an independent social-democratic party, which focused mainly on representing the interests of the Czech working class. In 18 years, or by 1911 it had become the largest of the Czech political parties and formed the strongest political camp. The category of important figures of social democracy included: journalist Jozef Boleslav Pecka-Strahovský (headed the founding congress), Ladislav Zápotocký (one of the party's delegates), Jozef Hybeš (main initiator of the legal unification congress of Czech social democrats in 1887), Viktor Adler (led the Hainfeld congress of the unification of social democracy a year later), Antonín Němec (party chairman) and several others. (Mahoney, 2011; Novinky.cz, 2021; Kořalka, 2005)

In the area of the program, it primarily followed the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx from 1848. In terms of values and program points, it promoted:

- introduction of universal, equal and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all legislative and self-governing bodies,
- the replacement of the capitalist economic system by state-organized production of property, i.e. socialism,
- separation of church and state and free education in public schools,
- the introduction of a single progressive tax on income and inheritance or the provision of state support to production cooperatives (state support of cooperative business),
- reduction of working hours to an eight-hour working day and national autonomy in education,
- nine-year compulsory school attendance and improvement of the education and material status of teachers,
- a proposal for the introduction of unemployment insurance, disability and old-age insurance,
- the guarantee of freedom of the press, associations and assembly and the election of judges – the independence of the courts or the organization of workers by trade unions. (Kořalka, 2005)

The workers' press has been the main and legal support of social democracy in Czech countries since its inception. The main press organs of the Czechoslovak Social Democracy were the magazines: Dělnické listy (1872–1874; 1877–1881), Budúcnosť a Arbeiterfreund (1874–1882), Rovnosť (1885), Hlas lidu a Věk slobody (1886), Nový věk slobody (1886). Social Democrat (1891). In addition to the mentioned

magazines, there were several smaller forms of printing, e.g. Heslo (1889), První máj (1890) and many others as Socialní democrat and Rovnost and many others became central party magazines. (Kořalka, 2005)

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Czechoslovak Agrarian Party in Czech politics, she mainly represented the rural part of society. In the Czech part of the Habsburg Monarchy, in connection with the rural way of life and agrarian values, the Czech-Moravian Peasant Association for Moravia and Silesia was formed in 1883. However, this association lacked a clearly formulated political program and the status of a political party. Despite this, he expressed his views on some economic issues – indebtedness of estates, hereditary peasant law, peasant credit, tax law and many others. In addition to these facts, it had the greatest support especially among the South Bohemian peasants, who gave the impetus for the creation of the Peasant Union for the Kingdom of Bohemia in 1889. A year later, the association found itself in a disadvantageous position due to the intervention of the Viennese government, which officially dissolved it in 1890 because she feared the growing radicalism in the agrarian movement. However, both organizations functioned illegally as the Central Peasant Union for Moravia and the Regional Peasant Union for the Kingdom of Bohemia. (Rokoský, 2005; Československé dějiny v datech, 1986)

In the following years, three more organizations with political and economic ambitions were formed – the Economic Party of all three countries of the Czech crown (implantation only in Bohemia; 1891), the Central Bohemian Peasant County (1896) and the Political Peasant Unity. Including this, there was also a change of the name of the Central Peasant Union to the Peasant Union for Moravia (1892). In 1896, the Central Bohemian Peasant County was renamed the Association of Czech Agriculturalists for the Kingdom of Bohemia. This organization already had a clearly formulated program. So already in 1903, the agrarians grouped together all the previous agrarian and agricultural-political trends and considered the rural population – farmers – to be their electorate. (Rokoský, 2005; Dějiny zemi Koruny české II., 1992; Urban, 1982)

The establishment of the Czech Agrarian Party is associated with the beginning of 1899, when the general assembly of the Association of Czech Farmers was held in Prague. At this meeting, the independent Czech Agrarian Party was founded. It was not until 6 years later that the integration of regional Czech, Moravian and Silesian agrarian movements into a unified Czechoslovak Agrarian Party. The founding of this party offered rural people an alternative to socialism or the confessional agendas of traditionalist Catholic parties. An important personality of the Agrarian Party was Kuneš Sonntag, who was credited with creating one of the two parties that later merged into a single party (the Czech Agrarian Party for Moravia and Silesia and the Czech Agrarian Party). Other representatives were: Ján Vaca (Chairman of the Czech Agrarian Party for Moravia and Silesia), Jozef Prokop Pražák (formulated the program of the Czech Agrarian Party from 1903), František Fiedler (worked in the newspaper Obrana agrárnikov) Antonín Švehla (co-created the

program priorities of the already unified party) and many others. (Rokoský, 2005; Balík, 2007; Mahoney, 2011)

The political program and views of agrarian politicians on universal suffrage were motivated by the prevention of the possible influence of social democracy in the countryside. Among other things, agrarians advocated:

- equalizing the rights of agricultural estates with other strata and ensuring that the agricultural estate has an appropriate share in the legislative and executive powers,
- control over agricultural cartels and protection of Austrian agriculture,
- recognition of Czech state law, weakening of centralism, support of national revival, improvement of self-government and expansion of powers of the Diet of the Czech Crown,
- rejection of industrial capitalism and reliance on the togetherness of all rural people,
- the creation of an association of farmers for the entire Czech Kingdom and the support of scientific research in the field of agricultural sciences,
- union organization of the peasantry, state credit and customs protection for agricultural production, but also to produce the domestic agricultural industry,
- holding anti-clerical positions and finally supporting universal suffrage (originally, they were against – they held a reserved position),
- religious or national issues did not play an important role or were secondary. It is also necessary to emphasize that the program principles of the agrarians were flexible and adapted to the current situation. (Cabada, 2005; Rokoský, 2005)

In the case of press periodicals, the agrarians as well as the social democrats had a number of important relevant print media at their disposal. However, while the leadership of social-democratic parties had to mask their activities due to illegality, agrarian politicians could publicly present their opinions and thought processes. Some media were created even before the establishment of the Czechoslovak Agrarian Party. They were primarily – Sedliacke listy (1884), Sedliacke noviny (1890), Defense of the Farmers (1900), Agricultural Discussions (1900), Vidiek (the first daily newspaper in the whole of Austria), Pilsen region (regional newspaper; 1906), Cep and illustrated agrarian magazine Rozkvet (1907). Others included Moravský videk, Mladá Morava, Moravský cep and Silezsky videk (published until 1912). From 1914, the Ľudový denník, the weekly Večer and the monthly Agrarian Revue – the first scientific magazine – were published. (Rokoský, 2005)

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The Czech Progressive Party (Realisti) traces its formal existence back to 1905, when a merger convention of the Realist Party with East Bohemia was held in Pardubice, or Radically progressive party from eastern Bohemia and Brno. The union of these two wings – populists and state-law progressives in 1906 made it possible to build the Czech Progressive Party on the principle of a small but mainly centrally controlled political party. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Alois Hajn were leading representatives of the Czech Progressive Party and also served as chairmen of this political party. It also involved Karel Stanislav Sokol (he worked as a journalist and publisher of the party), Antonín Kalina (the main representative of the party at the Vienna Reich Council), Lev Borský (ideologist and publicist spokesperson of the party) and several others. (Kučera, 2005; Tomeš, 2013)

The realists considered the social democrats to be their closest allies, with whom they tenaciously fought for the introduction of universal suffrage. Rather, equality for all social groups was adhered to in the program area, primarily through general, equal, secret and direct suffrage with proportional representation of minorities in all assemblies – legislative, representative and other public bodies. In addition to these points, they also advocated:

- separation of church and state and cancellation of Catholic privileges,
- free education – teaching and education reform with an emphasis on cultural needs,
- the status of women on an equal footing with men in the cultural, legal and political fields,
- support for small entrepreneurs, farmers and workers,
- freeing education from the influence of bureaucracy and clericalism,
- complete political independence within a free, progressive Austria,
- promoting social security for the weakest classes and democracy,
- equality of all citizens before the law and political and civil liberties in all spheres (freedom of belief, religion, assembly, learning and press). (Cabada, 2005)

The following charts show the results of the 1907 and 1911 Reichstag elections for Czech political parties.

Graph 1 The number of parliamentary mandates of Czech political parties after the elections in 1907

Počet poslaneckých mandátov v ríšskej rade

Source: Czechoslovak history in data, 1986 (own processing)

Graph 2 The number of parliamentary mandates of Czech political parties after the elections in 1911

Počet poslaneckých mandátov v ríšskej rade

Source: Czechoslovak history in data, 1986 (own processing)

The data in the graphs clearly show that the Agrarians maintained their lead in both elections, followed by the Social Democrats, and Young Czechs came in third place. The first three maintained a relatively stable number of parliamentary seats, while the other political parties underwent a significant change. They strengthened some of them (National Socialists and radical progressives), weakened others (Clericals, Old Bohemians, Realists).

Czech political parties in the period of the first republic

The interwar party system of the first Czechoslovak Republic was largely multi-party. This was because it consisted of several independently developing party systems – Czech, Moravian, Slovak, as well as the party systems of Austrian Germans and Poles and many others. These systems developed relatively autonomously until 1918 and were connected to several territories, e.g. with Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia, etc. (Cabada, 2005)

In the first Czechoslovakia, political parties had a significant position, because they were a fundamental part of the party structure, but also of the political system, and at the same time they intervened in the non-political sphere within society. There was competition between them, or the fight for the electorate, which in a multi-party system was especially important to maintain mutual control between them, so that there was no uncontrollable power. They played a decisive role in the development and establishment of fundamental state institutions – the National Committee, the Revolutionary National Assembly and the government of the Czechoslovak Republic. They influenced the course of Czechoslovak society not only from the positions of top state administration bodies, but also from the sphere of self-governing bodies. At the central and regional level, they created a number of affiliated, trade union, economic and interest organizations. (Harna 2005)

In connection with the party system from the founding of Czechoslovakia to the Munich Agreement, it is necessary to clarify the internal political circumstances. Many important political events took place during the era of the first Czechoslovak Republic. The separation from the Habsburg monarchy and the laying of the institutional and value foundations of the common state of the Czechs and Slovaks were among the most important of them. Also, with the creation of the common state, a democratic social structure was also developed, which was characterized by the division of power, market economy, the principle of plurality and many other elements. (Balík, 2007)

In addition, the Czech party system was characterized by a division based on political and value orientation, or ideological basis. In this sense, political parties were divided into conservative (Catholics), liberal (agrarians and freethinkers) and socialist (social democrats and national socialists). The parties were also divided into those with anti-clericalist views and those with pro-clericalist attitudes. In the context of a pluralistic social system, several successful political parties were created. The largest and most relevant category included: Republican Party of the

Agricultural and Small Peasant People – Agrarian Party, Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party, Czechoslovak People's Party and Czechoslovak National Socialist Party. (Cabada, 2005; Vodička, 2003)

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Republican Party of Agricultural and Small Peasant People – Agrarian Party had its beginnings of formal existence at the end of the 19th century. In other words, it followed on from the original Czechoslovakian side of the agrarian. It entered the newly emerging Czechoslovak state as a fully developed mass political party with a solid organizational structure and extensive experience from the previous period of the party system of the Habsburg monarchy. The name was changed to the "Republican Party of the Czechoslovak Countryside" in 1919 at the congress of the republicans, at which the new election program was also adopted. By integrating with a part of the Slovak National and Peasant Party, it operated on Czechoslovak territory under the name "Republican Party of the Agricultural and Small Peasant People" from 1922. (Cabada, 2005; Harna, 2005; Balík, 2007)

The Agrarian Party became the most influential political force in the context of the party system of the first Czechoslovak Republic. Although it finished fourth in the first Czechoslovak parliamentary elections, five years later it "climbed" to first place. From 1925 to the last elections in 1935, it became the dominant political force and the winner of the parliamentary elections until 1929 (the parliamentary elections in 1935 were won by the Sudetendeutsche Partei ethnic party, that is, the party of Germans within Czechoslovakia). In the first elections to the National Assembly within Czechoslovakia, the right to vote for women already applied. The National Assembly was bicameral and divided into the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The election results show that in the first Czechoslovak elections it won 9.7% and 28 mandates, while 5 years later it increased its gain to 13.7% and 41 mandates. In the third election, it achieved 15% and 46 mandates, and in the last 14.3% and 43 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. (Dějiny zemí Koruny České II., 1992)

Important representatives of the Agrarian Party included: party chairmen Antonín Švehla and Rudolf Beran (he replaced Švehla in the post in 1935), František Staněk and Viktor Stoupal (Moravian agrarian leaders), Ján Malypetr, etc. On the program level, the Republicans mainly focused on the needs of the rural population, especially farmers. The Republican program can be considered liberal, reformist, social, but at the same time anti-socialist, in some cases even revolutionary. In this context, he advocated:

- the introduction of a tax on war profits, social security for the poorest, social obligation of property,
- the introduction of the obligation to work – those who do not work do not have the right to life,
- nationalization of enterprises based on the exploitation of natural national wealth, e.g. mines,
- organizing farmers in trade unions and cooperatives,

- supporting agriculture with tax, customs, credit and other instruments,
- land parcelling and private ownership,
- implementation of land reform – gaining extraordinary influence in the political and material context (interest organizations, cooperatives, etc.),
- the weakening of the influence of big capital and the introduction of the principle of peace in foreign policy. (Harna, 2005; Balík, 2007; Broklová, 1992; Cabada, 2005; Vodička, 2003)

The classic tool of Republicans for communication with the public (voters and sympathizers) was the press. The Republican Party inherited several important press media from the period before the first Czechoslovak Republic. These were mainly the daily Vidiek, the weekly Cep, the illustrated newspapers Rozkvet, Moravský vidiek and many others. During the Czechoslovak state, or from 1919, the biggest boom was mainly the evening newspaper Večer, the daily newspaper Sloboda (a follow-up to Moravský venkov), the magazine Mladá republika, the weekly Domovina domkárov a maloľník and many others, including the radio station – Agricultural Radio, which began broadcasting in 1923. (Harna, 2005)

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The Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Workers' Party was established through a formal transformation and name change from the original Czechoslovak Social--Democratic Workers' Party, which operated before the first Czechoslovak Republic. Under the new name "Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Workers' Party" it figured since 1918 at the congress of the former Social Democracy, at which the integration took place, or merger with the Czech Social Democratic Party in Austria and the Slovak Social Democratic Party of Hungary. In other words, Czech centralists and Slovak social democrats joined Czechoslovak social democracy. (Kuklík, 2005; Cabada, 2005)

With this step, the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Workers' Party became the first political party to have a nationwide framework. Although it was a very important and, so to speak, dominant political party, it was going through internal party disputes between two wings – the social democrats and the left wing (Marxists and the more radical left). In 1919, the more radical wing therefore established itself as an independent unit and a year later joined the Communist International. In the first Czechoslovak parliamentary elections, both factions stood under a single candidate, but this changed after the declaration of the social democrats, who refused any cooperation with the communists. Finally, in September 1920, the radical wing of social democracy founded an independent party, i.e. Czechoslovak Social Democratic Labor Party (Left). Subsequently, in 1921, these radicals created the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which significantly weakened the social democrats. Although the social democrats were inclined towards Marxism, they rejected the communists' attitudes towards radical and violent changes in the democratic system and property relations. (Kuklík, 2005; Vodička, 2003)

In the first Czechoslovak parliamentary elections, the Social Democrats took first place with a gain of 25.7% and a record 74 mandates (the most among all political parties during the Czechoslovakian era). Five years later, their election result was significantly weakened – based on this, they won 8.9% and 29 parliamentary seats. In the order of the third election, they took second place with a slightly higher result – 13% and 39 mandates. In the last elections in the Czechoslovak Republic, they achieved 12.6% and 38 mandates. The results explicitly show that the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Workers' Party achieved the best electoral result in the first election, while the worst in the second (weakening due to a split in the party). Important representatives were, above all, Vlastimil Tusar (Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia 1919–1920), František Tomášek (Chairman of the Revolutionary National Assembly), Rudolf Bechyně, Jozef Macek, Gustav Habrman (Minister of Education in the government of Vlastimil Tusar), František Soukup (Minister of Justice) and others. (Dějiny zemí Koruny České II., 1992; Balík, 2007; Vodička, 2003; Kuklík, 2005)

In connection with the program points, the social democrats tried to distinguish themselves from the radical leftists – i.e. the communists and promoted several fundamental measures:

- rejection of consumption tax on healthy foods and revision of land reform,
- the introduction of a unicameral parliament and the return of the right to vote to soldiers and policemen (gentlemen),
- elimination of territorial organization and establishment of nationally unified counties, extension of paid vacations,
- abolition of privileges – the right of appointment and virilism in representation in local government (virilism was the vote of a privileged person, e.g. a wealthy voter, a nobleman before the introduction of universal suffrage) and the introduction of cheap agricultural loans,
- abolition of the death penalty and shortening of military service, as well as a 40-hour work week,
- cultural autonomy and elimination of the role of the church in the state – primarily in education,
- establishment of labor chambers and control of the movement of capital (cartels, joint-stock companies and money capital), as well as the introduction of a tax-free minimum for farmers and many others. (Balík, 2007; Broklová, 1992)

The social democrats, like other political parties, were aware that it is possible to reach many social groups within society with a high-quality and accessible press. The central press bodies were the media from the period before the First Czechoslovakia and mainly included the daily Právo ľudu and the daily Robotnícke listy. The new ones were mainly the daily newspaper Nová doba, Stráž socialismu, Robotnícke noviny, the monthly magazine Socialistická obec and also Nová sloboda. (Kuklík, 2005)

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The Czechoslovak People's Party as a representative of political Catholicism had to face intense attacks from the so-called anti-Catholic wave or doctrine from the beginning of existential. Under the influence of these circumstances, the Catholic--National and Catholic-Social parties agreed to merge into a single and comprehensive Moravian-Silesian People's Party. It operated under this name until the beginning of 1919, when the first congress of the already united party was held. At the convention at the end of January, the party was renamed "Czechoslovak People's Party". In the early days of the new state, the already united party concentrated on defending itself against a wave of anti-Catholic sentiment that attacked Catholic symbols as evidence of the outgrowth of the structures of the Austrian church and state. This phenomenon had a significant impact on the "good name" of the Catholic Church, from which more and more believers and sympathizers left. The whole process ended with the founding of the Czechoslovak Church, which acted as an autonomous church in Czechoslovakia. (Trapl, 2005; Cuhra, 2006)

In the case of the 1920 elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Czechoslovak Republic, the People's Party came second with a gain of 11.3% and 33 parliamentary mandates. In 5 years, they achieved a slightly worse result, or 9.7% and 31 parliamentary mandates. In the penultimate elections in 1929 to the Chamber of Deputies of the Czechoslovak Republic, they achieved 8.4% and 25 parliamentary seats, while in the last only 7.5% and 22 seats. It follows from the above that during the existence of the Czechoslovakia, the electoral support of the Czechoslovak people decreased in direct proportion with the coming elections. They achieved the lowest result in 1935 and the highest in the first elections in 1920. (Dějiny zemí Koruny české II., 1992)

Prominent representatives of the Czechoslovak People's Party were mainly the chairman of the party, Ján Šrámek, Bohumil Stašek (Srámek's successor, who took over the Czechoslovak Republic after 1938), Mořic Hruban (founder of the Catholic National Party), Ján Dostálek, František Nosek (Minister of the Interior in the Czechoslovak Government) and many next one. ČSĽ declared itself to be clericalism in the program area, or encyclical of Pope Leo XIII. Rerum novarum. So, the people were based on Christian doctrine. The electoral program of the ČSĽ included Christian socialism, Christian modernism and Christian democratism. (Balík, 2007; Vodička, 2003, Cabada, 2005; Trapl, 2005)

In practical terms, it was mainly about:

- rejection of materialism, demand for social justice and respect for the rights of national minorities,
- speaking out against militarism, but also the demand for training in weapons and in a comprehensive army,
- protection of private property (protection of small entrepreneurs from cartels and syndicates) and a proposal for cooperative employment of workers in factories,
- redistribution of natural wealth and energy and promotion of parliamentary democracy, as well as strong central administration + territorial self-government,

- introduction of compulsory religious education in schools and building equality of religious beliefs,
- indissolubility of marriage, support of population development and protection of motherhood (maternity leave),
- childcare, the fight against alcoholism and the introduction of proportional suffrage for women as well, requiring a plebiscite for important political decisions,
- the admission of the Vatican into the League of Nations and the close relations between other Catholic parties in South-Eastern Europe and many others. (Broklová, 1992; Vodička, 2003; Balík, 2007; Trapl, 2005)

Compared to the Social-Democratic or Republican Party, the People's Party lost a number of pre-war media, which were divided between Social Christians and National Christians, respectively. Christian-Social and Christian-National Party. It was e.g. Czech daily, which became non-political because it criticized the party for its political actions. However, on the other hand, three years after the creation of Czechoslovakia, new party media were founded: the newspaper Ľudové listy, denník Ľud, Hlas ľudu, České listy, Našinec, etc. (Trapl, 2005)

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Czechoslovak National Socialist Party (ČSNS) was created in 1897 as a reaction to the anti-state declaration of the Social Democrats on the Reich Council. On the left wing, the so-called of the Young Czech Party, a group was formed that described itself as national workers. It represented competition against the "non--national social democrats". The roots of ČSNS go back to the first year of Czechoslovakia, when it merged with several political entities at its convention. These were mainly the Federation of Czech Anarcho-Communists (later they switched to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia), several followers of the Czech Progressive Party (Realists) and the Czech Democracy group. At this convention, in addition to changing the name to the Czech Socialist Party, the program of Czech socialism was also adopted. Another name change occurred at the beginning of 1919, when it was renamed the Czechoslovak Socialist Party. It underwent its last adjustment at the congress in 1926, at which the final adjustment of the name to the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party was adopted. The name reflected the national and at the same time socialist demands of the Czechoslovak state. (Harna, 2005; Balík, 2007; Vodička, 2003; Cabada, 2005)

Czechoslovak socialists participated in all elections held during the Czechoslovakian era. The results clearly show that in the first elections to the Chamber of Deputies (1920) they won 8.1% and 24 parliamentary seats. In the context of the second election in 1925, they achieved 0.4% more than in the first, while achieving 28 parliamentary seats. Four years later, from a percentage point of view, they ranked at the level of 10.4% and acquired 32 mandates in the Chamber of Deputies. In the last elections in Czechoslovakia, on the contrary, they weakened and won only 9.2% and 28 mandates, which is 1.2% less than in the penultimate elections.

So, it is clear that they had the best result in 1929, while the worst was in 1920. (Dějiny zemí Koruny České II., 1992)

The following can be included in the category of key representatives: Václav Klofáč (editor of Narodné listy and party chairman), Eduard Beneš (foreign minister), Emil Franke (main creator of the program), Jiří Stříbrný (journalist), Františka Plaminková (member of the party's program commission), etc. In program questions, the National Socialists connected the national ideology with the social reform vision and tried to distinguish themselves from the Marxist ideology. The program document of the Czechoslovak socialists addressed mainly small entrepreneurs and was socially oriented to a significant extent. Among other things, he emphasized revolutionary goals and focused on the fight against exploitation. He also demanded social equality and justice or the separation of the state sphere from the economic sphere, that is, he opposed the so-called state socialism. The separation was to be guaranteed by an economic chamber that would function alongside the political chamber. Other fundamental measures included:

- promoting the idea of the Economic Senate and decentralization in production,
- transfer of nationalized means of production to the management of immediate producers or their trade unions/consumers – avoiding the shortcomings of central state collectivism,
- separation of church and state and the fight against the excessive influence of churches in education,
- the fight for national freedom and significant interventions by the state in the economy,
- reconstruction of capitalism to socialism and expropriation of the private sector for compensation,
- abolition of the wage system and political or social equality and many other measures. (Cabada, 2005; Harna, 2005; Broklová, 1992; Balík, 2007; Vodička, 2003; Cuhra, 2006)

The Czech National Socialists followed up on many press media from pre-republican times. The dailies České slovo, A-Zet, Telegraf were among the most important during the Czechoslovakia era; weeklies Prague Illustrated News, Hvězda, etc. In addition to the national print media, regional ones were also significantly successful: the revue Budoucnost, the daily České slovo, the monthly Národní kultura. Trade union media were also successful – the theoretical monthly Socialist Work, Slovak Worker and others. (Harna, 2005)

Political parties of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia 1938–1945

The Second Czechoslovak Republic can be defined as the period from the Munich Conference (September 30, 1938) to mid-March 1939. It was therefore a relatively short period of time, which was characterized by the occupation of the remnants of the territory of the first Czechoslovak Republic – the Czech part – by Hitler's Germany and the subsequent establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. There was also a loss of sovereignty, which was mainly reflected in the creation of the Slovak state. (Balík, 2007)

In accordance with the declaration of Slovak autonomy, there was also a strengthening of authoritarian trends in the context of policies in all parts of the state. There was also an increase in separatist tendencies, especially in Slovak politics. Under the pressure of Nazi Germany, the secession of Slovakia from Czechoslovakia and the subsequent occupation by Nazi Germany of territories that still belonged to the Second Czechoslovak Republic took place. In connection with the thought process of after Munich political subjects, it should be pointed out that the ideological basis of Czech political parties was the belief that the liberal (tolerant) first republic was doomed to failure, primarily because of its democratic regime and the resulting crises – social, economic and parliamentary. The solution to this situation was supposed to be the simplification of the party-political scene, which would mean the creation of a monopoly (Czech) party that would no longer rule Czechoslovakia by democratic but authoritarian methods. (Vodička, 2003; Cabada, 2005)

Also, the nationalist slogan of the unification of all national political forces became an important argument for the transition to a different party-political system. In addition, the after Munich representatives at the time sought to get closer to Italian corporatism and, based on that, built on its system – by limiting the number of party entities, which the first Czechoslovakia "suffered" from – instability, dominance, even party dictatorship. Party plurality was seen as ineffective and complicated. Although it was considered problematic, views on the party system emerged, through three models of political parties – one-party, two-party and three-party models. The first model counted on one dominant party, while the second model counted on two parties – right-wing and left-wing. The third model meant – right-wing block, centre and left-wing grouping. The most advantageous model for an authoritarian democracy was a two-party model – a government and a loyal opposition party. (Holzer, 2005; Balík, 2007)

From the point of view of the political and party system, it was a period of gradual transition from the democratic traditions of the First Republic to authoritarian--totalitarian social elements. It was supposed to be the so-called the concept of authoritarian democracy, which was not supposed to contain pre-Munich political elements, which the political community believed to be dysfunctional and ineffective. One of the solutions was the restriction of political and partly also civil liberties in favour of estate corporatism. However, the abandonment of these principles

did not mean a complex transition to a totalitarian society, while it was more about the start of tendencies that led to a one-party system and censorship, i.e. to an authoritarian regime. (Balík, 2007)

The party system of the Second Republic followed up on the so-called polarized pluralism of the first republic. It was characterized mainly by an unreduced proportional electoral system, a significant number of party entities, as well as many anti-system parties and many other features. In addition, during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, several political entities – movements, organizations, and parties – appeared. (Holzer, 2005)

In the period of the so-called Several organizations (unregistered political parties) operated in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which were directly inclined towards German Nazism or Italian fascism. This category includes, for example, the National Brotherhood, the National Fascist Community, the National Fascist Camp, the Flag and Action of the National Revival (creation of the Czech National St. Wenceslas Committee), the Czech Aryan Movement. Among the official and primary political parties, there were mainly the National Socialist Czech Workers' and Peasants' Party (Green Swastika Party), the National Aryan Cultural Unity, the Czech Fascist Party, the Moravian National Socialist Party and many others. The party system of the Second Republic included two dominant political parties – the National Unity Party and the National Labor Party. (Mareš, 2005; Holzer, 2005)

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The Party of National Unity and its creation is associated with the period of the end of 1938, when several pre-Munich political entities directly participated in its founding, or National League, National Unity, National People's Party or Christian Socials, Czechoslovak People's Party and others. The party of national unity was primarily led by politicians of the pre-Munich Republican Party, and on that basis, it was a conservative-right party. Rudolf Beran became the chairman of the party, and other posts in it were filled by: František Hodač, Jiří Stříbrný, Otakar Klapka, Jozef Černý and others. (Balík, 2007; Cabada, 2005)

The program priorities of right-wing politicians within the Party of National Unity focused on several key issues. Party supported the ideas of authoritarian democracy and nationalism. It therefore wanted to achieve enforcement of the new constitution – expressing national unity and the rule of the people through a stable parliamentary majority,

- rebuilding the state according to the model, the so-called of Italian corporatism – estate order (six estates – agriculture; industry and trades; finance and trade; transport; liberal professions and civil servants),
- the reorganization of the state administration and the establishment of a chamber of estates for each of the six estates, as well as the establishment of two trade unions – employees and employers,
- introduction of electoral procedure and exclusion of fragmentation of political life,

- building a system of controlled economy and proportionate restriction of Jewish and other elements,
- partial nationalization of agricultural land, but also preservation of private property and business,
- cooperation with the Third Reich and demarcation towards the Soviet Union,
- dissolution of anti-religious associations and unions, but also introduction of labor camps. (Balík, 2007; Kuklík, 2005)

The National Unity Party, like other political subjects, had its own internal press – News Service of National Unity Party, daily newspapers – Venkov and večer, newspaper Večer, revues and magazines – Brázda, Cesta, cultural and political papers – Lumir, Národní obnova, Tak; revue Fronta a Znova. Another important press was Čin, Den, Pražské noviny, Přítomnost, Lidové noviny and many others. (Kuklík, 2005)

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The National Labor Party was founded at the end of 1938, when Czechoslovak social democrats and national socialists began to integrate into a single, comprehensive left-wing political party. In the framework of political development, it also represented a moderate, loyal opposition to the Party of National Unity. The party was therefore led by former politicians from the ranks of social democracy or the National Socialist camp. These were, for example, Antonín Hampla (party chairman), Jozef Macek, Jaromír Nečas, Jozef Petejdl, who were also members of the presidency. (Kulíšek, 2020; Balík, 2007, Cabada, 2005; Kuklík, 2005)
From a programmatic point of view, the newly integrated leftists advocated:

- public administration reform and assistance to immigrants from abroad, as well as the rule of law and democracy,
- the policy of cheap money in the credit area and the reform of taxes and the banking sector,
- civil liberties, fundamental freedoms and social justice,
- support of private but also public business and public works,
- the fight against inflation, deflation and publicly available education for everyone, regardless of financial conditions,
- the equal rights of women and men in the economic and political spheres and the support of technical progress,
- better protection of workers in case of incapacity for work and more effective protection of workers' health, adequate remuneration of workers and proper housing, health and recreational opportunities,
- promoting neutrality in relation to foreign countries and good relations with all neighbours. (Balík, 2007; Kuklík, 2005)

The most important press organ of the National Labor Party was the daily Právo lidu from the period before the Munich Agreement. At the same time, its name was changed to the daily Národní práce. Other important newspapers and media included: the daily Národní osvobození, Hlas lidu, the revue Naše doba, the four-teenth daily newspaper Nová svoboda, the magazine Hlas mladých and the monthly Dělnícka osvěta. (Kuklík, 2005)

Party system 1945–1948 in the era of people's democracy

All the political trends that participated in the resistance against the Nazi regime were thinking about the post-war arrangement and the inevitable changes in the in-ternal policy, but also in the foreign policy of Czechoslovakia. These considerations resulted in practical measures that achieved a change in the political system within Czechoslovakia. In other words, the traditional model of pre-war democracy was modified and directly changed after 1945. (Kocian, 2005)

The political-party system (1945–1948) had three stages of development. The first was National Socialist (1945–1946), during which the foundations were laid – limitation of political competition, confiscation of property and its nationalization, devastation of the middle class, liquidation of self-government, etc. The second represented a phase of apparent balancing of forces (from mid-1946 to mid-1947) and was characterized by the "superficial" emancipation and growth of self-con-fidence of non-communist parties, but at the same time by the infiltration of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia into decisive state institutions. During the final phase, there was a transition to a qualitatively higher developmental stage of the communist government – the nationalization and removal of the non-Slavic popu-lation. (Balík, 2007)

In the party system between 1945 and 1948, the National Front played a dom-inant and key role, which was created on the basis of the revitalization of some Czech political parties – the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), the Czecho-slovak People's Party (ČSĽ), the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) and the Czechoslovak the National Socialist Party (ČSNS), as well as the Slovak political parties – the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) and the Democratic Party (DS). The establishment of the National Front (NF) preceded the agreement of the governments-in-exile, or centres of Czech politics in London and Moscow. Rep-resentatives of the National Front also participated in the adoption of the Košice government program in 1945. (Cabada, 2005)

It was therefore the cornerstone of the party system within the political system of Czechoslovakia 1945–1948. The National Front (NF) also represented the so-called a coalition of permitted political parties and some large social organizations. Resolved, or decided unanimously, while its fundamental element was the absence of any political opposition. He also decided on the creation of new parties and on some important areas of state policy – the unquestionable alliance with the Soviet Union and uncritical nationalization measures and many others. The basis of the

NF became the Socialist Bloc – a conglomerate of three socialist parties, which included Czechoslovak communists, social democrats and national socialists. The NF was characterized by the control of government activities. Based on the powers of the NF, it is appropriate to specify that these were limited competences – a non-polarized system or a closed plurality. (Housková, 1994; Balík, 2007)

The party system in that period cooperated with the democratic elections that took place in 1946. Within the framework of elections as a basic feature of democratic regimes, there were also various and key freedoms – assembly, press, religious, judicial freedom, independent control of the government and many others. Despite the fundamental role and position of the National Front, civil society and public opinion formed a fundamental component in society. (Kocian, 2005)

After the elections, governments of all parties in the National Front were formed, and this system of limited pluralism disappeared with the resignations of non--communist ministers, and the communists, with the support of the People's militias, mass unions and many organizations, dominated politics throughout Czechoslovakia. Among the most important political parties that functioned in the period in question were the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party and the Czechoslovak People's Party. (Cabada, 2005; Kocian, 2005)

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The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) was founded based on the split of the more radical members of the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Labor Party in May 1921, when the Constituent Assembly was held, which confirmed the establishment of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic and accepted the conditions for joining the Communist International. After accepting the demands of the Communist International (KI), the KSČ acquired the status of an international party, which was also reflected in the official name change to the KSČ – Section of the Third International. The party consisted not only of communists, but also of anarchists, social democrats and other left-wing radical groups. (Marek, 2005; Vodička, 2003)

During the Second Republic, the Communist Party of the Czech Republic operated within the National Labor Party, which united rather left-wing political entities. It was also successful in maintaining its continuity and existence during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, as well as the wartime Slovak state. Although on the one hand the leadership of the Protectorate ordered the dissolution of the KSČ, on the other hand it did not achieve a positive effect, because the KSČ went underground, and a large number of its leaders took refuge abroad. From exile, or of the Soviet Union, she joined the active fight against Germany and switched to legal activity during the Slovak National Uprising. (Pernes, 2005)

The Communist Party of the Czech Republic soon achieved the status of the strongest party entity, which had considerable support from the Soviet Union. It was also a party that dictated the political program and controlled potential deviation from official communist policy. During the Moscow negotiations, she managed

to accept the so-called Košice's government program, which incorporated the ideas of the National Front and people's democracy. Already after the end of the World War II, the belief in the possibility of a peaceful change of the economic system from capitalism to socialism dominated the party. (Balík, 2007)

In the case of the program, until 1948, the KSČ meticulously and strategically avoided public questions about the program focus and direction for the so-called the third Czechoslovak Republic. The program, on the one hand, was not clearly formulated, but on the other hand, it identified as its political program of the government of the National Front from 1945. Among the main priorities were nationalization and support of the nationalized sector or limiting the growth of the private sector. The KSČ, like many other political parties, controlled several press organs that promoted and shared its views on society. The two largest media included Rudé právo and Pravda. (Pernes, 2005; Housková, 1994)

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The Czechoslovak National Socialist Party has been active since 1926, when its name was changed from the original "Czechoslovak Socialist Party" (1919). In the period after the Munich Agreement, the ČSNS was significantly marked by the political decisions of the time, because the representatives of the ČSNS "split" in opinion. Part of the members joined the Party of National Unity, and the remaining part joined the National Labor Party. During the Second World War, the party actively cooperated in the overthrow of the Nazi regime, especially by participating in the civil national resistance, and its members became victims of cruel Nazi acts. The ČSNS resumed its activities in about the middle of 1945, while the renewal was preceded by a meeting of domestic and foreign representatives of the party in the same year. (Kocian, 2005, Harna, 2005)

In the years 1945–1948, the ČSNS became the second strongest political party, which was one of the parties that formed a direct opposition to the Communist Party. The decisive representatives of this party were: Milada Horáková, Karel Moudrý (pre-war party secretary), Petr Zenkl (party chairman), Hubert Ripka, Jaroslav Stránsky, Prokop Drtina (ministers of the government of the "third" Czechoslovakia, who resigned in 1948). Even though she had many views identical to the communists, they differed on the question of the necessity of Marxism or class socialism. In its election program, the party promoted the development of economic democracy and pointed to the necessity of three types of ownership of the means of production – private, cooperative and nationalized. She also advocated for the preservation of political and economic plurality and the rights of the individual, as well as the rejection of both the liberal pre-war and the post-war revolutionary--radical system. (Balík, 2007; Kocian, 2005)

Following the example of the KSČ and ČSNS, it had a range of media that were an important tool of its policy. Based on this, the ČSNS followed up on the pre--Munich media, which sympathized with or were directly subordinate to the National Socialists before 1938. It was because of this that some media were renamed or replaced – the Czech word was replaced by Slobodné slovo; Lidové noviny was

renamed Svobodné noviny. However, the weekly Svobodný zítřek (a new medium) and several others, more of a regional and regional type, were created. (Kocian, 2005; Československé dějiny v datech, 1986)

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The Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party and its establishment date back to 1918, when the former name "Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Workers' Party" was changed to "Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Workers' Party". After the Munich Agreement, a large group of members of the Social Democracy decided to emigrate abroad, to work in politics from an exile position and to support efforts to overthrow the Nazi regime. (Kuklík, 2005)

While during the so-called in the second Czechoslovakia, it was integrated into the National Labor Party, after the Second World War it resumed its activity as an independent political party within the National Front, which brought together several relevant political subjects. Like the National Socialists, the Social Democrats were victims of Nazi crimes, mainly imprisonment in concentration camps and Nazi prisons. In 1945, the name was changed, while the adjective "workers" was removed to make it politically accessible to a wider range of voters – the middle class, not just the lower class. (Vošahliková, 2005)

In terms of power relations at the national level, it was the weakest party among the four largest – the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party and the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party. The election result in 1946 also depended on the position of power. The election results for the Social Democrats were negative, mainly because the KSČ was successful in taking over or losing most of the Social Democrat electorate to its side. The decisive personalities of the social democracy were party chairman Zdeňek Fierlinger (he replaced Antonín Hampla, who died in a concentration camp), party chairman Bohumil Laušman, František Tymeš, Ludmila Jankovcová, Václav Majer – ministers who remained in the government with the communists) and others. (Housková, 1994; Balík, 2007; Vošahlíková, 2005)

Election program, or the political program of the social democrats, emphasized democracy and socialism. In the interest of this idea, they supported the nationalization, the revision of the land reform. They also tried to reach the middle class, the so-called small entrepreneurs and self-employed people – by protection from competition and provision by social laws. In the issue of the press, social democracy followed up on many of its pre-war media – the daily Právo ľudu, but also with the creation of several new regional or regional dailies – Nový deň, Stráž severu, Mladý socialista, Organizátor. The cultural and political revue Cieľ was also important. (Vošahlíková, 2005)

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The Czechoslovak People's Party (ČSĽ) was founded in 1919, when it was renamed from the original Moravian-Silesian People's Party. After the Munich Agreement, it was integrated into the Party of National Unity within two strong political parties during the Second Czechoslovakia – the Party of National Unity and the National Labor Party. After the Second World War, party worked in the so-called The National Front as the only non-leftist party that was not even part of the Socialist Bloc. (Trapl, 2005; Cabada, 2005)
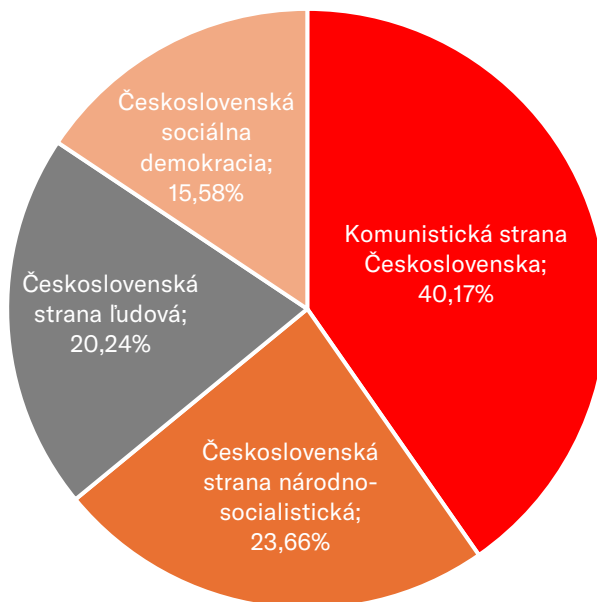
In the limited party spectrum of the third Czechoslovakia, it represented the most right-wing political party, and its relatively significant position was based on the reputation of the Catholic Church (direct domestic resistance against the Nazis) and on the experience of exile in London, during which the People's Party led the Czechoslovak government in exile. ČSĽ was also the only civil party in the Czech lands that was allowed to operate. During the war, several officials and rank--and-file members of the ČSĽ joined the anti-Nazi resistance, and several of them were also imprisoned. (Balík, 2007; Trapl, 2005)

Leading Czech populists were: Ján Šrámek (party chairman), František Hála (party vice-chairman), Adolf Klimek (party general secretary), Helena Procházková (member of the more radical wing of the party), Alois Petr (supporter of the party left) and many others. The People's gained control over most of their pre-war media, while several new ones were also created. The most important were: the daily Lidová demokracie (replaced Ľudové listy), Odborová demokracie, Rolnická demokracie and Delnícká demokracie (weeklies), the daily Národní obroda (replaced Deň), Osvobozený Našinec. The two weekly magazines Obzory and Vývoj were also important. (Balík, 2007; Trapl, 2005)

The graph below shows the results of the parliamentary elections to the Constituent National Assembly in 1946 for the Czech part of the republic.

The data in the graph above shows the percentage of votes, while the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia took first place with a gain of just over 40%. The National Socialists finished second, winning about 17% less than the Communists. Third place was taken by the Czechoslovak People's Party, which won about 3% less than the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party. The Czechoslovak Social Democracy took the last place with a profit of 15.58%.

Grahp 3 Voter support of Czech political parties in the 1946 elections

Komunistická strana
Československa;
40,17%

Československá
sociálna
demokracia;
15,58%

Československá
strana ľudová;
20,24%

Československá
strana národno-
socialistická;
23,66%

Source: Electoral systems, 2009 (own processing)

Communist monopartism in the Czech part of republic 1948–1989

The party system 1949–1989 was characterized by the dominance of one political party – the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), which had a decisive position in the political and party system. The totalitarian control of the state by the communists was preceded by the takeover of political power, still in the democratic system of limited pluralism in the years 1945–1948. (Vodička, 2003)

The rise of the communists to power after 1948 enabled the interruption of the previous political pluralism, the democratic state form and the principles of the rule of law. While in the post-war period of the third Czechoslovakia, the National Front took the form of a people's democratic coalition, after 1948 the situation changed – it became an organized institution with lower bodies and an apparatus, and thus the determination of the political line of the state was taken over by the Communist Party after him. In addition, society was built on the principles of a dead civil society and the subordination of various organizations to state authorities. One of the national organizations was the trade unions, which began to act as an instrument of communist policy on the same scale as the media, which disseminated official ideology, eventually promoted government policy and "formed" public opinion. There

was also the elimination of control mechanisms – elections, relevant courts, public opinion, and vice versa, the power position of the repressive elements increased. (Kocian, 2005)

The KSČ proceeded to control power by intervening against the non-communist parties within the National Front – the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Czech National Socialist Party (it was renamed the Czechoslovak Socialist Party) and finally the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party (it was forced to merge with the communists). These parties were subjected to severe persecution, judicial processes and internment. By eliminating any opposition, the KSČ became a true state party, which built the party system of the dominant political party and its satellite partners – the Czechoslovak People's Party and the Czechoslovak Socialist Party. Satellite political parties had only the formal status of political parties, and the communists controlled their activities and their programs had to be in accordance with the official policy of the Communist Party. In addition to these facts, the leading role of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic and communist ideology was also enshrined in the constitution of the state itself. (Cabada, 2005; Vodička, 2003)

The political-party system itself had three main periods. In the first phase (1948–1953), the society was massively mobilized, ideology intervened in all areas of social life, social and political pluralism was excluded, and the idea of leadership played a key role. The second period (1953–1958) was a textbook example of a quasi-totalitarian and consultative-post-totalitarian form of regime. In other words, the leading role of the Communist Party was preserved, the absence of a strong and competitive opposition, the important role played by bureaucratic groups – the party and civil service apparatus. The third was the period of relaxation (1958–1968) and it became an important part especially from the point of view of a greater degree of group conflict, the leading role of the party remained a dominant factor in politics, but there were also sharp disputes between party factions – there were differences of opinion within the KSČ itself. The last period already represented a certain intention to democratize the state (1968) and was an exemplary practice for the onset of democratic elements – freedoms and human rights. However, this rise was ended by the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops. Within the party system in the years 1948–1989, there were several political parties, among which were the Communist Party of the Czech Republic, the Czech Socialist Party, the Czech Socialist Party and a few others. (Balík, 2007)

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The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has become the leading and decisive force not only of the National Front (subordinating all political parties in it), but also of the Czechoslovak state and society since 1948. In society, it managed to successfully dominate all mass organizations and associations. A significant point was also the merger of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic with the Social Democrats, which enabled the unification of the "worker" forces, while it was not a voluntary merger, as the Social Democrats were forced to do so under constant terror and intimidation. It was based on the unification of social democrats and

communists that an ideologically complicated entity was created, in which they found their place – orthodox and reform communists, who were closer to social democracy. An important representative of the reform wing was Alexander Dubček, who sought to restore democratic principles in cooperation with socialism. (Balík, 2007; Vodička, 2003)

From the point of view of program measures, it is possible to clarify that the KSČ intended to implement several radical steps. The period of the communist era was a period of several economic changes, the most severe of which occurred right after the communists came to power. On the contrary, a certain relaxation and the onset of possible economic reforms came during the era of Alexander Dubček and his "socialism with a human face". His quasi-concept of human socialism and his policies were opposed by Antonín Novotný, who represented the orthodox wing of the Communist Party. (Dějiny zemí Koruny české II., 1992; Vodička, 2003)

Among the most important representatives of the Communist Party were: Klement Gottwald (party chairman 1929–1953), Rudolf Stránský (general secretary 1945–1951), Antonín Novotný (successor of Gottwald), Miloš Jakeš (successor of Gustáv Husák) and many others. The Communist Party of the Czech Republic published its first official program in 1949, and its key measures included: nationalization of industry, support of heavy industry and industrialization at the expense of lighter ones, interconnection of markets within the "people's democratic states" through the RVHP, planned economy modelled after the Soviet Union, massive agitation for the entry of peasants into the United Agricultural Cooperatives, the gradual collectivization of the countryside and agriculture. The liquidation of the private sector and trades, the nationalization of companies with more than 50 employees and the nationalization of companies operating in various segments of the economy (wholesale, construction, foreign trade, tourism) were also important policies of the Communist Party. (Dějiny zemí Koruny české II., 1992; Mahoney, 2011; Balík, 2007)

In addition to macroeconomic measures, the communists also focused on the social and labor law area, in which they pushed for free social and health insurance, free health care, the introduction of factory catering, regulation of rent and energy prices. As already mentioned, the economic measures of the KSČ were changed and modified under the influence of other circumstances. For example, in 1967 there was decentralization of the management system, restoration of the role of the market in the planned economy, material involvement of enterprises in the results of management, efforts to overcome equality in income. At the same time, the KSČ action plan was also adopted, which was even bolder and proposed a number of reforms that would change the essence of the communist regime: the guarantee of classical political rights and freedoms, the creation of space for social initiative, the guarantee of interest pluralism based on the National Front as an integration platform for the formation of opinions, enabling democratic debate, federalization of the Czechoslovakia, restoration of order and discipline, opening of the Czechoslovak economy to international competition, limitation of subsidy and protection policy of the state, structural changes in the production sphere, expansion of worker's rights through the creation of democratic bodies in enterprises, maintenance

of a planned economy, price and intervention policy on the socialist market, full freedom of scientific research, humanization of culture. (Šedo, 2005)

In the case of the press, it is necessary to clarify that freedom of the press did not exist within the Eastern Bloc and the media were directly subordinated to the communist governments. The same was true after 1948 in Czechoslovakia, in which the communists took over the information flows as well. Based on this, already established media were established or connected, and the central press organs of the KSČ became Rudé právo and Pravda. In addition to the main media, there were also regional or sectoral ones – Nová mysl – Marxism-Leninism revue, Politika and Tvorba magazines and others. (Šedo, 2005)

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The Czechoslovak Socialist Party was created by the transformation of the original Czechoslovak National Socialist Party in the same year that the KSČ seized power in Czechoslovakia. Members of the former ČSNS were persecuted and deprived of their political ranks, or position. The establishment of the ČSS was therefore a certain initiative of the communists, who were particularly thorough in the selection of members of this satellite political party – they had to go through strict checks by absolute and unelected action committees. Programmatically, the party signed up for the building of socialism and for the closest possible relations with the Soviet Union. Its ideological starting points flowed mainly from the fact that it was a subordinate and satellite party, which had to identify its activities with the politics of the Communist Party. Within the press, it had several media outlets, the most important of which were Svobodné slovo and Socialist Direction. (Křížek, 2005; Balík, 2007)

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The Czechoslovak People's Party underwent a large-scale transformation, which was influenced by external actors – the communists. Already at the end of 1947, the cooperation of the socialist parties with the communists ended definitively, and they thus found themselves in a unified block of all non-communist parties, including the Czechoslovak Communist Party. With parliamentary elections to be held in 1948, the Communists pressed and escalated their demands. There were persecutions of the democratic parties and the ČSĽ was labelled as a reactionary party, which only reflected that the communists were no longer interested in an agreement at the government level. Ministers from the Czechoslovak Republic continued to refuse to submit to most communist ministers in the government and submitted their resignations together with two other parties. (Lukeš, 2005)

Programmatically, the populists strove to restore Christian-social policies from the beginning of the 20th century and were at their most free during the Prague Spring, during which they demanded a return to a pluralist political system. Until then, the party was limited to working in cooperative agriculture, charitable activities, peace activities, etc. Under the influence of the communist totality, the

Czechoslovak Republic could not freely spread its ideas through various press organs that functioned before the communist or fascist era. Despite this, during the Prague Spring, she managed to establish a connection with the newspaper Lidová demokracie and for a certain time assert her views. (Balík, 2007)

The system of Czech political parties in the years 1989–1992

The new party system of the Czech Republic began to be born immediately after the events of November 17. The changes in the Czech party system were initially associated with a significant increase in the number of parties and movements that had the intention of establishing themselves in the emerging party system. Already on November 19, 1989, the Civic Forum was established, and social democracy was restored. In addition, the existence of three-party groups was a characteristic feature of the strengthening party system. The first group included parties that resumed their pre-communist activities (Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party). The second group consisted of party entities that continued to operate because they were tolerated even during the communist regime (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia, People's Party of Czechoslovakia). The third group consisted of entities that were created after November 1989 – Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia and many others. (Pšeja, 2005)

It is necessary to clarify that the emerging system of political parties after 1989 was an important element for the consolidation of democracy and for its later effectiveness and quality. As already indicated, the fall of the communist regime led to the re-emergence of a pluralistic system of political parties. Despite this, the creation of a party system within the Czech Republic was a long-term process influenced by several internal factors. It was mainly related to the twenty-year development of dissident groups during the period of communist Czechoslovakia. (Lawson, 2010; Mareš, 2000; Kunc, 2000)

The system of political parties in the Czechoslovak Federal Republic can be described as more stable than in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but nevertheless fragmented or atomized. It received this epithet because the Czech and Slovak party scenes were closely linked but developed essentially independently of each other. This manifested itself, for example, in the existence of two powerful party entities – Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, or also in the different transformation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Communist Party of Slovakia. The collapse of the Eastern bloc and the communist regime in Czechoslovakia also opened the way to regularly recurring democratic elections, which played a cardinal role in the development of the party system in post-communist Europe. In Czechoslovakia, the 1990 elections were the first ever free elections since 1946. On the floor plan of the parliamentary elections, Civic forum, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Christian and Democratic Union, Movement for self-governing democracy – Society for Moravia and Silesia entered

the Czech Chamber of Deputies. The profits of the mentioned political entities were distributed to the two chambers of the Federal Assembly and the Czech National Council. (Lewis, 2001; Havlík, 2012; Fiala, 2003)

Tables 11th, 12th and 13th contain data, including the percentage result and the number of parliamentary mandates acquired for Czech political parties in the first post-November parliamentary elections in 1990.

Tab. 11 Results of the 1990 elections to the House of People of the Federal Assembly

political parties	% share	number of mandates
Civic forum	53,15%	68
Communist Party of Czechoslovakia	13,48%	15
Christian and Democratic Union	8,69%	9
Movement for self-governing democracy – Society for Moravia and Silesia	7,89%	9

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Tab. 12 Results of the 1990 elections to the House of Nations of the Federal Assembly

political parties	% share	number of mandates
Civic forum	49,96%	50
Communist Party of Czechoslovakia	13,80%	12
Christian and Democratic Union	8,75%	6
Movement for self-governing democracy – Society for Moravia and Silesia	9,10%	7

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Tab. 13 Results of the 1990 elections to the Czech National Council

political parties	% share	number of mandates
Civic forum	49,50%	127
Communist Party of Czechoslovakia	13,24%	32
Christian and Democratic Union	8,42%	19
Movement for self-governing democracy – Society for Moravia and Silesia	10,03%	22

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Two years later, the second democratic elections were held, and their results brought some changes. The winner of the election was the Coalition Civic Democratic Party and Christian Democratic Party (ODS-KDS).

Following the 1990 elections, the electoral gains of the political parties were divided into three assemblies – the House of People of the Federal Assembly, the House of Peoples of the Federal Assembly and the Czech National Council. (Fiala, 2003)

Tab. 14 Results of the 1992 House of People's Federal Assembly election

political parties	% share	number of mandates
coalition of the Civic Democratic Party-Christian Democratic Party	33,90%	48
coalition Left Bloc	14,27%	19
Czechoslovak social democracy	7,07%	10
Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia	6,48%	8
Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party	5,98%	7
Liberal-Social Union	5,84%	7

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Tab. 15 Results of the 1992 House of Nations Federal Assembly election

political parties	% share	number of mandates
coalition of the Civic Democratic Party-Christian Democratic Party	33,43%	37
coalition Left Bloc	14,48%	15
Czechoslovak social democracy	6,80%	6
Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia	6,37%	6
Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party	6,08%	6
Liberal-Social Union	6,06%	5

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Tab. 16 Results of the elections to the Czech National Council in 1992

political parties	% share	number of mandates
ODS-KDS coalition	29,73%	76
the Left Bloc coalition	14,05%	35
Czech Social Democratic Party	6,53%	16
Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia	5,98%	14
Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party	6,28%	15
Liberal-Social Union	6,52%	16
Movement for self-governing democracy - Society for Moravia and Silesia	5,87%	14
Civil-Democratic Alliance	5,93%	14

Source: Czech Statistical Office

In the party system of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic, a key role was played by several established and relevant political parties, which belonged to several main ideological families. Ideological families included – communists, social democrats, or socialists, Christian Democrats and conservatives. On a practical level, these families were represented by the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, the Czechoslovak Social Democracy, the Christian Democratic Union – the Czechoslovak People's Party and the Civic Democratic Party. In addition to the primary ideological families, families of liberal and radical parties, extreme right-wing, peasant, environmental, regional or ethnic parties were also used within the party system of Czechoslovakia. Within the framework of a closer description, two political parties with diametrically different values can be mentioned in particular: the Citizens' Democratic Party and the Czechoslovak Social Democracy. (Mareš, 2002)

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Civic Democratic Party (ODS) represents one of the successor political entities that arose after the breakup of the "ideological hybrid" of the Civic Forum (OF). It consisted of a stream grouped around the former chairman of Civic Forum Václav Klaus, who had a vision to reshape and modify the ideological essence of the movement into a new purely right-wing conservative political entity. With his ambitions, however, he got into a dispute with the left-liberal and socialist part of the OF, which resulted in the demise of the OF in February 1991. The ODS has been the strongest right-wing party in the Czech Republic for a long time since its creation in February 1991. This is evidenced mainly by the election results, which show that ODS won the second election within the Czechoslovak Federal Republic with a considerable margin. Above all, it enabled it to participate in the economic and social transformation of the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. (Mareš, 2002; Cabada, 2005; Pšeja, 2005)

Programmatically, throughout its existence, the ODS advocated the concept of a "lean or limited state", which implies the promotion of the free market, respect for private property, reduction of the state apparatus and bureaucracy, as well as personal responsibility and individual freedoms. In addition, party rejected the deficit state budget and the indebtedness of the country. On the other hand, it promoted the simplification of the tax system, the introduction of a flat tax (15%), the merger of income and consumption tax (VAT), the implementation of pension reform and the privatization of state assets (transportation, healthcare, social services, etc.). In foreign policy, it emphasized national interests. In relation to the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) it took a positive stance, while towards the European Union (EU) it was Eurorealist (rejection of the EU federation and the loss of national identity). The social policy ODS was supposed to lead to equality of opportunities and employment, not to redistribution. It also promoted a social and market-oriented economy and described itself as a conservative-right party that combined elements of economic liberalism with a strong emphasis on Christian and conservative values in the social sphere. (Mareš, 2002; Cabada, 2005)

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Czechoslovak social democracy with the original name "Czechoslovak social--democratic worker's party" was established in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, the so-called of the first republic belonged to important political subjects. After World War II, it was part of the National Front, but in 1948 it was forcibly merged with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ). The Social Democrats were not deterred by this and continued to operate in exile under the leadership of Jiří Horák. During the so-called During the Prague Spring, a futile attempt was made in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to restore a full-fledged ČSSD on the territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. After November 1989, the ČSSD became legal again and continued its pre-war tradition and policies. The historical experience of the ČSSD proves that there are also social democratic parties on the political "front" within the post-communist states, which were not created by the reform of the communist parties. It gradually became the strongest left-wing party on the Czech political spectrum. Its strength was particularly evident in the 1998 and 2002 parliamentary elections. (Cabada, 2005)

The goal of the ČSSD's policy throughout its entire political career is the creation of a welfare state that would ensure well-being and a dignified life for the widest possible social strata. Based on this, at the program level, efforts are being made to implement several fundamental elements: social justice, solidarity and ecological responsibility. It also enforces relatively extensive social security, and the enforced measures also follow from this, e.g. progressive taxation of the income of natural persons and property, regulation of the economic sector (refusal of privatization in the areas of energy, transport, water management, healthcare, education, etc.), protection of employees and their participation in the management of enterprises, responsibility of the state for health care or education and social services (free higher education etc.). In the international sphere, it prefers integration into European and world structures of the social democratic and socialist type and strongly supports the entry of the Czech Republic into the EU and, with reservations, into NATO. (Mareš, 2002; Cabada, 2005)

Final comparison
of the Hungarian, Czech and
Slovak party systems

Political parties represent a socio-political phenomenon influenced by contemporary social circumstances of specific countries. The culmination of the power tension, first between the monarchs, the nobility and the progressively more important bourgeoisie, was first manifested in the countries of Western Europe with the English Revolution in the 17th century. It served as a "model" for the Great French Revolution. Among other things, their result was the defeat of absolutism. At the same time, however, it was necessary to curb revolutionary political violence on the other side. This need created the political dictators Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte. However, the political system they created was only a new "non-legitimistic absolutism" that limited the revolutionary gains of freedom to varying degrees, time and area. The power competition between supporters of political legitimism (nobility) and human rights and freedom (bourgeoisie) was transferred to the parliament, even in view of the increasingly destructive and exhausting war conflicts after the Napoleonic Wars. The existence of parliaments themselves, also in the form of assemblies and national assemblies or estates, was still a medieval affair, but it was not until the 19th century that political power was transferred here. Parliaments were not yet politically equal to monarchs and their executives in this period, but it was in the second half of this century that the development of political parties and mass politics took place.

The effort to make the monarch and the executive accountable to a constitution formulated by the legislature was a key issue in the national-liberal revolutions of 1848–1849, which affected most European countries. And it was the attitude of various political groups – among them conservatives and liberals represented in parliaments – that represented the germ of political parties in the political conditions of the Habsburg Monarchy.

The political map of the Austria-Hungary from 1867 was highly fragmented and dynamic due to the representation of nationalities, class interests, ethnic groups and religions. The Czech party system developed within Pre-Lithuania. Political parties on the territory of Bohemia and especially on the territory of Moravia had their organizational platform, while Czech and Moravian MPs from these parties cooperated in the Diet of the Kingdom of Bohemia (the Czech Land Diet in Prague) and in the Vienna Reichstag. The legislative assembly of Cisleithania, including the territory of Slovakia, was the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest.

The revolution in the years 1848–1849 was key to the emergence of political parties in both parts of the Habsburg Empire. Focusing on Czech, Hungarian and

Slovak political representation, we can conclude that Hungarian politics was among the more dynamic and modern from the middle of the 19th century – as evidenced by political activities in the form of the creation of the first political parties – the Conservative Party already in 1846, against which the liberal Opposition Party stood out. In the middle of the 19th century, the Radical Party and the Resolution Party were still formed.

Czech countries experienced the revolutionary years less hectically. The Czechs and Moravians behaved loyally towards the Habsburg royal family, while the Moravian nobility strongly supported them and at the same time had great political influence at the royal court. Successive political reforms from the beginning of the 1960s brought a revival of parliamentarism in Pre-Lithuania, which naturally brought with it a revival of political parties – in the Czech political environment, so far only honorary ones. The first political party here was the National Party (Staročesi), which in the following period was affected by secession in the form of the formation of the National Party of Free Thought.

Slovakia from the revolutionary years 1848–1849 and later from the so-called of the Austro-Hungarian settlement came out as politically defeated among the compared nationalities. The revolutionary demands of the Slovaks for their own neighbourhoods and the Diet were not heard by the Habsburgs due to the absence of political independence and other circumstances. Slovaks were represented by only a few deputies in the Hungarian Diet and later formed part of the parliamentary group of non-Hungarian nationalities. Despite this, the Slovak National Party was founded in 1871, but it demonstratively survived the greater part of the 19th century in political passivity. According to Rokkan's theory of building a modern state necessary to subsequently overcome the theoretical thresholds of democratization (Hlouček – Kopeček, 2004), the phases of state and nation building can be considered fulfilled only in the case of Czechs and Hungarians. The Slovaks were "only" part of the Kingdom of Hungary (an unachieved level of state building) and as a modern European nation they claimed their political rights with revolutionary declarations, until the end of Austria-Hungary they were supposed to represent a part of the Hungarian political nation (an unachieved level of nation building). Nor do we consider S. Rokkan's third level of democratization – the development of mass politics – to be fulfilled in Slovakian political conditions, not only due to the existence of universal suffrage, but also due to the organizational independence of Slovak political parties arising from the secession from all-Hungarian political parties (socialists and populists) and about the deliberate inactivity of the Slovak National Party.

Due to the unfinished Rokkan's phases of state building, individual thresholds of democratization were subsequently not possible. We therefore agree with statement Lubomír Kopeček: "The process of party structuring, which had only progressed slightly before the World War I, gained a fundamental impetus in 1918. Several factors were reflected in it. The key one was undoubtedly the establishment of a democratic regime, i.e. Almost immediate achievement of all four thresholds of democratization, including the introduction of universal suffrage for women as well." (Kopeček, 2006). The same author also draws attention to the fact that, until

the end of Austria-Hungary, there was no separate party system in Slovakia, but only an underdeveloped party subsystem that was formed in the era of the first Czechoslovak Republic.

The first comparative conclusion is that while the Czech and Hungarian party systems were fully developed until the end of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1918 and had their own regional subsystems (we compare the Moravian subsystem to the Czech system and the Slovak subsystem to the Hungarian system), the Slovak party system in the same period represented poorly developed subsystem. Although it developed after 1918, due to the lack of its own parliament, it can be paradigmatically considered a developed party subsystem within Czechoslovakia. The short post-war period 1945–1948 represented limited party pluralism. A full-fledged competition of political parties prevailed only after 1990 in all three countries. While the Czech and Hungarian party systems can be considered fully developed from the end of the 19th century, the Slovak party system has only been functioning this way since the end of the 20th century.

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Political party theory analyses political party systems through several sociodemographic and historical factors. To fulfil the aim of the monograph – i.e. the comparison of party systems – we will further evaluate the systems of Czech, Hungarian and Slovak political parties with a focus on the competitiveness of the system, the number of political parties and affiliation to ideological families.

The competitiveness of the party (sub)systems was not the same. Since its inception, the Hungarian party system has contained a higher degree of competition due to the presence of antagonistic political views of conservatives and liberals. They fundamentally differed politically in their view of Hungary's independence in relation to the Habsburg royal family. By the end of the 19th century, dozens of other political parties representing liberal, civil, anti-Semitic, and agrarian positions supplemented their different views on it.

On the other hand, in Czech politics in the same period, the political views of Czechs and Moravians were dominantly represented by old and young Czechs, Christian socialists and agrarians, who, however, occasionally cooperated purposefully for ethnic reasons – so the competitiveness of the Czech party system was limited.

In Slovak politics, only the Slovak National Party achieved its own organizational independence by the end of the 19th century, which demonstratively interrupted its activity with political passivity, while providing a political background for the people (Slovak socialists failed in their attempt to become independent), therefore we conclude that the poorly developed the Slovak party subsystem did not have a competitive nature.

The interwar period represented a fully competitive period in all three (sub) systems. In the Czech, Hungarian and Slovak systems, dominant agrarian-national, socialist, communist, popular and, since the 1930s, far-right political parties competed for power. The only difference is the existence of openly anti-Semitic political

parties in Hungary, while political anti-Semitism until the end of the 1930s in the Czech and Slovak environment represented an additional opinion appearing in several political parties. For this period, it can be stated that ideologically related political formations occurred in all party systems and in a similar number. The systems were even characterized by related political processes at approximately the same time – in Slovakia, shortly after the World War I, nationalists and agrarians tried to integrate, but the attempt failed. In Hungary, the Christian-National United Party and the National Peasant Party merged, which after the merger formed the Unity Party.

After the breakup of Czechoslovakia, political parties under the indirect control of Nazi Germany formally came to power at various times. In the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia there were two parties – the National Unity Party and the National Labor Party, and in the Hlinka Slovak People's Party, in which the political parties of Germans and Hungarians formally operated. Hungary formally maintained a plurality of political parties until 1944, but after the intervention of Nazi Germany for several months with tragic consequences, the radical Arrow Cross Party – the Hungarian movement – gained power.

A short period of "people's democracies" in Central Europe was enough to restore party plurality – partly based on interwar political parties, but to a limited extent. In the Czech, Hungarian and Slovak environments, the renewal of political competition manifested itself differently – while the Czech party system "went to the left", Hungarian political parties were more in favour of political agrarianism and civil democracy, while Slovakia remained popularly oriented.

Even the period of communist totality did not proceed identically in all three countries. While in Hungary the original Communist Party of Hungary ceased to exist and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was established after an unsuccessful anti-communist uprising, the Communist Party of Slovakia was subordinate to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which liberalized in the 1960s and after the intervention of the Warsaw Pact troops in 1968 was one of the most conservative communist parties in Central Europe. At the same time, the Hungarian communist regime operated in the form of the well-known "goulash socialism", which, for example, allowed a greater degree of private economic activity, and at the end of the 1980s it was among the first countries of the Eastern Bloc to begin dismantling the totalitarian regime.

After 1989, there was an "explosion" of new political parties in all three monitored countries. Some of them were part of the "revolutionary shout" and disappeared relatively quickly, another part of political parties tried to continue the tradition of interwar political parties (like after World War II), but new political parties became more successful. During most of the 1990s, civil-democratic and liberal political parties were successful in the Czech Republic and Hungary. A similar trend was also manifested in Slovakia, but the Slovak civil-democratic and liberal parties remained in a minority position. National-populist and conservative political parties were more dominant.

In the party systems of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, in the first half of the 1990s, all ideological families of political parties were represented from an ideological point of view. According to the number of party entities, they belong to multi-party systems, while in different periods, according to Sartori's classification, all systems tended towards limited or extreme pluralism.

The Slovak party system, despite the historical circumstances of its creation in the conditions of Hungarian politics and strong pressure of Magyarization, which included the promotion of the idea of a unified Hungarian political nation and later political Czechoslovakia, can be described as politically unique or original and cannot be described as related to the Czech or Hungarian system of political parties. Slovak political Catholicism, as a dominant force until the end of the World War II, had its origins in the Catholic Party of Hungary, but the same ideological direction was not dominant either in the Czech Republic or Hungary, as the agrarian orientation prevailed there. The Slovak left (both social democratic and communist) was nationally oriented, while the Czech and Hungarian left had an international character. While civil democracy dominated in the Czech Republic and Hungary at the beginning of the 1990s, national populist parties gained more voter confidence in Slovakia. The comparison of the party systems of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia ultimately does not confirm the hypothesis of historical influence on the appearance, form and functioning of social institutions, but indicates a greater importance of socio-demographic, cultural and confessional conditions.

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