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**„Impact of Internationally Broadcasted Information
Transmission of Radio Free Europe to Czechoslovakia in 1968-1989“**

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1. Introduction

Media and transfer of information have had a profound influence on our world. Access to information has influenced the success of an idea, result of a battle, or development of societies. Radio in particular has created a revolution in being able to cross the boundaries of space and shortening the time between an occurrence of an event and when reporting on this event reached the population. In the course of the 20th century, radio has become an instrument not only for information, but also for propaganda and psychological warfare. For instance, in 1929 Radio Moscow, the international broadcast service of the Soviet Union was founded, and in 1932 the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) began broadcasting internationally. During the World War II, the first large-scale use of international radio broadcasting occurred, when Nazi Germany's radio propaganda was countered by broadcasts of BBC and Radio Moscow.¹ Countless scholars have dealt with the successful history of a particular radio program: Radio Free Europe (RFE), which in 1951 began broadcasting to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

Authors from the West have looked at a general history of RFE, looking at the way it worked and was part of the US policies. However, only recently have the scholars begun studying RFE and impact in the target countries, looking at both the context of US policies and the society to which RFE transmitted. Czechoslovak case in particular has not been widely studied.

There is no argument in the fact that RFE had a large influence on the population of Czechoslovakia in regard to access of information. However, in context of collective memory studies, it would open new perspectives on RFE, when scholars would try to see the influence exerted by the radio, by looking at the different carriers of memory and their possibilities to establish a new collective memory and identity. Through such perspective, research brings out questions, such as: did RFE influence the way Czechoslovak people perceived their history and identity? If yes, what were the changes in the collective memory and identity, which the RFE brought forth?

In this paper I would like to prove or disprove a thesis that in 1968-1989 RFE was a surrogate teacher of history in Czechoslovakia. In my paper I would like to look at two competing collective memories of Czechoslovakia in years 1918-1948 – one presented by the state and

¹ Anna Bischof, Robert Luft, Radio Free Europe: Research and Perspectives. An Introduction. In: Voices of Freedom – Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe (München 2015) 3.

the other presented by RFE. Under teacher of history, I mean that RFE was not only spreading information – it provided a counter-memory (a re-interpretation) of Czechoslovak history by broadcasts of various types of commentaries, which the people listened to, and possibly discussed. This counter-memory contained, among others, a history of the democratic tradition in Czechoslovakia. Such tradition was viewed in a positive light, which was in contrast with what was presented at Czechoslovak schools in the so-called normalization era. Furthermore, such counter-memory would also construct a different type of identity among Czechoslovaks.

How can this thesis be proved or disproved? As German historian Wulf Kansteiner writes, different readers, or in our case listeners, do not form “cohesive interpretive community, because they use the same media text for very different ends.”² Furthermore, as Kansteiner points out, radio listeners tend to forget the source of their memories of historical events. They do not remember where they have the information from.³ Therefore, it would not be possible to analyze the response and impact among former listeners, due to the fact that too much time has passed since RFE broadcast to Czechoslovakia during the normalization era. Thus, there needs to be a different way to prove the thesis than to conduct oral history interviews or questionnaires. That is why I would like to research the commentaries written and broadcasted by the RFE in 1968-1989 dealing with the history of Czechoslovakia in 1918-1948, as well as history handbooks published in the era of normalization which the students used in order to study history of the first Czechoslovak Republic, the era of protectorate/Slovak state, and period leading to the communist takeover of power in 1948. These objects of research are carriers of memory (available to the wider public) and thus a vital source of information for the study of collective memory. Commentaries have been widely heard and it is my sub-thesis that these could be comparable to handbooks in effectiveness of memory formation. Moreover, I also argue that due to the context in the country, people generally distrusted the official narrative (including handbooks), and preferred other sources of information (carriers of memory). Broadcasts were part of these alternative sources of information.

In my thesis I first discuss theories and methods used, as well as sources central to my research questions. Afterwards, I provide a contextual view of Radio Free Europe and

² Wulf Kansteiner, *Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies*. In: *History and Theory*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (May 2002) 193.

³ *Ibid*, 194.

Czechoslovakia in the given time period. The next chapter deals with the empirical part of the thesis, where the texts produced in the RFE and in ČSSR are compared in the light of the current historical narratives on the history of Czechoslovakia in 1918-1948. At the end, I present a conclusion of my findings.

2. Theories, methods and sources

2.1. Theory of collective memory

Through its broadcasts RFE was providing an alternative memory of the past to Czechoslovakia. In my paper I would like to study this memory using the theories of Aleida Assmann and her works on collective memory.

As Aleida Assmann remarks, institutions and groups have no such memory as individuals do – they create the memory for themselves with the help of memorial signs such as symbols, texts, images, rites, ceremonies, places, and monuments. This memory helps groups to construct their own identity. This kind of memory is founded on selection and exclusion of relevant and irrelevant memories - therefore, a collective memory is a mediated memory. According to Assmann, the success of a collective memory to take hold of people is dependent on the efficiency of the political pedagogy and the level of patriotic or ethnic zeal.⁴ Memories are differently constructed on the levels of individual, family, society, and nation. These levels can exist mutually indifferent, but they may also result in friction, and collide in counter-constructions.⁵

Individuals incorporate larger groups into their identity by referring to them as “we.” Every group is constructed through shared practices and discourses that demonstrate certain boundaries, and therefore, characterize the principles of inclusion and exclusion. The individual has to share and adopt the group’s history and participates in the group’s vision of its past by cognitive learning and emotional acts of identification and commemoration. This type of past has to be memorized, not remembered. The collective memory has to be acquired via learning – however, the identity of “we” is created only through internalization and rites of participation.⁶

⁴ Aleida Assmann, Transformations between History and Memory. In: Social Research, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Spring 2008), 55.

⁵ Aleida Assmann, Response to Peter Novick. In: German Historical Institute Bulletin, No. 40 (Spring 2007) 37.

⁶ Assmann, Transformations between History and Memory, 52.

In her writings, Assmann distinguishes four levels or formats of memory: (1) individual memory; (2) social memory; (3) political memory; and (4) cultural memory.⁷ Assmann writes that manifestations of political and cultural memory are based on more stable carriers of external symbols and representations. If one wants to transform a fleeting social memory into long-term collective memory, the memory has to be elaborated and organized in various forms: events have to be connected in an affectively charged and mobilized narrative (e.g. heroic or martyriological narrative including victory or defeat), there need to be visual and verbal signs that serve as aids of memory, transmission is done through institutions of learning and mass media, sites and monuments which serve as distinct relics and commemoration rites that regularly reactivate the memory and strengthen collective participation.⁸ When this is used in a political level, a state selects criteria which determine the construction of collective memory and identity in the past. In a frame of a national memory, only those historical referents are selected which strengthen a positive self-image and support specific goals for the future. What does not fit this pattern is passed over and forgotten.⁹

Assmann states, that political and cultural formats of memory are designed for a long-term use to be transmitted across generations. The achievement of this goal is dependent on the stability and continuity of the political infrastructure. Assmann argues that as time passes, a heterogeneous and ambiguous bottom-up memory is transformed into a much more explicit, homogenous and institutionalized top-down memory. The top-down political memory is researched by political scientists - the scholars examine collective units such as institutions, states and nations in order to find out how memories have been used and exploited for political action and the formation of group identities.¹⁰

Is this theory applicable also in case of Czechoslovakia in 1968-1989? Aleida Assmann notes that totalitarian states concentrate on a monopoly over truth and the past. Censorship has served the function to destroy rival media and carriers of counter-histories that threatened the stability of a uniform view and an authoritarian voice of history. Education is a vital part in the building of a nation-state: when students learn their history, they are transformed into a

⁷ Aleida Assmann, *Memory, Individual and Collective*. In: Robert E. Goodin, Charles Tilly (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (Oxford, 2006) 211.

⁸ Assmann, *Transformations between History and Memory*, 55 f. Assmann, *Memory, Individual and Collective*, 216 f., 218.

⁹ Assmann, *Memory, Individual and Collective*, 217.

¹⁰ Assmann, *Transformations between History and Memory*, 56. Assmann, *Memory, Individual and Collective*, 215.

distinct and homogenous collective. History textbooks are the vehicles of national memory.¹¹ In totalitarian states, such as the case of Czechoslovakia in the era of normalization, collective participation in national memory is enforced coercively through indoctrination and propaganda. In democratic states, national memory is circulated by popular media or in a public discourse. However, as Assmann notes, in both types of states memory relies on effective symbols and rites that enhance emotions of empathy and identification.¹² Furthermore, according to Assmann, the discourses on memory and identity in 1980s and 1990s were backed by a constructivist turn in the humanities, which was built on two basic assumptions. The first assumption is that cultural symbols (texts, images, rituals) and their media, which change over time, matter, since they play an important role in the formation of identities. The second is, that the past is always reconstructed according to the needs of the present. Thus, with an unstable present, reconstruction of a past is an open-ended project. With this reasoning Assmann argues, that the concept of collective memory can be applied to the societies of the late twentieth century. Assmann has also noticed that collective memory defines a collective self-image, which is constructed according to historical and political challenges. If it seems not to be changing, it means that the conditions persist – this is due to an obsolete self-image and a collective memory which has not been revised and reconstructed.¹³ In case of Czechoslovakia, I argue that the collective memory and self-image was already obsolete and thus, the image given by the RFE had a lot of potential, while the top-down political memory which I will research in the handbooks had already lost its power.

As Assmann writes, history of memory “analyzes the mythical elements in tradition and discovers their hidden agenda.”¹⁴ In memory studies myth may refer to an idea, an event, a person, or a narrative that has acquired a symbolic value and is engraved and transmitted in memory. In the language of memory research, myth is used to point out the differences between the object of historical knowledge and collectively remembered events. This new meaning has been created since historical events in their transformation to collective memory create myths (or collectively remembered history).¹⁵ Therefore, it is no surprise, that collective national memory always selects and manipulates certain bits of the national pasts - some events are suppressed, other elevated.¹⁶ Thus, I will be looking for history as well as

¹¹ Assmann, *Transformations between History and Memory*, 64.

¹² *Ibid*, 65 f.

¹³ Assmann, *Response to Peter Novick*, 34.

¹⁴ Assmann, *Transformations between History and Memory*, 62.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 68.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

fiction and mythical elements, in order to analyze the hidden agenda in sources of memory and its counter-memory: one of the questions in the research part is dedicated to narratives of victory or defeat, where myths tend to occur.

Assmann argues, that in the study of memory constructs, one should ask these questions:

“Why do memory constructs work? Why do they succeed to mobilize? Why do they find or fail to raise mass support and resonance? By which norms and bias are they chosen? What is included and what is excluded from the constructions of collective memory? What are the political consequences of such choices in the present and for future?”¹⁷

In other words, the central part is to look at the narrative and the way events are ordered and connected together by a political power. In my case these questions are relevant, since I will be able to point out the functioning and non-functioning parts of narratives of both memory and its counter-memory in Czechoslovakia.

Moreover, as Assmann argues, minority nations have memories of losers, crystallizing around defeats. These experiences of defeats can be part of seminal cores for collective memory, but they have to be, as described by Bernard Giesen, emplotted in a martyriological narrative of a tragic hero. These types of states, which have founded their identity on the consciousness of victims, commemorate defeats with pathos and ceremonies in order to keep the memory of a suffered abomination awake and thus mobilize heroic counteraction or legitimate claims of retribution.¹⁸ On the other hand, as Assmann thinks, moments of shame and guilt cannot be incorporated into such a narrative, since they destroy the construction of a positive self-image.¹⁹ In Czechoslovakia, I am trying to pinpoint these kinds of moments – how the topics of defeat, shame, guilt and martyrdom are being used.

Within the framework of collective memory I will study the society in which texts supporting the political memory were created and to which these were addressed (including texts supporting the counter-memory) – this is reflected in the set of aforementioned research questions. This will follow the approach proposed by Wulf Kansteiner:

¹⁷ Assmann, *Transformations between History and Memory*, 67.

¹⁸ Assmann, *Memory, Individual and Collective*, 217 f.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 218.

“We should conceptualize collective memory as the result of the interaction among three types of historical factors: the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame all our representations of the past, the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions, and the memory consumers who use, ignore, or transform such artifacts according to their own interests.”²⁰

With this approach I will try to give a bigger picture of how narratives have been created and used both in the state and in its rival, RFE.

2.2. Methodology

I have decided to use the method of close reading as the most befitting method which would yield the most results relevant for the theory used – since it aims at answering the question of meaning: what the text is about, what it means and what implications it has for the readers/listeners. I would like to complement this method with a contextual analysis (wide reading) – I would like to give insights which might have influenced the way the text was written (and, possibly, understood), namely by describing the history of Czechoslovakia and the context in which the texts were written. Contextual analysis will also help me understand the language of the text, which is specific for the given period. Thus, with this type of textual analysis I will be able to prove or disprove my thesis and answer my research questions.

Close reading is a formalist method used by the proponents of New Criticism. New Criticism focuses on the text itself - the critic analyses the textual idiosyncrasies. The method sets itself apart from other methods by not striving to recover the original intention or motivation of an author while writing a particular text. New Criticism aims to analyze a text on the basis of its dimensions – focus lies on phenomena such as multiple meaning, paradox, irony, word-play, puns, or rhetorical figures – these form interdependent links with the overall context.²¹ In my text I will precisely try to look for these phenomena, but I will try to create a discussion between these findings and findings which will emerge from the contextual analysis of historical handbooks and radio broadcasts.

The close reading methodology requires (1) reading and re-reading the given text, (2) taking notes of whatever catches the interest of a reader (about how the text conveys meaning), (3)

²⁰ Kansteiner, *Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies*, 180.

²¹ Wilfred L. Guerin et al., *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (Oxford, 2005) 96. Mario Klarer, *An Introduction to Literary Studies* (Routledge 2004) 85 ff. M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, (Boston 1999) 104.

thinking about the significance the text has, looking for patterns and contrasts (something that varies or is different), what kind of narrative it has, why it does it the way it does, (4) leaving the text be for some time to give oneself some distance, (5) reading the text and notes again in order to think critically about all that was produced in the first readings (which points seem the most convincing, interesting, and which seem implausible, which points support one another, which seem to contradict one another, how would the criticism of one's speculations look like and how would these be defended). Therefore, in the beginning it is important to look for figurative language: similes, metaphors, personifications, and symbols. Secondly, one has to concentrate on the word choice – some might be unusual, or stand out; others might come from a different language. Furthermore, tone and voice are also in the center of the analysis – one should look for words and the tones or voices these create, if the voice is formal or informal, if it sounds appropriate for the content, etc. Lastly, one should also look at the sentences – if they are long or short, what purpose they serve, or the particular word order, which gives a special meaning to one word or the other. Then it is important to understand what the author is trying to communicate. Therefore, one needs to ask the following questions: What is the text about? What kind of text this is? Who is addressing whom? Where and when was the text written? How precisely was it done? (What kind of language does it use?) Why was it written? Is the author trying to convince me of something? Is there something missing, that the author might have left out? (Why?) Is there anything that could have been explained more clearly? Is there a message or a main idea in the text and what could lead a reader to such conclusion? What if the text was changed – with a different point of view, different style, written for this time/period, adapted for another genre or medium? ²²

Some of these things will only be understandable with the knowledge of language of normalization and of the broadcasts. For this particular reason, there is a contextual chapter on the normalization era as well as on the way history is viewed now – free from the burden of propaganda.

²² Guerin et al., *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, 94 ff. Nancy Boyles, *Closing in on Close Reading*. In: *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Dec 2012 - Jan 2013) 39 ff. Rob Pope, *Studying English Literature and Language: an Introduction and Companion* (London ³2012) 41.

2.3. Sources

2.3.1. Primary literature

I would like to research the commentaries written and broadcasted by the RFE in 1968-1989 dealing with the history of Czechoslovakia, as well as a history book published in the era of normalization which the students used in order to study history of Czechoslovakia. Some commentaries have been published as books and are available in local libraries. Others are stored in archives, mostly in the U.S. Therefore, the chosen commentaries come from a narrower selection of documents. The most important criteria for selection of the commentaries were: (1) the commentary had to talk about an aspect of history of Czechoslovakia in 1918-1948, and (2) it had to be written in the normalization era. History book was provided for the thesis from a private contact. Both objects of research are carriers of memory (both available to the wider public) and thus a vital source of information for the study of collective memory. Commentaries have been widely heard and it is my sub-thesis that these could be comparable to handbooks in effectiveness of memory formation.

2.3.2. Secondary literature – History of Czechoslovakia

Secondary literature on both history of Czechoslovakia has several issues, which influence the study of these historical periods, namely (1) there are no up-to-date handbooks of history for schools in Slovakia, and those, which are in use, have been accused of being plagiarisms of Czech handbooks; (2) the Fascist Slovak state lacks thorough examination with a fresh point of view, and finds sympathizers even amongst some Slovak historians; (3) the history of the communist state requires a critical analysis as well, and research is critically underfunded. Thus, it is often hard to find literature which is free from communist or fascist sentiment, and at the same time does not paint the history of this time period in black-and-white. Furthermore, there is more reliable research found in Czech Republic, which, however, does not concentrate that much on the specifics of the Slovak history. Therefore, (1) this paper uses more sources from Czech authors and (2) some parts of Czechoslovak history discussed in this paper simply need citations from literature, which has not yet been published and so, contextual analysis has limits in possibilities of provided content: some events will be covered more than others.

2.3.3. State of the field - Literature on RFE

There has been a lot of literature written on the topic of Radio Free Europe in the west, even from the late 1950s. This literature concentrates mostly on the history of RFE as a whole, not on various sections. Such were Robert T. Holt's book "Radio Free Europe" (1958) or Allan A. Michie's publication called "Voices through the Iron Curtain: the Radio Free Europe story" (1963). Both authors used to hold management positions in RFE, both wrote general histories and focused on RFE's role in the politics and events of the Cold War. Their research was limited by the time period in which their books were written and RFE was still an ongoing project in the larger context of the Cold War. Julian Hale put broadcasting to wider context of propaganda in his work "Radio Power: Propaganda and International Broadcasting" (1975). Another book which concentrated on general history was written by Sig Mickelson - again, a former insider who held management positions: "America's Other Voice: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty" (1983).

After 1989 the authors on both sides of the "iron curtain" have tried to stop using the ideological Cold War schematics, archives were opened and communication between the western and eastern scholars intensified. However, memoirs did not cease to be published – for instance, a former broadcaster George R. Urban wrote a book "Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War Within the Cold War" (1997). Arch Puddington, a former deputy director of RFE in New York also provides a general history of RFE in his book "Broadcasting Freedom. The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty." (2000). In recent years the attention of western scholars has moved from describing and interpreting activities of radios (RFE, Radio Liberty, Voice of America, BBC, etc), to the listeners in CEE and impact of these radios on the audience. Example of such turn could be the article written by Johanna Granville, "Radio Free Europe's Impact on the Kremlin in the Hungarian Crisis of 1956. Three Hypotheses." (2004), which is one of the many examples of literature written on the topic of 1956 in Hungary and RFE's role in it. Another example could be A. Ross Johnson's (former director of RFE) book, "Setting the Record Straight. The Role of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956." (2006). R. Eugene Parta also represents this new trend of studies concentrated on the region. He wrote a book "Discovering the Hidden Listener (2007) in which he analyzes the impact of the broadcast in Soviet Union. Parta was a chief of research department in RFE/RL (a media analyst), yet another example of how many people who have studied RFE have been former employees. Just a year later, Richard H. Cummings, former director of security for RFE/RL, published a

book “Radio Free Europe’s “Crusade for Freedom”: Rallying Americans Behind Cold War Broadcasting 1950-1960” (2008) where he looks at the funding of RFE/RL and the involvement of the state involvement in the movement. The same year, Cummings published an article: “The Ether War: Hostile Intelligence Activities Directed Against Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and the Émigré Community in Munich during the Cold War.” (2008). Cummings concentrates more on the reactions of the RFE’s activities and security risks connected with broadcasting. Year later, he published a book called “Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950-1989” (2009), where he expands the topic he had presented in the aforementioned article, using archival material which was not available before. Year later, Parta and Johnson collaborated as editors on a book: “Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A Collection of Studies and Documents” (2010). This is again a book trying to show a concrete impact of broadcast on listeners in individual countries of Eastern Europe based on the audience survey. There were other east European researchers collaborating on the book but there was no Slovak or Czech scholar present, and so, there is not much written on the Czechoslovak audience. In her book “Radio Free Europe and its “First” audience, the Polish Communist Establishment” (2010), Jane L. Curry studies the reactions in the target country, but this time, it was the reactions of the government. In the same year, A. Ross Johnson’s book “Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond” (2010) uses data from the CIA, archival research in the U.S., Germany, Poland and Hungary, and interviews to research the origins and the role of RFE/RL in the greater context of U.S. national security strategy, mostly concentrating on the role of CIA and its covert organization and funding of RFE. Johnson looks in particular at the crises of 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia. One of the latest examples of literature written on Radio Free Europe could be the anthology published by Anna Bischof and Zuzana Jürgens: “Voices of Freedom – Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe” (2015). The authors include Cummings, Johnson, Curry, and other. The papers cover all the countries where RFE broadcasted, the view into the operation in RFE, as well as the background of RFE in the U.S. The publication also contains memoirs of contemporaries working in RFE. To conclude, the trend in research of RFE has been moving from grand history towards more specific and contextualized studies, with regard to reactions and impacts in countries, where RFE was broadcast to. However, most of the writers engaged with this topic have been former employees of the radio, which poses a challenge to the objectivity of their work.

There are only a few scholars in Czech and Slovak Republic, which have dealt with the history of Radio Free Europe, and the Czechoslovak department in particular. In literature after 1989, there are also memoirs, where one can get information about individuals or different time periods of the Czechoslovak editorial office. One of the earliest examples is František Smrček, who published his memoirs under his radio nick-name František Tomáš: “Je sedm hodin středoevropského času. Postavy a příběhy ze začátků Svobodné Evropy.” (1990). Following him was Jára Kohout, a comedian, actor and a businessman with his memoirs: “Hop sem hop tam.” (1991). One of the earliest works on RFE was written by Karel Sedláček: “Volá Svobodná Evropa” (1993), which was written in a popularizing tone and it served well at informing the public about the Radio. Dušan Tomášek and Karel Kaplan studied censorship in Czechoslovakia and offered their view which includes the early years of RFE: “O Cenzuře v Československu v letech 1945-1956” (1994). One year later, Karel Janovský-Drážďanský wrote his memoirs: “Svobodná Evropa ...a nyní se už hlásí o slovo Karel Janovský-Drážďanský” (1995), which adds to the collection of memoirs written by former employees of RFE. In the same year Slávka Peroutková, wife of Ferdinand Peroutka, a well known RFE broadcaster, was able to collect Peroutka’s regular radio commentaries for RFE in three volumes. This is one of the few published resources to history of Czechoslovak section: “Ferdinand Peroutka, denníky, dopisy, vzpomínky.” (1995). The same year František Smrček published another memoirs: “Nadzdvihování tíže. Z rozhlasové stanice Svobodná Evropa” (1995). There are also biographies of most important RFE journalists – book of Pavel Kosatík on Ferdinand Peroutka, the first director of Czechoslovak section “Ferdinand Peroutka. Pozdější život (1938-1978)” (2000). Slávka Peroutková also wrote her autobiography as a former employee of RFE: “Třiatřicet let s Ferdinandem Peroutkou.” (2005). The very same year Jozef Špetko, one of the Slovaks employed in the RFE published a book called “Človek v Sietiach. Slovenské slovo z rozhlasovej stanice Slobodná Európa” (2005). The book brings a view of a Slovak employee in RFE. One of the Czech scholars dealing with the history of RFE and who has not been a former employee of RFE, is Prokop Tomek. He has used mostly archival records of security forces of the former regime to write one of his studies, “Československé bezpečnostní složky proti Rádiu Svobodná Evropa : "Objekt ALFA".” (2006). In his book, Tomek concentrates on the activities of the communist regime against RFE in years 1951-1990. Two years later Tomek published an article, which concentrated on two important figures in Czechoslovak section of RFE and Voice of America – Jaroslav and Pavel Pecháček – “Na vlnách Rádía Svobodná Evropa. Příběh Jaroslava a Pavla Pecháčkových” (2008). The story of Pavel Tigrid, the second founding member of

Czechoslovak section, was published in many ways – an example could be an interview, which was done in 1992, but got published 18 years later: “Mně se nestýskalo” (2010). There is also an interesting dissertation of Pavel Paleček: “Protikomunistická propaganda ve studené válce. Výbor pro svobodnou Evropu a exil” (2010), where he wrote on the development of RFE and gives a lot of attention to the Free Europe Committee and its relationship with RFE. Paleček works with a very rich archival material stored in north-American and west-European archives and brings a lot of yet unpublished information – for instance financing of RFE. Next year, Marek Junek and col. published a book called “Svobodně! Rádio Svobodná Evropa 1951–2011” (2011). The book is an anthology, which portrays the history of RFE and many aspects of its operation. Two years later a new biography of Pavel Tigrid was written by a journalist - Pavel Kosatík: “Tigrid, poprvé. Průvodce osudem inteligentního muže ve dvacátém století” (2013). The book concentrates mostly on Tigrid and his activities (publishing a magazine called “Svědectví”), which posed a threat to the regime. One of the latest examples in Czech and Slovak scholarship is Tomek’s book “Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe. Historie a Vliv na Československé Dějiny” (2015). Tomek maps the history of Czechoslovak section in the Radio and also deals with the reactions of the Czechoslovak state. To sum it up, Czech and Slovak literature on RFE is mostly a collection of books which were written by former employees of RFE. Only several publications have gone outside of this pattern, and so the research field is still not saturated. Therefore, a topic of my paper follows the trend of looking at the impact of RFE, while trying to remain unbiased by glorification of RFE.

2.4. Definition of central concepts

I am going to use the term normalization (era) as defined in Juraj Marušiak’s study on the normalization era. There, Marušiak describes the term as “the specific local variant of the regime of ‘real socialism’ in the conditions of post-invasion Czechoslovakia in 1970s and 1980s.”²³ According to Marušiak, after 1968 the regime “was based on the restoration and consolidation of full control over society by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the elimination of any independent civic activities in public life and the restoration of Soviet supremacy over Czechoslovakia.”²⁴

²³ Juraj Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970. In: Laura Cashman (Ed.), 1948 and 1968 – Dramatic Milestones in Czech and Slovak History (Routledge 2010) 161 f.

²⁴ Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970, 161 f.

Throughout my paper I will use the terms “surrogate radio” or “surrogate teacher”. By surrogacy I mean broadcasting news and other content as a “home” radio, which would serve as a model of a free press in an imagined democratic state. In other words, RFE would show people, how news, analysis (of history) would sound like in a democracy.²⁵

I will talk about (collective) identity and memory and how they are intertwined, using the concepts and terms of Aleida Assmann. The basic assumption about identity is that individuals possess various identities, which depend on the groups they belong to (communities, belief systems, political systems, etc.). Memory is knowledge about oneself – either as an individual, or as a member of a family, generation, community, nation or a cultural and religious tradition.²⁶ Human memory is often distorting and unreliable. At the same time, humans cannot have an identity and communicate with others without memories.²⁷ Totalitarian states concentrate on a monopoly over truth and the past. Censorship has served the function to destroy rival media and carriers of counter-histories that threatened the stability of a uniform view and an authoritarian voice of history. In this sense, education is a vital part in the building of a nation-state: when students learn their history, they are transformed into a distinct and homogenous collective. History textbooks are the vehicles of national memory.²⁸

3. Framework

3.1. Czechoslovak section of Radio Free Europe in 1968-1989

3.1.1. Origins of Radio Free Europe

In order to understand the context of Czechoslovak broadcasters in RFE it is important to describe the origin of RFE in the United States, and to describe the various aspects surrounding the broadcasts. This information will be important in the wide reading of the given texts.

Radio Free Europe has been founded in a context of a rising crisis in the western and eastern blocs, in late 1940s, and the political development in Czechoslovakia in 1948 was one of the main impulses for its creation. The leaders of the US were strongly opposing the expansion of

²⁵ For instance used at: Susan D. Haas, *Communities of Journalists and Journalism Practice at Radio Free Europe during the Cold War (1950-1995)*. Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations, Paper 869, 5.

²⁶ Jan Assmann, *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. In: Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning (Eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, New York 2008) 113 f.

²⁷ Assmann, *Memory, Individual and Collective*, 212.

²⁸ Assmann, *Transformations between History and Memory*, 64.

communism and used three ways of resistance: economic, military and ideological – RFE became one of the substantial parts of the last one.²⁹ Marshall Plan is one of the prime examples of economic resistance, which helped stabilize the situation in Western Europe. Militarily, the US founded NATO which showed the will to defend Europe.³⁰

As part of the ideological resistance, several organizations were established in the US. In June 1948 the US National Security Council issued a directive ordering CIA to lead covert government operations against foreign hostile countries or groups, and to support allied states and groups. In August 1948 delegates from the CIA, State Secretary's office, Secretary for Defense, and Office of Policy Coordination met and decided to create a democratic and philanthropic NGO called American Committee for Free Europe in New York. This NGO was supposed to support refugee organizations in Germany by giving money, transmission machines, printing machines and equipment, which would be used to spread information to East European countries, mostly Czechoslovakia and Poland. Both the council and the exile groups were supposed to work independently.³¹

In 1949 the National Committee for Free Europe (NCFE) was founded in the US – the Committee consisted of politicians, academics and journalists. It cooperated with the US Government, while remaining formally independent and its role was to support chosen exile proponents and to ensure that these would have access to media. Its members had experience with American intelligence services, psychological warfare, propaganda, state administration, diplomacy or the army.³² NCFE aimed to help democratic proponents who had escaped from the communist persecution in Eastern Europe to the US. The Committee also wanted to use the radio, print and other instruments to spread information and to keep thoughts of personal and national freedom in the oppressed countries alive. Furthermore, NCFE tried to find possible means of cooperation of like-minded European exiles living in the US and to coordinate their plans. However, the texts of the committee never mentioned any direct support of direct fight for liberation of countries under communist rule.³³ The Émigrés were very important for NCFE's activities, especially RFE's: they had the knowledge and understanding of local culture and manners. However, they were sidelined from decision- and

²⁹ Prokop Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny* (Academia 2015) 33 f., 35 ff.

³⁰ Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe*, 34 f..

³¹ *Ibid*, 36.

³² *Ibid*, 35 ff.

³³ *Ibid*, 38 f.

policy-making in the first decade of RFE's operation.³⁴ This would be a recurring issue until the end of the Cold War.

As Prokop Tomek writes in one of his latest books on RFE, the NCFE was subordinate to the US Government in question of financial support, political directives and other types of assistance. At the same time, NCFE was independent in forms of its activities. Thus, it was a propaganda and information operation within the activities of CIA and American Government – never a direct espionage operation.³⁵ These relations between the Government, NCFE and RFE are the reasons why I argue that the topic of this paper is a global transfer of information.

Radio Free Europe was supposed to be only one of the projects of NCFE – there were plans for different activities on the field of psychological warfare: there were three executive committees subordinated to the main Committee. The job of the first one was to find out how the intellectual abilities of exiles were to be used. Exiles were working in the Library of the Congress and analyzed newly created legislation in the European totalitarian regimes. Others studied and commented daily newspapers behind the iron curtain. In 1951 Free Europe University was founded in Strasbourg and it was aimed at educating exiles and to prepare them for restoration of democracy in their countries. Due to mostly financial reasons the university was closed in 1958. Afterwards, the exiles were supported by scholarships at standard universities.³⁶ The second executive committee was founded sometime in June 1949 and concentrated on broadcasting and newspapers. It founded Radio Free Europe and it was supposed to send information and encouragement from exiles and proponents of nations from Western Europe. The broadcasting was supposed to be free from limits, which were imposed on the Voice of America by the government.³⁷ The third executive committee was supposed to support the understanding between exile proponents and American public. Émigrés were to understand the life in the US and American citizens were to have a possibility to hear directly about the life in totalitarian states. These émigrés travelled around the US and visited various radio shows and press conferences.³⁸ Therefore, RFE was not an isolated initiative – the radio

³⁴ Simo Mikkonen, The “Freedom Radios” in the US Cold War Strategy: A Discussion of the Projects and Objectives that led to the Establishment of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. In: In: Voices of Freedom – Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe (München 2015) 17.

³⁵ Tomek, Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny, 39.

³⁶ Ibid, 39 f.

³⁷ Ibid, 40.

³⁸ Ibid, 41.

was created as a part of an extensive propaganda project. The exiles were supposed to return back to their homeland once it was liberated and would help establish democratic societies.³⁹

As Prokop Tomek notices, one can read NCFE's general policy from the standpoint which the Committee published in 1952: NCFE was supposed to support the vital interests of American people, namely "the acceleration of liberation of oppressed nation in central and Eastern Europe from Communist slavery". The main aim of the NCFE was to use the radio and other instruments to encourage people in the eastern bloc. Another goal was to spread understanding between the people of "oppressed nations" as prevention against conflicts and for perpetual peace. The third point was to work with democratically thinking émigrés with an aim to help liberate their countries.⁴⁰ The Committee⁴¹ ceased its activities (together with all structures responsible for activities not related with the radio) in the early 1970s, when the organization of the Radio changed dramatically.⁴²

Funding of NCFE and RFE is one of the basic reasons why seriousness of RFE is being challenged. The opposition in the eastern bloc used the doubts surrounding the resources to criticize the RFE as a project funded and directed by the CIA. Thus, the project could be downplayed as a one-sided, propagandistic, and therefore a dubious operation. As Tomek argues, the proponents of RFE were denounced as those bribed in a non-transparent system, which was allegedly hostile to the inhabitants of countries targeted by its broadcast. Furthermore, NCFE was never profitable in terms of finances. Thus, the organization had to find ways to fund its activities. That is why, for the purpose of obtaining funds officially, the organization Crusade for Freedom was founded in 1949. The organization campaigned in 1950 and was able to get around 16 million signatures of American citizens, who signed a document called "the declaration of freedom" and gave financial resources to the organization for its fight against communism.⁴³ The campaign used stories of people from the eastern bloc who fled to the west with great success. For instance, the NCFE was able to buy an armored halftrack (a so-called "freedom tank") which was used in 1953 to get 8 people from Czechoslovakia to Bavaria. This tank was used in a New York parade in 1954.⁴⁴

³⁹ Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 41.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 44.

⁴¹ At that point, the NCFE was called Free Europe Committee – it changed its name in 1954. More at: Prokop Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny* (Academia 2015) 45.

⁴² *Ibid*, 45.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 47.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 48.

Even though such campaigns were extremely successful, RFE got most of its funding from the state budget. In 1960s, when it was published that money was coming from the budget of the CIA, it was very pleasing for the communist propaganda apparatus. However, the Radio was not an organic part of the CIA structure or a covert intelligence project. During its operation, RFE obtained a large amount of information. However, these came mostly from well-analyzed public sources, and in a lesser amount from interviews with occasional informants, refugees, and guests from targeted countries. RFE then published this information in broadcast or shared it with other journalists and scholars from the west, as well as with CIA. Communist propaganda was unable to prove that RFE employees were involved in some kind of espionage in targeted lands of broadcast. The greatest interest of CIA in RFE, which can be proven with tangible sources, was to protect the radio from other agencies of communist lands, which were planning infiltrations into RFE, kidnappings of journalists or assaults. However, the role of CIA in RFE will not be known until archives of CIA will be opened.⁴⁵ In 1971, the funding was officially criticized in the Senate - accessible data showed that CIA was paying for all RFE/RL expenses. The discovery of CIA's role in activities of RFE and RL led to adoption of measures which made funding of both radios more transparent.⁴⁶

RFE was only one project of many instruments of psychological warfare which were initiated at the beginning of the Cold War and was global in its nature – transferring information across the “iron curtain”. The radio employed Czechoslovak émigrés who would play a crucial part in the whole process, influencing the listeners and their perception of reality. The funding from the US Government was a problematic aspect – it shows that the radio has to be understood in a global context.

3.1.2. Beginnings of Radio Free Europe

RFE was situated in New York and Munich. At first, Czechoslovak section had its contributors producing from both the US and Munich. However, this model was not working, because people in New York were far from the context of Czechoslovakia. Thus, after some time both program and production were being created in Munich, which was optimal, since it received all the information from Czechoslovakia (newspapers, etc.) much quicker, which increased RFE's response time to any type of information published in the Czechoslovak

⁴⁵ Tomek, Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny, 48 f.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 54.

media.⁴⁷ In Czechoslovak section there were three management positions: director, assistant director (or acting director, if needed), and associated director. Since Czechoslovak section was made of two nations, there was a rule that if a director was Czech, assistant director was to be a Slovak and vice versa.⁴⁸

The testing broadcast for Czechoslovakia in Czech and Slovak languages was from the 4th of June 1950 to the 30th of April 1951. On the 1st of May 1951 the regular broadcast began and lasted until the 30th of June 1994. The testing broadcast was created in New York and these recordings were then transported with an airplane to Germany, where they would be broadcasted. At first there were only short recordings which were filled with music and information about planned broadcasting.⁴⁹

RFE had the largest Czechoslovak section from all the radios broadcasting to Czechoslovakia, the section consisted of Czechoslovak émigrés, broadcasted more than other radios, concentrated on domestic news of the target country, faced more reactions of the regime than any other station and it had a large amount of regular listenership among the Czechoslovak population.⁵⁰ In comparison to other foreign broadcast companies which were transmitting to Czechoslovakia, RFE was formally an independent institution and the strongest of all of these radios (broadcasting in Czech and Slovak languages) in terms of both finances and staff. It was the only foreign station which was from the beginning mostly oriented to what was going on in the country, to which it broadcasted. Furthermore, it also had its headquarters outside of US - the sponsoring country, and was formally independent from the US government.⁵¹

RFE could also be regarded as a center of Czech and Slovak exile culture abroad during the era of communism in Czechoslovakia. At the same time, the American directors were consciously keeping their distance from the political discussions and conflicts within the exile group.⁵² Therefore, the radio served as an informal platform for discussion of topics connected to the collective memory of Czechoslovakia. It is a question of this paper, which kinds of output these discussions had in the broadcasts.

⁴⁷ Prokop Tomek, *Československá redakce Radio Free Europe: historie a vliv na československé dějiny*. (doctoral dissertation. Karlova Univerzita Praha, 2012) 52 ff.

⁴⁸ Jozef Špetko, *Človek v sieťach: slovenské slovo z rozhlasovej stanice Slobodná Európa* (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2005) 226.

⁴⁹ Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 55 f.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 259 ff. The data are estimates – they illustrate that there was a large listenership in Czechoslovakia. However, it is impossible to track exactly how many people listened to the radio between 1951-1989.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 14, 33 f.

⁵² *Ibid*, 14.

3.1.3. Czechoslovak section: changing context and different directors

After the invasion of the Warsaw Pact, the Czechoslovak section was trying to keep its audience informed while avoiding any type of encouragement for active resistance.⁵³ During this period, the section often lacked strong leadership and almost none of the leaders were accomplished journalists. The Czechoslovak Service was not as popular as Romanian, Polish and Hungarian Services in their respective countries. In the Czechoslovak case, leaders did not use the opportunity of well-trained and experienced journalists who left Czechoslovakia after the failed Prague Spring. Thus, the listenership numbers fell in 1969. The only genuine journalist in the leadership of the Czechoslovak Service (in the early 1950s) was Ferdinand Peroutka, a writer and a journalist during the First Czechoslovak Republic.⁵⁴

After the Invasion of the Warsaw Pact, Jaroslav Pecháček (in office: 1965-1975) was leading the Czechoslovak Service of RFE. During his tenure, the Service was able to hire several prominent journalists, who had left the country – Karel Jezdinský, Sláva Volný (from Radio Prague), Milan Schulz (*Literární listy*), Jozef Jedlička (cultural philosopher and writer) and Lída Rakušanová. These became leading figures of the Service's main evening program, *Události a názory* (Events and opinions). Many Czech and Slovak listeners appreciated these newcomers and perceived them as competent interpreters of current developments.⁵⁵ In the framework of collective memory theory, this development gave the counter memory from RFE an advantage in production of high-quality carriers of memory.

Pecháček was succeeded by the former Slovak Commissioner of Information and leading member of the Democratic Party, Samuel Belluš in 1975. Belluš was trying to moderate the conflict between the 1948 and 1968 generation within RFE – those who began working at RFE earlier had a different view on Communism than the ones who came later, and the differences often led to tensions. Belluš also tried to work with the Slovak staff and their national temper (the topic of Czech-Slovak relations will be discussed in a subchapter later on). In the larger context, the practice of RFE was influenced by détente politics – when western countries took a softer approach towards the eastern bloc: there was mounting pressure on the RFE to change its policies and strategies, and to make them less confrontational. There were even discussions about relocation of the radio to the US, and

⁵³ A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. The CIA Years and Beyond* (Stanford 2010) 162.

⁵⁴ Martin K. Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe (1950-1995)*. . In: *Voices of Freedom – Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe* (München 2015) 243 f.

⁵⁵ Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe*, 244.

some even wanted to stop the broadcasts altogether. This would mean the end of a counter-memory production or at least a serious altering of its form. Furthermore, if RFE were to be relocated to the US, this would create more distance between the people and the radio. However, relations between the West and the East changed and became more confrontational in the 1980s with the era of U.S. president Ronald Reagan.⁵⁶ Reagan supported the global war of ideas. Therefore, RFE received more money from the US government. Moreover, people appointed into management positions usually shared the anti-communist agenda and encouraged commentaries which were confrontational to communist establishment in the Eastern bloc. This led to tensions and heated debates over how RFE (including the Czechoslovak section) and RL should operate.⁵⁷ In 1980s the majority of RFE's managers and editors had lived most of their lives in Western Europe and so their political views had been shaped by the European environment. They were not enthusiastic towards the new wave of aggressive anticommunism. Their economic views were mostly inclining toward social democrats and were unimpressed by Reagan's free enterprise initiatives.⁵⁸

The program of the Czechoslovak RFE Service was very rich and broadcasts were often repeated. In Autumn 1982 there were following programs broadcasted: the aforementioned *Události a názory* (Events and opinions), which brought information and commentaries to the situation in Czechoslovakia and in the world; *Odpolední informační magazín* (Afternoon information magazine); *Svět 82* (World 82); *Přehled tisku* (Overview of the press), which had its sources from the western newspapers; *Články týdne* (Articles of the week) summed up the most important topics in the western press; *Co se děje kolem vás* (What is happening around you) was reporting on what was happening in other eastern bloc countries; *Naši zpravodajové hlásí* (Our correspondents report); *Gong*; *Rozhledy* (Perspectives); *Dokumenty doby* (Documents of the era); *Problémy naší doby* (Problems of our era); *Úvahy časové a nadčasové* (Temporal and timeless reflections). There were also cultural programs, talks on new trends, on literature, music, and a historical calendar. Moreover, RFE broadcasted protestant and catholic services and masses, as well as meditations and Christian magazines. Last but not least, RFE also broadcasted sport magazines.⁵⁹ In 1984, RFE began broadcasting a series called *Rozhlasová univerzita* (Radio university) – broadcasts of major Czech and Slovak émigré scholars. The program was aiming at giving a different view which the official

⁵⁶ Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe*, 144 f.

⁵⁷ Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (The University Press of Kentucky 2000) 253 f.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 258.

⁵⁹ Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 174 f.

historiography presented.⁶⁰ Thus, with this shift, more and more carriers of counter-memory were developed and used against the already weakened top-down collective memory.

In 1982, when Belluš retired, the RFE Director James F. Brown was trying to find a new director, who would fit within the conservative profile and related requirements of the Reagan-appointees in charge of RFE's supervisory board in Washington (the Board for International Broadcasting – BIB, which was founded in 1973). BIB either refused to accept a candidate of Brown's choice or attempted to force him to accept someone the Board favored. In 1983 Brown decided to resign, because he disagreed with the aggressive foreign and broadcast policies of Reagan's administration (and his appointees in BIB) which in turn influenced RFE/RL. Therefore, due to disagreements between BIB and directors of RFE, between 1982 and 1989 the Czechoslovak Service had four directors – such changes had a negative effect on the stability and organizational commitment of the staff. The radio was falling behind in quality of its reporting - a report from this period (1983) created by the RFE's Broadcast Analysis Department concluded that during one sample week the Service did not cover one single domestic political event on the day when it happened – a few developments were only covered with a delay of several days. The report also mentioned the absence of creative leadership of several Service managers as well as their inability to deal with the Czech-Slovak differences. Furthermore, it recommended that the program should be livelier and lighter, which would be easier to listen to, even under heavy jamming.⁶¹ Thus, in 1980s the transfer of information was affected by the situation in the US and this situation influenced the creation of counter-memories in Munich.

Josef Schneider was the interim director of the Czechoslovak section until late June 1983, when he was succeeded by another interim director – Karol Belák-Berger. In December 1983 Otto Pick was appointed as Director of the Czechoslovak Service by the BIB. Pick was born in Prague, grew up in Great Britain, where he worked for BBC, taught political science and even became an administrator at the University of Surrey. Czechoslovaks greeted Pick's appointment with relief and approval, seeing him as a well-qualified intellectual who would bring more quality and variety to the broadcasts. However, Pick was asked to leave after less than two years in office. It is unclear what the reason was, but there were certainly problems with the aforementioned conflicts within the Czechoslovak Service – Pick witnessed rising

⁶⁰ Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 176 f.

⁶¹ Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe (1950-1995)*, 244 ff., 249. Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 144 f.

tensions between right-wing and left-wing (former communists, which were working for RFE), refugees from 1948 and 1968, Czechs and Slovaks, Slovaks and Slovaks (those who were in favor of Czechoslovakia and the idea of Czechoslovakism⁶², and those for independent Slovakia), Jews and Anti-Semites, etc.⁶³ Younger generations grew up in different conditions than the émigrés of 1948. The younger émigrés were not so enthusiastic about the tradition of the First Republic – they were brought up under different conditions, in a society which officially rejected the democratic past of the Republic, or it forbade any positive remarks on it.⁶⁴ Therefore, one can already see that a collective memory ingrained into the 1968 émigrés was in conflict with the collective memory of the older generation. However, in RFE these different traditions were to coexist together in a democratic setting – even though employees of RFE had differing opinions, they could stay and were, most of the time, not forced to leave and could discuss these topics –in Czechoslovakia this was not possible. The radio was a platform for discussion of topics which were suppressed back in Czechoslovakia. However, this freedom also had its challenges and threats, which will be described in the next paragraphs.

After Pick, BIB appointed Zdeněk Šedivý in March 1985. Šedivý used to work for Voice of America. However, he positioned himself as a Reagan-supporter, which was in contrast with many popular Czechoslovak broadcasters in RFE. Furthermore, another employee of RFE, Olga Kopecká, a Catholic conservative, who would become deputy director, had become influential in the approval of programs, which arose another source of conflict, since she was not willing to approve different types of programs, including a popular freelancers such as Swiss Protestant pastor and regime critic Svatopluk Karásek – he could only be broadcast on days when Kopecká was not in charge of program approvals.⁶⁵ All these clashes influenced the popularity of RFE in Czechoslovakia: in 1988, dissident and future Czechoslovak president Václav Havel wrote a long letter including recommendations for changes in program to Milan Schulz. Šedivý decided to ignore the letter – he even ignored the instructions by senior American management, which suggested changes in program content. In fall of 1988, Šedivý left and at the end of 1988 jamming ended. The Czechoslovak section

⁶² Czechoslovakism - the idea popularized by the first Czechoslovak President Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, which said that there is only one Czechoslovak nation with two branches and two dialects.

⁶³ Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe* (1950-1995), 246. Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny* 164 ff, 168 f.

⁶⁴ Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 152.

⁶⁵ Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe* (1950-1995), 247. Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 169 f.

was not in a good shape: according to the Czechoslovak regime's Institute for Public Opinion Research, in the spring of 1989 Voice of America reached approximately 35 percent of the population while RFE only 20. This corresponds with the estimates given by the RFE's Eastern European Audience and Opinion Research.⁶⁶

In 1988 A. Ross Johnson was appointed director of RFE and decided to offer the position of director of the section to Pavel Pecháček, the son of former Service director, Jaroslav Pecháček. Pavel Pecháček started his tenure in summer of 1989. He used to work for RFE as well as for Voice of America in Washington, where he led the Czechoslovak section. Pecháček was more liked than his predecessor by his employees. Pecháček was not a regular author in political programming, but he became very popular among RFE's listeners when he reported from the demonstrations in Prague in November 1989 – it was the first time a member of RFE's Czechoslovak Service was able to come to Czechoslovakia. It was the main, uncensored source of information on what was going on in Prague. This also helped strengthen his position among journalists in Munich.⁶⁷ This last era before the fall of communist regime was largely influenced by the end of jamming, when more people had access to RFE. Moreover, RFE received more calls and correspondence from Czechoslovakia than before. Thus, the broadcast became more attractive and up-to-date. New programs were created and there were fewer programs repeated.⁶⁸ In terms of collective memory, at this period the counter-memory was not only strong in its message, but the carrier of memory was more available than ever, and it could reach and affect more people.

This chapter has shown a brief overview of RFE's Czechoslovak section in 1968-1989 which is important for understanding texts written by radio's employees. The recurring issues at this period were the lack of qualified staff and even leadership, conflicts between generations, nationalities, leaders and the BIB, etc. The program was often rich, but news reporting was lagging behind at times. The broadcasting was influenced by the international politics – by détente and Ronald Reagan's confrontational foreign policy, thanks to which the radio received necessary funds. In the end, the radio became very influential during the velvet revolution thanks to the presence of a journalist in Prague and due to ended jamming, which made it possible for listeners in urban areas to listen to RFE. All these factors influenced the power of the counter-memory in Czechoslovakia.

⁶⁶ Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe (1950-1995)*, 248.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 248 f.

⁶⁸ Tomek, *Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny*, 179 ff.

3.1.4. Relations of Czechs and Slovak within RFE

The conflict between Czechs and Slovaks within the radio requires specific attention - the RFE's counter-memory of Czechoslovakia's collective memory is more complex, since it includes the history of two nations, which now are independent. As I have already mentioned earlier, the coexistence of two nations and idea of Czechoslovakism were significant factors in the performance of the Czechoslovak section of RFE. For instance, in the beginning of the radio applicants who favored the federation of the country or Slovak independence were not considered by the Czechoslovak Service.⁶⁹

However, the tensions changed in the mid-1960s when the American management endorsed the traditional Czechoslovak state but also proposed that the new system should put more emphasis on a fair division of power for Czechs and Slovaks in a federal state. In 1970s, RFE's Czechoslovak section was, in theory, free to pursue a more liberal policy regarding Slovak autonomy. This was, however, not supported by the management and the American supervisors. As Bachstein found out in his interviews with RFE's employees, Agneša Kalinová, a Slovak writer and translator who joined RFE in 1978, claimed that Slovak and Czech employees had difficult relationships in RFE – Czechs were sitting apart from the Slovaks. James F. Brown, research director and head of RFE (1978-1983) and deputy director of the in-house Central News Department, Barry Griffiths had similar remarks. These relationships were also influenced by the walkout in 1960 when most Slovak employees left in response to the conduct of a Czech short-term service director Oswald Kostrba-Skalický. Kostrba-Skalický attempted to dismiss eighteen Slovak members of staff whom he considered ringleaders during a protest action in RFE. The situation deescalated only after RFE Director Erik Hazelhoff was replaced by a retired General, G. Rodney Smith, who was able to calm down the Slovaks. In his research, Bachstein also sees that there were not enough Slovak professional applicants in RFE.⁷⁰ Slovaks also did not have a strong politically active émigré community in the US, which would help and support Slovaks and their ideas in RFE.⁷¹ In the beginning RFE hired several Slovaks, including Ľudovít Šebesta, Michal Múdry-Šebík and Karol Belák-Berger. Belák-Berger was working for RFE in Munich and tried to motivate several people whom he knew from his journalistic activities before he was forced to emigrate to join the Czechoslovak section, but without success. Furthermore, Belák-Berger was under

⁶⁹Bachstein, *The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe (1950-1995)*, 238.

⁷⁰Ibid, 239 ff.

⁷¹Ibid, 252.

tension from efforts of Slovak catholic exile organizations which wanted their people hired in RFE – these organizations were connected with sympathizers of the Slovak state, which existed during the Second World War, and, were oriented towards an independent Slovakia.⁷²

In his book, Jozef Špetko, a former RFE employee, analyses the challenge of Czechoslovakism. Špetko claims this idea had no place in RFE. According to Špetko, Czechs and Slovaks were united under the principle of political and cultural cooperation. Furthermore, Špetko confirms Bachstein's argument, that there were simply only a few competent Slovaks who were able to work in a radio station.⁷³ Pavel Tigrid, another employee of RFE described the Slovak part of the broadcast as having too much Catholic broadcasting and that the level of professionalism was poor.⁷⁴ In such situation, the counter-memory was mostly created and influenced by the Czechs, the main historical narrative was Czechoslovak - therefore, the tension surrounding the autonomy of Slovakia in Czechoslovakia was present not only in the minds of people in Czechoslovakia, but also in the radio programming. However, the discussion about it could only occur with Slovak journalists and scholars, which the radio often lacked. This is, therefore, one weak point of the counter-memory: the Czechoslovak narrative might not appeal to many Slovak listeners.

To conclude, relations between Czechs and Slovaks were complicating the operation of RFE and weakening the RFE's counter-memory. US foreign policy supported the idea of the continuation of the old Czechoslovak state – therefore, Slovak autonomy never became a topic in RFE's broadcasts. Lastly, the Czechoslovak section lacked good leaders who would be able to deal with the different tensions and conflicts within the Czechoslovak Service.⁷⁵

3.1.5. Reactions to the broadcasts

It is hard to say, how many people listened to RFE in Czechoslovakia during this period: according to East European Area Audience and Opinion Research, in 1984, RFE broadcasted a substantially greater number of hours per week to Czechoslovakia (144) than did the Voice of America (21), the BBC's External Services (20.5), or Deutschlandfunk (24). Weekly

⁷² Marek Junek, Slovenská redakce Rádia Svobodná Evropa. In: Marek Junek and col., Svobodně! Radio Svobodná Evropa 1951-2011 (Praha: Radioservis, 2011) 61.

⁷³ Jozef Špetko, Človek v sieťach: slovenské slovo z rozhlasovej stanice Slobodná Európa (Bratislava: Kalligram 2005) 313, 318.

⁷⁴ Pavel Tigrid, Mně se nestýskalo (Praha: Gutenberg 2010) 20.

⁷⁵ Bachstein, The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe (1950-1995) 252.

listenership in Czechoslovakia for RFE was estimated at 4.3 million in 1984.⁷⁶ Other sources say, regular listenership in Czechoslovakia in 1984 was between 7 and 9 % of the population – smaller than the aforementioned estimates - it was lower due to successful jamming (the interference was most intensive in urban areas, not in the countryside) and probably also due to the threat of sanctions against the listeners.⁷⁷ The listenership grew after the jamming stopped in December 1988.⁷⁸ The reliability of these sources can be questioned – therefore, it is important to support these data with a presence of reaction and collaboration from the side of the RFE's listenership, which also supports the thesis of this paper: the best type of teaching occurs when those who listen, collaborate, discuss and ask questions.

The listeners tried to contact RFE by various means and for different reasons: most of the time, people sent letters. However, from 1985 listeners could also contact RFE via a telephone and the Czechoslovak State security service was unable to monitor and intercept many of these calls (which are estimated at around 10 000). There was also a possibility to transfer information via a so-called Bohemia Press Agency, later renamed the Free Press Agency (FPA). It was led by an émigré Libuše Čěrovská and Zbyněk Čěrovský, her husband – from 1985 onwards the couple was in contact with a former inmate of Čěrovský (Čěrovský was jailed for sedition and when he left prison, he fled from ČSSR in 1984). The inmate, Josef Průša, was a defense counsel for political activists. Through Průša, Čěrovskýs were able to obtain information from the ČSSR, mostly concerning the political and cultural opposition, religious questions, and ecology. The couple passed this information on to RFE and other foreign media. They had at least three calls per day, more in times of more significant events, such as demonstrations – all in all they contacted more than 350 people from Czechoslovakia via telephone. Correspondents in Czechoslovakia (many of them were the leading figures of dissent - such as Václav Havel – future President of ČSSR) received money for providing information, and so did the FPA from RFE.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Tomek, Československá Redakce Radio Free Europe: Historie a vliv na československé dějiny, 259 ff. The data are estimates – they illustrate that there was a large listenership in Czechoslovakia. However, it is impossible to track, exactly how many people listened to the radio between 1951-1989.

⁷⁷ Ioana Macrea-Toma, The Intricacies of a (Cold) War of Ideas: Radio Free Europe from above and from below. In: Voices of Freedom – Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe (München 2015) 130. Prokop Tomek, The Response to RFE Broadcasting in Czechoslovakia: An Attempt at Evaluation. In: Voices of Freedom – Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe (München 2015) 220. Bachstein, The Unique Situation and Difficulties of the Czechoslovak Service of Radio Free Europe, 237.

⁷⁸ Tomek, The Response to RFE Broadcasting in Czechoslovakia: An Attempt at Evaluation, 220 f., 228.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 222 f.

The state responded by analyzing the contents of broadcasts (Czechoslovak Radio as well as services and information unit of the KSČ Central Committee), using propaganda against RFE and its broadcasters, jamming (interrupting the signal), and even by deploying agents and undercover collaborators to the RFE.⁸⁰

It is clear that listeners were trying to interact with the radio via various forms available. Some of these forms were even helping RFE with its operation, such as the case of FPA. The fact that the state took a lot of time, money and energy to respond to the broadcasts also shows that the state took the threat of broadcasts from abroad seriously. This interaction also fits into the parallel of RFE being a teacher of collective memory – not only do the “students” listen, they even interact by giving feedback, contributions to different topics and they even discuss the topics themselves. Further research could show specific cases, where RFE’s were referred to or discussed in the Czechoslovak samizdat literature.

3.2. Normalization in Czechoslovakia: 1968-1989

This subchapter will shift the attention from the radio to Czechoslovakia in the period of normalization. Language and content of texts which will be studied in this paper have been influenced by the context in which these were produced. This subchapter will answer the question of where the target group of the Radio was, what kind of collective identity and memory was present in Czechoslovakia and will help understand the way handbooks were written as well. It will also show the differences between the societies in the Czech lands and Slovakia.

3.2.1. Pretext of normalization – Prague Spring and Warsaw Pact army invasion

In order to understand the state of Czechoslovak society in the era of normalization, this chapter will concentrate on the Prague Spring and the reaction of the Warsaw Pact armies to this attempt of democratization. The democratization process had its roots before 1968 – it was the climax of various developments occurring in Czechoslovak politics. The process fully emerged after the assembly of KSČ’s Central Committee in January 1968. Antonín Novotný, first secretary of the Party’s Committee, a proponent of the Party’s conservative wing stepped down from his position and was succeeded by Alexander Dubček. This was the first time a first secretary was elected without the Soviet approval.⁸¹ This change was subtle and opened

⁸⁰ Tomek, *The Response to RFE Broadcasting in Czechoslovakia: An Attempt at Evaluation*, 223 ff.

⁸¹ Stanislav Sikora, *Rok 1968 a politický vývoj na Slovensku* (Bratislava 2008) 46.

up possibilities for further reforms, which were gradually being implemented. Another change was the election of Vasil Biľak as the first secretary of Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) during the KSS's Central Committee congress on 23.-24. January 1968. Biľak was an opponent to the policies of politicians, who were supporting Novotný. These reforms were bringing up change, which the Soviet Union refused to tolerate.⁸²

The Soviets reacted to the reform process with strength – the Warsaw Pact armies invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968. In the next months the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia swiftly restored and consolidated full control over society, began eliminating all independent civic activities in public life and renewed the Soviet supremacy over Czechoslovakia.⁸³

3.2.2. Reactions to occupation in Czechoslovakia

The presence of Warsaw Pact armies in Czechoslovakia and events surrounding the occupation stirred various responses in Czech and Slovak parts of the state. During the first days of the occupation, the Soviet troops killed and wounded many Czech and Slovak inhabitants, and these events caused an outrage among the population. The initial reactions of Slovaks to the Soviet invasion in August 1968 were similar to those of Czechs and demonstrations in autumn 1968 were comparable in nature. The resistance was led mostly by students: many schools in Slovakia took part at protests and different forms of civic resistance. However, over time it became clear to most students and teachers, that Moscow would be able to push forward with the socialism of Russian type under the leadership of Vasil Biľak, who served as the secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party's General Committee. Last greatest stand against the normalization politics in Czechoslovakia was shown in August 1969. After these protests ended, people were left with feelings of powerlessness and were searching for new ways of how to survive in the new regime.⁸⁴

In Czech lands majority of people was forced into open confrontation with the regime – not just students. In Czech lands there was even a generation sharing attitudes, experiences, and, as Marušiak puts it: “preserving a common generational consciousness.”⁸⁵ In his analysis of this era, Marušiak writes how normalization regime in Slovak part was different in its character – some former active protagonists of the Prague Spring had to openly express their

⁸² Sikora, Rok 1968 a politický vývoj na Slovensku, 49.

⁸³ Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970, 162.

⁸⁴ Jozef Žatkuliak, Perzekúcie učiteľov v rokoch 1948-1989. In: Zločiny Komunizmu na Slovensku 1948-1989 I. (Prešov 2001) 673. Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970, 163 f.

⁸⁵ Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970, 165 f.

self-criticism, and others had to abandon their pre-reform activities. Thus, the reason why Slovak part became so passive was, because the regime in Slovakia was more effective in integrating larger parts of society into official structures – which was not the case in Czech lands.⁸⁶

3.2.2.1. Emigration

A specific reaction to the occupation was the emigration phenomenon. The occupation of Czechoslovakia was followed by a vast wave of emigration. In time period between August 1968 and the end of 1969 round 60 000 Czechoslovak citizens left Czechoslovakia. In Slovakia more than 11 000 people left in 1969-1970. Out of this number, 245 people worked in mass-media, 218 were high-school teachers, more than 1100 students, 638 university technicians and 110 university teachers. Most of these people were looking for better job opportunities, when they lost their illusions about further political development in Czechoslovakia.⁸⁷

Secret Police (ŠtB) and other state authorities reacted by taking away the citizenship from the emigrants, as well as their flats, trying and sentencing them in absence, and their family members were persecuted: children were unable to go to universities and were unable to go forward in their career, even if they wanted to. The emigration continued until 1989 – some sources say that in 1968-1989 more than 244 000 people emigrated: approximately half of the immigrants held a university degree or were university students.⁸⁸

Part of the citizens was fleeing from the persecution of normalization regime. The exodus of Slovak intelligentsia – doctors, teachers, engineers, scientists, administrative workers, manual workers – created problems in the Czechoslovak economy, education, public health, research, etc. The normalization government filled management positions with people, who were examined and seen as no threat to the establishment. However, they lacked the abilities required for their positions.⁸⁹

3.2.3. Purges

Purges followed the invasion affected both parts of the state, with some specific differences. Party check-ups and purges began already in autumn 1968 and were aimed mostly against

⁸⁶ Marušiak, *The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970*, 165 f.

⁸⁷ Žatkuliak, *Perzekúcie učiteľov v rokoch 1948-1989*, 674 f..

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 675.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 675.

intelligentsia. However, the expulsions touched all social strata of the population. Freedom of speech ceased to exist also among the writers and journalists – many of them were unable to publish and were driven out of the various unions. For instance, in Slovakia, magazines such as *Kultúrny Život*, *Nové slovo* were no longer published; other magazines mostly changed the way so that they would work along the changed political context.⁹⁰

In January 1970 the leadership of Czechoslovak Communist Party decided to start the examinations within the Party – for instance, in Slovakia alone 53 000 members were expelled from the KSS. Purges carried on within the army, state administration, economy, culture, etc.⁹¹ However, the purges were much more radical in Czech lands than in the Slovak part. The majority of the purged members in Czech lands were completely excluded from official public life, were not allowed to practice their original professions and their work was banned. In Slovakia many intellectuals, scientists and writers were expelled from their previous jobs after 1969. However, many of them were allowed to return to official literary or academic life. There were only a few exceptions: people who were in opposition against the regime were isolated - isolation was a tool the regime used to prevent the spread of resistance against the communist regime among intellectuals. Those intellectuals who were not willing to support the normalization were not allowed to return to public life and to get their jobs back. However, those who were purged in Slovak part of the state did not face unemployment or were not forced to take manual jobs after 1970, as it happened in the Czech lands.⁹²

Some people did not only lose jobs, but even faced trial. Again, the situation was harder in Czech lands - in summer 1969, at least 46 people were sentenced in political trials in Czech lands, while in Slovakia very few individuals were persecuted. The extent of purges was very wide: 23 percent of Party members were expelled or deleted from the list of Party members in Czech lands while 17 percent of Party members faced a similar destiny in Slovakia.⁹³

3.2.3.1. Purges and repression in education

Since education of history is in the center of this paper, purges and other repressive activities of the regime in the area of education require a closer look. Teachers and scientists were persecuted for (1) stepping up against practices of communist regime, (2) protesting against the occupation, (3) supporting the reform process of 1968, (4) giving explanations of

⁹⁰ Žatkuliak, *Perzekúcie učiteľov v rokoch 1948-1989*, 674.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 675.

⁹² Marušiak, *The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970*, 164 f.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 163 f.

Czechoslovak history, which were not in accordance with the top-down collective memory of the government, (5) supporting churches and their activities, and (6) posing questions regarding nationality or economic and cultural problems.⁹⁴

For instance, according to the leaders of the normalization process in Slovakia, universities and the Slovak Academy of Sciences were the leading centers of so-called “right-wing opportunism and revisionism” in Slovakia. The leaders stated these institutions were influencing people via media and influenced many young people and university students.⁹⁵ The regime reacted by excluding those teachers and scientists from public life, banning publishing of any of their works, loss of employment, transfer to a different workplace, or by prohibiting their children from going to schools (even high school) they applied to.⁹⁶ The purges in one of the biggest Slovak Universities show how these purges looked like: 144 people resigned from the Comenius University in Bratislava. Furthermore, until March 1970 due to a “complex examination” 37 teaching staff left – 22 of these were teachers of Marxism-Leninism classes. Later on two rectors, 14 professors, 14 deans, 51 associate deans and 101 heads of departments were changed. 38 professors and assistant professors were removed from the teaching process altogether. In whole Slovakia, 170 professors and assistant professors, or 14 percent, left the educational system. 318 university teachers lost their contracts and 128 of them emigrated.⁹⁷

Situation was similar in the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS): 137 people emigrated from the SAS. The Academy was reorganized – for instance, employment contracts became instruments of coercion from the regime: one did not know if they will be employed, and so it created existential uncertainty for the employees; some employees were forced to leave. The situation was similar in 32 other scientific societies, which associated 7500 members, including teachers. Chief Editors of Academy’s journals were removed and new editorial boards established.⁹⁸

Teachers at elementary schools and high schools were also affected. Reasons included: disagreements with the occupation, signatures under various proclamations in 1968, appearances at various events, and also from religious reasons.⁹⁹ During the normalization

⁹⁴ Žatkuliak, *Perzekúcie učiteľov v rokoch 1948-1989*, 677.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 677 f.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 677.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 678.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 678 f.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 679 f.

era, teachers were continually ideologically educated and forced to teach the regime's historical narrative, and so, their classes gave a distorted view on history, including years 1968 and 1969. For instance, in 1972 Slovak Ministry of Education was examining curricula and textbooks so that children would be educated according to the "spirit of communism, to socialist patriotism and Czechoslovak statehood and proletarian internationalism, based on the lessons of the crisis development" (the way the Government was describing Prague spring and the Warsaw Pact invasion). This examination was partly based on criticism of education system in Slovakia: according to the critics from the government, the system was influenced by nationalism and anti-socialist sentiments.¹⁰⁰ Thus, there was a reestablished control over the collective memory. Moreover, one can see that the nationalist-based tensions were not only visible in RFE, but in Czechoslovakia as well.

This sub-chapter described the persecution of teachers and scholars, as well as the top-down influence which affected the collective memory and the counter-memories. The nationalist tensions within Czechoslovakia were visible not only in RFE, but also in the state itself. As a result, within years after the invasion there was less opposition in the state against the ruling memory, which was reproduced easier at schools and universities. Those who opposed the government and wanted to discuss history outside the framework given by the state's historical narrative, had only limited options, which included samizdat literature and listening to radio. The activities of these people will be discussed in the next sub-chapter.

3.2.4. Opposition

The occupation and normalization process was not almighty, and even in new conditions, there were groups of people in Czechoslovakia who opposed the government and refused to comply. These people had access to different opinions and views thanks to samizdat (copies of forbidden domestic texts) and tamizdat (texts smuggled from abroad) literature, Austrian TV, as well as by the surrogate radios (which were part of the Western psychological warfare), such as Radio Free Europe (RFE), BBC, Voice of America, etc. These radios were presenting a different opinion on what was happening in the world and the commentators were also revisiting Czechoslovak history in order to confront the mainstream narratives taught at Czechoslovak schools, thus posing a challenge of a counter-memory to the collective memory presented by the regime. There were several crucial opposition groups in

¹⁰⁰ Žatkuliak, *Perzekúcie učiteľov v rokoch 1948-1989*, 677.

Czechoslovakia, namely the Catholic Church and the Dissident movement, which both shared different collective memories, than those spread by the state.

3.2.4.1. The Catholic Church

In early 1970s only the Catholic “Secret Church” – an underground movement – remained immune to the power of the state. In Slovakia it became the most influential form of civil initiative, which was independent from the state. Catholic samizdat journals were published within this environment (*Náboženstvo a súčasnosť*, *Serafínsky svet*, *Výber*, *Hlas Slovenska*, *Katolícky mesačník ZrNO*, *Rodinné spoločenstvo*, *Radosť a nádej*, *Bratislavské listy* etc.) and there were even a few members who were actively involved in political activities, such as František Mikloško and Ján Čarnogurský. The official Catholic Church did not support this initiative and the Catholic officials were very reserved towards this movement right until November 1989. Thus, the official Catholic Church was not the leading agent of resistance in the Slovak part of the state. On the other hand, in Czech lands, the movement for religious freedom was led by Cardinal František Tomášek, the highest official representative of the Catholic Church.¹⁰¹

3.2.4.2. Dissident movements

There were far more dissidents in Czech lands than in Slovakia, and were more interconnected than their Slovak counterparts. In Czech lands there were large societies, especially in Brno and Prague, who shared their ideas, were able to read banned literature, samizdats, to listen to lectures or banned music, etc. One of the greatest movements was formed around the declaration of Charter 77, a document listing human rights and civil liberties violations by the communist regime. This document asserted the inconsistency of these violations with international human rights conventions, which Czechoslovakia had signed. It was initiated by the Czechs and most of its signatories were Czechs. The government reacted with harsh criticism from media, formation of anti-charter movement, and even persecution of its signatories. In Slovakia, there were so-called “little islands of positive deviation” – groups of nonconforming individuals. Slovak dissidents were focusing mostly on human rights, criticized the politics of the Communist Party (for instance, they criticized it for saying there was no occupation in 1968). These dissidents had connections to

¹⁰¹ Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970, 166. Petr Pithart, Towards a Shared Freedom, 1968-89. In: Jiří Musil (Ed.), The End of Czechoslovakia (Budapest ²1997) 214 f. Jozef Žatkuliak a kol., November '89. Medzník vo vývoji Slovenskej spoločnosti a jeho medzinárodný kontext. Bratislava 2009, 62.

Charter 77 (however, only a few Slovaks signed the document), but otherwise, they had a limited potential. Their activities were mostly connected either with “alternative culture” or environmental issues. These dissidents began publishing their samizdat literature mostly in 1980s (samizdat magazines include: *Kontakt*, *Altamira*, *K*, *Fragment*, *Fragment K*). The Czech dissent movement was also active in publishing samizdats, hundreds of collectively edited reports and it also reported the repressive activity of the authorities.¹⁰² It could be argued, that since Slovakia was behind Czech lands, it could not catch up so much in such little amount of time also in terms of civic society.¹⁰³

However, over time a small student movement in Slovakia became visible before the fall of the regime. On the 16th of November 1989 students marched and demonstrated in Bratislava - the assembly protested against the conditions of the state. The march moved to the building of the Ministry of Education, where the students discussed the situation with the ministry’s secretary for ideology. This became the first act of the so-called “Velvet Revolution”, with even greater demonstrations in Prague on the 17th of November, which led to the fall of communist government and beginning of the democratic establishment.¹⁰⁴

3.2.4.3. Different normalization – different opposition

The distinctness of Czech and Slovak contexts and histories and tensions between generations are visible also in the opposition to the government. Firstly, the events of 1968 have been perceived differently in Czech and Slovak society. The biggest issue before August 1968 in Slovak society was the emancipation of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia. According to public polls conducted in April and May 1968, in Czech lands, the issue of federalization was of interest to 5 percent of citizens, while in Slovakia it was of utmost importance to 95 per cent. This difference stemmed from a different perception of the Czechoslovak history. In Slovakia, the first Czechoslovak Republic was deeply unpopular, and the most valued historical periods were the Slovak national renaissance in the nineteenth century and the Slovak National Uprising in 1944.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, during 1968 there were more activities among Czechs – for instance support of the “Two Thousand Words Manifesto” protest document. Demands for political change became a priority in Slovak part in June 1968. The lower support for reforms

¹⁰² Pithart, *Towards a Shared Freedom*, 1968-89, 214 f. Marušiak *The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970*, 166. Žatkuliak a kol., November ’89. *Medzník vo vývoji Slovenskej spoločnosti a jeho medzinárodný kontext*, 62, 68 ff.

¹⁰³ Pithart, *Towards a Shared Freedom*, 1968-89, 216.

¹⁰⁴ Žatkuliak a kol., November ’89. *Medzník vo vývoji Slovenskej spoločnosti a jeho medzinárodný kontext*, 115 ff.

¹⁰⁵ Marušiak, *The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970*, 167 f.

in Slovak part of the country was also caused by a lower degree of politicization in Slovak society. The level of political participation was lower, people lacked knowledge about the politics and discussed them less than in Czech part of the state. Slovaks had a different tradition of self-organization – it was almost non-existent, since there was the totalitarian experience of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party during the Second World War.¹⁰⁶ The lower degree of participation also has its roots in the way of living: even though the Slovak society was increasingly urbanized (from 31.4 percent in 1961 to 41.4 percent in 1970), the majority were born and educated in the villages and there was no significant change in the social and political behavior of Slovak citizens. Therefore, Slovaks benefited from the regime more than the Czechs: they had a higher quality of life as well as a higher educational level.¹⁰⁷

The differences in opposition were visible not only between Czechs and Slovaks, but also between generations. According to the poll from November 1968, almost 87 percent of Slovaks stated their lives had improved compared to pre-WWII situation and almost 94 percent expressed satisfaction with the material situation in their families. However, younger generation did not have the memory of pre-communist past and they compared their life to those living in the west. Therefore, the young generation was dissatisfied with the occupation and was the leading element of 1969 protests against the Soviet army and normalization.¹⁰⁸

After the federalization of Czechoslovakia in 1969 and industrialization of 1970s, new jobs were created in Slovakia. The social and economic policies had a positive impact on the perception of normalization in Slovak society – especially increased income for the retired, workers on collective farms, and, last but not least, social benefits for families with children during the population boom of the 1970s, which in early 1970s was twice as high in Slovakia as in the Czech lands. This development diminished the chance that political discontent together with some form of a political alternative would arise. On the other hand, as described earlier, Czech lands witnessed such initiatives. Furthermore, in Slovakia it was much easier to join the ranks of the Communist Party than in the Czech lands. Thus, many young people who used to be active in 1968 began working in the new jobs, and became dependent on the normalization regime. Consequently, many Slovaks were unable to be part of opposition movement in Slovakia. Thanks to all these economic and social factors, situation in Slovakia

¹⁰⁶ Marušiak, *The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970*, 168 f.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

was stabilized – it happened in Czech lands as well but there were more beneficiaries of this model in the Slovak part.¹⁰⁹

Federalization of Czechoslovakia helped strengthen the position of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia and also increased the political participation in the Slovak society. It was also easy to start a political career in Bratislava. However, the freedoms of the federal units were restrained and controlled. The political nominations in Slovakia were controlled by the Presidium of the KSČ's Central Committee in Prague. Furthermore, there was a serious influence of a collective memory in this period: in 1975 Slovakia lost the state holiday – 29th of August, the anniversary of the 1944 Slovak National Uprising.¹¹⁰

As mentioned earlier, Slovak Nationalism was a deeply important topic in Czechoslovakia. The communist regime fought against the revival of right-wing conservative nationalist projects based on the ideology of Hlinka's Slovak Peoples Party. The discussion about the "First Slovak State" (1939-1945) was forbidden in the era of communism.¹¹¹

The wind of change to normalized Czechoslovakia came in the second half of 1980s. It was the consequence of Michail Gorbachev's policies in Soviet Russia. Even in 1988 there were mostly older members of the Communist Party in leadership positions. In March 1988 the aforementioned Catholic dissent was able to organize a peaceful demonstration of believers with lit candles in Bratislava – they gathered in order to support the observance of human rights and religious freedoms. One of the reasons they gathered was the way the government was trying to control the Church by not enabling new bishops to be appointed. There were several thousand people present – the estimates range somewhere between 3500 and 10 000. However, they were brutally charged by the police.¹¹²

When the revolution of 1989 began (thus ending the normalization), the differences appeared also between the Eastern and Western part of Slovakia. Slovak opposition was very fragmented -before 1989 intellectuals from Košice had more connections to dissident circles in Prague than with those in Bratislava underground. In the first days of the 1989 revolution,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 170 f.

¹¹⁰ Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970, 172.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 176 f.

¹¹² Žatkuliak a kol., November '89. Medzník vo vývoji Slovenskej spoločnosti a jeho medzinárodný kontext., 11 ff., 25.

the cities in the East established Czech-based Civic forum – a political grassroots movement instead of Slovak Public against Violence platform, which was most active in Bratislava.¹¹³

3.2.5. Historiography in normalized Czechoslovakia

The regime had a firm grasp on the historical narratives of the Czechoslovak history and the texts representing this narrative were often in contrast to the samizdat literature. This sub-chapter aims to point out the various aspects of this narrative, namely the narrative of Czechoslovak history, class struggle in Czechoslovak history and periodization of history according to the narrative.

In the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1939) the Czechoslovak history was taught as a history of Czech lands with several brief notes on Slovak history beginning in the prehistoric times, from the arrival of Slavs to the geographic area of Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁴ Communist historiography in Czechoslovakia after 1948 used the construct of the First Republic – there were many studies published which concentrated on common Czechoslovak history and Czech history with its periods was made as the basic and determining narrative and interpretative structure, and the (sub)chapters of Slovaks and Slovakia was inserted into this structure.¹¹⁵

The historiography was also heavily affected by accenting class struggle in the history of Czechoslovakia. However, as Slovak historian Milan Zemko argued, class struggle was accented even though sometimes this social factor could not have played a historical role. For instance: in 1955 the first concept of Slovak Marxist history was published. In this publication, the history of Slovakia was divided into five epochs – (1) from prehistoric ages to Great Moravian Empire, (2) from the foundation of the Empire to the revolutionary year of 1848 (thousand years which were connected with a narrative of a feudal social structure), (3) from 1848 to 1918 (from revolution to the beginning of the first ČSR, capitalist structures), (4) from 1918 to 1945 (from the beginning of ČSR to the end of WWII, capitalist structure as well), and (5) from 1945 to mid 1950s (which was connected in the narrative of a way to a socialist system of government). In this kind of narratives, historical facts were chosen and served as illustrative material of those five theses. These theses were also used in the first volume of *Dejiny Slovenska* (History of Slovakia) which came out in 1961 and concentrated

¹¹³ Marušiak, The Normalisation Regime and its Impact on Slovak Domestic Policy after 1970, 177.

¹¹⁴ Milan Zemko, Medzníky slovenských dejín podľa marxistickej historiografie do roku 1989. In: Jan Kalous, Jiří Kocian (eds.), Český a slovenský komunismus (1921-2011) (Praha 2012) 262.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 264.

on the prehistoric times to 1848. The second volume (mapping the history between 1848 and 1900) was published in 1968 – it was of much higher quality, and could describe the complex history of Slovaks within the Hungarian Empire. However, this was the last publication since the chief editor had to leave due to the normalization process after the 1968 invasion.¹¹⁶

One of the most important consequences of the invasion and the federalization for education was that there was no longer a central ministry of education but each state had its own. However, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia still had control over the authorities. Under such conditions, several publications emerged, which were concentrating on Slovakia itself (not just Czechoslovakia). One of them was called *Slovensko – Dejiny* (Slovakia – History) - it was part of the so-called homeland study (*vlastiveda*), which consisted of several volumes and was written by various historians from the Academy and various universities. This study came out first in 1971 during the normalization era. However, it was prepared in the 1960s and so it was not heavily laden with dogmatic and schematic periodization of the 1950s. Nevertheless, it was unable to make the new periodization clear (the history was divided to centuries) – which was partly due to the fact that there was still the unanswered question of how to write historiography of the whole state (Hungary, Habsburg Monarchy) and history of one of its northern parts (Slovakia).¹¹⁷ The next project of Slovak history was done in the 1980s, which again came out under the name *Dejiny Slovenska* (History of Slovakia, published between 1985 and 1990s). The fifth volume was published in 1985 to honor the anniversary of the end of WWII. It followed the official paradigm – the Czechoslovak Communist Party had the leading role in the social struggles as well as in the WWII resistance. For instance, the role of Communist Party in the 1944 Slovak National Uprising was exaggerated to make it seem decisive. In the fourth volume historians were holding on to the thesis that without the Great October Socialist revolution there would be no ČSR. Thus, the influence of foreign resistance (and people such as Milan Rastislav Štefánik – Slovak politician, who was active in communication with Entente powers on the future of Czechs and Slovaks) on the founding of the first state were understated. Volumes one and two were not so affected by the communist ideologies, since there was no Communist Party present in the prehistoric era, history of Slavs and the history of Slovaks in Hungary up until the revolution of 1848. The volume on the era from 1945 to 1960 was published in 1988 and was highly influenced by the ruling ideology. The last volume which concentrated on the era

¹¹⁶ Zemko, *Medzníky slovenských dejín podľa marxistickej historiografie do roku 1989*, 265 ff.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 267 f.

after the revolution of 1848 to the end of the 19th century was already written in new political conditions and was greatly differing in its form and content from the previous publications.¹¹⁸ Thus, on this example one could notice the influence of the communist narrative on how the history of Czechoslovakia and Slovakia was written. The scholars often understated or overstated some phenomena, and were unable to deal with the issue of how to write the history of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia, since the question of historical narrative was not clear. Furthermore, Slovaks lost their commemoration day (Slovak national uprising), which was a blow against their collective memory, and created a question, if these two nations could truly have a living common collective memory with such differing experiences and under such political conditions. It is my sub-thesis, that due to these facts, the collective memory created by the state was so weak, that it could not be a suitable competition to the counter-memory that the RFE created and transmitted to Czechoslovakia.

To conclude this chapter, in 1968 the process of democratization in Czechoslovakia was struck down by Warsaw Pact army invasion and the state was forced to turn back on the track of socialism by the process of normalization, which was different for Slovak part and Czech lands. This process included protests, purges, mass immigration, repressive actions against teachers and scholars and taking control over education system, historiography and historical narrative of Czechoslovak history. Various forms of dissident movements emerged, which were different in Czech lands and Slovakia. This context has shown, where the handbook was produced, as well as where the listeners of broadcasts lived, and what kind of collective memories were at hand.

4. Close reading: Handbook and broadcasts

In this chapter, Czechoslovak handbook of history and RFE's broadcasts will be analyzed using the method of close reading in combination with wide reading. In order to analyze these documents in such way, the first sub-chapter will provide the context of a given era discussed in the broadcasts and handbook from today's perspective. Afterwards, the authors of these various documents will be presented. The analysis itself will be given in the following two subchapters.

¹¹⁸ Zemko, *Medzníky slovenských dejín podľa marxistickej historiografie do roku 1989*, 263, 268 f.

4.1. History of Czechoslovakia to 1948

In order to understand the texts and commentaries and the possibilities for the collective memories, this subchapter will describe the history of Czechoslovakia to 1948, giving special attention to similarities and differences in the development of both Czech and Slovak nations, their histories, as well as the political relations between Slovaks and Czechs within the Czechoslovak state (1918-1939, 1945-1948, and 1948-1989).

Czech and Slovak nations had a parallel development in their national formation. For instance, in Slovak part Slovaks and Hungarians were living next to each other, whilst in the Czech lands, there was a large amount of German inhabitants. However, there were also important contrasts, due to differences in development: the Czechs had the Kingdom of Bohemia, while the Slovaks were within the Hungarian Kingdom, without a history of their own state. Even though both countries had been united by a personal union in Austria-Hungary, the political border which had divided them created a different historical consciousness and social structure in both countries. One of the most common examples of this historical consciousness is the gradual Magyarization that the Slovaks faced in 19th century, which slowed down the process of Slovak emancipation, and sometimes led to complete assimilation with the Hungarians.¹¹⁹

With these kinds of differences it was hard to constitute a solid base for a new Czechoslovak statehood. Before and during WWI, Czech argument for an independent state was the historical right tracing back to the 16th century and the Bohemian Crown. This program of Czechs having a historical right appeared first during the revolution of 1848. The idea was to make Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia independent and only some matters were to be solved together with other parts of the monarchy. However, these ideas were never accepted by the Habsburg Empire – there was opposition from the German inhabitants of Austria, including those living in Bohemia. At the same time, the Slovak argument was based on the basis of nationality, within the framework of Hungary. This program was also presented by Slovak activists during the revolution in 1848, in a petition sent to the Austrian parliament, and later in 1861, when Memorandum of the Slovak Nation, a program document created by the

¹¹⁹ Jan Rychlík, National Consciousness and the Common State. In: Jiří Musil (Ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia*, (Budapest 2019) 98 f.

Slovak elites was sent to the Hungarian parliament. Both demands were completely rejected.¹²⁰

After 1867 *Ausgleich* Czechs and Slovaks were within the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire – Austria and Hungary were united via the emperor and had three shared ministries (foreign affairs, finance and defense). The two states also had unified customs and tariffs area, Czech economy was among the foremost and most progressive in the empire, and the Czech population was responsible for 60 percent of the overall taxation revenue. This Czech contribution was not rewarded by appropriate representation in the politics. The Czechs could only have influence through the regional assemblies.¹²¹ In Hungarian part, only Croatia and Slovenia had a partial independence, while the rest of the country was governed from the center in Budapest. Slovaks and other nationalities were represented in the Hungarian parliament – however, the combined non-Hungarian nationalities were represented by less than 10 percent of members, even though the Hungarians were a minority within the overall population. The Slovak youth was under the influence of heavy Magyarization (conversion to Hungarian nationality) – this was visible in the education system. After 1907, laws were passed which established Hungarian as the language of instruction in all schools. Even though the government tried to develop the economy and infrastructure of the country, in the early 20th century Hungary (and Slovakia) still had an agrarian economy and never achieved the level of industrialization seen in the western part of the empire. The leaders of the Slovak national movement were addressing the emperor to demarcate the ethnic borders of the territory which was inhabited primarily by Slovak nationals – consequently, Slovaks would have certain amount of control and administration. However, their requests remained unaddressed.¹²²

Thus, Czechs and Slovaks were divided in terms of identity. In addition, they seemed to have divergent histories in economic and cultural point of view. While the Czechs were developing quite well in the second half of the 19th Century, Slovaks were in decline due to ongoing Magyarization. Therefore, the Slovaks were trying to find a common ground with the Czechs. This suited the Czechs, who did not succeed in their endeavors to federalize the Monarchy.¹²³ During the First World War, both Czechs and Slovaks realized it would be impossible to

¹²⁰ Rychlík, *National Consciousness and the Common State*, 99 f.

¹²¹ Alena Bartlová, *Political Power-Sharing in the Interwar Period*. In: Jiří Musil (Ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia*, (Budapest 1997) 159 f.

¹²² *Ibid*, 161 f.

¹²³ Petr Přihoda, *Mutual Perceptions in Czech-Slovak Relationships*. In: Jiří Musil (Ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia* (Budapest 1997) 132.

realize their plans within Austria and Hungary. The elites realized there would be a solution to this challenge in creating a new state – Czechoslovakia. The main proponents of resistance active outside of Austria-Hungary were Tomáš Garigue Masaryk, who would later become the first Czechoslovak president, Edvard Beneš (future Czechoslovak president), and the Slovak astronomer and general in the French army, Milan Rastislav Štefánik. The supporters of a new Czechoslovak state would have to think about how to make two nations coexist in one. Masaryk, unlike older Czech politicians who were arguing with the historical right, was counting on Slovakia to counterbalance the German minority and Czechs giving support against the Magyars in Slovakia. Masaryk considered Slovak language to be recognized as equal to Czech, so that it could be used in parallel with it. Masaryk, whose father was a Slovak, did not doubt the existence of the Slovak ethnic nation. He wanted to create a Czechoslovak political nation, in which Czechs and Slovaks would develop independently. Furthermore, it was also necessary to present Czechs and Slovaks to the Entente Powers as one nation, because otherwise the powers would not agree on the division of Austria-Hungary and creation of Czechoslovakia.¹²⁴ The first official declaration for a common state from the internal resistance movement in the Czech part came in May 1917. The Slovak nationalists finally decided to sever ties with Hungary and to join the Czechs only in May 1918. In that time, the Central Powers were already losing and so the political opposition in Austria-Hungary was preparing for the possible takeover of political power.¹²⁵

On 28th of October 1918 Czechoslovakia was established. For Czechs, the new state symbolized the climax of the Czech national liberation effort. For many, Czechoslovakia was also the restored ancient Bohemian state, which lost its independence in 1620, and the expanded version of historical right, which included Slovakia and Ruthenia in the state. Slovaks had a completely different attitude towards the state – the state was supposed to be made of two autonomous states with joint arrangements in some areas. Not every party in the Czechoslovak parliament was for this solution. However, it was advocated by the strongest Slovak political party - Slovak People's Party and its leader, Catholic priest Andrej Hlinka – and so, the idea gradually became predominant in the Slovak part.¹²⁶ In the Czechoslovak constitution Slovaks were considered to be equal to the Czechs and Slovak was the official language in Slovakia. However, Slovakia was treated as one of Czechoslovakia's provinces without any separate legislative organs. It was due to the fact that at that time, Czechoslovakia

¹²⁴ Rychlík, *National Consciousness and the Common State*, 99 ff.

¹²⁵ Bartlová, *Political Power-Sharing in the Interwar Period*, 163 f.

¹²⁶ Rychlík, *National Consciousness and the Common State* 102 f.

was not a federation. All initiatives to change this were paralyzed by the threat of a large German-speaking population, who would then want the same right.¹²⁷

Czechs and Slovaks were unable to solve the problem of division of power (central vs. local government). There were constant discussions on Slovak autonomy, decentralization of the state and problems with the representation of Czechs and Slovaks in the central administration and in the organs of the government in Prague. At the beginning, these positions were mostly taken by Czechs – Slovakia did not have sufficient educated and politically acceptable people (for instance those not loyal to the Hungarians). Tens of thousands of Czech officials and teachers had to be transferred from the western part of the republic to Slovakia and significantly contributed to the growth of literacy. Thus, in late 1920s and early 1930s the Slovak education system produced large numbers of capable young professionals. However, these professionals were unable to find employment in the central administration, where posts were already taken - their situation was dire also due to the Great Depression. This did not get better even at the end of the First Republic – in 1938 there were 10,825 employees working in the ministries, the office of the president and the executive council, and only 123 of these positions were occupied by Slovak nationals. Slovaks were sensitive to this fact, since centralism reminded them of the former Hungarian administration, in which Slovakia had been totally under control and had been denied its share of power and influence.¹²⁸

History of Czechoslovaks was perceived differently in Czechoslovakia – there were several narratives. One of the most prominent was that Czechs and Slovaks were two ethnic groups united, and that the Czechoslovak nation existed since the beginning of time. The two branches did not share the same historical experience but it was due to external factors. One of the historical facts used in this narrative was the existence of the Great Moravian Empire (8th-10th Century), where Czechs and Slovaks lived in one political configuration. The collapse of this empire was due to the invasion of the Magyars to the region. From that period onwards, lands inhabited by Czechs had a separate history from those inhabited by Slovaks. There were only several short periods when the two nations experienced a common history: one example which was used in the historiography were the Hussite wars in the mid-fifteenth century, when the Hussite armies operated in northern Hungary in order to secure the Hungarian crown for the Bohemian king. Thanks to this army, ideas of Czech Reformation

¹²⁷ Zdeněk Suda, Slovakia in Czech National Consciousness. In: Jiří Musil (Ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia* (Budapest 1997) 113.

¹²⁸ Bartlová, *Political Power-Sharing in the Interwar Period*, 172 ff., 176. Suda, *Slovakia in Czech National Consciousness*, 114.

came to Slovakia. Another instance of common history was the unity under the Jagellonian and Habsburg dynasties, which constituted a loose link between the two nations. However, these were ruled by the same government only between 1780s and 1867.¹²⁹ This approach to Czech and Slovak history had its challenges: when historians were writing the History of Czechoslovakia, most of the text was about the history before Czechoslovakia was established – in this history, historians were concentrating mostly on Czech part of the state. Consequently, in this case, the new Czechoslovak national consciousness was a successor of a traditional Czech consciousness.¹³⁰ However, this approach was unacceptable for proponents of Slovak nationalism and autonomy.

The Slovak striving for autonomy was reached on the 6th of October 1938 when the strongest party in Slovakia, Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSPP) issued an ultimatum to the Czechoslovak government and forced it to transfer power into the hands of the newly created autonomous Slovak authorities. The Czechoslovak Prime Minister General Jan Syrový, who was also acting as president, appointed the vice-chairman of the HSPP, the Catholic priest, Jozef Tiso, Minister for Slovakia and later, after the installation of other ministers, Prime Minister of the autonomous Slovak government.¹³¹

Consequently, Slovakia was ruled by the HSPP which introduced a totalitarian regime and after Munich agreement was dependent on Nazi Germany. Some parties were prohibited, others were merged with the HSPP. Only two parties which represented the Hungarian and German minorities were allowed. However, these could not run independently in the December 1938 elections for the new Slovak parliament. There was a single list of candidates which was presented to the electorate, and the HSPP “won” the elections. The regime was anti-Czech and anti-Jewish. Czechoslovakia then ceased to exist after March 1939, when Hitler decided to disintegrate Czechoslovakia. Thus, with the intervention from Germany, Slovakia was established on the 14th of March, and one day later, Bohemia and Moravia were occupied by the German army, became part of Germany under the name Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and suffered greatly under the control of German authorities. In Slovakia, Tiso had to sign a special “Treaty of Protection” (*Schutzvertrag*) with Germany – according to the treaty, Slovakia had to subordinate its army and foreign policy to the Reich and a secret protocol put the Slovak economy under German control. The regime pursued an

¹²⁹ Suda, Slovakia in Czech National Consciousness, 116 f.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 117.

¹³¹ Jan Rychlík, , From Autonomy to Federation, 1938-68. In: Jiří Musil (Ed.), The End of Czechoslovakia (Budapest ²1997) 180.

anti-Semitic policy – anti-Jewish laws were introduced, the Jewish property was confiscated, and in 1942, tens of thousands of Jews were deported from Slovakia – the government paid 500 German marks for each one of them. Slovak army took part in the invasion of the USSR. However, the soldiers were quickly disillusioned from the war and often deserted to the other side, where a new Czechoslovak army was being organized. The War was also unpopular in the Slovak society. The opposition started a unified approach in December 1943 and planned to restore Czechoslovakia on the principle of equal with equal, or in other words a federation. This movement began cooperating with officers of the Slovak army – together they planned to overthrow the regime and to restore Czechoslovakia. Thus, on the 29th of August 1944, when German troops entered Slovakia to deal with the rising guerilla activities, the Slovak National Uprising began. The uprising was a revolt against the regime and its leaders declared the restoration of the Czechoslovak Republic in parts of Slovakia they were able to secure with the army. The rebelling part of army together with partisans was able to defend the liberated territory from Germans until the middle of October. However, on the 27th of October Germans were able to capture the center of uprising – Banská Bystrica, and the insurgents had to retreat and begin guerilla warfare.¹³²

When the Germans were almost defeated, the proponents of the Czechoslovak exile government as well as the men of the provisional government in Slovakia met to discuss the future of Czechoslovakia. The government program was announced on the 5th of April in Košice: the Czechoslovak government promised to guarantee the status of Slovakia in a new constitution. For Slovaks the conditions in 1945 were completely different from those in 1918.¹³³ The consequence of the separation after 1939 was that two separate political nations were formed.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Slovaks believed that the aforementioned Slovak national uprising redeemed their nation from the stigma of pro-fascist collaboration. The event has been a source of national pride for Slovaks – it was a conscious decision made by a sovereign nation. It also proved that the majority of the Slovak population was against the national ideology of the Slovak state. Moreover, the uprising also legitimated their claim to equal representation in the re-established republic. The Slovaks argued with this experience of the Slovak state, trying to make a point that the Slovaks and Czechs should live together on the

¹³² Rychlík, *From Autonomy to Federation, 1938-68*, 180 ff.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 190 ff.

¹³⁴ Rychlík, *National Consciousness and the Common State*, 103, 113.

basis of parity (equal with equal).¹³⁵ In addition, the different historical experiences the two nations had during WWII widened the gap between them.¹³⁶

The new government at first functioned on a confederative principle. However, the body of the provisional National Assembly was not elected by the citizens, but by the assemblies of delegates of national committees. Decisions were to be made by a simple majority. In matters dealing with Slovakia, approval had to be obtained from a majority of Slovakia's representatives in the assembly. Consequently, these members had the power of veto in questions regarding Slovakia. The following year, the central government limited the influence of the Slovak authorities – the President was to have the right to pardon convicts, to appoint professors to the universities, etc. in Slovakia (which had been in the hands of the Slovak National Council).¹³⁷ The situation in politics was tense as the Communist Party was trying to take control of the country. After 1946 elections, communists were unable to form a majority government and had to function in a coalition government with the strongest mandate (the Communist Party won a majority in Czech lands, while the Democratic Party won in Slovakia). The Slovak communists agreed to a temporary limitation of Slovak powers and to strengthening the central government. All other Czech parties followed suit and so Democratic Party was the only party representing the rights of the Slovak authorities. A month after the elections the Party gave up to the pressure: jurisdiction of the Slovak authorities was severely restricted: the Board of Commissioners was subordinated to the Prague government, the Slovak National Council had to present the drafts of its laws to the central government which was to decide whether the matter came under Slovak or joint jurisdiction, and, lastly, there were particular commissioners who were to function as the executive personnel of the Prague ministers in joint affairs. When former president Tiso was tried and executed, his supporters were demonstrating in the streets. The communists saw this as an opportunity and fabricated an allegation that this was a conspiracy of former regime's supports, and that the center of it was in the Democratic Party. The Democrats were discredited and in autumn 1947 the Party lost its majority on the Board of Commissioners.¹³⁸

On the 25th of February 1948, the communists organized a successful coup and were able to take power over the country. On the level of Czech-Slovak political relations, in April 1948

¹³⁵ Suda, Slovakia in Czech National Consciousness, 120. Miroslav Kusý, Slovak Exceptionalism. In: Jiří Musil (Ed.), The End of Czechoslovakia, (Budapest 21997) 142.

¹³⁶ Rychlík, National Consciousness and the Common State, 103, 113.

¹³⁷ Rychlík, From Autonomy to Federation, 1938-68, 190 ff.

¹³⁸ Rychlík, From Autonomy to Federation, 1938-68, 192. Suda, Slovakia in Czech National Consciousness, 120 f.

Slovaks lost the right to veto in Slovak affairs, and in May, newly approved constitution left the Slovak authorities with only a diminished jurisdiction. The power was centralized in the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and later to its secretariat. Slovak Communist Party was unified with the Czech Communist Party and the Slovak Communist Party became a regional organization of the Party.¹³⁹ The Slovak nationalism in its form from 1939-1945 survived only in exile – it was suppressed in Czechoslovakia, because the communist dictatorship perceived it as a rival totalitarian ideology.¹⁴⁰

To conclude, even though Czechs and Slovaks had a similar language, their culture, historical experience and lifestyle were different. Slovaks had no history of a separate nation, but the Czechs did.¹⁴¹ In their historical context, Slovaks were unable unprepared for a change in their identity which occurred in 1918. The notion of a double nation was too difficult for Slovaks to process and internalize, and it needed more time, than Czechoslovakia had.¹⁴² In March 1939 the first Slovak state was established, while Bohemia and Moravia were ruled directly by Nazi Germany. Slovakia was not independent - it was created under pressure of Nazi Germany and became its satellite state.¹⁴³ During the Second World War, Slovaks lived under the regime of totalitarian nationalism which developed into a militant intolerance against the neighboring nations and minority ethnic groups (except from Germans), which were seen as the national enemies of the Slovaks. Due to these feelings, Czechs were deported to the protectorate, Slovaks participated in the war against Poland, and Jews were deported to death camps.¹⁴⁴ The 1918-1948 was a virulent era for Czechoslovakia and the events which occurred during that time, could be (and were) interpreted in different, conflicting ways. Next chapters will analyze the various narratives and interpretations of events mentioned in this brief summary.

4.2. Analysis of the history handbook

In language of Aleida Assmann, handbook is a text which helps Czechoslovakia to have a memory, which constructs its identity. As Assmann remarked about the success of a collective memory, it depends on the efficiency of the political pedagogy. The way these texts

¹³⁹ Rychlík, *From Autonomy to Federation, 1938-68*, 192 f.

¹⁴⁰ Kusý, *Slovak Exceptionalism*, 142.

¹⁴¹ Suda, *Slovakia in Czech National Consciousness*, 108.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁴³ Rychlík, *National Consciousness and the Common State*, 103, 113.

¹⁴⁴ Kusý, *Slovak Exceptionalism*, 141.

were used by the pedagogy certainly varied, but it was established as a norm, a top-down memory, which matters for this study. Contextual analysis showed that the Czechoslovak government influenced the historiography. Furthermore, the teachers and historians, who did not leave or were not sacked, were under pressure of the government and risked a loss of job, if they tried to write or teach against the official narrative. Therefore, my premise is that most of them followed the given curricula and guidelines in order to secure their employment – the government had a hold on them and they did not want to lose their position. This text is supposed to teach an official narrative of Czechoslovak history, a construct, where the Communist Party was the leading victorious hero, who achieves the greatest goals in the progress of society with the help of its friend: Soviet Union.

The text was written and/or revised in 1969, at the beginning of normalization. Authors were Marxist historians Peter Ratkoš, Jozef Butvin, and Miroslav Kropilák, who was also a director of SAS's Historical institute (1970-1980). The handbook was written for students of second, third or fourth grade at a high school in the Slovak part of the republic – depending on the type of high school. The text is in Slovak. I decided to analyze the way handbook writes about the First Czechoslovak Republic in years 1918-1939, the era of separation in 1939-1945 and the unified state from 1945 until the communist takeover of power in 1948. The handbook writes about this history in the last three chapters (pages 308-405), which were written by Miroslav Kropilák. The handbook gives approximately one quarter of its space to this short part of history (30 years) – the other three quarters concentrate on the history of Czechoslovakia from prehistoric ages to WWI.

In the handbook's foreword, the authors describe the logic behind writing history and how it could be useful for those who study it. They explain why it is the study of national as well as a class history. This foreword already foretells the tone in which the whole handbook is set: the language is often official, using many political phrases, which, in many cases might not make any sense for the students. The authors argue that the history of Slovak and Czech nations are a history of two brotherly and neighboring nations, bonded through relationship, cooperation and common struggle, and since 1918 a common state life, which in conditions of socialism came to a fair federative arrangement on the basis of national equality. Foreword already mentions a legend of Jánošík – a Robin Hood-like figure, a heroic outlaw in Slovak folklore, who most probably lived at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century in what is now central Slovakia. This legend is mentioned when the authors are talking about the Slovak people and it symbolizes the fight against feudalism and social oppression. Thus,

the authors already reveal their intention of reinterpreting the history of Czech lands and Slovakia in a different manner, and with the objective of describing the development of Czechoslovak society from tribal life to socialism.

The analysis of the chosen text will try to answer four overlapping questions using the close reading technique, namely: What kind of language does the handbook use? What are the heroic narratives? What are the victories and defeats? What is included and what is excluded? Is the author trying to convince the reader of something? These questions aim to map the way handbook could have influenced the collective memory/collective identity of the readers – students. Therefore, the analysis gives attention to the language of the text, the narratives employed by the author, the things text includes and excludes from the narrative, in order to find answers to the last question of persuasion.

4.2.1. What kind of language does the handbook use?

The first part of the analysis centers on the language of the handbook, because it influences the understandability of the content and can either encourage or discourage the reader, if it is written in an appealing manner. Moreover, the language itself helps answer the questions of other three subchapters, since it helps discover intentions of the writer. There are three areas that are given specific attention, namely: word choice, figurative language and structure of sentences.

The chosen text is rich with poetic words, archaisms, foreign words, symbols and figurative language. Many words stand out, repeat themselves and are peculiar in choice. These include: “bourgeois”, “bourgeoisie”, “reaction”, “people”/“anti-people”, “progressive”, “proletariat”, “revolutionary”, “battle”, “class”, “traitor” and “enemy”. When these words are repetitively used in specific contexts, they create positive or negative connotations. For instance, the handbook uses the noun or the adjective “bourgeoisie”/“bourgeois” so often to denote the opposition/enemy of the Communist Party, that it is given a negative connotation (e.g. wealthy farmers are called “village bourgeoisie” – page 399). Sometimes, even the chapters and sub-chapters contain these particular words – the name of chapter dealing with the First Czechoslovak Republic is called “Bourgeois Czechoslovak Republic” (page 308). This particular word choice also reflects the Marxist view of history, which the author identifies with. Moreover, the foreword already mentions that the handbook “clarifies” the national history of Czechoslovakia from the class perspective. The same process occurs with the words: “reaction”/“reactionary”, which is the word used to describe the political opposition to

the Communist Party. In case of the adjective “anti-people”, the handbook uses this as an adjective describing the political opponents, such as Social Democrats. The word choice in this case is supported by a description and a narrative of negative responsibility: according to the handbook the Democrats were not working for the people. They even enabled some proponents of the old Slovak regime to enter politics. When this anti-people politics was de-masked, the political crisis of autumn 1947 started. This particular place is where the employment of a narrative is supported by the word choice.

Words such as: “progressive”, “proletariat”, “revolutionary” are connected with the activities of the Party and are given positive connotations. The adjective “progressive” is used exclusively for the Communist Party, and thus supports the narrative of the Party – the hero, which is working for the better tomorrow of the country. “Proletariat” is used as a name for the common people (working class, landless), and whoever helps the proletariat is the hero. “Revolutionary” as an adjective is used to describe the activities of the Communist Party – the word supports the narrative of change that the Communist Party advocated, and is used as a positive connotation - revolution the Party wanted to make was supposed to bring justice and equality.

There are also many uses of dramatic language, such as: “traitor”, “enemy”, which give emotional charge to the text. For instance, on pages 394-395 the handbook describes the decrees issued by the president after WWII - the language of the handbook is confrontational: the decrees are against enemies and traitors. Then, the text lists the areas of retribution, where it writes, that all lands of Germans, Hungarians and the traitors were to be taken into custody of the state and given to the little farmers, the landless. The language leads to a dualistic black and white thinking, where it is clear who is “we” and “them”, or “the others”. It is always trying to find opponents – those who are wrong or wrong-doers. This thinking is supported by the usage of pronouns, such as “we”, “us” and “our” (e.g., our nations, our development, in our country), which also support the possible identification of the readers with the presented history.

The figurative language used in the handbook is often related to power and force – the handbook describes who the stronger one is, who is ruling whom, or where the fight and class struggle (in Slovak translated also as battle) occur, etc. The text also describes who has the say in the state, as well as who has the money. The author of the handbook uses this narrative of the power struggle in the chapter dedicated to the history of First Czechoslovak Republic

and that there were only a few people representing the working class who had access to power (page 308). Figurative language is employed to either glorify the main hero (Communist Party), or to criticize and mock its enemies. For instance, when the handbook describes the events leading to the 1948 coup, the author uses a phrase “they (the opposing parties) were indulging in hopes” - the phrase used here tries to evoke feelings, that the Democrats were foolish, trying to be smart, but eventually, the Communist Party was smarter. There are also moments, when this type of language is used to give more drama to a described event – for instance, when describing the Prague uprising, the handbook writes, that “Prague was burning in many places”.

The handbook is organized in a manner that helps students reach information that was included by the authors. Sentence structure is clear: sentences are easily readable with a clear subject, verb and object. Therefore, the reader knows the key information, or what authors think is important to know: who did what, with what kind of motivation, or to whom it was done. Most of the time, the sentences are 2-3 lines long. The sentences are always grouped in paragraphs according to the described topics.

Usage of words, figurative language and sentence structure all contributed to the employment of constructed narratives, as it helped create the heroes and the villains of Czechoslovak history. Next subchapters will analyze how these words were employed to support concrete narratives serving the official political memory.

4.2.2. What are the heroic narratives? What are the victories and defeats?

In this sub-chapter, the spotlight of the analysis is on the narratives and the way events are ordered and connected together by the political power. Therefore, the analysis concentrated on the elements of martyrdom, heroism in the handbook, and in what ways this was achieved. The narratives in the analyzed chapters of the handbook concern mostly the development of the party, development of Czechoslovak government, resistance during WWII, communist takeover of power in 1948, Czech-Slovak relations, and Czechoslovakia in international context. The spotlight is on the working class and the Communist Party: it does not give comparable attention to other parties and other parts of the Czechoslovak society. If it does, it is mostly mentioned critically.

In the given time, the biggest spotlight is given to the Communist Party. The heroic narrative (sometimes a success story) is connected with the victories the Party achieved throughout

the history of the Republic for the sake of the working class, and the sacrifices it had to make. The handbook mentions the heroic struggles of the working class – strikes, protests, etc. – for instance, there was unrest in December 1920. The word choice helps paint the situation more dramatically: what occurred was a “brutal attack” against the revolting workers by the bourgeoisie. The ferocity of the “attack” was emphasized, when the authors wrote, that the strike was over in a week. The narrative continues with a victory (page 314): Marxist left of the Social Democratic Party separates from the party under the leadership of Bohumír Šmeral, Antonín Zápotocký and Josef Haken. When the government (the anti-hero, negative character of the story, described as bourgeoisie) decided to seize the building of the party (the handbook uses the word *attack*), which was occupied by the Marxist left and gave it to the right wingers of the social democratic party, the people reacted by a general strike – according to the handbook, approximately 1 million industrial and agricultural workers took part in the whole republic. It is not explained why the police decided to do so – the handbook centers on the measures and the fact, that the masses reacted and the left comes out as a hero. The formation of the party on 14-16th of May 1921 is described (page 316) as a victory, the acceptance of the conditions of the Communist International is described as if it was done with enthusiasm, and the handbook tries to convince the reader, that the party was representing the interests of the people – the handbook states the delegates represented 350 000 of Party members, people of various nationalities. The continual political struggle is written in a manner, that the Communist Party truly represented the working people – the Party is the historical hero. All other parties are described in a contrasting, darker light, as opportunists, with selfish interests, against Czechoslovakia (for instance, Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party) and low credibility. For instance, Czechoslovak social democratic party – the biggest party of the working class, was described as opportunistic and the Czechoslovak socialists were representing the self-employed from the city and intelligentsia, more than workers (pages 316-318). In some places, the government is even the villain working against the hero – for instance, the handbook describes, how a government passed a law on defense of the republic in 1923 and interprets it as a persecution of “progressive elements”, or in other words, units affiliated with the Communist Party.

One of the first victories of the given time period mentioned in the handbook are the elections in 1925 where the Party got 900 000 votes and it became the second largest party in the Republic (after the Agrarian Party) – the handbook interprets this “success” as a result of party’s uncompromising fight for the rights of the people (page 322). The handbook then

follows a pattern of describing what the governments and coalitions have achieved. It describes the governments and criticizes them for representing the interests of the Czech, German and Slovak bourgeoisie, for being anti-democratic, etc. The authors support these claims with examples: the government took away the voting right of policemen and soldiers and passed the law worsening the social security. The government reformed the state administration as well as regional administration – the handbook interprets this reform, where district courts got a lot of authority as against political participation of the people: only two thirds of members were elected - one third (experts) was appointed by the government. During the economic crisis the party was a protector of the rights of the working class, while the state was unable to get rid of the poverty - it only alleviated it. The handbook then mentions several occasions without further detail, in which the government used force against the protesters (page 326).

The author dedicated one sub-chapter on Czech and Slovak culture in years 1918-1938. It describes some positive aspects of this period, maps the relations between the state and the church – the state is criticized for not dividing the state and the church. Culture of the proletariat is given a lot of room. Education system is being praised, with the exception of the concept of Czechoslovakism – the handbook says that the importance of the help that was given to Slovak part from the Czech lands, when Czech teachers came in to help Slovaks, was diminished: the elites believed in the theory of one Czechoslovak nation and language and did not accept the separateness of Slovaks (page 342). Movie industry in 1930s is being criticized for serving the purposes of making producers wealthy and so that the movie-goers do not think about the industrial and political problems of that period (pages 345-346). In science, most scholars and scientists were working according to the idealistic viewpoints. Only gradually did individuals and groups adopt the Marxist method of research. The handbook then mentions a historian and a musicologist Zdeněk Nejedlý and praises him for mastering the Marxist method. There were Czech translations of Marxist works since 1924 in Lenin's Library and in Slovakia, the basic knowledge on Marxism-Leninism was shared via publishing of an edition called "Slovak communist library." (page 349) On examples of culture, sciences and Czechoslovakism, this sub-chapter again points out how faulty the First Czechoslovak state was – the narratives of defeat.

The handbook also mentions the success in the purification of the party – (in literary terms, the hero has an uncompromising character) – how it got rid of the right-wing elements within the party in 1929 and the *Bolshevik* core won (page 323). The handbook even reframes the

loss in the 1929 elections – the Party doubled its efforts to compensate for the losses it suffered (page 324). The language used in this part creates an image of a highly motivated and agile Party.

There are several narratives concerning the Czech-Slovak relations. The hard beginnings of Czechoslovak economy are explained in a way, where the Czech “bourgeoisie” is vilified (page 318) – it was not helping the Slovak industry - it was limiting and destroying it as an uncomfortable partner. Moreover, Czech bourgeoisie took most of the success in the home and foreign markets. This was listed as one of the reasons, why the Slovak industry was lagging behind, which created a crisis. With the crisis, many factories in Slovakia closed down, machinery was moved abroad, production halted. Unemployment and lower wages caused that the workers could not buy agrarian products, which in turn created overproduction of goods (pages 319-320). In this context the handbook interprets these actions as a failure (defeat) of the government both in industry and agrarian production: according to the text, the farmers were unable to handle the situation due to an inconsistent land reform.

The handbook then has a whole subchapter dedicated to the “Battle for the defense of the Republic against fascism”, in which it writes the narratives of victory and defeat in collaboration with or resistance against Nazi regime in Czech lands and Slovakia, as well as abroad. The chapter starts with the definition of fascism, and continues with the international context, namely relations and agreements between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. There, Soviet Union is depicted as a defender against fascism. The communists are the ones who warned against the plans of the so-called “reactionary bloc” which dissolved itself and the candidate lost the support. The quick fascistization of the republic was avoided (pages 332-333).

The handbook gives special detail to all the Communist Party conventions and to the strategy of the Communist Party in politics. Communist Party had a plan to help Slovakia, which would work against fascism. However, there were no ideas on how to solve the arrangement of the two nations. It was the fault of the enemy – the bourgeoisie – that plans for solutions of Slovak question were rejected and Slovak People’s Party would have a free field in this area – in other words, the parties in the government were guilty of the fascistization of the country (page 334).

The year 1938 is depicted as dramatic and full of tensions – the Agrarian Party began to secretly pact with the Nazis and tried to get the Sudetenland-German Party into the

government. Thus, fascists had more freedom to step out and spread their ideas, even leading to acts of terrorism in 1938. The government reacted by calling a mobilization of its forces in May 1938, which calmed the situation a little bit. The Munich Agreement (September 1938) is described as pre-decided by the government – the decision was presented as the only solution the government had. The government seemingly went against the will of its people, who were willing to fight, and against the fact that Soviet Union was willing to give a helping hand in case of war. However, the Czechoslovak government did not do it – the reason being, that it was afraid Soviet Union would help destroy the capitalist system in Czechoslovakia. The authors of the handbook emphasize the negative role of the United States in the Munich Agreement - they came with the initiative. In this place, the book again points at those who were the enemies, the villains, the responsible (pages 336-339). The time after the Munich Agreement is described as time of gradual peril for the Party, with the first acts of heroism emerging: Shortly after Munich agreement, the government dissolved and the new one quickly became hostile towards communists – in December 1938, the party was dissolved. In Slovak part autonomy was created and the territory was ruled by President Jozef Tiso and his Hlinka's Slovak People's Party – all the parties merged within. The Communist Party was banned in Slovakia, too, together with the press and labor organizations. The communists were not giving up and tried to defend democratic rights, and some left to emigration in Russia or England (page 351). Russia is presented as a hero, which protested against the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, while the western powers still went according to their appeasement policy – according to the handbook, the responsibility for this lies in the West, as well as with Germany and the attitude of Czechoslovak bourgeoisie in September 1938 (page 353).

Even in the onset of WWII Russia's agreement with Germany and consequent military actions in Eastern Europe are either not mentioned or described only indirectly – the text concentrates on Germany and the inactivity of allies. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact occurred only because England and France were unable to make an agreement with Soviet Union. The reasoning continues by saying that this act thwarted the creation of a united imperialist bloc aimed at Soviet Union and gave it time to prepare the defense against the possible German attack in the future (page 356).

One of the first acts of heroism mentioned in this chapter is, when the Communist Party organized the demonstration on the 28th of October 1939. It was the first event which drew the attention of the world public to how the Czech nation was really feeling. On the 15th of

November 1939 during the funeral of Jan Opletal, one of the victims of the previous demonstration, Nazis brutally dispersed the demonstrating participants of the march. On the 17th of November Nazi Gestapo took hundreds of students to concentration camps and even executed some of the student representatives. The Nazis even closed all Czech universities, so that there would be no more Czech intelligentsia and soil for germanization would be prepared. As the handbook explains, these actions caused a lot of reaction in Slovakia. The Communist Party spread leaflets, in which it emphasized that the suffering of the Czech nation is also a suffering of the Slovak nation and that it is necessary to fight together against the enemy of the two nations. The ones mentioned as persecuted are communists – therefore, it seems as if communists were the only ones to oppose and to go to jail (page 357).

In Slovakia the handbook describes the opposition of the communists – various activities that the communists organized are mentioned. These are painted in a positive light. The Czechoslovak government in exile is again described with negative language – “Bourgeois emigration” from Czechoslovakia was mostly concentrated in London. The handbook definitely does not view it as a help to the main hero: it states, that the government supported anti-Soviet politics of the western powers. It encouraged the Czech and Slovak nations to not do any activities independently, but to wait for their orders (page 358).

Communist Party is described as cooperative and open to making alliances against the common enemy, while the exile government was anti-national: the handbook argues, that even though the Communist Party disagreed with many opinions of the government, it accepted it and Beneš as proponents of the republic, because it was necessary to create a united anti-fascist front both at home and abroad; the English government was not in favor of a Czechoslovak Republic with the pre-Munich boundaries – the handbook accents the English supported an idea of a Czech-Slovak-Polish confederacy. This confederacy would be a good basis for English politics in Eastern Europe and that it would create a barrier against Soviet influence (page 359).

The handbook then covers the progress of the war: the Allies are painted as those, who were weaker, and Soviet Union is shown as the hero of the day, because the Russian people bore the biggest burden of the war against Germany. Soviet Union was from the beginning supporting the liberation of the suppressed European nations. The handbook mentions Czech and Slovak soldiers fighting in the Soviet Union – the Slovak army, which was engaged in the fights in the Eastern Front is described as being demoralized and pro-Soviet, many soldiers

sympathizing with the Soviets and even deserting to the other side. It gives heroic accounts and narratives of those willing to fight on the side of the Soviet Union and even to die. Stories of soldiers fighting in the West, Africa or Middle East are mentioned only briefly. In the narrative of the handbook, the emigration in London decided to create an alliance with the Soviet Union, because after the victories in 1943 it realized that Soviet Union would be the decisive force in the central Europe. The alliance-making is an important part of the narrative, because it gives the Soviet Union credit for the creation of new Czechoslovak Republic and a status of a *friendly nation* (pages 361-366).

Description of resistance and collaboration within Czech lands and Slovakia includes the depiction of the dire situation of the Czech and Slovak people. In Czech lands, Reinhard Heydrich became the Deputy Reich-Protector of Bohemia and Moravia in September 1941 and Germans immediately issued martial law. Many people were arrested, tortured and executed. In such a situation paratroopers, who were sent by the *bourgeois* emigration from London made an assassination attempt on Heydrich on the 27th of May 1942. His death for a just revenge for the terrible terror, but the assassination harmed the liberation struggle of the Czech people, even though it caused international reactions. Many people were tortured and killed in response, among them most of the members of the second central committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The handbook describes, that the Nazis did not just try to get revenge for the assassination – they also wanted to destroy the forward forces – in other words, the Communist activists in Bohemia and Moravia, and to threaten the Czech population, so that these would no longer commit any anti-fascist activities. Thus, the description of this heroic narrative is analyzed more critically than other narratives and their collateral damage (pages 362-363). The handbook then continues with the heroic narrative, when it describes the emergence of guerilla warfare tactics both in the protectorate, and in the Slovak state. These groups were disrupting infrastructure in order to cripple the Nazi economy (page 364).

Special room is given to the heroic narrative of the Slovak National Uprising (August-October 1944), which is the climax of guerilla warfare efforts. Guerilla warfare movement is glorified, described as undefeatable, because it had the sympathies and support of the people. Its role is described as crucial for the motivation of the soldiers in the army – many left their units to join the guerilla warfare, which was growing in numbers and strength. The activities in August 1944, which led to the intervention of the German army are described uncritically, as the largest activities against the regime. The Slovak fascist institutions were unable to

suppress it with its own police force and military, because the military was often on the side of the revolting. The government is described as incompetent – President Tiso had to call Germans for help. (pages 374-375).

The narrative of the uprising is that the army was helping the already ongoing national and democratic revolution. On the 29th of August 1944 Partisans began fighting the Nazi soldiers and the anti-fascist resistance changed its character to a national uprising. In this narrative, the army plays the second character, while the partisans are the heroes. The handbook emphasizes the role of the workers - the greatest mobilization of soldiers occurred in the regions with a large proportion of working class. The handbook analyzes the uprising and sees the reason of the uprising's failure in the Czechoslovak government in London – the uprising did not succeed because there was a problematic coordination (uncoordinated with the Soviet Union), and because émigré President Beneš did not want a wide revolution of the people, but only a military coup, which would give power to the exponents of the bourgeois Czechoslovak government (pages 375-377). Among many acts of heroism, the battle of the Dukla pass is given special mention in the resistance narrative – as the handbook writes, the date the Czechoslovak and Soviet units (6th of October 1944) were able to fight their way to the Slovak soil would later be commemorated as the day of the Czechoslovak army. This is a direct reference to the collective memory of the Czechoslovak state. The battle is described as fierce and meaningful – the Czechoslovak and Soviet units were binding many units to them, so that the uprising could carry on (page 380).

After the breakdown of the Czechoslovak army, the leaders of the army were captured and executed. The handbook calls them courageous patriots dedicated to the idea of a democratic Czechoslovak Republic. The handbook then takes on a confrontational tone – the war ended only for those who were calculating with the political advantages after the liberation – however, the Communist Party carried on with fighting. The heroic narrative then centers back on the guerilla fighters (page 381). Communist Party was very active after the *liberation* of Czechoslovakia and served where it could – as described in the handbook. Other parties are not mentioned (page 385).

The handbook dramatically describes the Prague uprising (5-9.5.1945), with the crucial role of Communist Party, its initiatives, various institutions and activities. The narrative is one of heroism, tragedy, cruelty and patriotism. US army is mentioned – the so-called *reactionary group* (name for the non-communist opposition) was awaiting their help in Prague. However,

this was not to occur. Here, the U.S. Army is described as inactive and giving shelter to surrendering Nazi units. Even though the uprising was supposed to end quickly – and the bourgeois officers made an agreement with the Nazi leadership about a safe passage to the American captivity, some German units were still fighting and decided not to leave the city. There is no further commentary on it, so it might sound as if the US army was the anti-hero of this history. However, the Soviet army decided quickly, and its units liberated Prague with great swiftness – tanks and soldiers moved from the vicinity of Berlin to Prague on the 9th of May 1945, and were able to quickly defeat the remaining forces (pages 388-389). This narrative gives a heroic narrative to the Czech people, as opposed to the Slovak National Uprising, which was the heroic narrative for the Slovak part. The narrative again supports the role-distribution, where the U.S. Army and non-communist parties are often anti-heroes, bystanders or villains, while the Communist Party is a character with proactive thinking and behavior, while the Soviet Union is the one, thanks to which the Czech and Slovak nations could reach freedom and state independence.

Restoration of the country after the war is described as a story, where the Communist Party and the Soviet Union played a major positive role in providing goods to Czechoslovakia, while other parties and nations played the ones creating obstructions for progress, not providing enough help, or are mentioned without any great enthusiasm – e.g.: help from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (page 393).

Part of the restoration phase was the retribution against Germans and Hungarians – as already mentioned, this part is emotionally charged due to the language use: all lands of Germans, Hungarians and *traitors* were taken into custody of the state and given to the little farmers and the landless. The handbook described it as a mostly peaceful process with only a couple of faults, which helped ease nationalist frictions within the state. In this context the handbook also describes the nationalization of finances, mines, industrial companies with more than 500 employees and some important companies with more than 150 employees. Later on, the handbook mentions the movement against the large landholders and the conflict arising from the Party's initiative to nationalize all large estates with a size of over 50 hectares – the handbook orders these events in such a manner, that this was a just action against another villain – the *bourgeoisie*. The initiative is described as a great success – the enemy of the hero was weakened as were its potential allies: foreign capital. The government was also successful in taking away money from the rich by creating a so-called millionaire tax. It is only said that it was achieved after a hard fight and with the support of the public. According

to the narrative of the handbook, these nationalizations strengthened the unity between the working class and the farmers - heroes are united for the good cause (pages 394-399).

The handbook then carries on with the narrative, where it is the positive proponent (narrative of a progressive party), which tries to fulfill all the positive changes it had planned. Again, Soviet Union is painted as a helper/mentor to the main hero - a savior of countries liberated by its army – according to the book, these countries were saved from the “yoke of capitalism” and with the help of the Soviet Union, the people of Europe began building the foundations for socialism. Due to the experience of Munich, Czechoslovakia was more oriented towards Soviet Union (pages 394-395). Former friends of the main hero (Czechoslovakia) in the West are not to be trusted anymore.

The handbook then describes the political history of Czechoslovakia after the war and the path leading to the communist takeover of power in 1948. One of the aspects that are mentioned is that the way politics worked was more oriented to the participation of the people – in contrast with what was occurring in the time of the first Czechoslovak Republic and the *bourgeois* administrative system. The working people had their own institutions, through which it was participating in the state administration and in leading of companies, and were discussing important public questions. This thorough description gives good ground for argumentation, why the whole process leading up to 1948 was according to the will of the people (page 395). The elections in 1946 are interpreted as a victory, even though the Communist Party lost in Slovak part of the Republic. The victory of the democrats – the enemy – is described as mischievous and un-democratic. The communists were, nevertheless the leading element in the coalition government and the handbook gives an impression that with such support of the people, the Party is unstoppable (page 398). The handbook then mentions positive developments, which came with the new government: the supplying of people got better, as well as loans, there was a better security for miners and there were united child allowances. The Communist Party achieved, that those interested received 1 700 000 hectares of soil which had been confiscated. This all contributes to the creation of a positive image – a heroic narrative of the Communist Party within a heroic Czechoslovak state. Among the positive elements, the handbook also mentions a political settlement with Poland. It is written as if the people agreed and understood the treaty between the two countries and it gives a feeling, as if it brought peace to the conflicts which had been an issue along the Czechoslovak-Polish border. All the praise is given to the hero: the Communist Party, which led the government responsible for the settlement (page 398).

The handbook also justifies the way the Communist-led government approached culture and how it would approach the culture in the future, without any opposition: The handbook states the rule, that the state is supposed to rein the culture and that cultural accomplishments have to belong to everyone, was enforced. For instance, film industry was nationalized and publishing activities started to be regulated. Culture was supposed to lift up the “backward segments of the society” and to overcome differences between the village and the city. School system is described as unreformed, because the *bourgeoisie* was able to get a hold of it until February 1948. However, there were already tendencies of a reform: Marxism-Leninism started to be taught at universities. The state of Science was not satisfactory before February 1948 – the explanation of this statement follows: there were only a few Marxist scientists, and they could not dedicate themselves to the study of scientific work, because some of them were active in political life. Most scientists were under the influence of bourgeois ideologies and were working with individualist methodologies. Intelligentsia is painted as being hesitant but was gradually convinced by the Party. Only February 1948 was the turning point for this state of Czechoslovak sciences. It seems that the handbook has an inherent narrative that some things were being prepared and basis was built for further development and that February 1948 was a turning point, which led towards a better tomorrow. The victorious progress of the hero still faces some opposition but it gradually becomes more and more successful. (pages 399-400).

The coup is described as a peaceful climax of the path towards victory (pages 401-405) – in this narrative, the Communist Party is shown as peaceful (bloodless) but strong, giving support to the Czechoslovak government, while withstanding the opposition of other parties – for instance, ideas created by the Communists were, according to the handbook, always opposed, democrats were described as anti-people, and the democrats still held some of the most important ministries. The events are ordered in such a narrative, that it was a reaction to an attack on a communist minister – this *attack* was pre-coordinated with other parties and was aimed against the whole party – this political crisis de-masked the intentions of the other parties in the government – the handbook states, these people were hoping that the President of the Republic would either not accept the ministers’ resignation and they would be able to enforce their conditions on the communists, or the government would fall and a new one will be created, which would recreate capitalism in Czechoslovakia.. According to the handbook, the February events were a solution of a general political crisis in Czechoslovakia and were unplanned. Thus, the event is described as resulting from the corruption of the Democratic

Party. The events were turning towards the favor of Communists, but the struggle was still ongoing with the enemy plotting against Communists – Social Democrats were not to cooperate anymore. The victorious narrative is written as a swift and powerful reaction of the Communist Party, including mobilization of the masses, large crowds demonstrating in Prague's Old Town, strikes, high level of organization, the gradual growth of strength of the Communist Party. The narrative gives importance to the masses, without which, this change would not be possible - the coup was backed by the Czech and Slovak people (national committees, people's militia, revolutionary labor union movements), as well as with the support of the Soviet Union (therefore, the Western powers did not dare to intervene), while its opposition is painted as foolish. The corrupt were gone, new loyal to the people's democratic order replaced the corrupt politicians. Many proponents of the Democratic Party left to emigration. This is written in such a way, that these were cowards – they gave a priority to living in emigration. The authors used a dichotomy in order to show, how the times were worse before the change. The chapter ends with the forward-looking comment on how the next years would be hard for the party: how to put its ideas to reality.

The chosen passages of the handbook provide many examples of heroic narratives in the portrayal of the Communist Party within Czechoslovak Republic before and after the war, the resistance against Nazism both at home and abroad, and in events leading to the coup of 1948. The passages also show various narratives of defeat, which are connected to the political opposition of the Communist Party. The narratives help create a different collective memory and, consequently, identity for the Czechoslovak people. Furthermore, the narratives define the enemy/anti-hero - who does not belong to the society, and who are the heroes – who is to be remembered, mentioned. In other words, the handbook uses these narratives to give support to a particular type of behavior, to a particular ideology, set of opinions, class, etc. It gives more meaning to political participation within the institutions of the Communist Party and it legitimizes the way the government worked in time, when the handbook was written: the settlement of the national question between Slovaks and Czechs; the economic model without the bourgeoisie; the friendship with the Soviet Union; animosity towards the West, the leading role of the Communist Party, etc.

4.2.3. What is included and what is excluded?

In handbooks, one is dealing with the political memory (as defined by A. Assmann earlier on), and it is natural, that the ruling memory will omit events which do not support the official

narrative, and will emphasize events, which support it to extent, that it even alters them, for instance by means of using a hyperbole.

The handbook often omits events, which could be dangerous for the constructed narratives and collective memories. These include negative actions of Communists, positive actions of non-communist groups, or controversial topics, which could trigger too much discussion and would be hard to accept.

Therefore, the handbook includes the history of Communist Party both in Slovak part and in Czech lands, and it describes to great detail – for instance, what the politicians agreed upon at various Party congresses in 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. The handbook mentions workers' movements, strikes, points out weaknesses of all governments, where Communists did not take part, and how these were not supporting the rights of the common people. In parts dedicated to science, culture and education, praise and attention is given mostly to Marxist and Leninist scholars and scientists, communist authors, composers and writers. However, it does not give such detail to other parties and groups.

During WWII, the role of the Communist Party, its resistance and fight against Nazism is emphasized and exaggerated using heroic narratives, while the activities of other parties are not mentioned with such detail, or are often criticized for their hidden motivations. Slovak National Uprising itself is given a new narrative, where the army does not play such a role, while the Communist resistance and influence in Soviet Union is the primal mover of the heroic struggle.

When discussing the role of the Soviet Union in WWII, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is not directly mentioned – it is described as an agreement between the Russians and the Germans, and it occurred, because England and France were unable to make an agreement with Soviet Union. It does not say anything about the division of land between Germany and the Soviet Union. Consequently, the handbook does not mention the Soviet invasion of Poland – it concentrates only on Germany and on the inactivity of the allies. There is also no mention of Soviet attacks on the Baltic countries, Finland and parts of Romania.

In the part dealing with the time after WWII, the handbook mentions the decrees issued by president Beneš after WWII. However, it does not mention the extent of violence, which had occurred against the Jews, as well as Germans and Hungarians. The question of national minorities was described as a mostly peaceful process with only a couple of faults - there is

no mention of violence which in some cases led to murder of Germans by Czechs and Slovaks. At the end of the handbook, the description of the communist takeover omits, among others the death of Jan Masaryk, minister of foreign affairs, who did not file a resignation and who died under mysterious circumstances in the time of the February events.

To summarize, the role of Communist Party is exaggerated in several instances, Communist politicians, scholars, writers, authors and composers are given privileged space, while the non-communist characters are not given comparable space, or are not mentioned at all. Military actions and agreements of the Soviet Union before 1941 are either omitted or interpreted in such manner, that Soviet Union always comes out of the narrative as a hero. The next sub-chapter will discuss what the aforementioned language, narratives, inclusion and exclusion reveal about author's intentions to persuade the reader, and what the object of persuasion is.

4.2.4. Is the author trying to convince the reader of something?

The last part of this analysis attempts to answer the question of intent hidden inside the chosen text. As previously mentioned, the text is part of the top-down political memory, and it is certain that a handbook wants to persuade the reader of something. There are several areas, where the persuasion is visible.

The system in which the people lived when the handbook was published seems to be glorified by the author. For instance, the handbook criticizes the first Czechoslovak state. One of its many flaws was the constitution – the handbook argues that it included nice words about the people as the source of state power, about freedom and democracy, but its main goal was to strengthen capitalism in the state. The constitution came out of the theory of Czechoslovakism, it did not acknowledge the separateness of the Slovak nation – a very sensitive topic for the readers of the handbook in time, when Czech-Slovak relations in Slovakia were being settled in a federative model.

Furthermore, the handbook writes that in the time of the first Czechoslovak state, the Communist Party tried to fight for the rights of the workers and small farmers, and other parties were only selfishly representing the interests of the few – be it nationalities or the wealthy.

According to the author of the handbook, Czechoslovakism was a construct, a narrative, which the author often criticizes and even calls a dangerous theory and a weapon. The authors

try to convince the reader, that the theory was a source of many problems. The handbook states that the theory of Czechoslovakism created a lot of evil in political and public life, mostly in relationship between Czechs and Slovaks – Slovaks were not equal to Czechs and Slovaks were exploited by the Czech capitalists (page 320). Thus, it also supported nationalism and Slovakia and stirred up nationalist tensions. These tensions helped Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, which would later govern Slovakia during WWII. The typical features included: centralism, arrogance, intolerance, depreciation, and non-recognition of Slovak national organism. When the handbook provides definition and negative effects, what follows is a list of parties and politicians, who were the proponents of this theory – in this way, the handbook vilifies them. In this way, the handbook tries to convince the readers to think differently of the Czech-Slovak relations and to see that these were unsettled until the Communist Party came to power.

In times of hardship and resistance (WWII), the handbook downplays, criticizes and ridicules activities of non-communist groups. The handbook wants to persuade the reader, that the Communist Party was the leading element in the resistance against evil, and employs heroic narratives to achieve this aim. This resistance inspired more people to join the fight against Nazism.

The text also depicts a Soviet Union, which has had a positive effect on the history of Czechoslovakia, while Western countries have mostly stood by passively, or had hidden or dark motivations, which the handbook "reveals". "Bourgeoisie" and "capitalists" was the universal enemy both during the era of Austria-Hungary, the First Czechoslovak Republic, state of separation in 1939-1945, and even in the era before the Communist takeover in 1948 (page 294).

The takeover is to be seen as a revolution and reaction against an evil plot which was to strengthen the power of the "bourgeoisie" and capitalism in Czechoslovakia. The handbook depicts it as an unprepared initiative, which quickly spread and energized the masses. The handbook interprets the takeover as a positive event conducted with democratic measures without the use of force. The change was backed by the majority in the country – therefore, it is interpreted as being according to the will of the people.

To conclude, the handbook gives a new interpretation and narratives to the history of Czechoslovakia in years 1918-1948. The author is trying to convince the students/readers of his or her narrative of history, which is, that socialism is a step forward in the development of

a society/state, and that the Communist Party is the engine of this change, as well as the leader of resistance against evil, including Nazism and economic injustice. The state, in which the society was in time this handbook was published, was better compared to the inequality of the years of the First Republic, the protectorate/Slovak vassal state, as well as the time before the Communist takeover of power.

4.3. Analysis of Broadcasts

Handbooks and commentaries in a radio convey meaning differently, have a different form, but serve similar purposes, namely to convince the reader/listener of a certain point of view. In the analytical part, findings from these documents will be analyzed in order to study the narrative they employ. Thus, the study will be able to find out if and how the commentaries could be teachers of counter-memory to its listeners, and in what ways it could influence the ruling memory in the minds of the Czechoslovak people, which was analyzed in the previous subchapter. The analysis covers 7 commentaries of a Czech broadcaster Ferdinand Peroutka and one political commentary written by a Slovak dissident Miroslav Kusý, who was able to get this text to RFE, which then broadcasted it. Broadcasts deal with history of Czechoslovakia in 1918-1948, including the question of Slovak statehood within Czechoslovakia.

4.3.1. Commentaries of Ferdinand Peroutka

The chosen texts were written and broadcasted in 1971-1973, at the beginning of normalization era. Ferdinand Peroutka was a skilled Czech journalist and broadcaster. He spent WWII in prison and concentration camps, and after 1948 he went to emigration. Peroutka led the RFE's Czechoslovak section in years 1951-1961. In 1961 he retired and until 1977 kept writing his commentaries which were broadcasted by RFE.¹⁴⁵ The commentaries are written in Czech language by a person with years of experience in writing. They usually are not long: most of them are approximately 2-3 A4 pages long. There are two groups of three broadcasts – one group is dedicated to the emergence of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the second is dedicated to the coup of 1948. The seventh broadcast deals with the politics in the era of the First Republic.

¹⁴⁵ Francis D. Raška, Činnost Ferdinanda Peroutky ve Spojených Státech Za Studené Války. In: *Studia territorialia*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2009) 65 f., 68 f.

In order to analyze the possible influence of broadcasts on the collective memory in Czechoslovakia, the analysis will try to answer the same/similar four questions, as in the analysis of handbook, namely: What kind of language do the broadcasts use? What are the heroic narratives? What are the victories and defeats? What is included and what is excluded? Is the author trying to convince the listener of something?

4.3.1.1. What kind of language do the broadcasts use?

Peroutka's commentaries were rich with figurative language, words were used on purpose and sentences had a clear structure. As it will be seen in the given examples from each commentary, the word choice and the usage of figurative language are not accidental – they serve the narrative Peroutka was trying to convey through his commentaries. Sentences are not long – the commentaries were supposed to be easy to follow via radio (which could be seen in other commentaries as well).

In *Politics in the era of the First Republic* (25.12.1971) the words which stand out include: “legend” (used when describing how people perceive the history of the First Czechoslovak state), “in comparison” (repeatedly used – Peroutka is comparing Czechoslovakia in 1918-1939 to the one in which Czechoslovaks lived in 1971), “terrorizing” (adjective Peroutka used in connection with the socialist movement and its anti-government activities), “socialist movement”, “tumultuous” (used to describe the era after the state was created) and “directed by” (verb used by Peroutka, when he describes how the Social Party was controlled from the Soviet Union). Figurative language includes phrases such as “a thorn in the body” (a metaphor he uses to describe how the memory of the First Czechoslovak Republic still affected people) or “winds from the vicinity were blowing into Czechoslovakia” (a phrase Peroutka used, when he was depicting the history of the 1920 Communist coup attempt, which was inspired by the coups done elsewhere in Europe). With this word usage and metaphors, Peroutka supports the narrative – namely, that he wanted to demystify the legend surrounding the First Czechoslovak state and he compared it to the state in which people lived at time of his broadcast. When listing the positives and negatives, the sentences tend to be shorter.

In *February 1948 – part I.*, Peroutka uses figurative language such as: “democrats had a noose around their neck” (description of position in which democrats were in 1948), “a shot into the air” (a way Peroutka describes the resignations), “lusting after positions” (this is how Peroutka wrote about the politicians willing replace those who had resigned), “we will chop

them up to pieces” (a quote of a Democratic politician when talking about confronting the Communists), “going to the deep waters” (used to describe the type of uncertain and uncharted politics the democrats were engaged in), etc. Peroutka uses words to emphasize his point – in this part the inability of the Democrats to do anything productive and the depiction of villains – those orchestrating the coup and those willing to fill in for resigned ministers. Words include: “devout” (used to describe members of the Communist Party who were to replace high-ranking police officers in Prague in 1948), “renegades” (those who replaced the ministers who resigned from the democratic parties), “cast out” (verb Peroutka used when he described how politicians in France removed the Communists from the government), “carelessly” (used to describe the activities of Democrats) and “dilettantism” (a word he uses when describing the activities of democratic opposition). In this part, Peroutka poses rhetorical questions, such as: “Where did the weakness of democratic ministers come from?” “Why did it seem that the real situation in the country was hidden from these ministers?” “Why did they make mistakes?” “What could have they done differently?” “Why should we have compassion with them and with ourselves?” With these questions he not only prepares the ground for the next part, but he also makes the listener think about the events and history in a deeper manner: something a good teacher does.

In *February 1948 – part II.*, words that stand out, include: “iron discipline” (Peroutka describes Communists as those having “iron discipline”), “dogma” (used to describe the Communist initiative, that agrarian party should be dissolved), “lie” (Peroutka describes what the Communists said about the events of 1948 – their strategy was to lie about themselves in order to get the masses on their side), “the new” (Peroutka describes how young people are always on the side of “the new”, which in this case was the Communist Party), “roughness”, “mercilessness” (words used to describe what people expected to occur after the takeover), “fear” (Fear is a word used in this commentary to describe the atmosphere created by the Party and the Soviet Union) and “deadly sin” (used in context – if a politician was promoting a different way to socialism, it was considered a deadly sin – for which many would be sentenced). At the end, when he describes the atmosphere of fear, Peroutka writes, that “Rudolf Slánský was afraid”. Rudolf Slánský was a prominent Communist politician. Peroutka does not need to describe what happened to Slánský, who would later be tried and sentenced to death. The listeners knew the story – Peroutka includes his name to prove, how pervasive fear-mongering actually was. Words and figurative language in this commentary

support the narrative of a Communist Party, which used aggression, lies and fear in order to gain control over the country.

The last part of the trilogy, *February 1948 – part III*, uses words to describe the drama of the situation: “dismal columns”, “silent columns”, “instruments of class struggle”, “not merciful”, “would probably not resist the idea of vengeance” (This is how Peroutka describes militia marching on the streets of Czechoslovakia as a show of force and fear), “confused” (it is used to describe how people felt in February), “recklessly” (Peroutka uses this word to describe how Communists were putting pressure on the President even though he was seriously ill), and “melancholic comments” (This is how Peroutka described words of President Beneš, when he said to the Communists: “History has shown us, where discord leads to.”) In sentence structure, Peroutka knows how to make a text dramatic – the commentary ends with a very short sentence, which in Czech is just one word: “He signed.” Figurative language includes: “go to the edge” and “hanging their plan on a thin bond” (Both describing the risk the democratic politicians were taking). In this commentary Peroutka ends the series depicting the counter-memory – word choice and figurative language help create the narrative of defeat, where under dramatic circumstances Communists took over power in Czechoslovakia, while the leaders and the people did not know what was going on, or were simply lacking foresight.

The emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part I, has many figures of speech and words that serve a particular purpose. Peroutka begins the commentary by saying that Šmeral’s name “was awaking passions”, but after 50 years it “burnt out” (Metaphor employed to show that the name is now forgotten). Words and figures of speech, that stand out, include: “heinous betrayal” (His opinion on having a common state within Austria, instead of just Czechoslovakia was described this way by the political opponents), “dishonorably fell”, “was shouted down” (Phrases used to describe the reactions towards Šmeral after he spoke about his opinions), “mood was radical”, “radicalism”, “non-radicals” (Words used in two sentences Peroutka chose to describe the mood in the Social Democratic Party), “easily inconsistent” (That is how Peroutka described Anarchism in Czechoslovakia at that time), “corrupt” (This is how, according to Peroutka, Anarchists called Šmeral), “opportunistic direction” (Peroutka writes, how Šmeral’s opposition in the Party called him), “non-enlightened” (Peroutka writes about the perception of Hungarian Communists on their less-experienced Communist colleagues), “nation”, “national” (These words are used quite often, since the text deals with the national question in the Social Democratic Party and Šmeral’s view on it), “wandering type of Communists” (This is Peroutka’s description of

Hungarian Communists active in the Czechoslovak politics), “floating in the air” (With this metaphor Peroutka describes the opinions expressed by the anarchist, Emanuel Vajtauer), “smallness of soul”, “loses all his spirit”, “fiddling about with the existence of one little nation” (Peroutka uses all these words and phrases when he describes how Šmeral’s opponent from the Party, Kreibich perceived Šmeral and acted according to this perception). In the text, Peroutka also works with quotes of anarchist S.K. Neumann, who in a poem wrote that “we will be a humble dung, from which a lineage will grow according to the teaching of Moscow.” (Peroutka shows the way Šmeral’s opponents thought about national sovereignty in comparison with Šmeral’s position). In this commentary, Peroutka repeatedly uses “ifs” and “what ifs”, as well as “maybes”, because he speculates about inner motives and thoughts of Šmeral – he demonstrates he does not know that for sure. The language used in this commentary supports the narrative, in which Šmeral faces great opposition regarding unwillingness to accept the conditions of International’s conditions – Peroutka demonstrates how Šmeral was criticized. Furthermore, the language employed is influenced by the fact that Peroutka was trying to use a more psychological approach, and so the language showed he was not sure, only speculating about Šmeral’s thoughts.

In *The emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part II*, Peroutka employs words, such as: “carte blanche” (Which Peroutka uses to describe the powers the Soviets gave to Šmeral, when he was in Moscow in 1920 – he could start and lead a Communist Party in Czechoslovakia), “involuntary founder of the Communist Party” (Phrase Peroutka used to describe, what position Šmeral had at the convention in 1921), “courtesy” (According to Peroutka, Šmeral did not have courtesy towards all the words coming from Moscow), “immediately” (Word is repeatedly used in contrast to Šmeral and his strategy – all needed to be done as soon as possible), “unconditionally accept”, “compromise”, (Words used to describe two possibilities regarding the acceptance of the International’s conditions) “but”, “however”, (Used often to point towards the contrast between Šmeral and his opponents), “moral power”, “organic development”, “development”, “own way to socialism”, “natural choice of better powers”, (All words used to describe Šmeral’s strategy of Communist takeover of power, which were in contrast with his opponents’ ideas) “burning with desire” (Peroutka uses this metaphor, when he describes members of the party listening to Šmeral and his theses on how the Party should function – people who had a completely different vision of how to get to power), “the era of halfway decisions is gone” (This is from a telegram from the International to the Czechoslovak Marxists, calling them to action in May 1921), “masses”,

“majority”, “minority”, “sect”, (Words Šmeral used according to Peroutka – again, these were repeatedly used to describe the different opinions in the Party’s strategy), and “overwhelmed” (Peroutka uses this word to dramatically describe Šmeral’s defeat in his struggle to delay the acceptance of the conditions). To conclude, words and figures of speech in this part pinpointed the differences between Šmeral’s stance and the opinions of his opponents. The words give the listener an impression of a struggle of two sides, where Šmeral seemed to be spot on in his vision of the Party’s strategy.

The last part, *The emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part III.* contains many figures of speech and non-random choice of words and phrases, which include: “We could apologize for closely studying the course of the convention” (Peroutka begins the commentary with this statement – he is justifying why it is important to look at the history of the Communist Party, although it might not be popular to do so), “almost crazy” (Adjective Peroutka uses to describe the political line of the Communist Party, which was followed after the adoption of the conditions), “imperialist” (Peroutka describes the attitude the Communists had towards Germans – they were not imperialist, but the rest of the world is); “inside a nut which the Communist Party swallowed (Peroutka uses this figure of speech to describe the implications of the acceptance of the Comintern’s conditions), “futile battle” (Phrase with which Peroutka describes Šmeral’s opposition to the conditions, which he then voted to accept), “shaking with a depredatory psychosis” (Peroutka mentions this phrase, when he quotes a commentary of a prominent Communist Klement Gottwald and his description of Czechoslovakia, to make a point, that it was not Hitler, but Czechoslovakia that was wrong), “they cast him out of his own fortress” (A figure of speech used to describe how Šmeral lost his position of a chief editor at *Rudé Právo* newspaper), “turned the guns of this newspaper against him” (Peroutka uses the military language to show how powerful words were and how these could be used in a political struggle), “Buddhist” (Adjective Peroutka uses with irony when he describes how Šmeral was able to survive all the criticism, written and verbal attacks), “influence”, “side will” (Words used when Peroutka quotes politicians, who decided to leave the Communist Party after the acceptance of the conditions and when it became obvious, what effect this had), “opportunist” (According to Peroutka, a Russian Communist described Šmeral’s politics this way, when he criticized the hold ups in Czechoslovak Communist Party and the merging of Hungarian, German and Czechoslovak communists), “natural”, “dogmatism” (Words used in the same sentence convey the difference between Šmeral’s ideas and thinking of Communists from Moscow), “repelled”, “inconsiderately

touching the religious feeling” (Words used when ideas of Šmeral were described, that refer to the mistakes done by the Communists in their engagement with the middle-class and people’s religion), “šmeralism” (Word used by the Communists as an insult – denoted anti-Communist behavior; Peroutka uses it here to describe how Communists decided to do just what they used to criticize Šmeral for) and “phenomenon” (According to Peroutka, Šmeral was one of the greatest phenomena in the Czech communism – he describes his uniqueness). To conclude, all these words contributed to the description of Šmeral’s struggle within the Communist Party and Peroutka’s criticism of the Communist Party, which lost its independence, was manipulated and years after Šmeral it decided to just what he had suggested, without even mentioning him or the fact that it was completely frowned upon earlier.

4.3.1.2. What are the heroic narratives? What are the victories and defeats?

In his commentary entitled *Politics in the era of the First Republic* (25.12.1971), Peroutka gives a quasi-positive (heroic) narrative of the first Czechoslovak State and gives examples of what was good about it in comparison to what the state looked like under Communist Party: the republic was a state in which people went to jail only if there was enough evidence to do so. There were no death sentences. The secret police was not an institution where one was unable to get an appeal – he appeals to the fact, that the secret police was strong, and it was okay that there was a humanist philosopher and sociologist as a president instead of “some” worker. The state knew that it was not responsible for – or it was not its authority over the lives of individuals. Individuals did not have to listen to lies in silence. Every statement faced criticism. The government was not controlling the art, sciences and it was not banning writers from publishing, painters from showing their work. The government was not nominating journalists to papers; each of them could hire whomever they wanted to. State was not receiving orders from another state and was not giving the composition of its government to another government for approval. He shows that if one paints the picture of the First republic this way, a desired legend is created. He then argues that there were not only victories, but also defeats and hardships – that the era was not carefree. He included defeats, such as: social question of inhabitants was unsolved; there was a constant risk and fear of revolution based on the experience of Soviet 1917 revolution, unrests in Germany and a Communist government in Hungary. One of the risks became real in 1920, when Communists in Czechoslovakia made a coup attempt – currencies of neighboring countries lost their value and this situation deepened the social crisis. Thus, the villain in this case is the Communist

Party, which is working against the hero – the state and all those willing to work for its existence, including the Social Democrats, thanks to which the government was able to function. The Czechoslovak leaders were facing situations they were not prepared for. Political parties were acting selfishly/against each other. They were together only for the fear of a loss of independence. Sometimes there were moments of total complete uncertainty; grave concerns were daunting for the ones in the top. Sometimes, it seemed as if Czechoslovakia was a state with an unknown center, because it was long unknown, which majority will be able to finally govern. It was not possible for the parties to find compromises and often the governments were caretaker governments. There were Germans who rather wanted to belong to Germany, comprising almost a third of the population. There was a Hungarian and Ruthenian minority. There was also a wild and terrorizing socialist movement, unknown strength, one part of it was most probably governed by the Soviets.

The commentary named *February 1948 – part I.* begins Peroutka's demystification of the official heroic narrative. In his narrative, the Communist Party is not the hero, but the villain who wins and the hero – the democratic opposition, with which Peroutka also identifies, is defeated. Democrats are described as being already weak and overwhelmed by the power of the villain and its mighty friend (Soviet Union), and the resignation was "a shot into the air". In the commentary, Peroutka illustrates this on the event preceding the resignation of ministers, when a communist minister of interior removed 8 high ranking police officers in the Prague police force and replaced them with loyal members of the Communist Party. Peroutka describes it as a preparation for a planned takeover of power. The resigned ministers were replaced by "renegades from democratic parties", who were willing to join such a government, and so the communists were able to continue governing without opposition and a need for new elections. At the end of the commentary, Peroutka affirms that this was done according to the law, as the official narrative of the Communist Party said. Peroutka includes stories of people important for these events – the opposition acts foolishly by doing nothing after resigning. The politicians did not anticipate what would come and even spent their weekend away. On the other hand, Klement Gottwald, Prime Minister and leader of the Communist Party is described as being smart – he had contact with the people and had great visibility. In comparison, the democrats met in private to discuss their strategies, did not cooperate and communicate with the social democrats well enough to coordinate their actions, including the resignation itself. The communists were skillfully completing their plan, while the democratic opposition was unwise, foolish, inexperienced, and improvising. In this

commentary, Peroutka tried to show the perspective of the opposition – how they could have felt after the attempt to stop the communists with the resignation did not work. In the narrative of loss and defeat Peroutka analyzes one of the leaders of the democratic opposition, Hubert Ripka, who was the main strategist and even came up with the idea of resignation as a strategy to get rid of the communists. On this example Peroutka shows how the opposition was unwise: Peroutka proposes a theory that Ripka could have found his inspiration to confront the communist Party in France, where the communists were cast out from the coalition government. France, however, was not in the Soviet sphere of influence. Peroutka states that Ripka did not know what it means to battle against the communists, nor lose against them. Right before the end, Peroutka quotes a politician who voted for the new government after the ministers resigned – after voting the politician went to a restaurant in the parliament and drank glasses of cognac.

Commentary *February 1948 – part II.* continues with the depiction of a new narrative, and describes the defeat while concentrating on other aspects of the February events. Peroutka gives background information on what the ministers were telling the president while giving resignation – the reasoning behind resignation was to force the communists to either openly use violence or to be enforced to cooperation in coalition government. Peroutka states that open violence came, continued and grew. Peroutka provides the listener with the background information on how the communists had secret meetings with the renegade politicians who would be willing to cooperate with them. With this, Peroutka enforces his argumentation, that the takeover was a thoroughly-planned operation. Peroutka revisits the events of 1945 to point out that the communists were already powerful enough before February 1948 – they had the most important ministries. Again, he stresses that the Soviet presence made the situation inevitable. Peroutka also tries to get into the mind of the democratic opposition – what were their options in such a hopeless situation. Peroutka writes about other aspects decisive for the victory of the communists and loss of democracy: the communists were organized and were even able to mobilize the young, whom Peroutka describes as inexperienced and lacking knowledge about the history of the Communist Party. The narrative of defeat includes what negative forces were used for the communists to win, namely fear of invasion and fear of persecution. Peroutka concludes the second commentary with description of how even the greatest communists feared possible accusations in such an atmosphere and would not be able to enjoy the victory.

The last part of the commentary series, *February 1948 – part III*, concentrates on the preparation phases of the coup as well as the crucial week of 17-24th of February 1948, looking both at the communist victory and the defeat of democratic forces. In his narrative of defeat, Peroutka shows the democratic forces which were not prepared for what would occur after the resignation and did not tell their people what to do. Peroutka includes the story of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Masaryk, who was an independent politician. Masaryk did not join the resigning ministers. Peroutka barely discusses his motives – he says that Masaryk could have used various tactics before fleeing Czechoslovakia. On the other side, there were police officers and militia controlled by the Communist Party, who were able to occupy the headquarters of social democratic party, national socialist party, their newspapers, even ministries, and factories. Therefore, Peroutka argues that the victorious narrative of the state is faulty, since the fight was already won before the 25th of February. In this narrative, relationship with foreign powers – prospective friends or foes – was described as complicated: the question of orientation was not yet settled, since the politicians did not have much positive experience with western countries (Munich 1938; the West was slow to recognize the émigré Czechoslovak government and the Czechoslovak borders during WWII). The communists also used misinformation, for instance they said that the democratic politicians received their orders from England or the U.S. The narrative then continues with a depiction of confused democratic politicians, who did not do anything and only hoped the President would do something about the situation – he would be the hero to save the state. However, it was not possible in the given geopolitical situation – Czechoslovakia was in the Eastern sphere of influence. Furthermore, President Beneš was under pressure of the communists: communists showed Beneš a long list of people they saw as “reactionaries” and would arrest them if he decided not to sign the new government. Peroutka mentions that the list contained names of Beneš’s friends and political associates. The narrative ends with Beneš signing the new government.

The series of commentaries entitled: *The Emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part I*, gives a narrative of the Party’s formation in Czechoslovakia, giving special space to one of its leaders, Bohumír Šmeral. In the first part, Peroutka gives a quasi heroic narrative of Šmeral, who was trying to maintain the national aspect within the Social Democratic Party against the pressure from various opponents: anarchists, Hungarian and German communists.

The Emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part II. carries on in the narrative, concentrating on Šmeral during the founding congress of the Party in May 1921. Šmeral is losing against the enormous pressure of Russian, German and Hungarian communists, as well as of his own colleagues. He is described as the one who was trying to contextualize communism to the circumstances in Czechoslovakia and did not want to rush the entrance of the Party to the Communist International (Comintern). He was for a party of the masses, which would not be funded from Russia, but would be poor – Šmeral found moral power in that. The congress ended with the creation of the Communist Party and acceptance of the Comintern's conditions.

In the last commentary of the series, *The Emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part III.*, Peroutka talks about the defeat of the Communist Party: acceptance of the Comintern's conditions. From then on, the Party simply followed the instructions from the Soviet Union, even if they were mindless. Peroutka includes an example to make his point: when Hitler took over power in Germany, Soviet viewpoint was, that other countries were imperialistic and were threatening Germany. Germany was not imperialistic. As a result of 1921 events, Czechoslovak communists copied this position in the parliament, even though people in Czechoslovakia knew about Hitler and his ambitions. Peroutka argues that the events of 1921 paved the way to 1948 and 1968, when the Communist Party accepted the dependency on a foreign authority. Therefore, the acceptance of the Comintern's conditions was a great defeat for Czechoslovakia in years to come. Peroutka then describes the fate of Šmeral, who voted for the acceptance of conditions, against which he had protested. He lost his position as a chief-editor in the Party's newspaper, was under surveillance, criticized and humiliated by the newspaper he used to lead. Again, Šmeral is described as a hero, a visionary within the party, who asked questions and shared thoughts which were timeless; who was cast out by people who had power, and a person, whose name was not mentioned and unknown to young people. Peroutka supports the heroic narrative with accounts of how Šmeral's opponents ended up: one of them began to defend Šmeral and was removed from the party, other left Prague with Nazis in 1945 and went missing. Peroutka mentions the third one knowing that listeners understand what he means: "Rudolf Slánský ... it is known, what happened to Rudolf Slánský." With this example, Peroutka finishes the narrative of a defeat: those who thought of themselves as victors, were sooner or later defeated as well (Slánský), and ideas which Šmeral was criticized for, were put to action in 1945 by the Communist Party.

4.3.1.3. What is included and what is excluded?

The commentary *Politics in the era of the First Republic* (25.12.1971) lists positive elements of the first Czechoslovak state, such as: fair elections, democratic principles, no false political processes, no death rows for people who had different opinions (not even a murderer of a minister of finances), national feelings. Hereby, Peroutka talks about things the handbook does not mention – in this comparison he criticizes the communist regime and mentions both the positive and the negative aspects of the first Czechoslovak state, for which this time period cannot and should not be idealized.

The three commentaries on February 1948 will be analyzed as one, since they only worked together as a more elaborate view of the coup. In the series of commentaries Peroutka includes the reasons for the crisis, Russian help, diplomatic pressure on the Czechoslovak politicians and the plan of communists for takeover (including establishment of secret warehouses full of Soviet weapons and ammunition). In other words, Peroutka included the things the communists wanted to keep hidden – how 1948 was a prepared event, with the backing of the Soviet Union. Peroutka concentrates more on criticism of democratic forces, rather than on the activities of the Communist Party. Peroutka makes a reference to the situation in the early 1920s, when politicians were also unsure of what to do. In 1920s there were people with a fighting spirit – here Peroutka mentions a Social Democrat, who was willing to fight for the government, even with the communist opposition within the Party. But people in 1948 did not have such fighting spirit. The broadcasts also give more spotlight to ordinary people and to the role these played – while communists were ready to go to the streets, the other parties lacked such support. Most of the young were enchanted with the communist vision. To this purpose Peroutka quotes one young poet's ode to Stalin. Peroutka also gives attention to writers – who became ambassadors, because they were helping the Communist Party by writing movie scripts. To sum it up, Peroutka gives attention both to the communists and their opponents and criticizes both of them.

The commentaries on the emergence of the Communist Party will again be analyzed together for the very same reasons as stated above. The commentaries cover a story of a concrete person, thus giving more space to psychology and his (possible) internal motivations. The text also discusses the political opposition of Šmeral. Peroutka does not include the details of the development of the Social Democratic Party until 1921, nor does he mention armed confrontation of Marxists in 1920. The three commentaries concentrate mostly on what was

going within the Marxist wing of the Social Democratic Party, and so there are not many descriptions of the context of Czechoslovakia. This selection shows, that Peroutka was trying to give the limited space he had to describe the story of one Marxist politician within the Party and the struggle to reverse the direction of making the Party dependent on Soviet Union.

4.3.1.4. Is the author trying to convince the listener of something?

In his commentary entitled *Politics in the era of the First Republic*, Peroutka is using a tone, in which he sounds that he is trying to give a more complex picture. He does not want to say it was great, nor ugly: „It was a work of people in a given time and under specific circumstances.“ (translated from Czech) Peroutka compares and contrasts this republic to the current one, which started in 1948 – he argues that the current state was enforced on people – it was not a result of a democratic process. He uses metaphors to make his point, that the memory of the First Republic was a danger for the communist government – he writes that the memory of the people of the First Republic is like a thorn in their body. So they try to shame it and to show that it is just a legend. Part of the convincing is the emphasis on a positive role of the Social Democratic Party and how its role was able to make Czechoslovakia work. Peroutka is trying to avoid black-and-white thinking by showing those who were vilified – Social Democrats – in a positive light. He wants to point out that one should not universally blame socialists – because then, one is making a great service to Marxists, who are given the entitlement of being the one and only socialists/Marxists. Communists fear different conceptions of socialism and revisionist Marxism more than they fear bourgeoisie. He criticizes the victims of Communism for appealing to tradition of the First Republic – according to Peroutka, they appeal to a tradition which was not written down. Therefore, in a confrontational manner he wants to prove that a narrative, in which socialists during the First Republic were seen as villains, is non-functioning.

Days between the 17th and 25th of February were commemorated by the Communist Party as a “Victorious February”. Peroutka commemorated these days in a completely different fashion: he takes the events of 1948 on from a different view. He begins his commentary entitled *February 1948 – part I.* with a statement that the Nazi regime paved the way for the communist power in Czechoslovakia. He tries to point out how the Nazis were able to show how soft and vulnerable people are, if they are not protected by a democratic system. The memory of Nazi dictatorship was still in heads of people in 1948, when a new dictatorship was being prepared – people were tired of conditions under which they had lived during the

Nazi occupation. In the commentary, Peroutka states, that if people had not experienced Nazism, they would have certainly acted differently in 1948. Peroutka also wants the readers to see that 1948 was unavoidable from the global perspective. Therefore, the end result was not due to the mistakes of the opposition. Most importantly, as Peroutka states at the end of his commentary, he wants the reader to know that the takeover of power in 1948 was a coup and the communists try hard to make the coup not look like a coup. In the second part, he further establishes that the event was a coup, which was already won before the 25th of February and February just showed what had already occurred earlier on. Moreover, he again stresses the role of the Soviet Union. In the last part of the series, *February 1948 – part III.*, Peroutka wants the people to understand how everyone is responsible for maintaining democracy in a state – it requires power and determination. Democratic ministers did not supply such power in 1945-1948. He again repeats that the victory was achieved before the February events.

The series of commentaries entitled *The Emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia* were broadcasted before celebrations of the 50th anniversary of creation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. In these commentaries Peroutka gives more light to what the Party tended to omit when describing its history, thus giving a different meaning to events of 1921. In *The emergence Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part I.*, Peroutka wants to convince the audience that at the beginning there were people in the Communist Party who were interesting and had character, namely Bohumír Šmeral. In *The Emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part II.*, Peroutka continues with the aforementioned argumentation, showing the listener that there was a struggle within the Communist Party, where Šmeral was one of the few, who were trying to steer away from a crucial decision – thus, the listeners could get the impression, that they should not condemn all who belonged to the Communist Party, because there were those who did not act according to black and white expectations, where communists were all villains. Furthermore, Peroutka also tries to convince the listeners that the influence of Russia was crucial for the Communist Party's politics to such an extent that it was no longer independent. In *The Emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – part III.*, Peroutka lays out his thesis that the decision to accept the conditions of the International prepared the path for Russian influence and intervention in 1948 and 1968. Furthermore, Peroutka also mentions several communists who decided to leave the Party, when they realized what kind of consequences the acceptance of the conditions had on the Party. In addition, when Peroutka describes how Šmeral ended up,

he asserts how his ideas were eventually put to practice years later – which could tell the reader that Šmeral was a visionary, and that the Communist Party was simply backward-thinking in 1920s, and many of its members lacked hindsight.

4.3.2. Commentary of Miroslav Kusý

The chosen text was written and broadcasted in autumn of 1988, at the end of normalization. At that point Kusý was even able to publish his ideas in Czech samizdat newspaper called Lidové Noviny – his commentary on Czechoslovakism and the idea of Czechoslovak statehood came out in the November 1988 issue. However, he managed to get the text to people, who made sure it would get to RFE headquarters in Munich, from where the text was broadcasted to the entire state – a scale samizdat literature would never be able to reach. In August 1989 Kusý faced trial for sending these texts to RFE.¹⁴⁶

4.3.2.1. What kind of language does the commentary use?

The text is unusually long for a commentary. This is due to the fact that the text was intended for a newspaper. The sentences are often short and show urgency, emotions such as anger, and even provoke. Kusý uses lots of terms which might have been more common to the more educated people – such as „fait accompli“, „raison d'être“, “pregnantly”, “facticity”, “sukus” (Word from latin, translated as juice or sap, basically meaning core) or “autochthonous”. Words, which Kusý keeps using are “statehood”, “articulated”. This word choice also shows that Kusý had a philosophical background. Furthermore, Kusý often quotes various scholars and politicians.

Kusý also uses figures of speech and words that get listener's attention, such as: “separatist” (How Kusý describes a statement on Czechoslovak statehood by a Slovak writer and politician Vladimír Mináč), “ľudák” (Used both as a noun and an adjective, referring to the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party) “unexpected and enraged Slovak criticism” (Kusý uses this phrase when he writes about the reaction of Slovaks on the Czechoslovak statehood during the First Czechoslovak state), “dimwitted” (Adjective Kusý uses when he asks a rhetorical question about the proponents of Czechoslovakism), “wise and honest people” (Description Kusý uses, when he answers the question he had posed about the proponents of Czechoslovakism), “innocent Slovak people” (Kusý uses this phrase in quotation marks, when he talks about the origins of Czechoslovakism and various theories, that give this

¹⁴⁶ Jan Pešek, Normalizácia a Štátna bezpečnosť. In: Slovensko a režim normalizácie (Prešov, 2003) 56..

concept vile motives against the Slovaks), “representative support” (Phrase with which Kusý describes the growing support for the idea of Czechoslovakism among the Slovak intelligentsia in pre WWI era), “rational, inalienable starting point of the concept of Czechoslovakism” (This is a phrase Kusý employs, when he makes his argument about the Czech-Slovak reciprocity), “sufficiently unfounded, speculative, based on unjust speculations” (Attributes Kusý gives to the expansion of Czechoslovakism – the notion of a Czechoslovak nation), “talk about it roughly and even with hatred”, “a conscious lie”, “ideological justification of exploitation of Slovakia by the Czech bourgeoisie” (Kusý describes the criticism of the concept of one Czechoslovak nation, sometimes directly quoting the phrases scholars used), “common”, “reciprocally”, “directly neighboring”, “close”, “directly”, “connected”, “relations”, “mutual cohesions” (Kusý uses all these words when he describes the Czech-Slovak reciprocity), “Federacy has got a thousand weaknesses” (Kusý compares the various possibilities, in which Czechoslovakia could theoretically function as a state) and “towards... a repeated break-up of the Republic?” (In one passage, Kusý uses rhetorical questions to illustrate, what Mináč could mean by “confirming the Slovak statehood” –a phrase Mináč used in the article Kusý quotes).

Kusý also uses many rhetorical questions in order to provoke further thought on a given topic or to prepare soil for his next statement. These include: “What will he (Mináč) offer to the Czechs? To celebrate their own, Czech statehood?”, “How, where would Mináč like to ‘confirm the Slovak statehood’? Towards confederacy, free association of independent sovereign states?”, “Were all the named and other ‘Czechoslovaks’ dimwitted, that they did not notice all the transparent defects of the aforementioned concept?”.

The language Kusý employs helps create the urgency, with which he wants to react to the quoted articles. The words and figures of speech help Kusý in his criticism of various positions and to provide alternative opinions, which are understandably explained to the listener/reader. Questions help listener understand what Kusý is aiming to convey in his argumentation. However, not every listener would understand some of the words, since some are of foreign origin.

4.3.2.2. What are the heroic narratives? What are the victories and defeats?

In the beginning, Kusý quotes Vladimír Mináč, a Slovak writer and politician. The citation is from a Slovak literary magazine where Mináč weighed in on the topic of Czechoslovakia – namely, that joining the Czechoslovak state was moving from one state of slavery to another –

narrative of defeat. Kusý's article is a reaction to Mináč, in which Kusý presents a counter-memory and a counter-narrative where, the victory is not the question of nationality, but the victory of Czechoslovak statehood being accomplished via the concept of Czechoslovakism. In contrast to Mináč, Kusý views this concept in a positive light. He thinks the concept puts emphasis on what Czechs and Slovaks have in common. In this light, the narrative of defeat in Kusý's text is the proposed idea of Slovak statehood, which gives more emphasis on how Czechs and Slovaks are different and what is specific for them. Kusý gives the history of Czechoslovakism a lot of space, in order to describe its positive aspects. For instance, Kusý argues, that the idea of Czechoslovakism comes from a long historical nature of Czechoslovak mutuality, solidarity or reciprocity. This was conditioned by the fact that the two communities had neighbored each other for a long time, and that the languages are close to each other, meaning people could communicate without much effort. The history of these two territories has been interconnected and they have influenced each other. There were rich cultural and industrial relations. The Slovak separatists cannot refuse to admit the mutuality and reciprocity. They only state that the differences between them are qualitatively superior to the reciprocity. Thus, Kusý argues that Czechoslovakism was a victorious narrative filled with mutuality and reciprocity. Kusý then writes that the concept of united Czechoslovak nation was a contemporary expression of the idea of Czechoslovakism, which fulfilled a function of its development and strengthening – there Kusý writes about the failure of reasoning: this was based on faulty assumption, namely there was no united Czechoslovak nation, which resulted in political struggles when Slovaks realized what Czechoslovakism meant in daily practice.

Kusý then defends Czechoslovakism against its critics who mostly criticized the intent of the concept, interpreting it as: an ideological fiction, a conscious lie, a product of Great Bohemia politics, a tactical feat, created and used for the needs of Masaryk's foreign mission, which would then give reasons to the foreign powers for the creation of a new Czechoslovak state (All from quotes of various émigrés living in Canada, who wrote a collective volume on Czechoslovak history and from the aforementioned discussion, where Mináč took part). Kusý writes, this "defeat" (as described by the opponents of the concept) had a different history: the concept of one unified Czechoslovak nation was not brought up by Czech expansionists, capitalists, Masaryk, etc. When Masaryk took the idea, it was already 50 years old. It was explicitly mentioned by a Czech politician Palacký in 1849. It was co-formulated and preached by important Slovak proponents in 1868. This concept had a representative support

on both sides. Thus, this was not a tactical feat, but a concept with a long tradition, to which Slovaks produced no alternative.

Afterwards, Kusý turns in the narrative to ask what other statehood could be celebrated beside the Czechoslovak one, if the only purely Slovak statehood known to Kusý was the one between 1939 and 1945. What is considered a defeat is the way Czechoslovakism was put to practice in Czechoslovakia – the negative consequences of its application sparked various discussions, which led to the federative arrangement of the republic in 1969.

To conclude, Kusý revisits the narrative of Czechoslovakism to pinpoint its positives in the historical context (victories), shows how the concept is being misinterpreted (narratives of defeat) and that the Czechoslovak state based on the idea of Czechoslovakism actually gave Slovaks the possibility to engage in politics and to build up the national self-consciousness (victory).

4.3.2.3. What is included and what is excluded?

Kusý includes both the Czech and Slovak perspectives and proponents of Czechoslovakism, which were important for Czechoslovak Republic. He gives a lot of space to explain how the concept came to being and to explain what the logical consequences of Mináč's statements would be. In his argumentation, he does not go deeper into the negative effects of Czechoslovakism in the first state that the opponents and proponents of a Slovak state would mention. He also does not write much about the competing concept – the Slovak state (1939-1945) – he only mentions that this is the only concept that was thought through and put into practice. To sum it up, Kusý's inclusion and exclusion pattern shows, that it was more important to thoroughly describe Czechoslovakism, its roots and to refute the criticism it received. However, Kusý stays mostly in the sphere of political theories, meaning he did not discuss the practical life within Czechoslovakia. He also did not write extensively on the concept of autonomous Slovak statehood – the listener knew Kusý's negative position towards that concept, but the explanation of this attitude was not in the center of this commentary.

4.3.2.4. Is the author trying to convince the listener of something?

Kusý writes this text in the context of the 70th anniversary of Czechoslovakia (October 1988) and discusses the Czech-Slovak relations and identity of Czechoslovakia. From the beginning he confronts various positions – therefore, the text is per se challenging the discussion around

Czechoslovakia and Slovaks within this polity. Kusý does not want to defend the First Republic in terms of national question – he tries to show to the listeners, that he does not want to glorify the state. He wants to criticize and comment on the fact, that the idea of Czechoslovak statehood was negated by Vladimír Mináč, a prominent Slovak writer. According to Kusý, Mináč and his positions are simply wrong in terms of how the first Czechoslovak Republic was to be understood. Furthermore, Kusý also wants to accent, that the only or the central thought of the celebration should have been the confirmation of Slovak statehood within Czechoslovakia. Slovaks should not abandon the idea of Czechoslovak statehood and to substitute it with an idea of a Slovak statehood. Moreover, Kusý wants to convince the listeners that the idea of Czechoslovakism puts emphasis on what Czechs and Slovaks have in common. Kusý wants the listener to understand the background of the concept and to see the consequences of reasoning he tries to criticize. He puts the concept in a historical context to make his point that it was not simply a political strategy, but the concept was around since, 1840s. Kusý also wants to draw the difference between the concept and the practical coexistence, which showed its weaknesses. In addition, the practical coexistence gave Slovaks the freedom to become more politically active and to develop the national self-consciousness. Kusý also urges the listeners to newly create the consciousness of being Czechoslovak, not just Slovaks – as a national identification.

To conclude, the text was written for the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic. With this essay Kusý tries to give some sense to the discussion about the identity and past, and gives a meaningful narrative to the discourse, which is often ruled either by communist narratives or by people hailing the first Slovak state (1939-1945) and their ideas of a separate nation and statehood. Kusý tries to give a moderate position, in which he argues for the commemoration of Czechoslovakism, which is a “fruit of a real Czech-Slovak reciprocity” within the Czechoslovak people.

4.4. Analysis of findings

The analysis showed what kind of narrative was taught to students who used this particular handbook. The close reading of broadcasts, on the other hand, showed a different narrative, pointing to things the handbook did not mention or give much attention to. Handbook was a vehicle of memory, which concentrated all the narratives, and was easy to access. It held together all information deemed important for the creation and preservation of narratives, the government wanted to spread. The language is either very official, or using an emotionally

charged tone and language of power. It shows who is to be praised and who is to be blamed. It creates a world, in which is supposed to be easy to navigate. One knows who is “us”, “we” and “them”. At the same time, the commentaries were continually broadcasted to the republic, confronting the narratives and memories of the handbook on the history of Czechoslovakia. It is the premise of this paper, that such change in perspective brings a new collective memory to life, which then influences the collective identity. This sub-chapter will analyze several moments in broadcasts, which gave a new perception to the listeners, and were different to the official narrative presented in the handbook – a constant barrage of commentaries “teaching” a counter-memory to the listeners could influence their identity to such extent, that they would not be willing to identify themselves with what was presented to them (internalization) and would lead into ideas subversive for the “normalized” society.

Firstly, in his broadcast on the history of the first Czechoslovak state, Peroutka teaches the listeners to not fall for myth-making, but to see both the positives and the negatives of the Republic. Therefore, he is able to debunk the heroic narrative of the Communist Party, and other “heroes” come to the front. 23 years into the communist establishment and with the Soviet army present in the country, people are again reminded of the positive aspects of life in the First state thanks to his commentaries. At the same time, he points out that the period of the First Republic was not without any troubles and risks. Thus, he puts listeners back to reality to see, that one has to fight for democracy, if it is to work. Furthermore, he breaks down the stigma all people associated with anything connected with Marxism, communism, Leninism or socialism by praising the Social Democratic Party for its support for the Czechoslovak government back in 1920s, thus providing a more pluralistic point of view, which would not be possible in the context of Czechoslovakia during the normalization period. In this commentary he destroys the heroic narrative connected with those who left the Social Democratic Party and gives it to those who stayed and helped the state function properly.

The commentaries on the beginning of the Communist Party showed the listener that at its onset, the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia consisted of people who had interesting ideas and insights, confronting decisions, such as the acceptance of the conditions of the Communist International. However, these were not to prevail in the Party, as it gradually lost its autonomy, and was dependent on foreign authority – Soviet Union. Thus, Peroutka tries to convince the listeners that the acceptance of the Cominterns’ conditions was to be an inherent failure within the Party with consequences for the whole state later on. These

findings show the listeners that the history of Czechoslovakia was not so black and white and even communists had interesting politicians within their ranks. At the same time, it pointed out how the Party was inherently flawed from its beginnings – not representative of the interests of the Czechoslovaks, but led from the top – Soviet Union. With these commentaries, Peroutka rearranges who the heroes and anti-heroes of the history of Czechoslovakia are – with Communist Party being an anti-hero and a caricature of a party of citizen's representatives.

In the series dedicated to the coup in 1948, Peroutka shows both a different view on what happened and what kind of meaning it had for the people in Czechoslovakia. This is apparent in little details: In handbook, the removal of officers in 1947 is described as “personal measures”, and the reaction of the democrats was a prepared “attack” against the Communist Party. However, Peroutka provides a narrative that the “personal measures” was simply a prime example of takeover of power in the police force, and the “attack” was no attack, but a chaotic and unprepared reaction of democratic forces to the coordinated and prepared coup of the communists, with a strong backing of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the Communist Party is again an anti-hero, and its opponents are mostly victims of the conspiracy, which was simply unavoidable due to the strong Soviet presence in the Eastern Europe. In this sense, the events of 1948 were really a coup, which made the citizens of Czechoslovakia hostages of its government ruled from the Soviet Union.

Last but not least, Kusý's commentary on Czechoslovakism and the Czechoslovak state sheds even more light on the Czechoslovak state and its commemoration. It is not as described in the handbook, which blamed Czechoslovakism for being the source of many problems and used it almost as a pejorative word. Kusý sees it as a theory which was trying to find a common ground. Furthermore, it paved a way to the state in which Slovaks could be politically active, were given more possibilities and were able to develop their national and political consciousness. Kusý's position provides a more complex view, where, even with its obvious faults, Czechoslovakism is seen as positive – not a tactical feat, but an old theory with many positive consequences – such as the First Czechoslovak state. In autumn 1988 Kusý merely wanted to commemorate its 70th anniversary, because it was the best statehood possible at that point.

The given commentaries challenge the official narratives of the First Czechoslovak state, theory of Czechoslovakism, the beginnings of the Communist Party as well as the beginning

of the Czechoslovak Socialist State in 1948. These texts provided a fresh perspective on the state and the identity of its citizens. The message of the broadcasts was dangerous due to the fact, that it challenged and weakened the official narrative, which justified the state's existence and raised questions regarding the identity of Czechoslovaks. Furthermore, the commentaries disrupted the internalization of memory as well as rites of participation, since these were often broadcasted on the days, on which certain events were celebrated. Czechoslovaks were reminded that there were more possible narratives and points of view and that Czechoslovakia once used to be a state with a democratic establishment, which provided more freedom, possibilities, as well as responsibilities, than the state in which they lived at the time.

5. Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to discuss the influence of RFE on the collective memory and identity in Czechoslovakia in 1968-1989. As seen in the previous chapters, influence of RFE in Czechoslovakia is a specific case due to the divided history of Czech lands and Slovakia, and the question of nation.

RFE was a project specifically aimed at various countries, providing up-to-date information to its listeners. In the case of Czechoslovakia RFE's operation had its specifics connected to the issues of leadership, national question and extensive jamming. Invasion, repression, purges, altering of history, manipulation of information, emigration, rising opposition all contributed to an increased demand for alternative source of information. RFE's commentaries were one of the possibilities, where people could find what was either missing or lied about in the official narratives – such as history handbooks.

The analysis showed that the handbook was a compact carrier of memory. However, in the given context, the intended readers were prone not to believe it, which increased the likelihood, that the commentaries were able to shape the counter-memory within Czechoslovakia. Out of the vast amount of material broadcast, I decided to include analysis of 8 commentaries, which challenge the narratives and memories presented by the handbook on the period 1918-1948. Research showed that RFE had the potential to influence the way Czechoslovak people perceived their history and identity – it is because the chosen commentaries provided an attractive, more realistic and pluralistic view on the Czechoslovak history and identity, and, importantly, the statistics of listenership that are available prove that people had access and listened to the broadcasts. The broadcasts also served as a refresher of

memory for those, who lived during the given era and could compare what they actually witnessed with what their children studied at school. Theoretically, this could even spark a debate in families, where the transfer of collective memory occurs, and where the influence of parents on children could make children distrust the official narratives. For instance, children could hear about Milan Rastislav Štefánik or Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk from their parents and discuss the counter-memories at home. Furthermore, the Radio kept broadcasting the different point of view every day during the normalization era, and so, in 20 years of normalization the counter-memory could grow in society, which was looking for alternative sources of information. The changes in the memory and identity, that the commentators of RFE proposed, were radical – the given commentaries questioned the criticism of Czechoslovakism and the First Czechoslovak state, challenged the official narrative of the formation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, as well as the beginning of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1948. Czechoslovaks lived in a state, which constantly lied to them about their past, painted phenomena such as Czechoslovakism black, and the Communist Party was presents as the solver of problems other governments were unable to resolve. At the same time, the counter-memories broadcasted by RFE were a reminder that they once lived in a democratic system – the Czechoslovak republic. The system had flaws, required effort, but was better than what they lived in at present. Moreover, the memory could have sparked inspiration among the listeners to strive for the ideals of democracy even in the context of a *normalized* Czechoslovakia and to think about the concept and existence of Czech and Slovak nations. Last but not least, broadcasts were written in an attractive language, which was easier to listen to, compared to the language of the handbook, which was heavily laden with the discourse imposed from the top by the government. Therefore, based on the contextual analysis of RFE and history of Czechoslovakia, as well as close reading of both the official collective memory and its counter-memories from RFE I conclude, that in 1968-1989 RFE was a surrogate teacher of history in Czechoslovakia.

The research of the given topic showed, that there are still many areas which could be further analyzed. Among other directions, future research could lead to finding concrete proof of how RFE's commentaries were reflected upon by the listeners – namely, how writers of samizdat literature dealt with the broadcasted topics. This could show a proof of how people were able to discuss topics the government did not want to be discussed, with samizdat literature being the source of these discussions, as well as a vehicle of counter-memory. With such analysis, the shift of concentration from RFE to the recipient countries would be complete.

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7. Abstracts

English abstract

This master's thesis investigates the impact of Radio Free Europe (RFE) in Czechoslovakia in the years 1968-1989. It explores the possible influence of RFE's commentaries on the collective memory of people living in Czechoslovakia, using the theory of collective memory of Aleida Assmann and the method of close reading. After introducing the aforementioned theory and method, as well as the history of RFE and Czechoslovakia in 1968-1989, the thesis concentrates on the analysis of two carriers of memory: a history handbook and broadcasted commentaries. The close reading provides a deeper look at the texts which shaped the collective memory in Czechoslovakia, giving specific attention both to the used language and employed narratives. The chosen texts provided a closer look at the competing memories of Czechoslovakia in 1918-1948, showing that broadcasts could be instruments used by RFE – a surrogate teacher – to teach the listeners about the history of Czechoslovakia. Research showed that RFE had the potential to influence the way Czechoslovak people perceived their history and identity – it is because the chosen commentaries provided an attractive, more realistic and pluralistic view on Czechoslovak history and identity.

German abstract

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht die Auswirkungen von Radio Free Europe (RFE) in der Tschechoslowakei in den Jahren 1968-1989. Die Arbeit erforscht den möglichen Einfluss der RFE-Kommentare auf das kollektive Gedächtnis der Menschen in der Tschechoslowakei, unter Verwendung der Theorie der kollektiven Erinnerung von Aleida Assmann und der Methode: *Close reading*. Nach der Beschreibung der vorgenannten Theorie und Methode, sowie der Geschichte der RFE und der Tschechoslowakei in den Jahren 1968-1989 konzentriert sich die Arbeit auf die Analyse von zwei Trägern des Gedächtnisses: ein Geschichtshandbuch und ausgestrahlte Kommentare. *Close reading* gibt einen tieferen Blick auf die Texte, die das kollektive Gedächtnis in der Tschechoslowakei prägten – dabei, wird der verwendeten Sprache als auch den benützten Narrativen besondere Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Die ausgesuchten Texte stellten die konkurrierenden Erinnerungen der Tschechoslowakei in den Jahren 1918-1948 näher dar – sie zeigen, dass Sendungen von RFE (a *surrogate teacher*) als Instrumente verwenden konnten, um die Zuhörer über die Geschichte der Tschechoslowakei zu unterrichten. Die Forschung zeigte, dass RFE das Potential hatte, die Art und Weise, wie die tschechoslowakischen Menschen ihre Geschichte

und ihre Identität wahrnehmen, zu beeinflussen – dies liegt daran, dass die ausgewählten Kommentare einen attraktiven, realistischeren und pluralistischeren Blick auf die tschechoslowakische Geschichte und Identität erlaubten.