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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: “100 YEARS SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC”

Zuzana Mičková – Anna Schneiderová\*

From the point of view of the common Slovak and Czech history, 2018 is interesting for several important anniversaries. Since the Munich Agreement, i.e. since the break-up of Czechoslovakia, 80 years have passed this year, since the Communist coup in 1948, 70 years have passed in February and since the „Prague spring“ and the subsequent invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia it has been 50 years. All these anniversaries, however, are overshadowed by a one basic event that led to the emergence of Czechoslovakia on 28 October 1918. It was this key event and the subsequent development of a newly established state, which grew up on the ruins of Austria-Hungary as one of its successor states that the international scientific conference titled *100 years since the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic* dealt with from various aspects.

The conference was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 at the Faculty of Law of Matej Bel University (MBU), under the auspices of **Mult. Dr. h.c. prof. JUDr. Mojmir Mamojka**, the judge of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic. The main organizer of this unique event was the Department of the History of State of the Faculty of Law of Matej Bel University, which traditionally organizes this historical and legal scientific conference every spring. Since the last year, these conferences are part of the cycle called the “Banska Bystrica’s School of Legal History” (*Banskobystrická škola právnych dejín*). By organising conferences, this institution seeks to respond not only to the current developments in legislation, viewing it from a legal history aspect, but also to

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important historical events concerning the history of state and law. In the fourth year of organising this event, the home organiser was joined by other collaborative workplaces from individual faculties within the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, which undoubtedly added uniqueness to this event. The co-organisers included the Department of the History of State and Law of the Faculty of Law of the Masaryk University in Brno, the Department of the History of State and Law of the Faculty of Law of the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, the Department of the Theory of Law of and Legal History of the Palacký University in Olomouc and, last but not least, the Department of Theory of Law and Social Sciences of the Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava.

The strong response and success of the event is also evidenced by the number of participants in the conference whose active or passive participation was over 60, not only from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, but also from Poland.

The conference also had media support when a commercial television broadcast a reportage and a public radio RTVS broadcast a live discussion from the conference on March 22, in which the reporter and conference participants, **doc. Dr. iur. JUDr. Ing. Michal Turošík, PhD.**, **prof. JUDr. PhDr. Tomáš Gábriš, PhD., LL.M., MA** and **prof. JUDr. Ladislav Vojáček, CSc.**, dealt with the development of the legal system from the period of the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Republic to the present, its impact on the current state, or the clarification of the term of the legal historian and the definition of his/her tasks. Subsequently, shorter reportages were also recorded with other conference participants, which were regularly broadcasted the following week. Another accompanying event of the conference, which was a specialised seminar dedicated to Tomáš G. Masaryk, is worth mentioning. It was held on April 19, 2018, again at the Faculty of Law of MBU. The seminar was also organised by the Department of the History of State of the Faculty of Law of MBU, this time in cooperation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bratislava. The seminar was lectured by the experts from the Masaryk Institute and the Archive of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, **PhDr. Dagmar Hájková, PhD.** a **PhDr. Richard Vašek, PhD.** The Slovak part was represented by **PhDr. Dušan Kováč, DrSc.** from the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

The conference programme itself was split into two session days. Over the course of these days, nearly 50 expert papers were presented, presenting the results of archives' research, clarifying the legislative development of individual legal institutes, offering historical-legal analysis of specific problems, or

revealing the lives of individual prominent personalities or groups of the population.

The opening plenary part of the conference, was opened by the Dean of the Faculty, **doc. Dr. iur. JUDr. Ing. Michal Turošík, PhD.**, followed by contributions of other guests of honour. The first one was the presentation by **prof. JUDr. Ladislav Vojáček, CSc.** from the Faculty of Law of the Masaryk University in Brno, who drew his attention to the day of the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state. In the next presentation, **prof. JUDr. PhDr. Tomáš Gábriš, PhD., LL.M., MA** from the Faculty of Law of Comenius University presented the results of his research conducted in the USA focused on the activities, efforts and merits of the American Slovaks on the emergence of the common state of the Czechs and Slovaks. The Chairwoman of the Administrative Board of the Nation Memory Institute **Mgr. Andrea Kluknavská, PhD., LL.M.** followed with a contribution in co-authorship with **Mgr. Jerguš Sivoš, PhD.** entitled Vojtech Hatala – “the enemy person”. The last presentation in the plenary session was the one by **Dr. h. c. prof. JUDr. Jaroslav Chovanec, CSc.**, who did not deal with the beginning of the establishment of Czechoslovakia, however, brought an analysis of the final stage of the common history and the initial stage of our present history, namely the historical and constitutional aspects of the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic (1993).

After a short break, there were contributions mostly dedicated to personalities and selected problems in the field of legal institute development. From a rich selection of contributions, we would like to mention at least some core presentations. The Dean of Faculty of Law in Bratislava **doc. JUDr. Eduard Burda, PhD.** in his paper introduced significant personalities from the field of criminal law, working at the Faculty during its years of existence. The Personality of Edvard Beneš and his contribution to the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic was evaluated by **doc. JUDr. PhDr. Róbert Jáger, PhD.**, the head of the organising department. The probe into the most controversial moments of the life of President Emil Hácha was presented by **doc. JUDr. PhDr. Pavel Maršalek, Ph.D.** from Charles University in Prague.

The impact of Slovak law on the succession law was highlighted by **doc. JUDr. Pavel Salák jr., Ph.D.** from the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University in Brno. The session was subsequently concluded by **doc. JUDr. Ivana Šošková, PhD.** and her presentation titled “Abolition of Nobility versus Maintaining Estates Differences”.

The first group of presentations in the afternoon session was dedicated to

the theory of law, specifically to legal normativism. The authors of the contributions were teachers from the host faculty, **doc. JUDr. Vierošlav Júda, PhD.** a **JUDr. Dominik Šoltys, PhD.**

**M.A. Marie L. Neudorflová, PhD.**, a former employee of the Masaryk Institute - Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, tried to clarify the understanding of statehood by T.G. Masaryk.

One of the most significant presentation in another group of contributions in this session was the presentation of **JUDr. Marek Starý, Ph.D.** from the Faculty of Law, Charles University, who in a compelling way presented the process of incorporating the area of Hlučinsko into the Czechoslovak Republic.

Representative of the Faculty of Law in Košice, **JUDr. Miroslav Fico, PhD.** introduced the draft of Criminal Act 1937, which was intended to be the result of not quite successful unification efforts in the field of substantive criminal law.

The sessions of the first day of the conference were concluded by **doc. PhDr. Peter Mičko, PhD.** and **Mgr. Zuzana Mičková, PhD.** who elaborated on the issue of economy in the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Republic, namely the comparison of the origins of the Czech part and the Slovak part of the Republic in this important area.

Traditionally, part of the conference is an interesting programme for the participants. In this year, the organisers decided thematically for a commented tour of the city focused on life in Banská Bystrica during the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Republic. The decisive full stop on the first day of the conference was a reception, where the participants had the opportunity to talk informally, to discuss possible future cooperation and, last but not least, to enjoy themselves.

The next day of the conference began with a session focused on both the serious and sensitive national issues in the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Republic. The session was opened by **Mgr. Zuzana Illýová, PhD.**, who in her presentation gave a preview of the Martin Declaration in the context of its importance for the emergence of the common state of the Czechs and Slovaks. **JUDr. Kamila Bubelová, Ph.D.** from the Faculty of Law of the Palacký University in Olomouc and **JUDr. PhDr. René Petráš, Ph.D.** from the Faculty of Law of Charles University also interestingly interpreted national situation from the point of view of law and in the context of foreign policy.

Another nationality, which had a special status in the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Republic and its path to the newly formed state was rather interesting, were Ruthenians. In his contribution, **Mgr. Alexander Onufrák, Ph.D.** from the Faculty of Arts of UPJŠ in Košice addressed this minority. The paper entitled

"The right of women to vote in Czechoslovakia and Poland (1918 – 1939)" was presented by the authors **Dr. hab. Dorota Lis-Staranowicz** and **PhDr. Anna Schneiderová, PhD.**

After a short break, the programme continued with presentations focused on the position of the Slovaks in the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Republic and their attempts at self-rule. Speakers of this topic were **PhDr. Róbert Arpáš, PhD.** with a contribution titled "From Czechoslovakia via Czecho-Slovakia to the Slovak State (Closing or Overcoming the Political Program of the HSL'S Party?)", **Ondrej Podolec, PhD.** with the contribution of "Two Stages of the Slovak Autonomy 1938-39" and **JUDr. PhDr. Martin Skaloš, PhD.** with the contribution "Czechoslovak statehood and the right of self-rule of the Slovaks with respect to their own state".

The emergence of new states presupposes the demise of the old states. **Mgr. Matej Mlkvý, PhD., LL.M.** focused on the dissolution of Austria-Hungary from the legal point of view.

The final part of the afternoon was dominated by the guests from Poland, such as **Mgr. Paweł Błzejczyk**, who presented "Relation between Poland and Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1939 in the doctrine of the National Democracy Camp". Other active guests were **dr hab. Piotr Szymaniec**, **Dr. Paweł Selera**, **prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Skóra**, **Dr. Tomasz Chłopecki** and **prof. dr hab. Mieczysław Różański**.

The conference was closed by a block of contributions dedicated to the relationship between the Church and the state. **Mgr. Ján Sombati, PhD.** informed the audience of the contribution of Professor Vratislav Bušek in the field of teaching and studying the church law at the Faculty of Law of the Comenius University in Bratislava. **Mgr. Renáta Jakubčová, PhD.** highlighted the Church reorganisation in Czechoslovakia on the territory of Slovakia between 1918 and 1960 and **PhDr. Roman Hradecký** from his point of view generally evaluated the relationship between the state and the Church in terms of the 1st Czechoslovak Republic.

The conference was duly completed with a short address and thanks to all the participants, whether active or passive, by **doc. JUDr. Ivana Šošková, PhD.**, the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Law of MBU and also a member of the organising department.

A valuable achievement and one of the goals of this undoubtedly successful event will be the publication of conference proceedings where everyone will have the opportunity to publish their papers, and a collective monograph that

will result from the selection of the best presentations of the conference. However, the mission of the conference was certainly not only the presentation of the results of the scientific research activity. An important part of the conference was also the creation of a space to establish, deepen and intensify contacts and work with colleagues from both home and foreign universities.