

Lucky Coincidences and/or Unnecessary Mistakes

From the Czech Velvet Revolution in 1989
to the second elections in 1992

Adéla Gjuričová



Prague, November 17, 1989

Velvet Revolution - Chronology

Distance from Nov. 17	
First days	student strike, street demonstrations the Civic Forum founded
1-2 weeks	Communist Party leadership reshuffle first political prisoners released general strike
3-4 weeks	negotiations between the PM and the Civic Forum first constitutional changes (erasing the „leading role of the Communist Party“) the Government of National Understanding formed
5-6 weeks	first „reconstructions“ of Parliaments Václav Havel elected the President

January to June 1990 – up to the first elections

Distance from Nov. 17	
2-3 months	„reconstruction“ of Parliaments (Civic Forum gets seats) law on political parties adopted the Secret Police disbanded start of discussions on de-communization
4-5 months	election law adopted „wild lustrations“ begin basic civil rights regulated by law (freedom of assembly and association, petition right, press law etc.) Czecho-Slovak „hyphen war“
5-6 months	economic laws introducing private business rehabilitation of political prisoners liberalization of the education system crime rates skyrocket anti-communist rows
7 months	first free election

From 1st to 2nd elections (1990-1992)

Economic transformation (Václav Klaus) – rapid change to market economy: strong discourse of speed and necessity, underestimating legal framework, discussion, civil society

Dealing with the past (de-communisation, anti-communism): rehabilitation, property restitution, lustration law vs. feeling of injustice, continuity of elites

Czecho-Slovak question – revolution perceived differently by Czechs and Slovaks --- the Czech lesson: never play down a potential social conflict

General lesson: as a leader, never blame urgency of a problem for not discussing it properly



Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar signing agreement on dissolution of Czechoslovakia