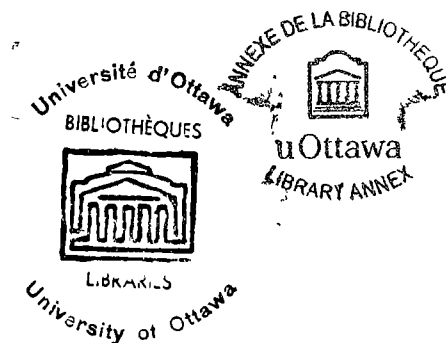


SLOVAKIA AND THE SLOVAKS  
IN THE WORKS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN HISTORIANS

by Julius J. Mihalik

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of the University of Ottawa through the  
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## INTRODUCTION

Motto: But no man who is correctly informed as to the past, will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present.

Thomas Babington Macauley

In the Western World, but especially in English speaking countries, Slovakia and the Slovaks, through no fault of their own, are probably the least known of all the Slavic nations. The reason for this ignorance is the fact that although Slovakia lies in the very heart of Europe, and the Slovaks lived there continuously for some fourteen centuries, this country, for over a thousand years, was not able to emerge in history under its own name. Unfortunately, even today, when independence and freedom is being achieved by all, including even the most primitive and uncivilized people, Slovakia is not an independent country.

However, this is not the only reason why Slovakia and its people are little known in the West. This time the fault lies with the men who write history. Since the Slovak historical works were never given a chance to be popularized in English speaking countries, the Slovaks and their history had to depend for an introduction to the West, through the historical and political works of foreign scholars. These were either official Hungarian or Czecho-Slovak historiographers.

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Gradually, towards the end of the nineteenth, and especially in the twentieth century, various European and Anglo-American historians began discovering Slovakia and its historical past. But even then, in comparison with other small European nations, very little was written about Slovakia and the Slovaks by the writers and historians of the western world in general and the English and the Americans in particular. In many instances, however, the works of the Anglo-American historians, though they are concerned with the history of Slovakia and its people, show a considerable lack of knowledge of historical facts about the subject. With the exception of the English historian C.A. Macartney (Hungary and Her Successors), an American writer Peter P. Yurchak (The Slovaks) and, to a certain extent, professors R.W. Seton-Watson (A History of the Czechs and Slovaks), Hans Kohn (Pan-Slavism), and A.J.P. Taylor (The Habsburg Monarchy), most of the Anglo-American historians seem to be misinformed as to Slovakia's past and consequently, their works very seldom correspond with the historical facts.

This misinformation is most evident especially in the works of the American professor of Slavic history, Joseph S. Roucek (Slavonic Encyclopedia, Central-Eastern Europe), and also in the books by Robert J. Kerner (Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence), S. Harrison Thomson (Czechoslovakia

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in European History), Hugh Seton-Watson (Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941), and in the works of many other less eminent scholars.

The writer of this thesis has undertaken to compare the works about Slovakia by various English and American political and historical scholars. This is done in order to point out not only the misinformation about Slovakia, found in the works of some of these authors, but mainly to show the true historical facts, as they have been recorded in the works of other Anglo-American historians.

The first chapter of this thesis is concerned with the early history of the Slovaks. It discusses the various theories concerning the origin of the Slovaks, their attempts at forming an organized and independent state and their conversion to Christianity. Chapter II describes the Slovaks in the framework of the Hungarian kingdom, their role in the development of Pan-Slavism, and their struggle for survival, the Slovak language and national freedom.

The third chapter presents the problems encountered by the Slovaks since their inclusion into the newly created Republic of Czecho-Slovakia. It also discusses the events which led to the complete independence of Slovakia.

Finally, in the conclusions, an evaluation and critique of the results of this research are attempted.

## CHAPTER I

## THE DAWN OF SLOVAK HISTORY

## The Origin of the Slovaks and Their Arrival in Slovakia

The origin and the arrival of the Slovaks and other Slavic tribes in Central Europe are somewhat obscure and exact data are lacking. Therefore the works of Anglo-American historians on the history of the Slovaks contain many different theories as far as this subject is concerned. However, in the light of new historical research, it may be safely assumed that the ancestors of the Slovaks arrived in Slovakia after the fourth century. Up to that time, Slovakia was in the hands of various wandering tribes, (mainly the Marcomani), and also the Romans and Germans<sup>1</sup>.

Although the Slovaks were among the first nations in Central Europe to accept Christianity and to live in their own sovereign state, as early as in the ninth century, very little had been written about them in western historical literature. Because of this, they are not as well known as their neighbors, the Czechs, with whom they are quite often confused by the student of the Slavic history. Many Anglo-American historians do not write about the early history of

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Hrusovsky, This Is Slovakia, A Country You Do Not Know, Scranton, Obrana Press, 1953, p. 6.

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the Slovaks, and when they do, it is almost invariably in connection with that of the Czechs. As a result, the students of the Central European history are of the impression that the Czechs and Slovaks are one, not two nations. Along these lines, one American historian writes this:

The original home of the Slavs and the region from which their migration began was the basin of the Dnieper and the area extending to the Carpathians and the Vistula. From these regions they spread to the west and southwest. At the present time, some eleven to fourteen languages, not including the extinct ones, can be reckoned as distinct Slavic tongues. It is often possible to draw a definite line between one Slavonic people or language and another. The Great Russians, Poles, Czechs, and Bulgarians are universally admitted to be distinctive Slavonic people with distinct languages. The Little Russians and the White Russians tried at one time to develop into separate nationalities. This is also true of the Ruthenians in Czechoslovakia and of the Slovaks. The Moravians must be included in the Czech nation, because they themselves hold to this and there is no philological, political, or ethnographic reason to the contrary. The Slovaks of Moravia also consider themselves of Czech nationality. But it is difficult to draw a line between the Bulgarians and the Serbians in Macedonia. In racial and linguistic terms, the Croats and Serbs can be regarded as one nation; the same applies to the Czechs and Slovaks.

.....  
 "Czech" refers to the principal people or language found in Bohemia and Moravia. "Slovak" is the name given to the easternmost divisions of the Czech-speaking people<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>  
 Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1946, p. 60-61.

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Here the author like many others<sup>3</sup>, disregards any possibility of a separate Slovak nationality. He makes the Slovaks a part of the Czech nation and connects indiscriminately their origin and entire history with the Czechs. In the same book, Professor Roucek speaks only of the origins of the Czech nation. Since the author makes it clearly understood that the Slovaks are nothing but the easternmost Czechs, it is rather confusing to read further on that "the Slovaks settled their part of Europe about the same time as the Czechs and were closely associated with them"<sup>4</sup>. Thus the author not only contradicts himself but admits that the Slovaks were a separate people, living on their own territory. The Slavic tribes during the migration from their original homeland were not numerically large, and had the Czechs and Slovaks been one tribe or one nation, they would have found it impractical and dangerous to split in order to migrate to new territories. Such a split would have made them weaker and easier to subdue by the hostile tribes.

The conception of the Slovaks and Czechs being two different but related nations even in the earliest history of

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<sup>3</sup> R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, London, Hutchinson, 1943, p. 250.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 81.

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their national existence, is supported by an English author-  
ess, Cecily Mackworth<sup>5</sup>, who states that Bohemia was only the  
sister of Slovakia and other Slavic countries. An American  
historian, Ales Hrdlicka<sup>6</sup>, curator of the Smithsonian Institu-  
tion, is of the same opinion and states following:

From eastern Moravia along and partly in the  
Carpathians to the faraway boundary of Ruthenia, there  
settled still other sister clans or tribes that  
eventually became known as the Slovaks - a collective  
name probably derived from the old "Slav" or "Slavian".

Thus it may be safely assumed that the peoples that  
settled in Slovakia during the Slavic migration were a  
separate and an independent tribe. They were called neither  
the Czechs, nor the Czechoslovaks, but the Slovaks. It is  
worth noting that the term 'Czecho-Slovak' or 'Czechoslovak',  
just like 'Yugoslav', is of recent coinage, dating from 1918,  
when the Czechs and Slovaks, with the help of the victorious  
Allies, proclaimed their independence of the Dual Monarchy  
and established a new state, called Republic of Czecho-Slo-  
vakia<sup>7</sup>. There is no doubt therefore, as to the relationship

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<sup>5</sup> Cecily Mackworth and Jan Stransky, Czechoslovakia,  
London, Macmillan, 1943, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Ales Hrdlicka, "Anthropological Notes", in Czecho-  
slovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, Berkeley, University  
of California Press, 1940, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

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of the Slovaks and Czechs, for they both belong to the same race. It is important, however, that the Slovak nation and its history should be considered a separate one, though closely related to other Slavic nations.

After the Romans and Germans withdrew from the Danube watershed region, the Slavs flooded Central Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Balkans. But hardly had the ancestors of the Slovaks moved through the Carpathian passes into the territory between the Danube and the Carpathians, which they have occupied continuously ever since, before they were invaded from the east by the warlike Avars who then held control of Slovakia from the end of the sixth to the end of the eighth century<sup>8</sup>. The Avar rule was so harsh that it finally aroused even the peace-loving Slavs to revolt. Under the leadership of a traveling Frankish merchant, Samo, they freed themselves from the Avar rule and chose Samo for their king. But the kingdom, whose boundaries were extensive if difficult to define, fell apart soon after Samo's death, about the year 658-659<sup>9</sup>.

8

Francis Hrusovsky, This Is Slovakia, A Country You Do Not Know, p. 6-7.

9

S. Harrison Thomson, "The Czechoslovak to White Mountain", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 9.

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6

A confusion very similar to that concerning the origin of the Slovaks, arises also in regard to this first Slavic state in the area where the Slovaks live. Consequently, the first organized state of the Slavs is treated from a different viewpoint by practically every historian. For instance, Peter P. Yurchak writes that "the Slovaks then united with other Danubian Slavs, and later with the Slovenes, (...) under Samo, set up a state known thereafter in history as Slovakia (Slovensko)"<sup>10</sup>. Although Samo was not a Slovak or a Slav, many Slovak historians consider his kingdom to have been the first effort of the Slovak tribes at creating an independent state. However, both assertions are quite incapable of proof. But so are those that consider Samo a Czech chieftain<sup>11</sup>, whose kingdom included the Slovaks, or that Samo made his capital on the Vysehrad, near Prague, in Bohemia<sup>12</sup>. At that time there existed in that part of Central Europe three castles named Vysehrad. It is true that one of them was

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<sup>10</sup>

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, Whiting, Lach, 1947, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup>

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 81.

<sup>12</sup>

R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 11.

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located near Prague, but the other two were located in Slovakia, (one on the Danube, near Komarno and the other one in Central Slovakian province of Turiec). One of them could have been Samo's capital, but it is not certain which one. It is more probable that the capital was located somewhere near the point where river Morava joins the Danube, because that was about the centre of the state<sup>13</sup>.

An American historian, S. Harrison Thomson believes that Samo's state "would have to be called Western Slav, by reason of large intermixture of Slavic tribes which became gradually differentiated as they settled in different localities"<sup>14</sup>. It seems therefore right to assume that this early kingdom was neither Slovak, nor Czech, even though it was located in their territories.

After Samo's death, the Avars overcame the Slavs again. Thus, the invasions that were to last until the twentieth century were resumed. In fact, Slovak history seems to have been blanketed with a series of struggles against invaders whose only aim was to destroy the Slovaks and their

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13

Frantisek Hrusovsky, Slovenske dejiny, Turciansky Sv. Martin, Matica Slovenska, 1940, p. 30.

14

S. Harrison Thomson, "The Czechoslovaks to White Mountain", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 9.

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national freedom. It can be said that the Slovaks have been trampled upon as much, if not more than any nation in Europe.

#### The First Slovak State - Greater Moravia

The first truly 'all Slovak' principality was located in the Nitra watershed region. It was about the year 830 that Prince Pribina ruled Slovakia and made Nitra his capital. Thus two distinguished names appear in Slovak history: the name of the first Slovak ruler in history, and the name of the first Slovak castle. The latter became the cradle of the Slovak national history. However, in the works of Anglo-American historians, the existence and importance of this Slovak principality and its contributions to Christianity are not given the recognition they deserve. These historical facts are omitted in the works of such eminent students of Slovak and Czech history, as R.W. Seton-Watson, Robert J. Kerner, Joseph S. Roucek, S. Harrison Thomson and Ales Hrdlicka. Even in his Slavonic Encyclopedia, which is supposed to be the most extensive and informative handbook on Slavic studies, Professor Roucek mentions these historical facts only vaguely. It is surprising, therefore that Dr. Milan Hodza, the late Prime-Minister of Czecho-Slovakia, 1935-1938, and one of the leaders of the numerically inferior pro-Czecho-Slovak section of the Slovak nation, writes in his Federation in Central

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Europe<sup>15</sup>, a book which he wrote in exile, during the second world war, as follows:

It was then in Prince Pribina's Slovak capital of Nitra, about 833, that the oldest Christian church of vast Central European region was built. Prague was about forty years behind Nitra in setting up a Christian church, while the Hungarian St. Stephen came one hundred and sixty-seven years after.

Thus, the Slovaks were the first nation in Central Europe to embrace Christianity. While other Slavic nations in Central and Eastern Europe were removed from Western European Christian culture and still wandered in the darkness of heathenism, the Slovaks became a Christian and a cultural nation.

It is worth noting that at the time of the consecration of the first Christian church at Nitra, Pribina was not a Christian yet. The fact that Pribina, though himself a heathen, allowed his nation to hear the word of God, demonstrates clearly that the first Slovak ruler, even though he could not understand the importance of Christian teachings, nevertheless understood the political and cultural significance of Christianity on the Slovak-German borderland. Pribina, being a wise and a cautious ruler, realized that a small nation, living at such a dangerous crossroad of Europe,

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15

Milan Hodza, Federation in Central Europe, Reflections and Reminiscences, London, Jarrolds, 1942, p. 86.

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10

could defend itself against its more powerful and cultured neighbors only if its own culture equaled that of its neighbors<sup>16</sup>.

The question of Pribina's rule is studied in detail by a Slovak historiographer, Dr. Bokes, who in his Dejiny Slovakov a Slovenska states:

It is not known whether Pribina was an independent ruler or just a ruler of a part of land belonging to the larger national organization, ruled at that time by Mojmir I. It is more probable that he was an independent ruler. With the names of these two princes are connected the final efforts for the unification of the Moravian-Slovak region<sup>17</sup>.

This theory of Pribina's independent rule is supported by Professor Hans Kohn<sup>18</sup>, who considers Pribina's rule before he became subjected to the Moravian princes, as the one and only episode of Slovak independence. It is questionable, whether or not Pribina's rule was the only episode of Slovak independence. However, even if it were, it proves that the Slovaks were a sovereign nation, separated from the Czechs who at that time had their own Bohemian Kingdom.

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16

Frantisek Hrusovsky, Slovenske dejiny, p. 33.

17

Frantisek Bokes, Slovenska vlastiveda IV, Dejiny Slovakov a Slovenska, Bratislava, Academia Scientiarum et Artium Slovaca, 1946, p. 33.

18

Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology, Notre Dame, University Press, 1953, p. 20.

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About the year 836, Mojmir I, who under his rule had united the Slovak tribes in the western part of the Slovak territory, exiled Pribina from Nitra and occupied his territory. Pribina, together with his son Kocel, subsequently ruled over Panonia.

The unification of Mojmir's territory with that of Pribina, resulted in the creation of a new state on the north bank of the Danube. This state united all Slovak tribes in a single kingdom. The name of this new state was Greater Moravia.

The name does not necessarily indicate that it was a kingdom of the Moravians. It may be safely assumed that the name did not indicate the nation or tribe, but the geographical location of the Slavic tribes, living along the river Morava<sup>19</sup>. Nitra, in Western Slovakia, was probably the capital for at least a part of the time, although some historians believe that Velehrad-Devin was the capital<sup>20</sup>. This belief is shared also by a prominent Slovak historian who states that Greater Moravia was a Slovak state, the nucleus and main

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19

Joseph Kirschbaum, Les Slovaques et le Monde Slave, unpublished Master's thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Montreal, Quebec, 1953, p. 4-5.

20

R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 250. Also S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, Princeton, University Press, 1943, p. 197.

castle of which were located near the Morava river<sup>21</sup>. Both, Velehrad and Devin castles are located near the Morava river and, together with the castle of Nitra, in what is the present-day Slovakia.

Greater Moravia must therefore be considered as the first Slovak state. The fact that for the first time in their history, all Slovak tribes were united in a single state and formed a union with the Moravians, made it at that time a considerable political power.

Many Anglo-American historians and students of the Slavic history are confused as to the question of what kind of Slavs had constituted Rastislav's and Svatopluk's Greater Moravia. In this they are not alone, for in this respect a great confusion arose even among the Slavists, although Dobrovsky, the founder of Slavic philology as early as in 1825 emphatically claimed that the real Greater Moravia was the present-day Slovakia<sup>22</sup>.

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21

Frantisek Hrusovsky, "Slovakia - The Oldest State in Central Europe", in Slovakia, Vol. 1, No. 1, issue of May 1951, p. 1-3.

22

"...die heutige Slowakey in Oberungern ist das eigentliche Gross-Mahren..." - he wrote in a letter (in 1825) to J. S. Bandtke. - Correspondence of Joseph Dobrovsky, Vol. II, p. 163, quoted by Joseph Skultety, Sketches from Slovak History, Cleveland, First Catholic Slovak Union, 1930, p. 11.

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Although many historians who admit the fact that Slovakia was the first cultured, and perhaps also the first political centre of Greater Moravia, believe that Greater Moravia was the early medieval precedent of the present-day Republic of Czecho-Slovakia<sup>23</sup>. Professor R.W. Seton-Watson, while calling this state "a loosely knit structure"<sup>24</sup>, considers it to have been "the first brief experiment of Czecho-Slovak unity"<sup>25</sup>. He is supported in this assertion among others by Joseph Hanc<sup>26</sup>, and Joseph S. Roucek<sup>27</sup>. However, Professor Roucek in the same book mentions "the birth of the Great Moravian Empire (Moravia and Slovakia, 830-903)"<sup>28</sup>, which clearly indicates that it was a state of the Slovaks and Moravians. An eminent authority on Slavic history, Prof.

23

Milan Hodza, Federation in Central-Europe, Reflections and Reminiscences, p. 86.

24

R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 14.

25

Ibid., p. 251.

26

Josef Hanc, Eastern Europe, London, Museum Press, 1943, p. 38.

27

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 81.

28

Ibid., p. 61.

## THE DAWN OF SLOVAK HISTORY

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Kohn, calls it also "a Moravian-Slovak Empire"<sup>29</sup>. Another historian, Professor Darlington notes that "in 846, fourteen princes of the Czechs were baptised at Ratisbon (Regensburg) and their country became attached to the diocese of Ratisbon until 973"<sup>30</sup>. Had Greater Moravia been a Czech or Czecho-Slovak state, these Czech princes would not have travelled to Germany in order to be baptized, but would have been baptized in Greater Moravia which was already Christian.

It is quite clear therefore that because of its name and because the Czechs at that time had their own kingdom, (though only a semi-independent one, being under German control), Greater Moravia could not have been a precedent of present-day Czecho-Slovakia, nor an experiment in the Czecho-Slovak unity.

It is true, however, that the Czechs were connected with Greater Moravia once, but very loosely and for a short time only<sup>31</sup>, (about twenty-five years), when after his

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<sup>29</sup>  
Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology,  
p. 12.

<sup>30</sup>  
Oscar G. Darlington, "Catholicism and the Slavs",  
in the Slavonic Encyclopedia, New York, Philosophical Library,  
1949, p. 140.

<sup>31</sup>  
S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European  
History, p. 198.

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marriage to the sister of the Czech prince Borivoj, King Svatopluk enlarged the sphere of his influence to include Bohemia<sup>32</sup>. This is confirmed in the Slavonic Encyclopedia<sup>33</sup>, where it is further stated that after Svatopluk's death, the Bohemian princes detached themselves from Greater Moravia and, as Mr. Yurchak rightly points out<sup>34</sup>, once again acknowledged German sovereignty over the Czechs.

Thus ended, what some historians call, the brief experiment in Czecho-Slovak unity. The assertions that Greater Moravia was a prototype of the modern Czecho-Slovak state can therefore be hardly correct, for the Czechs formed a unit with Greater Moravia for a short time only, (and not as a ruling class), and left it by their own volition. Except for this brief union with Greater Moravia, Bohemia played an entirely subordinate part in the history at the time of existence of Greater Moravia. Another proof of Bohemia's being only a neighbor of Greater Moravia can be found in Professor Seton-Watson's book, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, where

32

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 37.

33

Joseph S. Roucek, "History of Czechoslovakia", in the Slavonic Encyclopedia, p. 457.

34

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 39.

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he writes that while Charles the Great imposed a sort of loose vasselage upon the Czechs, his son and successor, Louis the Pious, concentrated his efforts against the neighboring state of Moravia<sup>35</sup>.

It is therefore safe to assume that Greater Moravia was a Slovak state, for even today, as Professor Macartney observes, parts of Moravia are Slovak<sup>36</sup>. Had it not been a Slovak state, with most of its inhabitants and rulers being Slovak, it would not have left a permanent mark upon the language and people of the eastern half of present-day Moravia. This important observation has been made by a Croat, Vatroslav Jagic, undisputably the greatest student of Slavic linguistics and central figure of Slavistics throughout half a century. In his book Entstehungsgeschichte der Kirchenslavischen Sprache,<sup>37</sup> Jagic observes that:

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<sup>35</sup> R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 76.

<sup>37</sup> Vatroslav Jagic, Entstehungsgeschichte der Kirchenslavischen Sprache, Vienna, 1900, p. 19, quoted by Joseph Skultety, Sketches from Slovak History, p. 12.

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In her language Moravia is even today Czech only in her western half - her eastern half connects with the Slovaks, and these Slovaks live even now in North-western Hungary. In ancient Moravia, if her frontiers extended to the Danube, they must have spoken a language in the ninth century which was in its substantial outlines identical with the present-day Slovak language (as in Moravia and Upper Hungary). This Slovak language could then have extended farther into Moravia than it does today, and in Hungary could have reached as far as the Danube.

All of these observations lead inevitably to the conclusion that Greater Moravia was a Slovak, and not a Czech or Czecho-Slovak state.

Since the Slovaks were the first nation in Central Europe to accept Christianity and to have a sovereign state, they, as Professor Hrusovsky states,<sup>38</sup> have a right to claim that they are not only the oldest inhabitants of the Danubian basin, but also the oldest cultural nation of the Middle Danube.

The Mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius among the Slavs

The two most important events in the history of Greater Moravia, which after Mojmir's death was ruled by Rastislav and achieved its greatest glory and territorial gains under King Svatopluk, were the arrival of the Slav Apostles,

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38

Frant. Hrusovsky, Slovenski vladari, Scranton, Obrana Press, 1948, p. 79.

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Saints Cyril and Methodius, and the coming of the Magyars in Central Europe. The consequences of both events were of supreme importance not only to the Slovaks and Slavs in general, but indeed for the whole history of Europe.

As stated before, Christianity was introduced among the Slovaks already at the beginning of the ninth century and the first Christian church in Slovakia was consecrated in 833. But the Christian religion could not reach the wide masses of the people, because they understood neither the language of the German missionaries, nor did they wish to have their land Germanized, for it is true that at that time Christianity and Germanization went hand in hand<sup>39</sup>. At that time not only Rome, but also Constantinople was the center of Christian activity. Because Rastislav feared Germanization and because his people did not understand the German-Latin missionaries, - the only ones that Rome could send them, - he saw that the only place whence Christianity could come to Greater Moravia, without endangering the independence of his kingdom, was Constantinople. Therefore, in 863, Rastislav sent a special

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Even the Germans themselves admit much of that nature: "...mit dem deutschen Priester kam auch der deutsche Colonist, (...) so dass von nun an Christianisierung und Germanisierung Hand in Hand gehen", cf. Karl Schober, Die Deutschen in Nieder und Ober-Oesterreich, Salzburg, Karnten, p. 15, quoted by Joseph Skultety, Sketches from Slovak History, p. 10.

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mission to the Byzantine Emperor, Michael III, asking him to send missionaries capable of teaching the word of God in the language of Greater Moravia. Michael III had no Slavic missionaries at his court, but he did have two outstanding Greek missionary brothers who were already famous for their work among the most southerly branch of the Slavs. The brothers spoke the dialects of the Southern Slavs perfectly, and Michael III felt that they could be understood in Rastislav's realm. These two brothers were Constantine, who later took the monastic name of Cyril, and Methodius. The arrival of the holy brothers in Greater Moravia was definitely the most important event not only in the history of Greater Moravia but of all Slavdom<sup>40</sup>. Although Saints Cyril and Methodius are considered the Slav Apostles, "their labours have left an indelible mark not merely on the religious or ecclesiastical, but even on the national or political development of Europe"<sup>41</sup>. It is an unquestionable fact that their mission greatly influenced the development, and above all, the orientation of all Eastern and also of some Central

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Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 47-48.

41

R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 13.

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European nations. With this, most of the Anglo-American historians agree without any reservation.

Saints Cyril and Methodius realized that even though they spoke the Slavic dialect fluently, their work in Greater Moravia could not have been effective without the translation of the liturgical books and gospels into the Slavic tongue. For this, however, the alphabet was lacking. Therefore, before leaving Constantinople for Greater Moravia, Cyril, using the Slavic dialect spoken around Solun, (Biblical name Thessalonica, now Salonika), developed a new, complete alphabet, based on the Greek characters. The name of this new alphabet was the Glagolitic, which later developed into the Cyrillic alphabet<sup>42</sup>. Although some authorities credit St. Cyril with both scripts, others doubt that Cyril developed the alphabet which was named after him. Most of the students of the Old Slavic language consider St. Cyril the author of the Glagolitic (which is more difficult) and believe that the Cyrillic was invented by St. Cyril's disciples some decades later<sup>43</sup>.

Referring to the new Slavic alphabet, the Byzantine Emperor, Michael III, wrote to Rastislav this: "Receive this

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Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 50.

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C.H. Andrusyshen, "Cyril and Methodius", in the Slavonic Encyclopedia, p. 206.

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gift, greater and more valuable than all gold and silver, precious stones, and transitory riches<sup>44</sup>. It was truly a great gift for the Slavs, for the alphabet is still used not only in the liturgical services of the Orthodox Church, but its modernized version is used today by the Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians and Serbs.

As a result of the evangelistic work of Saints Cyril and Methodius, all the Slavs belonged for some time to the Eastern or Greek Rite, under Rome and the Pope. They, and the whole of Central Europe would still belong to it today, if it had not been for the heathen Magyars. But the arrival of the Magyars in Central Europe, separated the Western and some of the Southern Slavs from Constantinople and they came under the influence of Rome once again. By the end of the thirteenth century this separation was complete. The Western (Poles, Slovaks, Czechs) and Southern Slavs (Croats and Slovenes), together with the Magyars were Roman Catholics, while the Eastern (Russians, and later also Ukrainians and Byelorussians) and two Southern Slavs (Bulgarians and Serbs), and also the Rumanians, Greeks and Albanians, remained in the

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<sup>44</sup> Cyril J. Potocek, Saints Cyril and Methodius, New York, Kennedy, 1941, p. 65.

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Greek Church. With a few minor changes, the religious division of these nations is the same today<sup>45</sup>.

After establishing themselves in Greater Moravia, Saints Cyril and Methodius founded a school for the education of new priests. St. Cyril believed that nations that have no books in their own languages are naked, and therefore both he and St. Methodius, in addition to translating the Scriptures and liturgical books from the Greek, wrote a complete ritual together with the lives of the saints, and prepared also a compilation of Church laws in the Slavic language.

The introduction of the written Slavic language and the work of the holy brothers among the people of Greater Moravia which was now becoming an entirely Christian state, strengthened the position of Rastislav and the Slavs in Central Europe. This, and the fact that a popular language was being used in celebrating the Mass, angered the German bishops who insisted that only Latin, Greek or Hebrew should be used. But the brothers realized the importance of a Slavic liturgy for the Slavs, and, upon Rastislav's advice, left in 867 for Rome to request the Pope to approve their Slavic liturgy. The Pope, Hadrian II, was so impressed with the

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Hugh Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941, Cambridge, University Press, 1945, p. 16-17.

results of the brothers' work in spreading Christianity among the people of Greater Moravia, that he not only approved the Slavic liturgy, but blessed it. He was so pleased with Saints Cyril and Methodius that he had the Mass celebrated in the Slavic language in Rome and ordained all the disciples who accompanied the holy brothers to Rome. He also consecrated St. Methodius bishop.

While in Rome, St. Cyril became sick, entered a monastery and died there in 869. St. Methodius returned to his missionary work and, after a second trip to Rome, he became the Archbishop of Moravia and Pannonia<sup>46</sup>, (territories of present-day Slovakia, Moravia, Hungary and northern part of Yugoslavia). The seat of the archbishopric was at Sirmium, and St. Methodius' jurisdiction extended over all the Slavs. His disciples started teaching Christianity to the Slavs outside Greater Moravia and it was during his lifetime that the Slavic liturgy penetrated into Croatia, Bohemia and Poland<sup>47</sup>. Although Christianity did not become permanently established among these nations until later, the credit for introducing

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<sup>46</sup>  
R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup>  
Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 62.

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it to them must be given to St. Methodius and his faithful disciples.

Although the Slavic liturgy has been approved and blessed by the Pope, the German bishops disliked the departure from the Latin rite and also St. Methodius' jurisdiction over the territories which, they believed, should have been administered by them. Therefore, in 879, St. Methodius decided to journey to Rome once again to defend the Slavic liturgy and his work. Accompanying him were King Svatopluk's envoys who came to ask the Pope, John VIII, to accept King Svatopluk, his princes and magnates and the people of Greater Moravia under the protection of the Holy See. Pope John accepted the Slovak state under the protection of Rome<sup>48</sup>, once again approving the Slavic liturgy with these words: "We rightly praise the Slavonic letters invented by Cyril, in which praises to God are set forth, and we order that the glories and deeds of Christ be told in that language"<sup>49</sup>, and confirming St. Methodius as Archbishop of Moravia and Pannonia, he said: "In his hands are placed by God and the

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Francis Hrusovsky, "Slovakia - The Oldest State in Central Europe", in Slovakia, Vol. 1, No. 1, issue of May 1951, p. 2.

49

Cyril J. Potocek, Saints Cyril and Methodius, p. 95.

Apostolic See, all the Slav countries"<sup>50</sup>. Although St. Methodius returned home victorious, the struggle had been too much for him and he died a few years later, in 885.

The disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius dispersed across the Slavic part of Europe to carry on with the work of the holy brothers. Upon the arrival of the Magyars, the Slav language began disappearing from the liturgy of the Slavs in Central Europe, its place being taken once again by the Latin rite. It is undisputable, however, that in spite of the disappearance of the Slavic liturgy from Central Europe, Saints Cyril and Methodius deserve full credit for Christianization of all the Slavs and for giving the initial impetus to their literature<sup>51</sup>.

The full appreciation of the importance of their immortal work is well expressed with these words:

The Slav alphabet, (...) and the Slav liturgy spread by St. Cyril and St. Methodius are, so to speak, the two columns upon which rests the civilization of all the Slav nations of the east and south<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup>  
Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>51</sup>  
C.H. Andrusyshén, "Cyril and Methodius", in the Slavonic Encyclopedia, p. 207.

<sup>52</sup>  
Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 62.

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The activity of the holy brothers among the people of Greater Moravia, whose descendants are the Slovaks, brought them not only Christian culture, and protection from Germanization and Magyarization, but also awakened in them the spirit of nationalism and gave them the spiritual and moral strength which they needed for national and cultural survival in the centuries to come.

Saints Cyril and Methodius are the Patron Saints of Slovakia which became a strong supporter of the Christian faith in Central Europe and which, as in the past, is now a bastion of the Christian culture that is once again threatened by eastern barbarians.

Very few Anglo-American historians make an attempt to discuss the origins of the Slovaks, the date of their settlement in their present homeland, or their activities during the migratory period and in the first formative years of their new life, for all this is a matter of theory and will always remain so for lack of positive evidence.

There is, however, little doubt that the Slovaks were, even in the earliest history a separate and distinctive people, or that Greater Moravia was a Slovak state, ruled by Slovak princes and kings. The proof of this can be found

in the Annales Fuldenses<sup>53</sup>, a great part of which deals with the association of the Slovak rulers with the Holy See from the middle of the ninth to the beginning of the tenth century.

Neither are there any doubts as to the importance of the role played by the Slovaks, the first Christians among the Slavs, in the Christianization of the Slavs and Central and Eastern Europe in general, and in the development of the Slavic civilization, which got its start in the present-day Slovakia during the time of the activities of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

Consequently, one must agree with the great Slovak scholar and the father of the humanitarian and romantic Pan-Slavism, Jan Kollar<sup>54</sup>, who believed that Slovakia was the nest of all the Slavs and the cradle of the Slavic civilization.

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Quoted extensively by Fr. Hrusovsky, "Styky slovenskych kniezat so Svatou Stolicou", in the Nadej vitazna, Scranton, Obrana Press, 1947, p. 119-182.

54

Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology, p. 17.

## CHAPTER II

## THE DARK MILLENNIUM

The Slovaks in the Framework of the  
Hungarian Kingdom and Their Struggle for Survival

After the death of King Svatopluk in 894, his eldest son and successor, Mojmir II, became the ruler of Greater Moravia. But in spite of his ability as a ruler and all his efforts to save the kingdom, Greater Moravia, brought to the apogee of its political power by Svatopluk, slowly began falling apart. The first blow was struck by the Czechs who detached themselves from Greater Moravia soon after King Svatopluk's death<sup>1</sup>. They were followed by the Lusatian Wends in Saxony. Greater Moravia thus weakened, was having internal troubles as well, for Svatopluk's sons were waging fratricidal war against one another.

Towards the end of the ninth century, the Magyars penetrated Central Europe and entered the present-day Hungary, either to take advantage of Greater Moravia's weakness, or to help one party against another. After a decade of struggles with the Germans and Czechs in the west, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph S. Roucek, "History of Czechoslovakia", in the Slavonic Encyclopedia, New York, Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 457.

Magyars in the east, Greater Moravia was conquered and destroyed and completely disappeared from the map of Europe about the year 906<sup>2</sup>.

It is a historical fact that the Magyars alone would have never succeeded in destroying and conquering Greater Moravia. They were helped in this task not only by the Germans, but by the Czechs as well<sup>3</sup> who, soon after detaching themselves from Greater Moravia, once again were included in the German sphere of influence and acknowledged German sovereignty over themselves. If nothing else, this single historical fact should be an adequate proof that had Greater Moravia been a Czech state, they, themselves, would not have helped the Germans and Magyars in destroying it. If, as some Anglo-American historians put it<sup>4</sup>, with the downfall of

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<sup>2</sup> C.A. Macartney, The Magyars in the Ninth Century, Cambridge, University Press, 1930, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Annales Fuldenses ad a. 897. 898. 900. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum, Hannoverae, 1891, p. 130 and 134, quoted by Fr. Hrusovsky, "Styky slovenskych kniezat so Švatou Stolicou", in Nadej vitazna, Scranton, Obrana Press, 1947, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, Princeton, University Press, 1943, p. 13. Also Joseph S. Roucek, Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1946, p. 62.

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Greater Moravia, the Slovaks were separated from the Czechs, they should also add that the short-lived union between the two was brought to an end by the Czechs themselves, long before the coming of the Magyars and, after their arrival, helped them in destroying Greater Moravia, the kingdom of the Slovaks.

After the fall of Greater Moravia everything is obscure in Slovakia, and by incorrect and often tendencious explanations of some of the reports, much more of that obscurity has been caused. Every legend, every tradition of the early Slovaks were lost in darkness, just as historical evidences were lost in the adverse days. For the Slovaks, a peace and freedom-loving nation, began a new era, the era of wars and invasions, slavery and oppression. The period from the downfall of Greater Moravia to the end of the first world war, may well be called the dark millennium of the history of the Slovak nation.

This period of Slovak history is treated most objectively by the majority of Anglo-American historians who agree that in spite of very unfavorable conditions, the Slovaks, from among all the Slavs, have succumbed the least to foreign influence.

Although the Slovaks were not destined to have their own state again for over a thousand years, they did not

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become subjected to the Magyars immediately after the fall of Greater Moravia. During the tenth and eleventh centuries the fate of Slovakia remained undetermined and her frontiers were not definitely established. But during the twelfth century, the Slovaks were driven northward and remained confined within the limits of present-day Slovakia, the only defense against Magyar influences being their self-reliance<sup>5</sup>.

In the first half of the thirteenth century, the Mongols invaded the Eastern and Central European countries, among them Slovakia. Later, in the second half of the same century, they were followed by the Tatars. These invasions by various Asiatic and European hordes continued up to, and including the seventeenth century, when the Turks withdrew from Central Europe. It is surprising that the Slovaks, though numerically small, were able to survive these repeated invasions. Each one of them seemed to take a greater toll of lives. The only protection against the barbarians were the fortified castles and the mountains. But even through the invasions Slovakia remained within Hungary. However, up to the middle of the fourteenth century, she was an independent province, ruled by provincial chiefs, or dukes.

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<sup>5</sup>  
Ibid.

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The last provincial chief of Slovakia, Matthew of Trencin (Matus Cak Trenciansky), seems to have been the mightiest of the provincial chiefs in the Hungary of his time. King Charles Robert made him royal Chamberlain and Protector of Hungary, but later Matthew rebelled and ruled Slovakia alone for twenty years (1301-1321). He established many tax-free towns, coined his own money, had his own court and maintained a large army<sup>6</sup>.

Some Slovak historians consider Matthew's independent rule the rebirth of the Slovak statehood, but others seem to be more reserved in their assertions stressing that although Slovakia achieved partial independence under Matthew of Trencin, she still formed a part of the Hungarian kingdom. From among the very few Anglo-American historians who formed an opinion in this matter, Professor Macartney<sup>7</sup> of Cambridge University, calls Matthew of Trencin a "robber chief", who "established himself in a position of semi-independence", while Professor Seton-Watson writes as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, Whiting, Lach, 1947, p. 61-72.

<sup>7</sup> C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 75.

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It would, however, be a mistake to attach undue importance to the episode of Matthias Csak of Trencin, sometimes called 'dominus Vagi et Tatrae'. (...) Writers of the romantic revival sought to make him a national hero, aiming at Slovak independence, but this may be dismissed as entirely mythical<sup>8</sup>.

The author tries here to minimize Matthew's achievements and although it is doubtful whether or not he aimed at Slovak independence, there is no historical proof to the contrary.

Hardly had the Slovaks recovered from an Asiatic invasion when in the fifteenth century their land was invaded again, this time by the Protestant Hussite troops from Bohemia. The Hussites, under the leadership of Jiskra, ruled parts of Slovakia for some years. Although Hussitism and the Hussite wars may be considered by some to coincide with the heroic period of the Czech history, they are definitely not considered as such in Slovak history. Prof. Seton-Watson believes that Hussitism and the "Personal Union between Hungary and Bohemia (...) brought the Czechs and Slovaks nearer together"<sup>9</sup>, but the opposite is true. While the Catholic

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<sup>8</sup>  
R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 253.

<sup>9</sup>  
Ibid., p. 254.

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German armies were plundering Bohemia, the retreating Czech Hussites sought vengeance in Catholic Slovakia. The consequences for Slovakia were terrible: devastation and suffering for almost twenty years<sup>10</sup>. Even Professor Roucek admits<sup>11</sup> that the Hussites were "spreading abroad the terror of the Hussite name", while calling themselves the "fighters of the Lord". Therefore it is very difficult to share Professor Seton-Watson's belief that Hussitism brought the Slovaks and Czechs nearer together. In fact, the Slovaks wanted no part of this new faith, a faith that was accompanied by suffering and bloodshed. "For the Slovaks, Hussitism was the alien doctrine, Catholicism the natural faith"<sup>12</sup>, and not even the Hussite and Asiatic invasions could have destroyed their faith and national heredity.

After the worst of the Hussite invasions had passed, the Turks invaded Central Europe from the south and at least

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Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 66.

11

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 68.

12

C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 87.

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parts of Slovakia were occupied by the Turks at one time or other during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

The Turkish invasions of Hungary resulted in a new situation for the Slovaks. While Slovakia alone paid taxes into the treasury, she became, at the same time, the centre of the entire constitutional and ecclesiastical life of the Hungarian kingdom as well as of the organized resistance to the Turks. The Hungarian Diet met either in Kosice (Kaschau) or Bratislava (Pressburg), the latter gradually acquiring the position of the coronation city. At the same time the Reformation movement began to infiltrate into Hungary. The Germans in Slovakia became Lutherans and the Magyars Calvinists, which became the exclusive Magyar faith. The Slovaks, in so far as they became Protestants, chose Lutheranism. But due to the influence of the descendants of the Hussite soldiers in Slovakia, the Slovak Lutheran Church later accepted the Czech language for the language of the Slovak Protestant liturgy, and remained such until modern times. But the Counter-Reformation, under the leadership of Cardinal Peter Pazmany, began reclaiming Hungary for the Catholic Church, and proved to be extremely successful. The Protestants were deprived of more than three hundred churches, being expelled from the Cathedral of Kosice as early as in 1604. In 1635, Cardinal Peter Pazmany established a seminary and a Jesuit

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university at Trnava, on Slovak soil. These, together with the seminary at Vienna, were instrumental in preserving Catholicism in Slovakia and Hungary<sup>13</sup>.

The Turkish invasions resulted in yet another situation for the Slovaks. They meant a new influx of foreigners into Slovakia. But in spite of a considerably large number of Magyars and Germans, the latter were introduced to Slovakia throughout the centuries in hope

that they would ultimately take the place of irreconcilable Slovaks, (...) the Slovaks showed the same ability to resist Germanization that they had shown in resisting Magyarization<sup>14</sup>.

Thus Slovakia, after over seven centuries of foreign domination, Asiatic invasions and Protestant influence, was still predominantly Slovak and Catholic.

The Slovak National and Cultural  
Renaissance, 18th - 19th Century

The attempts of Joseph II to replace Latin, then the official language of Hungary and the rest of his dominions,

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R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 254-257.

14

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 82.

with German, were met with strong objections from the people of the Habsburg Monarchy and meant the beginning of the struggle between the rival races and languages. The Magyars were willing to substitute Latin for the Magyar 'national language', but not for German. From then on, the 'national or mother tongue' was to be included in all nationalistic claims. The Magyars were by no means the first or only nation in the Habsburg Monarchy that revived the national sentiment and literary effort. The smaller nations of Hungary, the Slovaks, Croats, Ruthenes, Rumanians and Serbs were moved just as early as the Magyars.

The period of the Slovak national and cultural revival is well covered in the works of various Anglo-American historians. But practically all of these historians seem to look at the matter from a different viewpoint, with different interpretations of the motives of the Slovak national and cultural pioneers.

For instance, Professor Seton-Watson, who is considered an authority on the Slovak and Czech history, writes in his book, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks<sup>15</sup>, as follows:

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<sup>15</sup>  
R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 258-259.

## THE DARK MILLENNIUM

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There is no little irony in the fact that the incentive to Slovak literary expression should have come from the Jesuits, who were largely responsible for the decline of Czech. But the explanation is simple enough; they wished to erect a barrier between the two kinsmen. In 1718 a Paulinian monk named Macsay published a collection of sermons written in western Slovak dialect, and the Jesuits of Trnava followed this up by various books of devotion written in a mixture of Czech and Slovak. In 1746 Matthew Bel, Hungary's foremost scholar in that age, and a leader of the Pietist movement, wrote a preface to a 'Slavo-Bohemian Grammar', expressing pride in his own Slovak nationality and the zeal with which it was then being cultivated by the magnates and gentry of Slovakia.

The student of Slovak history may get an impression that Professor Seton-Watson considers it a pity that Slovak literary expression came from the Catholic clergy, without whom no part of the Slovak national or cultural life could have developed. In fact, one may get the impression that he seems to be sorry that such expression was developed at all. Had the Slovaks remained silent when the entire Central Europe was slowly awakening and becoming nation-conscious, they would have most certainly perished within a short period of time, after the Magyarization of Slovakia became most intensive. Similar action on the side of the Czechs, Poles, Magyars or other nations is considered patriotism. In the case of the Slovaks, it was a 'treacherous' action on the part of the Jesuits. But the Slovaks did not lose their national individuality during the eight centuries of foreign

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domination and they were not willing to sacrifice it for the sake of some imaginary 'Czechoslovak' nationality.

In 1873 the first Slovak newspaper, the Pressburger Journal (Prespurske noviny) was published and was followed by the publication of the Old Beaux-Arts Gazette at Banska Bystrica<sup>16</sup>. At the same time, a Catholic priest, Joseph Bajza, wrote a novel entitled The Adventures of the Young Man René, in which he made the first attempt to use Slovak as a literary language. At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cardinal Rudnay, a Slovak<sup>17</sup>, encouraged the establishment of Slovak literary societies and book stores in several Slovak towns<sup>18</sup>.

Up to the end of the eighteenth century, the Slovaks did not have a literary language of their own. Slovak Catholics used various Slovak dialects, while the Slovak Protestants used the Biblical Czech, the language of their

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Robert J. Kerner, "The Czechoslovaks from the Battle of White Mountain to the World War", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1940, p. 36.

17

Cardinal Rudnay made this famous pronouncement: "Slavus sum et si in cathedra Petri forem, Slavus ero".

18

R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 258.

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Protestant liturgy. But with the rise of nationalism in Slovakia and the spread of the literary movement, the need for a Slovak literary language became even more apparent. Concerning this, Professor Macartney says the following:

The first literary movement was, interestingly enough, directed primarily against the Czechs, its father, a Catholic priest named Bernolak, being chiefly concerned in championing the independence of the Slovak language against the 'Hussite tongue' of the Czech ecclesiastical literature used by the Slovak Protestants. Bernolak was supported for political reasons by the Hungarian Government and by the Hungarian Primate of the day, who was himself of Slovak origin. An energetic counter-party maintained the substantial identity of the Czech and Slovak languages. In 1803 this group founded a chair of Slavonic languages and literature in the Lutheran College at Bratislava, and its leader, Palkovic, who led the chair for many years, made of that town the centre of Slovak cultural life. Among his pupils were two of the great figures of Slavonic scholarship of the day, Kollaer and Safarik, who held different views on the Slovak problem. Safarik recognized a difference between Slovak and Czech, but held that Slovak was the pure, original form, of which Czech was a mere corruption. Kollar recognized only four main branches of the Slavonic language: Russian, Czech, Serb and Polish<sup>19</sup>.

Bernolak, after some preliminary studies, decided to use the Western Slovak dialect as the Slovak literary language. In 1787 he published an essay on Slavonic philology and the first Slovak grammar, Grammatica Slavica, which was

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C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 88.

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to become the basis for the new written Slovak language. In 1792, Bernolak founded the Slovak Learned Society (Slovenske ucene tovarisstvo) at Trnava. The last years of his life he devoted to writing of an elaborate pentalingual lexicon (Slovak-Czech-Latin-German-Magyar) in six volumes which, however, was not published till a decade after his death (1813). But Bernolak's choice of the Western Slovak dialect as the Slovak literary language was rather unfortunate because that dialect, being the nearest to Czech, was quite unfamiliar to the Slovaks in Central and Eastern Slovakia. For this reason alone, Bernolak's Slovak literary language, with the exception of the western region, never became popular throughout Slovakia<sup>20</sup>. Disregarding the failure of Bernolak's literary language to popularize itself, it nevertheless gave the Slovaks an opportunity to write in their own language and to build their own culture which became the basis of Slovak national life.

Among the Slovaks who made use of Bernolak's Slovak literary language was, first of all, his pupil and follower, a Catholic priest, Jan Holly (1785-1849), sometimes called

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Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 99-101. Also S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, p. 216, and R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 259.

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'the Slovak Homer'. He was first to translate into Slovak some of the great classics: Virgil, Homer, Horace and Theocritus. He is, however, best known for his great epics of his own on the topics so dear to the hearts of all Slovaks - King Svatopluk and Saints Cyril and Methodius. His Svatopluk (1833), Slav (1834) and Cyrilo-Methodiada (1835), portray the glory and tragedy of the early Slovak history, its struggles, its days of heroism, and its Christian spirit<sup>21</sup>.

A literary critic, Jozef Kacka<sup>22</sup>, summarized Holly's contribution to Slovak letters in these words:

Holly's significance for Slovak literature is beyond evaluation, He is the greatest Slovak poet(...) His own unsurpassable expression of the national soul has made him and will continue to make him the greatest of the Slovak poets, lending glory to Slovakia's historical past; just as certainly as his prophecies on the destiny of Slovakia, opening up visions of its future freedom, made and will continue to make him the proud prophet of Slovakian people. With nothing more than a nonliterary, formless dialect at his disposal, Holly moulded and shaped it into a rich poetic language, creating at the same time the Slovak epic, the Slovak ode, elegy, and song. In this respect Holly is comparable to Dante, for just as Dante set the foundations for Italian literary creation in the vernacular of his country, so Holly established the foundations of Slovak literature in the language of his own people.

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21

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 103.

22

Jozef Kacka, Dejiny literatury slovenskej, Ruzomberok, Slovakia, 1921, quoted by Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 103-104.

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43

While Catholics followed Holly's example and continued to use the Western and other Slovak dialects in place of a literary language, the Slovak Protestants persistently used Czech. However, even in spite of this, they remained Slovak and Slav patriots.

The most outstanding Slovak Protestants of that time were the poet Jan Kollar (1793-1852), and the scientist Pavol Jozef Safarik (1795-1861). These two men became the leaders not only of the Slovak nation, but of the entire Slavdom. Kollar's greatest and most famous work, Slavy dcera (The Daughter of Slava), published in 1824 and representing poet's dream of Slavic unity, fired the imagination of the nation. Safarik's Slovanske starozitnosti (Slavic Antiquities) published in 1837, had a similar influence on the people<sup>23</sup>.

But not all Slovak Protestants resigned themselves to the permanent use of Czech language. One of them, Ludovit Stur (1815-1856), who used to be Palkovic's assistant and later professor of Slavic languages and literature at the Lutheran College at Bratislava, was destined to be not only

23

Robert J. Kerner, "The Czechoslovaks from the Battle of White Mountain to the World War", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 37.

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44

the leader of the Slovak nation in 1848, but also the re-generator of the Slovak language<sup>24</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Magyars were preparing a complete Magyarization of the country and Stur, according to Professor Macartney<sup>25</sup>

became convinced that it was impossible to maintain Czech as the language of Slovak culture; if Slovak was to exist at all, it must stand on its own feet. Accordingly, with his two friends Hurban and Hodza (both Lutheran priests), he adopted as the language of his movement the purest of the Slovak dialects, that of Central Slovakia. In 1847 a formal agreement was reached with Bernolak's school to adopt this dialect as their common language. The Czechophiles resisted vociferously for a while, but came into line in 1851.

The reasons for this resistance to a common Slovak language are discussed by Professor Kerner<sup>26</sup>, who states that the Czechs "warned in vain against this departure from the practice of a thousand years. They argued that its results would only be to the benefit of the Germans and Magyars".

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<sup>24</sup>  
R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 259.

<sup>25</sup>  
C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 88.

<sup>26</sup>  
Robert J. Kerner, "The Czechoslovaks from the battle of White Mountain to the World War", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 38.

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45

For the Slovaks it could hardly have been a departure from the practice of a thousand years. The Slovaks and Czechs have never spoken the same dialect or language because if they had, they would still have spoken it in the nineteenth century. Only the Slovak Protestants used Czech in their liturgy and later, since there was no Slovak literary language, they used it in their literary works. But they always spoke Slovak dialects. The written Czech was so different from the spoken vernacular that it was read and written with difficulty not only by the Protestant Slovaks, but even in Moravia and Bohemia. The Czech language of the nineteenth century was quite different from the earlier Czech<sup>27</sup>. This, of course, was due to the natural evolution and the efforts towards developing a literary Czech language. Thus, the Czechs did not hesitate to depart from the tradition and practice of a thousand years in order to create a literary language, but they warned the Slovaks about doing the same with their own language. At the same time, the Czech language was deformed by German influences. As Professor Kohn puts it, "it seemed more advisable for the Czechs to find true Slavdom in the clear sources of Slovak inspiration

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S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, p. 220.

than to ask the Slovaks to drink the 'polluted' waters of Czech customs and speech"<sup>28</sup>. Luckily, the Slovaks disregarded the 'warnings' and by accepting their new literary language that was popularized by the Slovak poets Samo Chalupka, Janko Kral, Jan Botto and others, who collected and preserved the original Slovak songs, the Slovaks thus came to a national consciousness of their own<sup>29</sup>.

The Slovak cultural and national revival was therefore a great success, considering the difficulties it had to overcome. The Slovak literary language has been definitely established. The men who played such very important part in the Slovak national and cultural revival were to play just as important role in the new Pan-Slav movement that swept through the Slavic Europe.

#### The Role of the Slovaks in the Pan-Slav Movement

The term Pan-Slavism has had various interpretations. Roughly, it may be summarized as the doctrine that all Slavs should have as large a measure as possible of cultural and

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Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology, Notre Dame, University Press, 1953, p. 21.

29

Robert J. Kerner, "The Czechoslovaks from the Battle of White Mountain to the World War", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 38.

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47

political solidarity. The term Pan-Slavism appeared for the first time in 1826, in a Latin treatise on Slav philology, written by a Slovak, Jan Herkel<sup>30</sup>, and it seems to be his invention. In his treatise, Herkel proposed a common Slavic literary language which would make possible a "unio in literatura inter omnes Slaves sive verus pan-slavismus"<sup>31</sup>. But long before Herkel's time and his invention of the term Pan-Slavism, the idea of cultural, national and religious unity of the Slavs had occupied the minds of several Slavic thinkers.

Perhaps the greatest and noblest figure of the early Pan-Slavists was the Croatian priest, Juraj Krizanic (1618-1683), a missionary in Russia, who dreamed of the unity of all Slavs under the Tsar of Russia and who believed in the reunion of the Eastern Slavs with Rome. To Krizanic, religious unity, under the guidance of the Roman Catholic Church, seemed a prerequisite of Slavic unity. But it was too early for any organized all-Slav movement. Consequently, Krizanic's ideas were forgotten until the first half of the nineteenth century, when a new Pan-Slavism began to flourish.

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Jan Herkel, a Slovak attorney in Budapest and a good friend of Kollar's, used this term for the first time in his Elementa universalis linguae slavicae e vivis dialectis eruta et sanis logicae principiis suffulta.

32

Hans Kohm, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology, p. 6 and 254.

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The strongest impulse of new Pan-Slavism came from Slovakia, which was at the same time experiencing a national and cultural revival of its own. The greatest exponents of this new humanitarian and romantic Pan-Slavism were the great patriot and poet of Slovakia, Jan Kollar, and the Slovak scholars Pavol Jozef Safarik and Ludovit Stur. According to Professor Kohn<sup>32</sup>, who is considered the foremost authority on Pan-Slavism, Kollar and Safarik may be regarded as fathers of Pan-Slavism and they became its first poet and first scholar respectively.

The original idea of Pan-Slavism called for a unity of all Slavs under Russia. To understand fully the predominance of Russophilism in Pan-Slavism, it is necessary to remember that during the whole nineteenth century Russia was the only free and powerful Slavic nation in Europe. All other Slavic peoples had at that time been submerged - Slovaks, Czechs, Slovenes and Croats - in the Austrian monarchy; Serbs and Bulgarians in the Turkish Empire; Poland in Germany and Russia. Most of these, naturally, looked to Russia as their big brother and protector, and they strengthened their faith in their ultimate liberation by pointing to the strong and

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32  
Ibid., p. 11.

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powerful Russian Empire in the east. It is not, therefore, surprising that they had a tendency to idealize the only Slavic nation, and that their attitude to the big-brother Russia was often uncritical.

It is natural that the Pan-Slavism of poets, scholars and dreamers should have been exploited by the Tsarist Russia to further her imperialistic aims, and many Slav nations that found themselves living under foreign domination, (if not directly under the Russians themselves), were deprived of their freedom with the help of Russia. Therefore, the new political Pan-Slavism was created more as so-called Austro-Slavism, leading to the federalization of Austria. Only about the year 1870, did political Pan-Slavism and later Neo-Slavism with the idea of Russian leadership, revive<sup>33</sup>.

The Slovak Pan-Slavists (Kollar, Safarik, Stur and Herkel), together with other representatives of Pan-Slav movement (Czechs Hanka and Dobrovsky, Croat Kukulievic, Slovenes Kopitar and Vraz and Serb Karadzic) and other less known Pan-Slavists in Austria-Hungary, had a most idealistic conception of co-operation. Solidarity of the Slavs meant to them a lifting-up of suffering and subjugated peoples and a

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 33

Joseph Kirschbaum, Les Slovaques et le Monde Slave, unpublished Master's thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Montreal, Quebec, 1953, p. 29.

## THE DARK MILLENNIUM

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service to all humanity. They dreamed of the revival of the glorious past of the Slavdom and of a new, brighter future of the Slavs.

Kollar, under the influence of German romanticism and humanistic philosophy, compiled his ideas on Slavic nations in his book Über die literarische Wechselseitigkeit zwischen den verschiedenen Stämmen und Mundarten der slavischen Nation, published in 1837. His ideas of the past and future of the Slavic nations is, naturally, very idealistic and adapted to the needs of literary and cultural unity of the Slavs, and to the creation of one great union of all Slavic nations, led by the Russians. The latter idea Kollar stresses and professes in his second, and probably greatest work, Slavy dcera. Kollar believed in one Slav nation and one Slav language<sup>34</sup>. The pioneers and proponents of this idea were the Slovak Ban-Slavists.

Kollar's explanation of the reasons for the Slovaks assuming leadership was the fact that since the Slovaks had very little literature of their own at that time, they were willing to embrace all the Slavs in order to create a true Slavic literature. Grammatically and geographically, the Slovak dialect stood in the center of all Slavic dialects and

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 37-38.

## THE DARK MILLENNIUM

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Slovakia, Kollar believed, was also the nest and cradle of all Slavs<sup>35</sup>. Indeed, it is true that the Slovak language was, and still is, the key to all Slavic languages, since it contains the greatest number of forms common to all Slavs and thus it is most easily understood by other Slavs<sup>36</sup>. There is little doubt, therefore, what Kollar offered to the Slavs. Kollar and the Slovaks were willing to sacrifice the Slovak language and literature for the sake of creating a true all-Slavic language and literature.

Because of his literary achievements and his work in the Pan-Slav movement, Kollar had an extraordinary influence over other Pan-Slavists and, indisputably, was the leader of the entire humanitarian and romantic Pan-Slav movement.

The greatest of Kollar's contemporaries was Safarik, whose appeal for a closer co-operation among the Slavs and his own literary achievements awakened a resounding echo throughout the Slavic world. In Russia in particular, writes Professor Seton-Watson, "Safarik may be regarded as the founder of a whole school of scientific writers, whose work had a

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<sup>35</sup>  
Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology,  
p. 17.

<sup>36</sup>  
Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 105.

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very direct political bearing upon the whole development of the Slav world"<sup>37</sup>. Safarik's influence was very much evident at the Slav Congress, held in Prague on June 2nd, 1848. In his opening speech, which was given a great reception, Safarik stressed the fact that the Slavs were asking nothing but justice and when they were declining to become Germans, Magyars or Italians, they were not being barbarians, but simply refusing to betray their country or the cause of liberty<sup>38</sup>.

Although Kollar could not attend the Congress, the Slovak delegates, Safarik, Stur, Hurban and Hodza, played a part second to none. Their work earned them a honorable place in history of all the Slavs. Many historians believe that "Kollar and Safarik were to Slav cultural reciprocity what Cyril and Methodius had been to Slav Christianity"<sup>39</sup>. As Professor Kohn writes<sup>40</sup>, Kollar and Safarik brought to the

37

R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 176.

38

Ibid., p. 188.

39

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 123.

40

Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology, p. 18-19.

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Slavs the promise of a bright future, a promise that heralded the coming of a new era, the era of lasting liberty, peace and happiness for all Slavs.

The Struggle for National  
Freedom and the Slovak Language

The new ideas which later, under the slogan "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity", resulted in the French Revolution, made their way into the Danube basin and affected also the nations of that region. These ideas found fertile soil not only among the Magyars, but also among the Slovaks and other nations which lived in Hungary. Slovak national consciousness sprang and grew from several sources: besides the contemporary trends of thought entering Slovakia from the outside and the pressure exerted upon the Slovaks by the Magyars, Slovak national consciousness was strongly rooted in Slovak life itself and not even more than nine centuries of foreign rule and denationalization could have destroyed it. The Slovaks were being awakened from their passive resistance by the actions of the Slovak and Pan-Slav leaders of that time, as shown in the previous paragraphs of this chapter.

It was natural for the Slovaks to follow the new trend of thought and the example set by other nations in order to fight for their rights. The Slovaks were becoming convinced

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anew that the country which they occupied was their own country and that they alone had all the rights of ownership to that region of Hungary. Although they had no intention of detaching themselves from the Hungarian kingdom, they desired at least a national and cultural autonomy.

The Revolution which erupted in Paris in February, 1848, and reverberated throughout Europe, inspired a strong movement in Hungary also, affecting the development of Slovak life and resulting in a rebellion. Individual regions of Slovakia rebelled against the Magyar oppression.

This rebellion became known in Slovak history as the Slovak National Revolution of 1848-1849.

A national revolution, the struggle against the oppressor, is always given a very honorable place in the history of any nation. The Slovak National Revolution has always been considered by the Slovaks the most heroic chapter of Slovak history. But in the political and historical works of many Anglo-American scholars, the reasons that forced the Slovaks to rebel and the period following the Revolution, a period of continuous struggles for national freedom and the Slovak language, are often discussed unobjectively. This unobjectivity and bias are the results of the Magyar, and mostly Czech political tendencies, the aim of which was to suppress

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Slovak nationalism and minimize the historical achievements of the Slovak nation.

For the sake of historical truth it must be stressed that the reasons which led the Slovaks, under the leadership of Stur, Hurban and Hodza, to start the Slovak National Revolution and take part in the revolutions of 1848-1849, were the desires to achieve national and cultural freedom. But the consequences of this step were catastrophic for the Slovaks. They became even more subjected to the wrath of their Magyar overlords because in the revolutions they sided with Vienna, against the Magyars. Since Vienna emerged victorious from the revolutions, the Slovaks rightly expected to benefit by being granted more national and cultural freedom than ever before. Instead, Vienna rewarded them by abandoning the Slovaks entirely to the mercies of the Magyars<sup>41</sup>. The Magyars began to take drastic steps to destroy national consciousness among the Slovaks. To them, a Slovak was not a human being<sup>42</sup>

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Robert J. Kerner, "The Czechoslovaks from the Battle of White Mountain to the World War", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 42.

42

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 82. Also Josef Hanc, Eastern Europe, London, Museum Press, 1943, p. 17.

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(T<sup>1</sup>ót nem ember), even if he shared the same state with them. But Hungary itself was not a Magyar state even at this late date and, consequently, the Magyars tried to make it such as quickly as possible, their goal being a unified state with one official language. When Latin was the official language of the kingdom, the Slovaks and other non-Magyar nations of Hungary seemed to have had no objections to surrendering the right to speak their own languages in official and governmental matters, so long as it was a surrender to a universal language. Since Hungary was already in the process of substituting Magyar for Latin, which was becoming an increasingly obsolescent language, the Slovaks recognized the need for a new common language and, at first, they were willing to accept even Magyar as an official tongue of the multinational Hungarian kingdom. But the Slovaks soon realized that the Magyars were trying to give Magyar language the dominant position in all aspects of national life, which would have reduced the Slovak language and other non-Magyar languages to the level of a patois<sup>43</sup>. Therefore, the Slovaks were determined to resist and refused to accept Magyar as the

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<sup>43</sup>  
S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, p. 219.

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official tongue, without claiming the same privilege for the Slovak language<sup>44</sup>. The Slovak leaders felt that something had to be done in order to save the Slovak nation and the Slovak language from extinction. Several of the Slovak leaders still believed that the Slovaks might attain recognition and political status within the framework of the Hungarian kingdom.

Therefore, it was decided to publish the detailed principles of the Slovak political program in the Slovak newspaper Pestbudinske vedomosti (No. 21, 1861)<sup>45</sup>, and to call a Slovak General Assembly to Turciansky Svaty Martin. Thus, on June 6-7, 1861, a large gathering of prominent Slovaks - including such leaders as S. Hurban, V. Pauliny-Toth, J. Francisci, S. Marko-Daxner, and other representatives of noble Slovak families - met at Turciansky Svaty Martin. Stefan Marko-Daxner, an eminent Slovak attorney, drew up the 'Memorandum of the Slovak Nation', addressed to the Hungarian Diet. This Memorandum claimed legal recognition of the Slovak nation and asked that the part of the Hungarian territory inhabited by the Slovaks should be recognized as 'North Hungarian Slovak

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<sup>44</sup> Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology, p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> Frantisek Bokes, Slovenska vlastiveda IV, Dejiny Slovakov a Slovenska, Bratislava, Academia Scientiarum et Artium Slovaca, 1946, p. 223.

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District' (Hornouhorske Slovenske Okolie), in which Slovak should be the official language. The Memorandum asked also for the creation of a Slovak Academy of Law and a chair of Slavic languages and literature at Budapest. The Slovaks, in return for these privileges were willing to recognize Hungarian as the official language of the Hungarian kingdom.

Although the Slovaks demanded only basic rights which, they believed, rightfully belonged to them, the Hungarian Diet declined to receive the Memorandum and refused to grant any of the privileges to the Slovak nation<sup>46</sup>. Refused by the Magyars, the Slovaks decided to approach Austria which, in the past, had shown more understanding for the Slovak nation than had the Magyars.

In December 1861, a Slovak deputation, led by bishop Stefan Moyses of Banska Bystrica, was received in Vienna and, in a memorable document to Emperor Francis Joseph, requested that the Slovaks be granted the privileges as stated in the Memorandum. The Slovaks were once again rejected, but received some small cultural concessions, which allowed them to found two Slovak gymnasia (higher secondary schools) at Turciansky

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B.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 265. Also C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 90, and Cecily Mackworth and Jan Stransky, Czechoslovakia, London, Macdonald, 1943, p. 41.

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Svaty Martin and Revuca, in 1862, and a third one at Klaster pod Znievom, in 1867. These schools depended for support entirely on the Slovaks themselves.

Equally important as the schools, if not more so, was the foundation at Turciansky Svaty Martin of the Slovak Institute, which received a small donation from the Emperor. This institute, christened by the Slovaks the Matica Slovenska became the centre of Slovak national and cultural life. During its existence, it published historical material, collections of folklore and popular poetry, subsidized the education of poor students and opened reading-rooms throughout Slovakia<sup>47</sup>.

In 1870, a second Slovak cultural institution was organized at Trnava, known as the Society of St. Adalbert (Spolok Svateho Vojtecha), which was allowed to function even during the period of the most intensive Magyarization of Slovakia<sup>48</sup>.

These two institutions are rightly credited not only with preserving the Slovak language and culture, but also with saving the Slovak nation from extinction.

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<sup>47</sup> R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 266.

<sup>48</sup> Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 111.

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In 1867, however, Vienna concluded the 'Compromise' with the Magyars, which left them absolute masters of Hungary. In this new Hungary, the status of non-Magyar nations was to be regulated by the 'Law of Equal Rights of Nationalities', passed by the Diet in 1868. This law, however, was never honestly carried out and the position of the Slovaks not only became worse, but grew steadily and unbearably more desperate. After Koloman Tisza became the Prime Minister of Hungary, the Slovaks were degraded to the position of a submerged nationality. Matica Slovenska was dissolved in 1875 and its property confiscated. The Slovak schools met with the same fate<sup>49</sup>.

While other non-Magyar nations of Hungary (the Croats and Rumanians) could always turn for help to their fellow-countrymen living in Rumania and Croatia, the Slovaks did not have such an opportunity. Therefore, they began searching for a new national home, or a substitute for it, which they found in America<sup>50</sup>. America, the land of the free, became an inspiration for the Slovaks and in the years prior to World War I, close to a million Slovaks emigrated to the United States in

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Robert J. Kerner, "The Czechoslovaks from the Battle of White Mountain to the World War", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 44.

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A.J.P. Taylor, The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1948, p. 188.

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search of freedom and better economic conditions. They were to play a very important role in bringing freedom to their brothers in Europe.

Meanwhile, the Hungarian Government continued mercilessly its efforts to Magyarize the Slovaks. When R.W. Seton-Watson visited Hungary at the beginning of this century, the Magyar politicians assured him arrogantly that there were no Slovaks in Hungary, while the Prime Minister, Count Andrassy declared to the Times correspondent that the Magyars would massacre the Slovaks to the last man, rather than give them any political rights<sup>51</sup>.

Although the situation in Slovakia was terrible, nevertheless the Slovak language and nationalism was being kept alive by such Slovak patriots as the great poet Hviezdoslav, Vajansky, Skultety, Krcmery, Razus and many others.

Many Anglo-American historians are of the mistaken impression that the Magyars were helped by the Catholic clergy in the denationalization and Magyarization of Slovakia<sup>52</sup>, but

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<sup>51</sup> Cecily Mackworth and Jan Stransky, Czechoslovakia, p. 89-90.

<sup>52</sup> Robert J. Kerner, "The Czechoslovaks from the Battle of White Mountain to the World War", in Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, p. 44.

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the very opposite is true. As authors Keeton and Schlesinger rightly point out<sup>53</sup>, it was among the Slovak Catholic clergy that the chief means for the preservation of Slovak nationalism, language and traditions were found.

Perhaps the greatest and the bravest of all Slovak Catholic clergymen who dedicated their lives to God and to the struggle for cultural and national freedom of the Slovak nation, was Mgr. Andrej Hlinka. In the past, just as today, he is considered by the Slovaks the 'father' of Slovakia.

World War I that brought the Slovaks freedom, but not independence, found Slovak nationalism weakened but not extinct. The Slovaks survived one thousand years of foreign oppression, thus proving that an enemy may kill individuals, but never a nation.

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George W. Keeton and Rudolf Schlesinger, Russia and Her Western Neighbours, London, Cape, 1942, p. 85.

## CHAPTER III

## FOR GOD AND FOR COUNTRY

## The Slovaks in Czecho-Slovakia

Intolerance towards the Slovaks and other minorities within her borders and the outcome of World War I, led the Magyars into a disaster. In 1918, Greater Hungary was dismembered and on her ruins new states were born. Among them was the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia which, it was hoped, would become a true national home for all Czechs and Slovaks.

The idea of a Czecho-Slovak state was contrived during the war by "Czechs and Slovaks from Moravia, or more remotely, in the United States"<sup>1</sup>. The chief representatives of this idea were T.G. Masaryk, a Moravian Slovak, E. Benes, a Czech, and M.R. Stefanik, a Slovak. These three men, who were destined to play such very important roles in the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the creation of the successor states, were helped in their task by many less eminent exiles, but mainly by the Americans of Slovak and Czech descent.

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<sup>1</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1948, p. 191.

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Since the Slovaks in Hungary were in no position to speak for themselves, nor were they able to express their wishes for future, the Americans of Slovak origin considered it their duty to speak up for their oppressed brothers until they could act for themselves. As a result of this decision, writes Mr. Yurchak<sup>2</sup>, the Slovaks and Czechs in the United States, met in Cleveland as early as October 25, 1915, and agreed upon a united program which, they believed, their fellow countrymen would accept after their liberation. This program was set forth in a document known as the 'Cleveland Agreement'<sup>3</sup>.

Professor Masaryk, who was the President of the newly formed Czecho-Slovak National Council (1916), realized the importance of this decision of the American Slovaks and Czechs and the advantages that their help would bring to his movement. Therefore, he decided to visit the United States and on May 30, 1918, in Pittsburgh, he met the representatives of the American Slovak and Czech organizations. According to Peter P. Yurchak<sup>4</sup>, in his speech at Exposition Hall, Masaryk

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<sup>2</sup> Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, Whiting, Lach, 1947, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> For the text see Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 212-213.

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settled any misgivings that the American Slovaks might have held regarding the position of the Slovaks in the new state. He mentioned his own Slovak origin with pride (...) "I am a Slovak"<sup>5</sup>, Masaryk told his preponderantly Slovak audience - a profession which, although Masaryk spoke in Czech, was greeted with thunderous applause. It was hardly necessary to say, Masaryk emphasized, that the Czechs and Slovaks were 'equals'; however, lest any misunderstanding should arise, the Czechs and Slovaks could be assured that only by a union of their forces - 'as equals united' - could they defeat their common enemy.

The Pittsburgh meeting resulted in the acceptance of a document, which was supposed to be 'the Slovak Bill of Rights', and became known as the 'Pittsburgh Agreement'<sup>6</sup>. Actually it was the original 'Cleveland Agreement', revised and written in Slovak by Masaryk himself. The Agreement was signed by T.G. Masaryk on behalf of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, and by the representatives of the concerned Slovak and Czech organizations in the United States.

Meanwhile, Stefanik, the Slovak member of the trio, who rose to the rank of general of the French army, began

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<sup>5</sup> However, in his Confidential Memorandum on Independent Bohemia of April 1915, Masaryk stated the following: "The Slovaks are Bohemians, in spite of their using their dialect as their literary language", quoted by R.W. Seton-Watson, Masaryk in England, Cambridge, University Press, 1943, p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> For the text see Appendix 2.

to organize the Czecho-Slovak Legions in Russia, France and Italy. These legions were composed of the Slovak and Czech prisoners of war, and also of some Slovaks and Czechs from the United States, and formed the nucleus of the Czecho-Slovak armies.

After the recognition of the Czecho-Slovak National Council and the Czecho-Slovak Army by the Allies, in 1918<sup>7</sup>, the National Council became the Provisional Government of the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, with its seat in Paris. This government, headed by Prof. Masaryk, Dr. Benes as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and General Stefanik as the Minister of National Defense, was given de jure recognition by the Allies in October, 1918. Taking advantage of Austria's capitulation to President Wilson's terms, a Czecho-Slovak Republic was proclaimed in Prague, on October 28th, 1918<sup>8</sup>.

While the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia was a fait accompli, the Slovaks, unaware of this, were trying to reach an agreement with the Magyars and, as Prof. Taylor states,

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7  
Recognition by Italy on April 21; France on June 30; Great Britain on August 9; the United States on September 2, and Japan on September 11, 1918. - See S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, Princeton, University Press, 1943, p. 264-270.

8  
Ibid., p. 273 and 282.

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had only reached the point of demanding "autonomy" within Hungary; they were swept off their feet by the news that Czechoslovakia already existed and, though still negotiating with Budapest, accepted the new state, somewhat breathlessly, on October 29 (the right date is October 30)<sup>9</sup>.

The rapid development of the unexpected situation, hastily brought the Slovak leaders to Turciensky Sv. Martin on October 29-30, 1918, to organize a Slovak National Council. It is true that this meeting "had received the approval of all important Slovak leaders, but it must be stressed that these politically conscious Slovaks were only a minority"<sup>10</sup>. The Slovak National Council agreed upon a declaration, known as the 'Turciensky Svaty Martin Declaration' (Martinska Deklaracia) which, on Dr. Hodza's advice and in spite of some opposition was amended the following day, after many members of the National Council had already gone home. The Martinska Deklaracia<sup>11</sup>, adopted on October 30, 1918, united Slovakia and the Czech lands in the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup>  
A.J.P. Taylor, The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918, p. 249.

<sup>10</sup>  
Hugh Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941, Cambridge, University Press, 1945, p. 175.

<sup>11</sup>  
For the original and amended text see Appendix 3.

<sup>12</sup>C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, p. 101.

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Among the most important signatories of this document was Mgr. Andrej Hlinka, who "expressed joy and satisfaction at the achievement of a common independence"<sup>13</sup>. There is little doubt that Mgr. Hlinka and a greater majority of the Slovaks were glad to be rid of the Magyars. They welcomed the creation of the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, for they had great hopes for the national, cultural and economic development of the Slovaks in the new Republic providing that the 'Pittsburgh Agreement' would be adhered to.

#### The Differences between the Czechs and the Slovaks

It is a popular belief, especially in the Western Hemisphere that Czecho-Slovakia was, or at least had every chance of becoming another Switzerland, as Dr. Benes promised at the Peace Conference, in 1919. But if Czecho-Slovakia has ever had such an opportunity, it was quickly removed by the Czechs themselves at the very beginning of her existence. The hopes of the Slovak nation for a better national life and a peaceful co-existence with the Czechs, as equal partners, were soon shattered by the action of the government and its lack of understanding of the Slovaks. Although it is only fair

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S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, p. 283.

to admit, in the words of Hugh Seton-Watson, that "the Slovaks enjoyed better government under the Czechs than they had previously known"<sup>14</sup>, the whole trouble rested in the fact that it was 'under the Czechs' and not with them, as equal partners.

While the Slovaks had their own ideas of a government in Slovakia, the Czechs had ideas that were quite different. The Czecho-Slovak Government, without consulting the Slovaks, abolished the Slovak National Council and the numerous local Slovak Councils, and replaced them with a 'Government Office', headed by Dr. Vavro Srobar, a representative of the Centralist, (or Czechoslovak) wing. The head executive of this high office, which was actually a Slovak Government, was neither elected by the Slovaks, nor chosen by them; he was appointed by Prague. This move was executed by the Czechs in the hope that they might be able to govern Slovakia through the Czecho-ophile Slovaks<sup>15</sup>.

Another great disappointment for the Slovaks was the arrival of Czech officials, who came to Slovakia in order to help the Slovaks to rebuild their national and cultural life.

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<sup>14</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, The East European Revolution, London, Methuen, 1950, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 112.

Although at first even Mgr. Hlinka insisted that the Slovaks would welcome all Czechs who were willing to help them, the attitude towards the Slovaks and the bigotry of the 'free thinkers' among the Czechs aroused the Slovaks, and, certainly did not help the budding republic or the Czech-Slovak co-operation<sup>16</sup>.

Dr. Milan Hodza, the late Prime Minister of Czecho-Slovakia, describes the Centralist errors in the Slovak administration in his book Federation in Central Europe<sup>17</sup>. Among other things he mentions the fact that these errors had forced Mgr. Hlinka, who for many years had been one of the strongest supporters of Czecho-Slovak co-operation, to turn against Prague. In fact, Hlinka went so far as to make an attempt to bring the Slovak self-government claims before the Peace Conference in Paris. Because the Czecho-Slovak Government refused Mgr. Hlinka's request for a passport, he had to make the journey to Paris via Poland. Although the Czechs in Paris tried to prevent Mgr. Hlinka from seeing any competent Allied diplomats and peacemakers, he did manage to see some

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16

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 233.

17

Milan Hodza, Federation in Central Europe, Reflections and Reminiscences, London, Jarrolds, 1942, p. 89.

members of the United States delegation. Colonel Bonsal, an American diplomat and adviser to President Wilson, recorded his conversations with Mgr. Hlinka in his book Suitors and Suppliants, The Little Nations at Versailles<sup>18</sup>. In September 1919, Mgr. Hlinka told Colonel Bonsal following:

Yes, I did sign the declaration (Martin Declaration of October 30, 1918) which went to the Powers a few days after the Armistice. I did say, may God and my unhappy people forgive me, that the Slovaks were a part of the Czechoslovak race and that we wished to live with them with equal rights in an independent state. Why did I do it? I cannot explain - not even to myself - but I will tell you some of the reasons that swayed me then unfortunately. In the Pittsburgh declaration of our independence which the American Slovaks sent to us, I read that Masaryk had guaranteed the independence of Slovakia and had further agreed that we should be represented at the Peace Conference by our own delegation. Even then I had my doubts as to the wisdom of the step I was taking, but what else was I to do? When the people in Prague saw that I was hesitating and the reason why, they reassured me by saying, "This is merely an emergency move, and you can make it with mental reservations. When Europe settles down, you can make your own final decision".

.....  
 The Czechs regard Slovakia as a colony, and they treat us as though we were African savages. Abroad they shout that we belong to the same race, and yet at every opportunity they treat us as helots. Within the borders of what they are pleased to call Czechoslovakia, they only treat us as hewers of wood and drawers of water for their High Mightiness of Prague.

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18

Stephen Bonsal, Suitors and Suppliants, The Little Nations at Versailles, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1946, p. 160-161.

Colonel Bonsal explained Mgr. Hlinka's story to Col. House, the United States delegate to the Peace Conference, who was very impressed by it. M. André Tardieu, the Commissioner General for Franco-American Military Affairs, admitted to Colonel House later that he too had been startled and impressed by the plea of the Slovaks. Unfortunately, Mgr. Hlinka was told, it was too late to do anything at the Peace Conference for the Slovaks, but upon the assembling of the League of Nations, he could appeal the case of Slovakia there.

Mgr. Hlinka was disappointed, but decided not to give up, but to enter the Czecho-Slovak Parliament where he would continue to fight for his people. However, upon his return to Slovakia, he was seized in the middle of the night and, in a Czech prison, where he remained for many months, he was treated with such cruelty that his health was permanently impaired. This high-handed act of the Czecho-Slovak Government provoked a local revolt<sup>19</sup>. It also created a breach in the new republic, which grew wider with years.

Since there was a lack of qualified Slovaks for public service in Slovakia, it was inevitable, and many Slovaks admit it, that many positions in the public service in Slovakia

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<sup>19</sup>  
Ibid., p. 164-165.

should be occupied by Czechs. Although they were welcome at first, soon they became very much disliked by the Slovaks not only because of their attitude towards them, but mostly because of the Czech mentality which was offensive to the Catholic Slovaks. Professor Macartney<sup>20</sup> writes as follows on this subject:

The Czech officials were less rough-hewn than the legionaries, but something of the same aroma clung about them. It soon appeared that the profound differences between Czech and Slovak national mentality were no mere invention of the Magyars. Above all, the Czech Socialists, who played such a large part in the Government of the first years, incorporated all those Czech characteristics most obnoxious to the Slovaks. They were crude, they were ill-mannered, they were aggressively egalitarian, and they were almost fanatically anti-clerical, seeing in the Churches of Slovakia a twofold enemy, social and national.

A similar observation has been made by Hugh Seton-Watson<sup>21</sup> in his book Eastern Europe Between the Wars 1918-1941.

It was understood by the Slovaks that these Czech officials would be withdrawn from Slovakia as soon as enough Slovaks could be trained for public service. Although some

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C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 126.

21

Hugh Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe Between the Wars 1918-1941, p. 175.

Anglo-American historians believe that this understanding was strictly adhered to<sup>22</sup>, the very opposite is true. With time, the influx of Czech officials, and even workers, into Slovakia increased and by 1930, as even the official Government records showed, 120,926 Czechs had come in. This invasion by the Czechs deprived many Slovaks of positions that they had been trained for. As a result, during the first eight years of Czecho-Slovakia's existence, almost a quarter of a million Slovaks had to leave their homeland to seek employment elsewhere, mostly in the United States and Canada<sup>23</sup>.

In more ways than one, did the Czechs arouse the already much disappointed Slovaks. The latter, being predominantly a Catholic nation, deeply resented the treatment accorded to the Catholic Church in Slovakia. First the State assumed absolute control over the Catholic gymnasias, and gradually began to replace the Confessional primary schools by State establishments, in which religious instructions were restricted and novelities, quite often anti-religious, were introduced into curricula. This was followed by the seizure of

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22

S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, p. 292.

23

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 239.

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State control of Church lands and an order making clergy liable for military service. The Slovaks also deeply resented the favoritism of the Government supported propaganda of the newly created 'Czechoslovak Church', which was very much anti-Catholic and anti-Slovak.

Perhaps the most grievous damage to the Czech-Slovak cause was the overstressing of the idea of the 'Czechoslovak language' and the 'Czechoslovak nationality'. Even the Slovaks who were until then quite favorable towards the Czechs, turned against them as a result. The fact remains that this idea was pure fiction and was foreign not only to the Slovaks, but to many Czechs as well, because the languages, like the peoples of Czecho-Slovakia, were two and not one. Czech officials and teachers in Slovakia hoped to solve the problem of the linguistic duality by trying to eliminate Slovak language altogether. Very few Czech teachers made honest effort to acquaint themselves with the language of their Slovak pupils and, consequently, much of the teaching in Slovak schools was done in the Czech language. These methods were practised not only in the primary and secondary schools throughout Slovakia, but even at the Bratislava University, (a Slovak university, named after a Czech scholar, Komensky), where the Czech professors, instead of fostering and develop-

ing the Slovak language and culture, worked to destroy them.

The climax of this Czechization of Slovakia was reached in 1932, when a group of Czechs in the 'linguistic committee' of the Matica Slovenska, after many industrious attempts to secure acceptance of the Western Slovak dialect (which was quite close to the Czech language) as the literary language of Slovakia, presented to Matica Slovenska a 'new Slovak grammar'. Had the Slovaks been foolish enough to accept the grammar proposed by the Czechs, the problem of the linguistic duality would have been solved and the Slovaks would have had a Czechoslovak or a Czech literary language. This time, however, the Czechs went a little too far. Angry protests poured in from nearly all the leading figures of Slovak cultural life and as a result, the Czechs and Czechophiles were ousted from all committees engaged in the development of the Slovak culture<sup>24</sup>.

As far as the economic situation in Slovakia was concerned, the picture was just as dark. The Czechs claimed that "Slovakia depended entirely upon Czech economic support"<sup>25</sup>, which was not true, for even though Slovakia was a weaker

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<sup>24</sup>

C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 126-127.

<sup>25</sup> George W. Keeton and Rudolf Schlesinger, Russia and Her Western Neighbours, London, Cape, 1942, p. 107.

partner economically and needed protection and help, the Czechs have "sometimes used the opportunity furnished by the centralist regime to exploit rather than to help"<sup>26</sup>. In fact, at the beginning of Czecho-Slovakia's existence the Czech lands drew on Slovak resources with a thoroughness which distressed and angered the Slovak population. The Slovak industry suffered very severely. Some iron works were closed down (Krompachy in 1922, Zvolen in 1924), and production in others, as well as in textile factories, breweries, enamel works and other factories, was reduced radically. In Lucenec, for instance, only a single factory remained working out of thirteen. The Slovak industry was also much more heavily taxed (at least until 1929), than the industry in Bohemia and Moravia<sup>27</sup>.

As a result of such provoking and insulting Czech actions, the hostility between the Slovaks and Czechs grew more bitter than it had ever been previously. The Slovaks, who for one thousand years fought for their national, cultural and economic freedom against the Magyars, had no other choice but to fight against the Czechs as well.

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C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 143.

27

Ibid., p. 128-131.

## The Slovaks in the Struggle for National Independence

Some misinformed Anglo-American historical and political writers believe that the Slovaks are "a peasant people"<sup>28</sup>, or that they are "simple and pastoral"<sup>29</sup>, and that a Slovak "is not very important in Europe, and is bound to find himself in a subordinate national position"<sup>30</sup>. This mistaken impression about the Slovaks was shared by a large number of Czechs, especially those in the Government of Czecho-Slovakia. But if the Czechs expected that the Slovaks would easily and meekly submit to their imperialistic and denationalizing efforts in Slovakia, they certainly did not take into consideration the Slovak national mentality. As Professor Taylor<sup>31</sup> very correctly observes, "Masaryk had hoped that the Czechs and Slovaks would come together as the English and the Scotch

28

Cecily Mackworth and Jan Stransky, Czechoslovakia, p. 91.

29

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 82.

30

Stephen Graham, Europe - Whither Bound?, London, Butterworth, 1921, p. 123.

31

A.J.P. Taylor, The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918, p. 255.

had done; the Slovaks turned out to be the Irish". It must be stressed once again that the Slovaks had wished for close co-operation and brotherly co-existence with the Czechs in what was to have been their common national home. But they did not wish to be regarded as Czechs or anything else, for as Mgr. Hlinka had stated in Paris, in 1919, "the Slovaks are neither Czechs, nor Czechoslovaks, but Slovaks who intend to remain Slovaks"<sup>32</sup>.

Many Slovaks did not consider Czecho-Slovakia a very democratic state and would most certainly disagree with Prof. Roucek<sup>33</sup>, who writes that "as far as the Czechs were concerned (and to a large extent, the Slovak also), Czechoslovakia was a real progressive democracy - the only east of Switzerland". They might, however, agree that although Czecho-Slovakia might have been a more democratic state than her neighbors, it was also true, as Professor Macartney states<sup>34</sup>, that "this democracy does not extend so far as to give the Slovaks any real

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<sup>32</sup> Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 236.

<sup>33</sup> Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 343.

<sup>34</sup> C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 121.

self-government, except in minor questions", and the Slovaks decided to fight for the autonomy of Slovakia.

The spokesmen for the autonomy of Slovakia became, for the Slovak Catholics, the Slovak People's Party under the leadership of Mgr. Hlinka, and for the Protestants, Rev. Martin Razus, an Evangelical Lutheran minister, and his Slovak National Party. These two parties combined their forces in their efforts to secure home rule for Slovakia. It should be remembered that some twelve per cent of Slovaks were Protestants, and, as Prof. Macartney estimates<sup>35</sup>, some twenty per cent of them were for Slovakia's autonomy, the rest being 'Centralists'. At the same time, some eighty per cent of the Slovak Catholics were autonomists.

The Slovak People's Party and its leader, Mgr. Hlinka enjoyed great popularity in Slovakia and, as a result, it became the strongest single Slovak party<sup>36</sup>, although it did not receive a clear majority of votes in the elections (1925, 1929 and 1935). But this, as Professor Macartney rightly points

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C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 146.

36

Ibid., p. 117. Also B.W. Seton-Watson, A History of The Czechs and Slovaks, London, Hutchinson, 1943, p. 318.

out<sup>37</sup>, does not necessarily mean that the majority of the Slovaks were in favor of a centralist Czecho-Slovakia. It is very important to understand that none of the elections in Slovakia were fought on the issue of Autonomy versus Centralism, and material advantages were to be gained by voting for the Czecho-Slovak parties, especially for the always-in-office Agrarians. In fact, apart from the small Lutheran minority, and the Czechs living in Slovakia, most Slovaks who voted for the Czecho-Slovak parties, were probably opportunists.

It has been said already that the program of the Slovak People's Party was self-rule for Slovakia and "even the extremists of the Hlinka Party never demanded more than a larger degree of local autonomy"<sup>38</sup>. With this in mind, Mgr. Hlinka and his party, in August 1922, issued the 'Zilina Memorandum', demanding autonomy for the Slovaks, and accused the Czecho-Slovak Government and Masaryk of a breach of faith in not executing the Cleveland and Pittsburgh agreements<sup>39</sup>.

37

C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 144-145.

38

Cecily Mackworth and Jan Stransky, Czechoslovakia, p. 93.

39

R.W. Seton-Watson, A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, p. 334.

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This demand was turned down by President Masaryk, who told Mgr. Hlinka that "the Pittsburgh Pact, it is to be understood, was meant for America and for American conditions", whereupon Mgr. Hlinka exclaimed in astonishment: "It is difficult for me not to laugh in the President's presence! The Pittsburgh Pact was meant for America?"<sup>40</sup> After this, the Slovaks knew that they would never be able to reach an agreement with Prague. In 1932, the Slovak People's Party and the Slovak National Party issued a joint declaration<sup>41</sup>, stating the following:

The individuality of the Slovak nation, which we shall not renounce even at the cost of the Republic, demands the recognition of sovereign rights and therefore a responsive form of political life. The only form, regarded as such by the Slovaks, is the autonomy of Slovakia, which is the immediate result of Slovak political tradition and agreements concluded during the action of liberation between the Czechs and Slovaks.

Turned down again, the Slovaks began to prepare for a 'do or die' battle with the Government, in which large masses of the Slovaks were to take an active part. In 1933, on the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of the consecration of the

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<sup>40</sup> Karol Sidor, Andrej Hlinka 1864-1926, Bratislava Slovensko, 1934, p. 243-245.

<sup>41</sup> Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 243.

first Christian church in Central Europe, under the rule of Prince Pribina in 833, a great mass meeting was held at Nitra on August 13th, attended by close to one hundred thousand Slovaks. It appeared, however, that Mgr. Hlinka, by that time the most popular and most important national figure in Slovakia, was not to be allowed to make a speech. But, as Professor Macartney<sup>42</sup> writes, "Czech ministers were shouted down and Monsignor Hlinka made a fiery speech, crying, 'There are no Czechoslovaks. We want to remain just Slovaks!'. The meeting resulted in a collision with the Czech gendarmerie, tightening of censorship and indictment of some fifty Slovaks on charges of treasonable activity towards the Czecho-Slovak Government. But this only stiffened the Slovak resistance and stepped up their efforts for autonomy. When Masaryk resigned from his office in 1935, the Slovak People's Party, having been given definite assurance of autonomy for Slovakia, voted solidly for the election of Dr. Benes to the Presidency of the Republic. Although Dr. Benes was elected, the promise was not fulfilled while he was President of Czecho-Slovakia<sup>43</sup>.

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42

C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 145.

43

Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, p. 245.

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The efforts of the Slovaks for the autonomy were supported also by the Americans of Slovak descent, who even founded a 'Revision League', whose program was complete independence for Slovakia, not merely autonomy<sup>44</sup>. They were destined to play an important role in the struggle for Slovak autonomy. Colonel Bonsal<sup>45</sup> writes that in 1938, came Hlinka's hour of triumph:

Some American Slovaks brought to Europe the long-concealed original draft of the Pittsburgh Pact between the Slovaks and the Czechs, reached in 1918. It demonstrated the fact that, although he had taken some part in drawing it up, Masaryk was honestly mistaken as to its terms and that Hlinka was fully justified in maintaining that complete autonomy had been promised his people and further that they were assured that on a basis of equality they would sit with the Czechs at the Peace Conference.

But Mgr. Hlinka died on August 16th, 1938, before he could lead his party to victory, which was now so close at hand. The struggle was carried on under the leadership of Mgr. Tiso, a close collaborator and friend of Mgr. Hlinka. A day after Dr. Benes' resignation, which was brought about by Munich, a meeting of various Slovak parties took place at Zi-

44

C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, p. 145.

45

Stephen Bonsal, Suitors and Suppliants, The Little Nations at Versailles, p. 165.

lina, and led by the Slovak People's Party, they once again demanded autonomy for Slovakia. This time, on October 6, 1938, the Czecho-Slovak Parliament complied with the Slovak demands. For the Slovaks it meant complete self-government, its own legislative diet and the right of Slovak military recruits to be trained in Slovakia. Foreign affairs, defense and finance were left in the hands of the Prague Government<sup>46</sup>.

Despite the fact that the enemies of Slovakia claim that the Slovaks and People's Party betrayed Czecho-Slovakia in her darkest hour (the Munich crisis), it should be stressed that although the Slovaks were not willing to give up their fight for autonomy, "only a small minority aimed at more than Slovak autonomy within a united Czechoslovak Republic, and the majority of the Hlinkist leaders, during the Munich crisis, gave the national Government their unreserved support"<sup>47</sup>.

A great majority of the Slovaks rejoiced over their new self-rule and while working for a better future for Slovakia, they were also trying to improve their relations with the Czech nation in a new and better Czecho-Slovak Republic.

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46

S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, p. 350.

47

George W. Keeton and Rudolf Schlesinger, Russia and Her Western Neighbours, p. 106.

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## The Rebirth of the Slovak Statehood

The Slovaks and Czechs showed a genuine effort to lead a peaceful co-existence in the Second Republic. But the development of the political situation in Central Europe, in 1939, showed that the Czecho-Slovak Republic had arrived at the edge of an abyss. No doubt, the end was hastened by the Czechs themselves. As an American historian points out<sup>48</sup>,

on March 12, 1939, (the right date is March 9), Prague decided to intervene in Bratislava against the Slovak extremists by deposing Dr. Tiso, the Catholic Premier, and appointing Karol Sidor, the heir to the patriotic tradition of Father Hlinka, as his successor.

Mr. Sidor, the Prague Government felt, was more friendly towards the Czechs than Mgr. Tiso who, with several other members of the Slovak Autonomous Government, was arrested; Slovakia was occupied by the Czech army and martial law was proclaimed. In the evening of March 11, during a meeting of the Slovak Autonomous Government, representatives of Germany appeared and ordered the Government to proclaim the independence of Slovakia. Sidor, however, hesitated and wished to negotiate with Prague, whereupon Mgr. Tiso, who in the

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48

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 365.

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meantime left the monastery where he had been confined, found himself virtually kidnapped and was flown immediately to Berlin, where Hitler awaited him<sup>49</sup>. Hitler was by now the Lord of Central Europe, and his edict was brief and blunt:

It was not a question of days but hours. If Slovakia wished to make herself independent, Hitler would support this endeavor and guarantee it. If she hesitated and did not wish to dissolve the connection with Prague, he would leave the destiny of Slovakia to the mercy of events, for which he was no longer responsible<sup>50</sup>.

Hitler demanded that Mgr. Tiso makes the decision immediately, which he refused, even though Hitler, as Mr. Wheeler-Bennett observes<sup>51</sup>, "was indignant that his commands for the declaration of Slovakian independence had not been complied with immediately". Although for Mgr. Tiso and for Slovakia it was "Hobson's choice", he considered any decision regarding the future legal status of Slovakia to be the right and duty of the Slovak Autonomous Parliament. Mgr. Tiso left

49

John W. Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, Prologue to Tragedy, New York, Pearce, 1948, p. 341.

50

Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika, Generals and Nazis of the Third Reich, New York, Schuster, 1952, p. 235.

51

John W. Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, Prologue to Tragedy, p. 341.

for Bratislava, where, on March 14, 1939, the Slovak Autonomous Parliament, called into session by the President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, Dr. Emil Hacha, "declared Slovakia an independent and self-governing state by unanimous resolution"<sup>52</sup>. Some enemies of the Slovak statehood claim that "the Slovak Parliament refused on March 14, to vote on separation from the Czechs"<sup>53</sup>. This is not true, because the Slovaks wished to be free and no nation in history had ever refused to become independent. The Slovaks, like all little nations, needed help in gaining their independence and while not liking the Germans, they were willing to accept their help, just as Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia accepted the help of the Allies in 1918, (and of the U.S.S.R., in 1945) toward gaining their independence.

Slovakia did not solicit the protection of Germany, but could not reject it for various reasons, and, it is true, this restricted its sovereignty to a certain degree. But in spite of this, Slovakia, as Hugh Seton-Watson points out,

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Francis Hrusovsky, This Is Slovakia, A Country You Do Not Know, Scranton, Obrana Press, 1953, p. 85.

53

Joseph S. Roucek et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, p. 365.

"was not governed directly by the Germans"<sup>54</sup>, and was not occupied by the Germans, as Professor Roucek<sup>55</sup> claims it. At the same time, Slovakia enjoyed more national, cultural and economic freedom than any other nation in Europe. This is a historical fact, and only an unjust man would wish to deny it.

The full recognition of Slovakia by foreign countries was prevented because of the outbreak of World War II. However, Slovakia was recognized not only by small countries and great powers, but even by the former allies of the Czechoslovak Republic. Among twenty-seven countries, either a de jure or de facto recognition (or both) was given to Slovakia by Great Britain, France, the Vatican, the U.S.S.R., China, Italy, Japan and Poland<sup>56</sup>.

The Slovaks believe that they did only what they had a right to do, and what any other nation would have done in

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<sup>54</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, The East European Revolution, London, Methuen, 1950, p. 70.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph S. Roucek, "Slovakia", in the Slavonic Encyclopedia, New York, Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 1188.

<sup>56</sup> Francis Hrusovsky, This Is Slovakia, A Country You Do Not Know, p. 86.

their place. Even though the decision of the Slovak Parliament meant an end of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, she would not have been able to survive, since it was Hitler's decision to occupy Bohemia and Moravia<sup>57</sup>. Her downfall would have been Slovakia's downfall and the Slovaks would have been left not only to the mercy of its neighbors, but to the same terrible fate that awaited other European nations. Colonel Bonsal<sup>58</sup> having this in mind, wrote the following:

Thanks to the way in which Hlinka's teachings swayed them, although he, their apostle, was now dead, the Slovaks escaped the inhuman, barbarous treatment by which the Austrians, the Czechs, and, above all others, the unbending Poles, have been crucified.

During the brief existence of the Slovak Republic (1939-1945), the Slovaks tasted the sweet fruit of liberty, for which many generations of the Slovak nation had fervently yearned and struggled. Just as the Slovaks will never give up their Faith, neither will they give up the idea of a free and independent Slovakia. Until this is achieved, the Slovaks will continue to fight for God and for Country!

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<sup>57</sup> John W. Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, Prologue to Tragedy, p. 342.

<sup>58</sup> Stephen Bonsal, Suitors and Suppliants, The Little Nations at Versailles, p. 165.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of the research for this thesis lead to the conclusion that the history of Slovakia and its people, as interpreted in the works of various Anglo-American historians, has been written roughly along two different lines and two different ideologies.

The first ideology, is strictly pro-Czecho-Slovak, and, from the standpoint of the Slovak nation is wrong and biased. It does not correspond with historical facts. It presents the Slovaks as a part of the Czech nation, or at least, stresses the inseparable ties that bind the Slovaks with the Czechs since the very beginning of their respective national existence. It also shows and emphasizes the great advantages gained by the Slovaks from their union with the Czechs. In reality, the Czechs, just like their Hungarian predecessors, tried to suppress and eliminate any and all desires of the Slovak people to gain their national freedom and independence.

The second ideology represents the desires, hopes and struggle of the Slovak people for independence, and is based strictly on true historical facts. As such, it is favorable to the interests of the Slovak nation. It points out the fact that the Slovaks were a sovereign nation even in the ancient

## CONCLUSIONS

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times, and stresses the importance of the role played by the Slovaks in spreading Christianity and awakening national consciousness among other Slavs. This ideology shows further that the Slovaks did not gain much from their recent union with the Czechs. It reveals further that the treatment of Slovak national, cultural and economic life by the Czecho-Slovak Government was unjust and unfavorable.

It seems that as a result of these two different interpretations of historical facts with regard to Slovakia, the Anglo-American historical and political writers, in whose works is reflected the first ideology, unconsciously or deliberately, are simply highlighting the aims, imperialistic and ruthless, of some Central European people. This has resulted in a great disservice to a people genuinely interested in seeking a real destiny among the community of nations.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bokes, Frantisek, Slovenská vlastiveda IV, Dejiny Slovákov a Slovenska, Bratislava, Academia Acientiarum et Artium Slovaca, 1946, 441 p.

This fourth volume of works on the Slovak Civics contains a complete history of Slovakia from the earliest times to the establishment of Czecho-Slovakia. It is written in the Slovak language and is intended more for the student of history than as a reading suitable for the general public.

Bonsal, Stephen, Suitors and Suppliants, The Little Nations at Versailles, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1946, xiii-301 p.

Colonel Bonsal, diplomat and adviser to President Wilson, gives a diary-type account of the events at, and following the Peace Conference of 1919. The book discusses the problems of the little nations, among them that of the Slovaks. It is written in a simple style and is helpful in the study of the post-World War I problems.

Hanc, Josef, Eastern Europe, London, Museum Press, 1943, 272 p.

A short history of the East European nations from the peace settlement of 1919 to World War II, and a description of the attempts to preserve peace. Although, in some respects, the author is quite biased, parts of the book are written objectively.

Hodza, Milan, Federation in Central Europe, Reflections and Reminiscences, London, Jarrolds, 1942, p. 236 p.

The book deals with the history of Central Europe from the last attempts for the federative re-building of the Habsburg Empire, through the period between the two wars and the beginning of the World War II. The author, the only Slovak Prime-Minister of Czecho-Slovakia (1935-1938), pays considerable attention to Czecho-Slovakia and, up to a certain point, presents the history of his nation objectively, but with definite Czecho-Slovak leanings. The book is more political than a scientific work, which the author originally intended it to be.

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Hrusovsky, Frantisek, Slovenské dejiny, Turciánsky Svätý Martin, Matica Slovenská, 1940, 451 p.

The author, a professor of history at the University of Bratislava and the best known Slovak historian, describes with great ability and knowledge the history of the Slovak nation. The book covers the entire history of the Slovaks: their origins, Greater Moravia, the Slovaks in Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia and the rebirth of the Slovak statehood. The value of this book rests in its light style and the objectiveness with which it is written. It is indispensable to the student of Slovak history.

-----, Slovenskí vladári, Scranton, Obrana Press, 1948, ix-263 p.

A history of the Slovaks from the early times to the fall of Greater Moravia. It is probably the best book on the lives of the Slovak rulers, starting with Prince Pribina and ending with Mojmir II. This is a good and most informative book, written by an undisputable authority on the subject; it is a valuable contribution on the early history of the Slovak nation.

-----, This Is Slovakia, A Country You Do Not Know, Scranton, Obrana Press, 1953, 110 p.

In spite of the shortness of this work, the author who is now living in the United States has been able to present his thesis with impressive force. It is a short but excellent summary of the history of Slovakia and the Slovaks from the ancient times to the present day. It is excellent for the general public, but does not contain enough material for the student of the Slovak history.

Keeton, George W. and Rudolf Schlesinger, Russia and Her Western Neighbours, London, Cape, 1942, 160 p.

A survey of Russia's foreign policy in relation to the smaller states of Eastern Europe, situated near to her Western border. It is also an analysis of the political and economic conditions in those countries in the pre-war years. At the time of writing of the book, the authors were of the opinion that there was little likelihood of this section of Europe going Communist. Short, but containing much valuable information. It is well written and easy to understand.

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Kerner, Robert J., Editor, Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1940, xxi-504 p.

Another in the series of studies on Czecho-Slovakia, written in essay style by several authors some of them of Czech origin. Some chapters are written objectively, but the whole study shows a strong pro-Czecho-Slovak tendency harmful to the Slovaks. However, it is a fair introduction to all phases of Czech and Slovak life.

Kirschbaum, Joseph, Les Slovaques et le Monde Slave, unpublished Master's thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Montreal, Quebec, 1953, xiii-100 p.

The author, a Slovak politician, diplomat and lecturer in Slavic Civilization at the University of Montreal, explains in detail the role of the Slovaks in the Pan-Slav movement, both literary and political. It is a very good and impartial study of the subject.

Kohn, Hans, Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology, Notre Dame, University Press, 1953, ix-356 p.

The author, a professor of history at Harvard, Yale, Smith College, California, is considered, with justification, the foremost authority on Pan-Slavism. The book contains history of Pan-Slavism from its very beginning, after the Napoleonic Wars, to the present time. It contains copious quotations from the works of great Slav thinkers and writers. It is written very objectively and is fair to all nations concerned. This excellently documented anthology of important aspects of Slav thought is an extremely valuable contribution to the history of Slavs and Pan-Slavism. It is an indispensable source to the student of Slavic history.

Macartney, C.A., Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, 1919-1937, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, xx-504 p.

This book is a study of the Trianon settlement and a general introduction and summary of the history of each of the provinces lost by Hungary after World War I. The chapter on Slovakia contains a great deal of information for the student of the internal problems of Czecho-Slovakia. This book is one of the most excellent, objective, and dependable studies on

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this problem and is a great contribution to the history of Central and South-East European nations. It is absolutely indispensable to the student of European history.

Mackworth, Cecily and Jan Stransky, Czechoslovakia, London, Macdonald, 1943, vii-176 p.

The first part of the book, by Cecily Mackworth, is a short history of Bohemia rather than of Czecho-Slovakia, since it contains very few notes on Slovak history. The second part, by Jan Stransky, a Czech journalist and politician, describes the plans for the future of Czecho-Slovakia in the post-war period.

Potocek, Cyril J., Saints Cyril and Methodius, New York, Kennedy, 1941, 172 p.

This book is a complete story of the lives of Saints Cyril and Methodius. It gives a detailed description of their missionary activities in Greater Moravia and among the Slavs in general. It contains considerable amount of information which it is impossible to find in other studies on the lives of the holy brothers. It is written very objectively and makes interesting reading. It is a must for the study of Christianity among the Slavs and of the development of Greek or Eastern Rite.

Roucek, Joseph S. et al., Central-Eastern Europe, Crucible of World Wars, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1946, xii-679 p.

This is a series of essays written by several authors on the political history of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. Professor Roucek, the editor of the study and also the author of thirteen chapters, shows an unjustified prejudice against the Slovaks in his chapters on Czecho-Slovakia. Some of his statements about the Slovaks have no basis of historical fact. It is clear, however, that one of Prof. Roucek's aims is to discredit the Slovak nation in the Western world. Although some parts of the book contain much valuable information, due to Prof. Roucek's contributions, the book loses much of its authenticity.

-----, Editor, Slavonic Encyclopedia, New York, Philosophical Library, 1949, xi-1445 p.

This book is supposedly the most informative and valuable handbook on all aspects of Slavism. The

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parts on Slovakia and the Slovak patriots, writers, politicians, historians, literature, although not all written by Professor Roucek, (some contributors were Communists), very seldom correspond with the historical facts. It contains a great deal of information on everything there is to be known about the Slavs, but, unfortunately, not all of it is authentic and the book loses its value.

Seton-Watson, Hugh, Eastern Europe Between the Wars 1918-1941, Cambridge, University Press, 1945, xv-442 p.

This book concerns itself with national and international problems of the nations of Central-Eastern Europe between the two world wars. It contains also short outline of early history of the nations in question. It discusses three solutions of East European problems: Denationalization, Exchange of populations and Federation. Written with ability and knowledge by the son of Professor R.W. Seton-Watson, and it is a notable contribution to the history of the nations of that troubled section of Europe.

Seton-Watson, R.W., A History of the Czechs and Slovaks, London, Hutchinson, 1943, 413 p.

The author presents the history of the Czechs and Slovaks from the ancient to the present times. Unfortunately, it gives very little of the early history of the Slovaks. It brings to the reader's attention the persecution of the Slovaks by the Hungarians. However, it shows strong tendency for favoritism toward the Czechs, especially in the discussion of the Czecho-Slovak problems. In spite of this, it is valuable and helpful book to the student of the Czech and Slovak history.

Skultety, Joseph, Sketches from Slovak History, Cleveland, First Catholic Slovak Union, 1930, 229 p.

The author of this book is a Slovak patriot, professor of history and President of the Slovak Institute (Matica Slovenska). Although his book, as the title suggests, does not contain the complete history of Slovakia, the information contained therein is excellent and authentic.

Taylor, A.J.P., The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918, A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary, London, Hamilton, 1948, 279 p.

This history of the Habsburg Monarchy from the end

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of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 until its own dissolution in 1918, shows the attempt of the Habsburgs to maintain an Imperial organization 'above nationalities' as well as the source of its failure. A very well written history. It is indispensable not only to the student of history, but to anyone who is interested in the co-operation between different nations.

Thomson, S. Harrison, Czechoslovakia in European History, Princeton, University Press, 1943, viii-390 p. This book is a series of independent essays on history of the Czechs and Slovaks in relations to the part that they and their lands played in the whole European scene. Although, with regard to the Slovaks, the author accepts as historical facts the works of some Czech historians which, so to say, are not exactly authentic. Certain parts of this work do show an impartiality, which is so rare in the English language history of the Czechs and Slovaks.

Yurchak, Peter P., The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, Whiting, Lach, 1947, xvii-280 p. The author traces the development of the democratic tradition in Slovakia as a political ideal having its roots in the early tribal life of the Slovak people. This ideal has been retained to the present day by the Slovaks despite centuries of domination by hostile, alien kings and governments. It is rich in material and information and is written in simple and fluent prose. This book is indispensable to the student of Slovak history and would make profitable reading for the general public who are interested in this far reaching problem.

APPENDIX 1

TEXT OF THE

Cleveland Agreement of October 25th, 1915<sup>1</sup>

as accepted without any modification by the Slovak League of America, representing the Slovaks and the Czech National Federation, representing the Czechs.

1. The autonomy both of Czech lands and of Slovakia.
2. The union of the Czech and Slovak peoples in a "federative union of States", with complete national autonomy for Slovakia. Slovakia is to have own schools, its own state administration, cultural freedom, and the use of the Slovak language as the official language of the State.
3. An electoral right that is to be universal, secret and direct.
4. A form of federal government in the nature of a personal union, with democratic organization of the State "as in England".
5. The right to change the basis of mutual agreement by enlarging or extending it only through the consent of both parties. The Czech National Federation is to retain the right of incidental alteration, and the Slovak League is to retain the same right.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Peter P. Yurchak, The Slovaks, Their History and Traditions, Whiting, Lach, 1947, p. 211-212.

APPENDIX 2

THE TEXT OF

Czecho-Slovak Agreement<sup>1</sup>  
concluded in Pittsburgh, Pa., on May 30th, 1918.

The representatives of the Slovak and Czech organizations in the United States, the Slovak League, the Czech National Alliance and the Federation of Czech Catholics

deliberating in the presence of the Chairman of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, Professor Masaryk, on the Czecho-Slovak question and on our previous declarations of program, have passed the following resolution:

We approve of the political program which aims at the union of the Czechs and Slovaks in an independent State composed of the Czech lands and Slovakia.

Slovakia shall have her own administrative system, her own diet and her own courts.

The Slovak language shall be the official language in the schools, in the public offices and in public affairs generally.

The Czecho-Slovak State shall be a republic, and its Constitution a democratic one.

The organisation of the collaboration between Czechs and Slovaks in the United States shall, according to need and the changing situation, be intensified and regulated by mutual consent.

Detailed provisions touching the organisation of the Czecho-Slovak State shall be left to the liberated Czechs and Slovaks and their duly accredited representatives.

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S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History, University Press, Princeton, 1943, p. 272.

APPENDIX 3

THE TEXT OF

Turciansky Svaty Martin Declaration of October 30, 1918<sup>1</sup>

Original text

1. The Slovaks form a part of the single Czechoslovak nation.
2. The Slovaks propose to exercise the right of free self-determination.
3. The Slovaks will be represented at the Peace Conference by a special Slovak Delegation.

Amended text

1. The Slovak people is both linguistically and by virtue of its cultural history a part of the single Czechoslovak people. The Slovak branch has participated in all the cultural battles which the Czech people has waged, and which have made it famous.
2. We also claim for this, the Czechoslovak people, the absolute right to self-determination, on a basis of complete independence.
3. In virtue of this principle, we express our agreement with the new system of international law formulated on October 18th, 1918, by President Wilson, and recognized on October 28th, by the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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<sup>1</sup>  
C.A. Macartney, Hungary and Her Successors, The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 101.

## APPENDIX 4

## ABSTRACT OF

Slovakia and the Slovaks  
in the Works of Anglo-American Historians<sup>1</sup>.

The works of Anglo-American historians on Slovakia and the Slovaks display, with few exceptions, a considerable lack of knowledge of historical facts concerning Slovakia and its people. This is due to the fact that in most cases, the Anglo-American scholars did not base their works on authentic historical documents and discoveries, but on the works of the official Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak historiographers, which, although often exhibiting every appearance of genuineness, were seldom, if ever, based on historical facts. This distortion of historical facts is the result of the efforts of alien elements that throughout the centuries, but especially in the recent times, tried to suppress Slovak nationalism and minimize the historical achievements of the Slovak nation.

This departure from historical facts is clearly evident in the treatment of early Slovak history. Many Anglo-American scholars do not consider the Slovaks as a separate

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<sup>1</sup>  
M.A. Thesis presented by Julius J. Mihalik, in 1954, to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa, 103 pages.

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people and do not realize the importance of the role played by the Slovaks in consolidating and Christianizing Central and Eastern Europe.

Perhaps the most objective and unbiased treatment of the Slovak history is that of the period from the fall of Greater Moravia to the establishment of Czecho-Slovakia. All writers give full credit to the Slovaks for their struggle for survival in the face of the Asiatic invasions, wars and Hungarian oppression. They also admit the importance of the role that Slovak scholars played in the development of the Pan-Slavism.

However, the full extent of misinformation about, and the prejudice against the Slovaks is evident in the works of some English, and many American historians, where they concern themselves with the history of Slovakia since the establishment of Czecho-Slovakia, in 1918. Although some writers are quite objective, others consider the Slovaks as a simple, illiterate and undemocratic tribe, unfit to be free and independent.

It would be therefore desirable that a new historical work on Slovakia be published. It should be based strictly on historical facts and discoveries and as such, it would be a valuable contribution to the science of history.