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STRUGGLE FOR SLOVAKIA, 1780-1918

by

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of a struggle by three nations for a territory they claimed on the grounds of historic or natural rights, or both. The study traces the Slovak national movement from its emergence late in the eighteenth century, through the formulation of the comprehensive regional autonomy (Okolie) program in 1861, to the separation of Slovakia from Hungary and its integration into Czechoslovakia in 1918.

The subordinate position of the Slovaks in Hungary, their lack of territorial and national identity, their undifferentiated social structure, and their religious and cultural-linguistic diversity prevented the Slovak national movement from developing the kind of rigor and autonomy the Czech and Magyar national movements had. After decades of frustrated endeavors to gain concessions from Buda and Vienna, some Slovaks accepted their inability to win their rights unaided and turned toward the Czechs for help. The Czechs, however, insisted that in return for their aid the Slovaks must follow their lead, as outlined by Havlíček. Kollár and the Hlasists accepted the Czech demands, but the bulk of the Slovak leaders, in the tradition of Štúr, opposed what they saw as a Czech threat to assimilation and denationalization. Keeping their options open, some Slovaks put great hope in Francis Ferdinand. With his death and the outbreak of the war, Slovak politics came to a halt until the last months of World War I.

Hungary strengthened its grip over Slovakia during the war, but the Slovak national cause was taken up by Slovak emigre organizations in the Allied countries. Czech interest in Slovakia was revitalized by the vision of an Allied victory. Some hoped that the Bohemian kingdom, including Slovakia, would become part of a Slavic empire under the Romanovs. Masaryk and Beneš established an alternative resistance move-
ment in the western Allied countries, hoping to gain support for an independent Czechoslovakia. In return for military assistance, the irredentist leaders secured several statements of support from the Allies, but not recognition of a free Czechoslovakia.

While the Slovaks abroad meticulously insisted on guarantees of autonomous rights for Slovaks in the envisaged Czechoslovak state, no corresponding concerns entered Slovak minds at home. Thus, when the Czechs seized the initiative in the last days of the war, the principles of unification were decided in Prague and presented to the Slovaks as accomplished fact. The unprepared Slovaks accepted ad interim the Czech-devised centralistic system of administration. Aware of the Slovaks' inability to administer the territory now claimed by Czechoslovakia, Prague decided to solve the problem through military occupation of Slovakia.

Because of its sensitive nature and the possibility of "incorrect findings," the question of just how Slovakia was incorporated into Czechoslovakia has been almost completely avoided by serious scholars, both nationalist and Marxist. It is an important subject for at least two other reasons as well. First, from the very inception of Czechoslovakia, the Magyars believed that Slovakia had been militarily torn away from them by the Czechs, and they planned irredentist policies accordingly. This study uncovers the roots of this problem, which poisoned Eastern European politics through the interwar years. Second, in 1969 Czechoslovakia was reorganized into two republics. This indicates that the union of 1918 was something less than complete. Why this was so is the subject of this study.
To my family.
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In Search of an Identity

At the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries the region now known as Slovakia was overrun by the Magyars and gradually integrated into the lands of the Hungarian crown. Slovakia became a part of the Hungarian kingdom, to be subjected to Magyar domination for more than a thousand years. At the end of the First World War a new political entity, the Czechoslovak state, arose within boundaries that had never existed before—particularly in the south, where they separated the Slovaks from the Magyars. The new state was established on the theory of a single unitary Czechoslovak nation with rights to the northern part of the former Hungarian kingdom. Because Czechoslovak political leaders insisted that the Slovaks were a branch of the Czechoslovak nation, they felt they had an undeniable right to claim and exercise sovereignty over the historic Slovak homeland.

Historians tend to use the terms Slovakia and Upper Hungary interchangeably when referring to the region in question. However, the question of precisely what constituted Slovakia prior to 1918 is much more complex than is generally realized. Slovakia never constituted a distinct administrative-political entity within the Hungarian kingdom. After the eleventh and twelfth centuries Slovakia was a kind of non-hereditary duchy which some Hungarian kings
bestowed on their sons, but it never developed into a duchy fully independent of central authority and consequently never acquired a territorial identity. Neither was Slovakia represented by separate representative institutions. Slovakia thus was actually nothing but the northern part of Hungary (exclusive of Ruthenia). It was inhabited by people who regarded themselves as Slavs but who acquired the status of a distinct separate cultural entity only recently in history. The northern and western limits of the Slovak-populated area are relatively easily identified; in the south, however, no clear division, either natural or artificial, ever existed. Hungary was divided into several administrative, military, ecclesiastical, educational, mining, and even postal districts, but always along north-south lines. Thus, Slovakia consisted of a series of vertical strips from east to west. In Magyar usage the terms Upper and Lower Hungary (_felső_ and _alsó_ Magyarország) denoted the eastern part of Slovakia as Upper, and most of Western Slovakia as Lower, Hungary.¹

¹ Günther Freiherr von Probszt, *Die niederungarische Bergstädte. Ihre Entwicklung und Wirtschaftliche Bedeutung bis zum Übergang an das Haus Habsburg (1546)* (Munich: Verlag R. Oldenburg, 1966), p. 11, n. 2. Probszt also points out the unfortunate and confusing usage of the upper and lower denominators for what was in fact western, northwestern and northeastern part of Hungary. The map of the "Lower Hungarian" mining district, included as a supplement to his book, clearly demonstrates that the entire region is in reality situated in the northern part of Hungary, i.e., in Slovakia. Two of the mining districts located in Slovakia were those in the Upper Hungarian, or the Smolník, district in the east and the Lower Hungarian, or the Banská Štiavnica, district in the western and central parts of the Hungarian Uppland.
This vertical division of Hungary persisted after the lands of the Hungarian crown were subjected to the House of Habsburg following the catastrophe at Mohács in 1526. The western and central Slovakian counties and a narrow strip on the right bank of the Danube (the Dunántúl, Transdanubia) were ruled directly from Vienna. Although most of the territory was located in the north, this area has usually been referred to as Lower Hungary (Niederungarn). Administratively, Hungary was divided into the following regions: (1) the right bank of the Danube; (2) the left bank of the Danube; (3) the region between the Danube and the Tisza; (4) the right bank of the Tisza; (5) the left bank of the Tisza and the corner between the Tisza and Maros; (6) the region beyond the Királyháágó; and (7) the town and district of Rijeka (Fiume). The fifteen or sixteen Slovak counties were located in the districts on the left bank of the Danube and the left bank of the Tisza. Most of the Slovak counties were established by the twelfth century. In them the Slovaks generally comprised the majority of the population; however, purely Magyar communities and ethnically mixed regions prevailed in the south.

Elek Fenyes, the Magyar statistician, calculated in 1839-1840 that the Slovaks resided in 2,469 municipalities and numbered 1,687,256 inhabitants. According to Fenyes, the Slovaks had an absolute majority in Orava, Liptov,

Trenčín and Zvolen counties and a simple majority in the counties of Nitra, Tekov, Turiec,Spiš and Šariš. They made up nearly fifty percent of the population of Bratislava and of the counties of Hont and Gemer, and were numerous in the counties of Abaúj, Zemplín, Ung, Novohrad, Máramaros, and Ugocsa. 3 About fifteen percent of the territory (48,936 square kilometers) and fourteen and three-tenths percent of the population (3,000,870) of the lands of the Hungarian crown constituted the territory and population of Slovakia in 1918-1919. 4 Unlike Croatia, Transylvania, the Voivodina, and some other Hungarian provinces, Slovakia was always included in and treated as part of Hungary proper. However, not even the Hungarian peace delegation that signed the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 denied that, on the basis of the 1910 census, the Slovaks formed the absolute majority of the population in most of the area they claimed for themselves: forty-nine percent in the county of Bratislava; seventy-one percent in Nitra; fifty-four and eight-tenths percent in Tekov; ninety-one and eight-tenths percent in Trenčín; sixty-nine percent in Turiec; eighty-nine and nine-tenths percent in Liptov; seventy-five and one-tenth percent in Orava; eighty-four and four-tenths percent in Zvolen; fifty-


six and two-tenths percent in Spis; and sixty-eight and three-tenths percent in Šariš.⁵ Of the Slovak counties eight were incorporated into Czechoslovakia in their entirety; only parts of the remaining eight were annexed, leaving some of their territory to Hungary and two small enclaves in Spis and Orava to Poland.

There were two classes of people in Hungary: the noble estate owners and the faceless commoners, each group stratified according to rank. Throughout Hungarian history the middle-rank nobles in the (noble) estates were the ruling group in the kingdom. They regarded themselves as a class of equals. This upper stratum of privileged and tradition-conscious nobles constituted the real citizenry of the country, since only its members were regarded as, or considered themselves, the Hungarian nation (the natio hungarica). The natio hungarica was based on social status rather than ethnic origin. Though its members were often characterized as a class, its membership was not determined exclusively by social origin. For example, persons who distinguished themselves in war could be, and often were, elevated to the ranks of the nobility for merit. Rich Jews could simply buy aristocratic titles and join the Hungarian

ruling elite. Neither was the Hungarian nobility limited in number. At the end of the eighteenth century the Hungarian nobility, with its monopoly of political rights, wealth, and education, amounted to more than half a million people; 464,705 of them were Magyars; 58,000, Slavs; and 21,666, Romanians and Germans. At the same time, the population of Slovakia was estimated at two million, the urban population representing roughly six percent of the total population. Slovakia was relatively densely populated with nobility. During the Turkish war aristocratic Magyar families found refuge in the unoccupied Slovak counties creating an unusually high concentration of nobles there, especially in the county of Bratislava. About fifty percent of the natio hungarica, some 50,000 of them, resided in Slovakia. They were as numerous as the total Slovak urban population. The developing new class of honorationes, who could be designated as intelligentsia, numbered some 10,000 persons during the reign of Joseph II. Naturally, only a fraction of them, perhaps ten percent of the total, were Slovaks. Even though they were Slovak by birth and conceivably aware of their ethnic heritage, the honorationes were politically loyal Hungarian citizens, whose intellectual background was

6Fényes, Magyarország statisztikája, Vol. I, p. 64.
7Tibenský, Slovensko: dejiny, p. 417.
8Ibid., p. 373.
frequently German. Many of the intellectuals were priests, both Evangelical and Roman Catholic. The Evangelical priests played a significant role in Slovak cultural and political life primarily because of the high concentration of their co-religionists in the counties of Turiec and Liptov. Turciakyn Sväty Martin, in Turiec, was the most important political and cultural center in Slovakia. Since the Evangelical priests did not practice celibacy, their number grew disproportionately faster than that of the Catholic clergy.

Since the overwhelming majority of Slovaks were Roman Catholics (1,215,944 in 1839), they could easily accommodate themselves to living in the Hungarian Regnum Marianum. The Slovak Protestants, some 497,562 of them, were Evangelicals and Lutherans; the Magyar Protestants were mostly Calvinists. Consequently the Slovak Protestants were motivated in their struggle against the Magyars not only by nationalism but also by religion, since the Magyar Protestants were mostly Helvetian, or Reformed, Protestants. They zealously guarded themselves against real or alleged Magyar endeavors not only to "Magyarize" but, even worse, to "Calvinize" them. A simple comparison of the numerical strength of the largely clerical Slovak intelligentsia with the members of the privileged natio hungarica who lived in Slovakia indicates the insurmountable obstacles which the

"awakeners" were to face in their efforts to mold the amorphous Slovak populace into a culturally self-conscious nation cognizant of its separate identity. The magnitude of this task became particularly apparent during the 1830's and 1840's when the broadest segment of the Hungarian estates, the lesser, common nobility, who were the champions of Hungarian aristocratic nationalism, set out to turn all Hungarian peoples into Magyars in a ceaseless effort to create a unitary Magyar political nation and a Magyar nation-state. In their eyes, the concept "Hungarian" was to be identified with that of "Magyar;" the national interests of the kingdom were to be identified with those of the estates, and the assimilation of non-Magyar subject peoples into a greater Magyar nation was forever to secure the hegemony of the natio magyarica, that is, of the estates and their adherents. To achieve this goal, all attempts to obtain the national, cultural, and especially political mobilization of the non-Magyar peoples had to be effectively checked and, if necessary, crushed by force.

The relationship between the Magyars, Slovaks, and Czechs was determined by their coexistence in the Habsburg empire. All these peoples were subjects of the Habsburg dynasty. Yet significant differences existed in the degree of each of the three nations' dependence on the Viennese court and the constitutional rights which determined the position of each nation in the Habsburg domain.
The Czechs had lost their independence early in the seventeenth century, but they still retained the historic rights of the old Bohemian kingdom. They had lost their aristocracy but Prague had become an all-important center of Bohemian national life. Among the Magyars, a substantial number of power-hungry nobles indefatigably championed independence from Vienna. The Slovaks lacked all of these advantages, so indispensable to autonomous national life. Unlike the Czechs, they were victimized both by the Habsburg court in Vienna and by the Hungarian ruling classes. Under such conditions, the Slovak nobility and educated classes were assimilated by the ruling minority and did not struggle for the independent existence of a Slovak nation. They adopted Magyar culture not because they were forced to do so, as was to be the case later in the nineteenth century, but solely to gain personal advantage.

The ruling natio hungarica represented a supranational political conglomerate of upper classes whose individual members, regardless of their ethnic origins, enjoyed a monopoly of political rights.\(^1\) The supranational character of the natio hungarica was illustrated by the exclusive use...

of Latin as the official language of its members. The Hungarians aimed to establish an independent kingdom under their domination in the area comprising the lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen. Consequently, the members of the nation hungarica thought in political rather than ethnic terms, and the state, not the nation, had precedence in their hierarchy of values. The only nationalities they recognized were the historic nations, those with so-called "historic rights." From this perspective, they believed that the Croats were a nationality but that the Slovaks were not. 12

The reluctance to acknowledge the existence of any peoples other than the Magyar nation in Hungary was reflected even in the Magyar language. There is only one word in Hungarian—Magyar—for Hungary as a territorial state and for the ethnic Magyars (Magyar nemzet and Magyarország). Other languages differentiate between the two—Hungary for the country, Magyar for the people and the language. The Magyar national leaders, however, were so zealous in their efforts to convince the world of the identity of these two concepts, that eventually they fell

victim to their own propaganda. By the time of the Magyar national renaissance in the latter part of the eighteenth century when the Magyars already regarded the terms Magyar and Hungarian as synonymous, they observed with consternation and surprise that the non-Magyar ethnic groups, inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment, claimed human and national rights equal to those asserted by the privileged *natio hungarica*. The vision of a monolingual, monolithic Hungary was so deeply rooted in the minds of the Magyars that it took more than one and a half centuries of tragedy for them to rid themselves of that belief.  

The Slovak national renaissance occurred about the same time as the Magyar national revival. Emperor Joseph II gave major impetus to the awakening of the non-German nations of the empire by the decree of December 27, 1786, providing for the use and development of the empire's regional and vernacular languages.  

Ironically, the *natio hungarica* determinedly opposed the introduction of Magyar as the official language of their kingdom; they were unable to speak Magyar, which was the language of the lower classes.  

The cream of Hungarian society was fluent in German, French,

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and other languages but ignorant of the life and language of the Magyar people. This was true also of upper-class Slovaks, most of whom identified themselves with the Latin-speaking natio hungarica. No literary Slovak language had yet been developed. Communication was conducted in various popular Slovak dialects. The Evangelicals, culturally the most advanced Slovak minority, had substituted an archaic Biblical Czech for Slovak, while the Roman Catholics majority and their clergy used one or another of the local dialects. If they wanted to communicate with their congregations and carry on pastoral work, the priests had no choice but to use the language spoken by the populace of a particular area. Thus, Slovak society was divided in both language and religion. These divisions seriously hindered all efforts to attain national unification, whether cultural or political.  

To a considerable extent the practical aspects of pastoral work, the need to communicate, both orally and in writing, with the largest possible audience, motivated the young Catholic philologists at the Bratislava seminary and their leader Anton Bernolák to devise a Slovak literary language. In 1787 they succeeded in agreeing upon the first grammatical standards for a Slovak language based upon the western Slovak dialect. Shortly thereafter the Slovenské učené tovarystvo (Slovak Learned Guild) was established for

the purpose of spreading national culture and enlightenment to the Slovak masses. The religious division among the Slovaks was responsible for the appearance of two separate national programs. The so-called "Bernolák School," composed of Bernolák and his handful of followers, insisted on Slovak national individuality and demanded equal recognition for the Slovak nation and the Slovak language with those of other nations and languages. The Evangelicals, inspired by the great poet Jáń Kollár, believed in tribalism, that is, that the Slovaks were only one of the branches of the Slavs whose language was Czech. Neither group questioned the legality of Slovakia's incorporation in Hungary; there was no opposition to Hungarian statehood and territorial integrity. The Catholics, religiously affiliated with the Magyars, accepted their status as subjects of the Kingdom of Hungary. St. Stephen, the Magyar national saint, was also the national saint of the Slovak Catholics. The religious bond between the Slovaks and the Magyars, though often underestimated by historians, was a strong one. A Roman Catholic Slovak was closer to a Magyar of the same faith than to a "pagan Evangelical." On another ideological plane, however, both the Protestant and Catholic Slovaks regarded themselves as part of a greater entity, the

Slavic world, and opposed the idea of the unitary, monolithically "Magyarized" Hungarian nation-state demanded by Magyar nationalists throughout the nineteenth century. The two Slovak groups differed chiefly in their approach to Czech affiliation. The Catholics opposed both the idea of a unitary Magyar state and the concept of monolingual Czechoslovak unity, while the Evangelicals embraced Czechoslovak unity and opposed only the concept of a monolingual Hungarian nation-state. 18

The two separate Slovak national programs gave occasion to frequent and persistent controversies between the Czechoslovak-oriented and the Slovako-centric groups, accompanied by diatribes with strong political overtones and by linguistic struggles aimed at both Magyars and Czechs. Partisan controversies impeded Slovak ability to resist cultural pressure from the outside and hindered the development of a purely Slovak culture at a time when national cohesion was of the highest importance in resisting the ever-increasing pressure of "Magyarization," which had become the official Magyar policy since the early part of the nineteenth century. The need to concentrate all available

forces in their struggle for independence from the Habsburg court in Vienna appeared so important to the Magyar national leaders that they thought it necessary to demobilize all nationalities in the kingdom that might oppose the Magyar aspirations. They felt that to establish an independent unified Magyar nation-state it was necessary to unite their subjects under Magyar leadership, notwithstanding their ethnic origins. Magyar pressure forced the subject nationalities to create an ideological bulwark, an ideology of national defense, against the loss of national identity to rescue them from cultural annihilation. No subject nation seemed to have a chance of withstanding the Magyar onslaught unaided.

Ján Kollár and Pavel Josef Šafařík, inspired by the German philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder and others who prophesied a great future for the Slavs, found a solution to the problem in the idea of Slavic reciprocity, that is, of Slavic mutual assistance and cooperation in all areas of life. Kollár’s ideas of mutuality were based upon a humanitarian philosophy. They were pro-Slavic without being anti-Magyar or hostile to anyone else. In opposition to the Magyar aristocratic national concept, which emphasized the state as the principal national value, Kollár considered culture, languages, and ethnicity of the highest importance in the life of a nation.¹⁹ Kollár believed in the existence

of a great Slav tribe consisting of four branches: Russian, Polish, Illyrian, and Czechoslovak. He wanted to unite the Slavs in order to safeguard their culture and freedom against any outside threats. Yet Kollár could not dismiss the existing discord among the Slovaks over the idea of Czech-Slovak reciprocity, to cite only one of the many examples of fundamental disunity among the Slavs, and he was aware that a union such as the one he desired had no chance of materializing, at least until the indispensible prerequisites for harmonious collaboration should come into existence. The absence of such preconditions was evident, and it should have indicated sufficiently to any thinking person that the idea of Slavic reciprocity had no real foundations. Kollár, a man of faith, however, believed that the controversies were only a matter of misunderstanding and that they could be overcome through mutual good will and trust. 20

The advocates of Czech-Slovak reciprocity, mostly recruited from the ranks of the Evangelicals who constituted only fifteen to twenty percent of the total Slovak population, were and always remained a numerically insignificant minority. However, due to their cultural advancement, their cultural and ideological influence was disproportionately great. This dominant minority was almost the exclusive champion of the notion of Czech-Slovak reciprocity. Kollár was aware that the Slovak Catholics were not

20 Ibid.
particularly receptive to his ideas, but he nevertheless believed that a compromise solution might bring about the unification of the Czechoslovaks, as he sometimes referred to the Czechs and Slovaks. The Slovaks insisted that their mother tongue was unique, indeed the most authentic of all Slavic languages, and resented the notion that Slovak was a mere dialect or derivative of some Czechoslovak language. Kollár hoped to attain unity by the "Slovakization" of the Czech language, i. e., by introducing Slovak words into Czech he hoped to induce the Czechs gradually to accept the Slovaks and vice versa.

Josef Jungman, the great Czech philologist, and František Palacky, the highly acclaimed historian, emphatically rejected the idea, undoubtedly to Kollár's disappointment and that of other educated Slovaks. Jungman and Palacky argued that the Czech language was the only vehicle for developing that common Czech national culture which was necessary to emancipate the Czechs from German cultural influence. They regarded Kollár's proposal as harmful to the nation's cultural unity. Although Czech-Slovak unification was highly desirable politically, since it would strengthen the Slavic element in the Habsburg Empire, the Czech national leaders made it clear from the outset that Czech-Slovak cooperation could be carried out only on their terms. The Czech linguists, beginning with Josef Dobrovsky, regarded Slovak as nothing but a Czech dialect and not an authentic language—an attitude which not only deeply
offended the Slovaks but also became the main obstacle to badly needed cooperation and mutual assistance between the two fraternal nations, culminating in a Czech-Slovak linguistic and political schism with far-reaching consequences for the future. 21

Kollár's well-intended efforts to unite the Czechs and Slovaks failed at an extremely critical time. During the 1830's and 1840's the Magyar national movement grew in vigor. With the intensification of the political struggle between Budapest and Vienna, the pressure to "Magyarize" the non-Magyar nationalities of Hungary now reached its climax. The Magyar desiderata mirrored the aspirations of their subject nationalities: independence from Vienna in the case of the Magyars; and in the case of the subject nationalities, independence from both Vienna and Budapest. The Magyar liberals, led by Lajos Kossuth in their fight for independence from Vienna, insisted on the political unity of their country and its people and were convinced that granting democratic rights to the non-Magyar nationalities would guarantee their acceptance of a Magyar nation-state. But the same Magyar politicians who led the opposition against Viennese centralism in Hungary wanted to impose their own centralism on the non-Magyar nationalities. Although they demanded independence for their own nation, it never occurred to them to grant equal rights to others. On the contrary, the Magyar leaders were determined to suppress

21 Ibid., pp. 31-167.
such insolent demands by force if necessary. Given this attitude on their part, it seems incomprehensible that they actually expected the non-Magyar nations to support the Magyar bid for independence. Kossuth and his followers underestimated and ignored the fact that the non-Magyar nationalities were driven by a force of nationalism no less powerful and irresistible than the one which motivated the Magyars.

The court in Vienna skillfully exacerbated the conflict between the subject nationalities and their suppressors, inciting them against the Magyars as soon as the Magyars began to revolt. The opportunistic tactics of the court widened the gap between the Magyars and the non-Magyars for a long time to come. "Regional patriotism," a catch-phrase coined by Vienna, became the basis of Czech Austroslavism or, in the more accurate term of a recent Czech historian, Austrofederalism.

To the Slovaks, Czech Austrofederalism represented a fate no different in substance from "Magyarization." It appeared to them that Slovak national interests were jeopardized by both the Czechs and the Magyars. Sandwicched between the two, the Slovaks faced the danger of either

22 Barány, Szechényi, pp. 120-122, 395, and 404-408, especially pp. 403-414.
political assimilation by the Magyars or cultural and linguistic assimilation by the Czechs. The danger which jeopardized the basic tenets of the Slovak national program—the preservation of their national individuality and the development of their language and culture and gradually of their political independence as well—became the central theme of the Slovak national movement during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Czech national leaders, aware of their own weakness, endeavored to preserve the Austrian Empire, which they regarded as the best protection against the menacing "Germanization" that posed the greatest contemporary threat to Czech culture, by reorganizing the monarchy into a federative state of equal nations. Their program would allow the Czechs to unite with the Slovaks. The German-speaking territories in Bohemia were to be free to join other German-speaking communities. Palacký and other Czech political leaders wanted the Slovaks of Hungary as a compensation for the lost Germans. They claimed that Slovaks were actually Czech. The incorporation of Slovakia into the Bohemian kingdom would strengthen the Slavic element in the empire, to the benefit of both nations.²⁴ It was evident that both the Magyar and the Czech interests in

Slovakia were politically motivated. The young Slovak generation's program, Ľudovít Štúr's in particular, was frankly opportunistic. The young Slovaks had few illusions about either the Magyar or Czech nationalists who competed for Slovakia.

Already in the course of the 1830's the Slovak national leaders observed with jealousy the growing Czech sympathy for the Magyar struggle for independence from the common enemy in Vienna. The language dispute helped crystallize the Slovak position on Czech-Slovak unity and resulted in recognition of the need for an independent Slovak national policy. Czech and Magyar pressure on the Slovaks naturally produced a reaction; the Slovaks increasingly perceived their language as independent and desired separation from both the Czechs and the Magyars. The government in Vienna subtly maneuvered to deploy one subject nationality against the other, successfully keeping them as disunited as ever. The Slovaks only gradually realized the gravity of their position. When they did, they devised the political strategy of walking on the peripheries of both the acrimonious Hungarian conflict and the Prague-Vienna controversy in order to exploit them as far as possible for their own national benefit. If this policy of balancing between Slavic reciprocity and efforts to gain maximum national rights from the post-revolutionary Hungarian government should fail, the alternative of cooperating with Vienna against the Magyars in order to receive from the
court what the Hungarian government had denied to the Slovaks would still be left open. It was an opportunistic approach, but the Slovaks hardly had a monopoly on opportunism.

The common denominator of the nineteenth-century Slovak national programs, almost without exception, was the conviction that the Slovak question could and must be solved only within the framework of the Hungarian state. This part of the program, which was indicative of the loyalty of the Slovaks to the Hungarian state, disappointed the Czech national leaders. Some Slovak political leaders actually believed that the Magyars might grant equal rights to the Slovaks. Aware of the loyalty of the Slovaks to Hungary, Palacký came forward with a new formula regarding the role the Slavs were to play in European affairs. The Slavs, or rather the Czechs including the Slovaks, were predestined to assume their historic mission of forming a bridge between East and West. 25 Such a role would, of course, strengthen the position of the Czechs in Europe. Palacký's notion was based on the assumption that the Slovaks were Czechs in the sense that they formed part of a single Czechoslovak nation. The logical next step would be the creation of a joint politico-geographical unit of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, which would be an organic part of the envisaged fed-

eralized Habsburg empire. Thus the Slovak question, or more precisely, the problem of Slovak territory, became extremely important to the Czech national program—if their historic mission in Europe was ever to be realized. After all, how could the Czechs create a bridge which would traverse the east-west gap without gaining control of Slovakia? Without Slovakia the Czechs would be almost entirely isolated from the "great Slav world."

Palacký's ideas about federation were further developed and given a more practical form by Karel Havlíček-Borovský, the famous Czech journalist and politician and one of the leading representatives of Czech liberalism. He urged his contemporaries, both Czech and Slovak, to end the idle linguistic disputes and face practical political problems. The idea of Slavic reciprocity was useful in the past, Havlíček argued; now, however, the Austrian Slavs could not hope for help from outside. The Austrian Slavs must solve


their problems alone. Havlíček himself was a partisan of federalization and like Palacky, contemplated compensating Bohemia for the loss of German-inhabited territories by the incorporation of Slovakia. This would reinforce the Slavic influence in the empire by virtually creating a Slavic majority. Havlíček's concept of a unified Czechoslovak nation was also based on natural rights and the assumption that Czech and Slovak interests were identical. For him, however, it was obvious that the politically and economically weaker partner, the Slovaks, should be subordinated to the interests of the stronger partner for the benefit and improvement of the whole.

For a man of his beliefs, "separatist" policies, whether Slovak or Moravian, were unacceptable. Ideas about independence and Slovak individuality must have seemed hostile or subversive. For this reason Havlíček's plans were not favorably received in Slovakia. Havlíček openly expressed the intentions of the Czech nationalists to exploit the Slovak national movement for the benefit of the Czech nation. His career exemplifies early Czech nationalistic attacks on Slovakia and the Slovak movement for national emancipation, which as a Czech he considered dangerous and harmful, likely to weaken Czechoslovak reciprocity and posing a threat to Czech aspirations to leadership within the empire. In Havlíček's opinion, "separatism" was a betrayal of the Slavic cause in general and of Czech interests in particular. He openly accused the Slovak
political leaders of political opportunism and pro-
Hungarian leanings.  

In this respect, Havlíček's attitude closely resembled that of Kossuth before and during the 1848 revolution, and the ideas of both were rejected by the Slovaks. Nevertheless, Havlíček's attitude had a lasting impact on Czech political philosophy. (Tomas G. Masaryk, for instance, claimed to be an adherent of the political philosophy of Palacký and Havlíček). This philosophy appears to have done more harm than good to the relations between the Czechs and Slovaks and later contributed to the destruction of a Czechoslovak state founded in 1918 since the Czechoslovak state did not recognize the Slovaks as an authentic nation.

Havlíček had at least in theory arrived at the idea of a monolingual Czechoslovak community of various ethnic groups sharing a common state. Such a political community could not be established either in his time or in the foreseeable future. Havlíček's ideal demanded the subordination of the Slovaks to Czech interests and sought to secure a dominant position for the Czech nation. Most important from the Slovak point of view, however, was the fact that Havlíček rejected the existence of the Slovaks as a national entity with the attributes of an independent nation even though the recognition of Slovakia's right to independent nationhood

28. Škadlešková-Vantuchová, Češi a Slováci, pp. 56-68.

and statehood was the very essence of all Slovak national programs. Consequently, the Slovak national leaders could never accept the Czech proposal for union as presented by Havlíček, for it compromised their existence as a nation. 30

The Czech demands differed from those of the Magyars only because they were made by a people who were culturally and linguistically akin to the Slovaks, while the Magyars were strangers on both counts. Still, both Czechs and Magyars attempted to denationalize the Slovaks, although it could be argued that the Magyars were the national oppressors of the Slovaks and that life in the Austrian half of the monarchy after the Compromise of 1867 was easier than in Hungary. (After 1867, however, the Czechs and Slovaks became estranged from each other in more than an administrative sense, for the Czechs lost much of their former interest in the Slovaks and relations between the two were strengthened only at the end of the nineteenth century.) On the other hand, the Slovaks had lived under the Magyars for almost nine centuries and had become "accustomed" to their rule. The rural population, suspicious of change, was indifferent to nationalism. Nobody regarded the Czechs as liberators of the Slovak nation and some even viewed them as oppressors. 31

30 Tkadlečková-Vantuchová, Česi a Slováci, pp. 51-68.
The Magyar nationalists regarded the non-Magyar nationalities as mere ethnic groups. Their concept of the monolingual national state was almost a mirror-image of the Czech ideas. The "Magyarization" trend continued throughout the 1840's and coincided in time with Havlíček's endeavors to mobilize the Slovaks for the Czechoslovak, i.e., the Czech cause. In 1839-1840 the Hungarian diet passed legislation extending the compulsory use of Hungarian to administration and even to the Church. No person who did not speak Magyar could serve as a priest. Some of the Magyar liberals even proposed the compulsory introduction of Magyar as the language of instruction in all schools.\footnote{Robert Seton-Watson, \textit{Racial Problems in Hungary} (London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1908), pp. 38-43, 59-73, and 82-89; Jászi, \textit{A nemzeti államok}, pp. 321-323; Bárány, Széchényi, pp. 394-395; Peter Brock, \textit{The Slovak National Awakening: An Essay in the Intellectual History of East Central Europe} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 38-45; Tibenský, \textit{Slovensko: dejiny}, pp. 457-458 and 471-473.} In 1840 the Slovaks prepared a petition which energetically protested against these measures, but it was without practical success; even before the final draft of the Slovak petition was completed the diet to which they had planned to present it adjourned, and the petition remained a document of purely historic interest.\footnote{Daniel Rapant, \textit{Slovenský prestolný prosbopis z r. 1842 [The Slovak Petition to the Throne of 1842]} (2 vols., Turčiansky sv. Miluša: Tranoscius, 1943), Vol. II, pp. 17-25; Seton-Watson, \textit{Racial Problems in Hungary}, pp. 65-67; Tkadlečková-Vantuchová, \textit{Češi a Slováci}, pp. 49-51.}

The years that followed witnessed the rise of a wave of forced "Magyarization." The demand of Karoly Zay, the
superintendent of the Hungarian Protestant Church, for the use of Magyar as the liturgical language throughout Hungary showed that the Hungarian establishment was serious in its determination to "Magyarize" the country. Zay's polemics resulted in the presentation of the well-known "Slovenský prestolný prosbopis" (The Slovak Petition to the Throne) in which the Slovaks strongly protested against repressive measures and demanded the recognition of Slovak as an equal language. Kossuth reacted to the petition by accusing its authors of high treason and issuing warrants for their arrest and imprisonment. As the radical opinions of the young Slovak generation intensified, the rulers of Hungary proved unable to show moderation. Though the most significant Magyar politicians of their time, Counts István Széchényi and János Majláth, called for moderation, nobody would listen to them. The Hungarian liberals had made up their minds to advocate the self-destructive course of forced "Magyarization," and their hostility toward dissis-

dent nationalities grew. 35

Meanwhile, the Slovaks rejected the urgent Czech offer for national unification. After the Slovaks became fully cognizant of the essence of the Czech endeavors, the leading personalities among the Slovak cultural nationalists decided on pursuing an independent course, but they were far from united in what they advocated. The older generation, represented by Kollar, supported the theory of Czechoslovak reciprocity, while the Bernolák school insisted on Slovak cultural autonomy. The younger generation headed by Ludovít Štúr rejected the linguistic choices of both the Kollar and Bernolák groups, because it considered neither language adequate for the task which the nation and its leaders faced. In 1843 Štúr chose the dialect of central Slovakia, the purest and best preserved, as the basis for the new literary language. 36 This dialect was not only to be utilized as a vehicle for pastoral work but was also to be a means of communication to reach the greatest number of people for purposes of national-political mobilization. The


new language reform, which came at a time of protest and complaints against Czech failure to recognize Slovak as an independent language, stirred up a new round of disputes and produced a Czechoslovak linguistic schism.37

Kollár had not regarded the Slovaks as an individual, autonomous Slavic branch. Stúr, on the contrary, considered them a unique, distinct nationality and demanded they be recognized as such. Stúr also decided to follow an independent course in politics. Like all previous Slovak national programs, his assumed that Slovak questions would be solved—within the Hungarian state. (There are some indications, however, that he supported a Hungarian solution for tactical reasons, and with reservations.) Stúr's actions and his Slovak publications met with anxiety and disapproval in Prague. The Czechs were particularly alarmed because there were certain signs (in 1844) of a potential Austro-Hungarian compromise which would weaken Slavic influence in the empire. The heated exchange that followed between Stúr and his Czech opponents impaired Czech-Slovak relations for several decades.38


The publication of the pamphlet *Hlasová a potřebě jednoty spisovného jazyka pro všechny Čechy, Moravany a Slováky* (Voices about the Need for a Unified Language for all Bohemians, Moravians, and Slovaks), which was initiated by Ján Kollár, started a new round of heated disputes that deepened the already serious cleavage between the Czechs and the Slovaks. Kollár opposed an independent Slovak national movement and denied the existence of an authentic Slovak language. He and others maintained that any claims to the contrary weakened the resistance of the Slavic community to the dangers of "Germanization" and "Magyarization." Palacky went so far as to declare that the Slovaks lacked all the prerequisites necessary for independent national development: they had no political rights, they lacked an aristocracy of their own, and, consequently, they were made up only of the lower classes. The Slovak language, Palacky maintained, had no chance of being recognized by the Hungarian government.39

In general, the Czech attacks on the Slovaks in Kollár's pamphlet were aimed at the heart of the Slovak national program, namely, the hope of solving the Slovak question within the framework of the Hungarian state and of being recognized as a separate nationality within it. "From whom had the Slovaks become separated?" they asked. If from the

Magyars, the Czechs would welcome this separation. But there was no way the Slovaks could ever be separated from the Czechs, if only because the two had never been united. The Slovaks reacted to these Czech attacks by emphasizing their right to use their language and to enjoy independent growth. From a political viewpoint they fully recognized the need for close cooperation with the Czechs, but only on a basis of equality. The Slovak leaders insisted that the Slovak question could and would be solved on Hungarian soil. Unlike the Czechs, the Slovaks still did not entertain the possibility of Czech-Slovak political reciprocity. For them, reciprocity remained a cultural problem.\footnote{Tibenský, \textit{Slovensko: dejiny}, pp. 479-483.}

All the differences between the Czechs and the Slovaks, however, could have been reconciled, with one important exception: the national question. On that issue none of the parties involved would compromise, least of all the Magyar liberals. The Hungarian liberals fought on two fronts--against centralism from Vienna and against the conservatives at home. Through their uncompromising attitude toward the subject nationalities they managed to turn them into a third enemy front. Forced "Magyarization" during the 1840's sharpened the controversies between the subject nationalities and the Magyars and at the same time helped to unite the various national factions into a united anti-Magyar camp.
By 1847 the Slovaks were sufficiently united in their determination to attain national rights to submit another petition to the Hungarian diet. In it their leaders demanded the recognition of equality for all subject nationalities in Hungary. The Hungarian diet ignored the Slovak national demands.

It is unfortunate that they did so, for the pre-March period (Vormärz) was a crucial juncture in relations between the Magyars, the Slovaks, and the Czechs. As we have seen, neither the Czechs nor the Magyars were willing to recognize the Slovaks as an autonomous nation with a language and culture of its own and with a natural right to independent development. For these reasons the Slovaks had to reject both the idea of a monolingual Hungarian state and the notion of Czech Austrofederalism. The Slovaks, who wanted only to preserve cultural autonomy, were in the position of a nation that had nowhere to go. 41

Palacký had regarded the Czech nation as jeopardized by Russian Panslavism, German nationalism, and Magyar fanaticism, which, he said, "equally seek to absorb and destroy our nationality. Should we, however, be forced no longer to be Czechs, then it will make no difference to us whether we become Germans, Italians, Magyars or Russians." 42

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there any reason for the Slovak intelligentsia to feel differently when approached by the Czechs? Were they not to fear Czech assimilation in the same way the Czechs did assimilation by the Russians? What was the difference between being "Czechized" or "Magyarized" once they were forced to give up their national identity? Since the latter was already in progress, the only apparent difference was that it could be accomplished without complications. The Czech political leaders, insensitive to Slovak national desires, asked for a serious Slovak commitment to the Czech cause. In return, the Slovaks were asked to renounce their national identity. There was every reason for the Slovaks to feel just as Havlíček did about Russia after his return from that country: "The Russians delight in the idea of being our brothers, they become friendly particularly with the Illyrians and with us because they assume that we want to live under their rule." 43 There is little doubt that the young Slovak generation did not want to become Czech and that they remained cool to Czech overtures because they did not want the Slovaks to be swallowed by the Czechs. "We Slovaks are a tribe," declared Ľudovít Štúr, the acclaimed leader of the young generation, "and as a tribe we have a dialect of our own which is different from Czech." 44 Besides acknowledging the individuality of each Slavic nation and the natural equality of these nations

44 Tibenský, Slovensko: dejiny, p. 480.
within the greater Slavic unit, Stúr did something politically intolerable to the Czechs when he openly accepted the political affiliation of the Slovaks with the Magyars and proclaimed Hungary the country of the Slovaks. As he stated in 1846, "In a political sense, we are truly nothing when separated from other inhabitants of our homeland. In this sense we are Hungarian citizens: we are Hungary." 45 Stúr and his generation had confidence in their ability to fulfill the historic mission of their nation if the Slovaks would rid themselves of foreign influences and create a spiritual world of their own. This notion formed the basis for the foundation of Slovak "separatism"—a term frequently and incorrectly used since an early period in Czechoslovak history. 46

The Slovaks had no recourse but to turn to the emperor for protection against ever-increasing "Magyarization."

As a matter of fact, the first Slovak petition (1840), like those which followed, was addressed both to Budapest and Vienna; yet it was always from the latter that the petitioners hoped to find understanding and help. There are indications that some of the extreme radical Slovak thinkers wished to create an independent state, or at least an autonomous province administered by the central imperial authorities in Vienna. The reception of their petitions

45 Pešek, "The Czechoslovak Question," pp. 141, n.31. See also Kohn, Pan-Slavism, pp. 21-22.
before 1848, however, gave them little reason to hope that their problem would be solved within the constitutional and quasi-political framework of Hungary, and they had no real reason to expect autonomy or independence within the framework of the Habsburg empire.

As for Czechoslovak unity, probably no one in the Slovak national camp envisaged Czechoslovak reciprocity in political terms. Even Czech-Slavs like Kollár contemplated a purely cultural union, while the Slovaks avoided all discussions which might imply anything other than cultural reciprocity. This was the position of both the Štúrists and their Slovak opponents. For Štúr and his followers the idea of Czech-Slovak mutuality in no way conflicted with or jeopardized Hungary's integrity. Shortly before the 1848 revolution, however, certain ideas about a potential political union between the Czechs and Slovaks began to be entertained. Nevertheless, in their national demands presented to the emperor in March, 1848, the Czechs said nothing about unification with the Slovaks. The Czechs were fully aware that such demands would make it difficult for them to obtain the minimal concessions requested by their nation. To lay claim to Slovakia would contravene the historic rights of Hungary, and it was precisely on historic rights that the Czechs based their own national demands. The contradiction would have been too obvious.

Stúr supposedly declared in private conversations that the Slovaks would rather perish than remain under the Magyar yoke. He allegedly called for the creation of a Czech-Slovak-Croatian alliance against the common enemy. In a private conversation with the Czech politician František C. Kampelík, he supposedly stated that if the Hungarian government and diet did not comply with Slovak demands, the Slovaks were determined to secede from Hungary and become incorporated with the Bohemian kingdom. This, however, sounds more like extremist talk under the divisive influence of Vienna than an expression of serious intention. Stúr could hardly have carried out a political coup of such magnitude without the support of the bulk of the Slovaks, which neither he nor any other group or individual ever had. Furthermore, there was little hope of gaining their support, because of popular indifference to his endeavors. Moreover, the Hungarian authorities were not deaf to such mutinous rhetoric, and after they exerted some pressure the Slovaks publicly apologized and proclaimed themselves loyal subjects of the Crown of St. Stephen.  

Neither did the Czech party intercede on behalf of the Slovaks. At the heart of Austroslavism was an idea of imperial reform based on the principle of equality for all nations. The Czech politicians had no clear idea of the constitutioonal or state rights of Slovakia in the federation they hoped to establish; nor did they entertain

48 Záček, Slovanský sjezd, pp. 16-18 and 19-22.
any precise idea of how to solve the Slovak question. During the turbulent revolutionary era the Czechs had too many problems of their own to solve; there was no place for Slovaks in their consideration. Havlíček, as already mentioned, contemplated the political unification of the two nations, but even he lacked any firm ideas about the formal and constitutional questions which might arise in case such an alliance materialized. Kollár, as always, advocated a vague doctrine of reciprocity, but only as a kind of sterile metamorphosis. In his opinion Czech and Slovak should become Slovakoczech. 49 The three major alternatives entertained as solutions to the Slovak question were: (1) should Slovakia be incorporated into federalized Austria as an independent unit; 2) should it be united with the Bohemian crown lands; or (3) should it remain part of a federalized Hungary? The first and second alternatives obviously involved the territorial disintegration of the Kingdom of Hungary. 50

At the Slavic Congress in Prague on June 2-12, 1848, the unification of Czechs and Slovaks was advocated almost exclusively by Czech and Moravian delegates. The Slovak representatives were less sure of the desirability of union and proclaimed the Czech solution unrealistic under the given circumstances. They consented, however, to leave this option

open for the future. The proposal of Count Janos Majlath, which envisioned the complete separation of Slovakia from Hungary and its direct subordination to Vienna, seemed more acceptable to the Slovaks. The majority of the Slovak participants at the Congress preferred the centralistic system because it appeared to grant equal rights to all nations.

The Slovak wishes notwithstanding, the Czechs continued to advance the doctrine of Czechoslovak unification. Frantisek L. Rieger, another leading Czech politician, advocated this solution during his unsuccessful secret negotiations with the leaders of the Hungarian exiles in May, 1849. As Rieger envisaged it, Slovakia was to become part of a vaguely conceived kind of central European federation which would be established on the ruins of the Habsburg empire. However, the Slovaks rejected the idea of secession from Hun-


53 Jan Novotny, "Cesi a Slovaci v narodne politickych bojich od Slovanskeho sjezdu do porazky revoluce 1848-1849" [Czechs and Slovaks in their National and Political Struggles since the Slavic Congress until the Defeat of the 1848-1849 Revolution], Historicky casopis, Vol. XVI (1968), pp. 322-325; Tkadleková-Vantuchova, Cesí a Slováci, p. 79. For the text of Palacky’s second federative plan of January 22, 1849, see Zacek, Slovansky sjezd, pp. 172-173.
gary as an impractical political step at the moment. At the same time, the idea of unification with the Czechs or other Slavs, which was also discussed, was postponed, and the Slovaks continued to avoid commitment to it. Their obvious reason was fear of the Czech domination which appeared to be unavoidable in a Czechoslovak union. Aware of their weakness, the Slovak leaders noticed that there was little if any chance to achieve the desired equal status with a stronger partner, and no weaker partner for them existed.  

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The revolution of 1848-1849 provided new prospects and presented new possibilities to the Slavic people, who had begun to claim their right to independence. Dissatisfied with the March legislation of the Hungarian diet, the Slovaks once again submitted to the Buda parliament the žiadosti slovenského národa (Petitions of the Slovak Nation), which contained the most radical Slovak demands of the revolutionary era and which had been accepted by acclamation at a mass rally at Liptovský sv. Mikuláš on May 10, 1848. The very first point denied the basic Hungarian political axiom concerning the presumptive existence of a unitary Hungarian nation-state and demanded the recognition of the Slovak nation as an independent political entity which would have to be taken into account in the reorganization of Hungary. The reorganization itself, the petitioners maintained, must be based on the equality of all nationalities in a federal

state and must be completed with the consent of a general assembly of all nationalities in Hungary. In addition to the right to participate in a general Hungarian diet, the Slovaks demanded a separate Slovak diet in which the Slovaks would have a voice in all matters concerning Slovakia and the right to intervene in issues dealing with the entire kingdom. The Vladiosti also touched upon the territorial question. An ethnic line was drawn to delineate the territory from which the deputies would be delegated and elected. The line would also represent the administrative limits within which the national administration would function. In this territory Slovak would be the official language both of the administration and of education. The petitioners also demanded full active and passive "franchise" for persons who did not speak Magyar, as formerly required by Article 5 of the 1848 Hungarian constitution. Freedom of the press and freedom of assembly were to be granted as well.\(^5\)

The Hungarian government rejected the Slovak demands. Federalization jeopardized the dominant position of the Magyar nobility, and they labelled the Slovaks' democratic and national claims "unheard-of communism."\(^6\)


als, loudly calling for freedom and democracy, would not even listen to the demands of the "non-historic" nations for national freedom and autonomy. They regarded the non-historic nations as mere ethnic entities, not as nations. Reaction to the national demands came in the form of retaliation and persecution of the national leaders of the non-Magyar nations.

The stubbornness of the Hungarian government and the skillful manipulation of the Slovaks by Vienna forced the Slovak national leaders to make the radical decision to create their own political institution, the Slovak National Council. The creation of the Slovak National Council was proclaimed in September, 1848. Its leaders, Stur and Hurban, denounced the Slovak union with Hungary and renounced the subordination and obedience of the Slovaks to the Hungarian government. From the point of constitutional law this was the most radical step taken by the Slovaks during the revolutionary era.57 Believing that there was no realistic chance at the moment of obtaining a Slovak union with the Czechs, the Slavic leaders accepted the Slovak National Council's demand for a separate Slovakia within the framework of the Habsburg domain. The Slovak position was based on the promises or at least the ostensible willingness of Vienna to recognize the Slovaks as an independent, autonomous nation.

with a diet of their own and home rule, as proposed by Karl Rosenfeld, the councillor to the court.\footnote{58} The Magyar reaction was predictable. Warrants for Stūr's and Hurban's arrest were signed on October 18, 1848, by Kossuth personally, in the name of the Committee for the Defense of the Country. This made an alliance with the throne directed against the Magyars almost inevitable for the Slovak leaders.

The logical result of the decision to separate Slovakia from Hungary was direct subordination to Vienna. This decision was made at a Slovak mass meeting in Turciānsky sv. Martin, in January, 1849.\footnote{59} The Slovaks claimed autonomy for themselves and sought a Viennese centralist government dominated by the Habsburg government in Vienna as the best protection against the Magyar hegemony.

This action was opposed by Palacký, who did not intend to grant autonomy to the Slovaks and who did not even think it necessary to consider Slovak wishes or to consult Slovak national leaders. Under these circumstances the Slovaks had no choice but to continue political maneuvering between Buda, Vienna, and Prague—a policy which was followed with greater and greater skill as World War I approached.\footnote{60}

The Mikulas Petition was followed by the Osnova, the most essential part of the Martin petition, which was drafted


\footnote{59} Ibid., Vol. III, Pt. 1, p. 188.

\footnote{60} Holotík, "The Slovaks," p. 384.
to present to the emperor. The drafters of this petition demanded the establishment of Slovakia as an independent crown land in the reorganized empire. The Grand Duchy of Slovakia was to be separated from Hungary and incorporated into the Austrian part of the monarchy. It was to be represented in the Reichsrat and to have a national diet and administration of its own. However, even before these demands could be presented to the court, the March 4, 1849 Austrian constitution declared the unity of the empire, including Hungary, thereby precluding the formation of an autonomous Slovak duchy. The constitution, however, recognized the equality of all nationalities and languages. As a result, the Slovak deputation moderated its political demands on its way to Vienna and altered the wording of the petition. The petition was rejected.

The duplicity of the Viennese court became even more apparent after the conservative Ján Kollár and his followers were appointed aulic advisors for Slovak affairs. The Viennese ruling circles intended this appointment to disrupt the unity of the Slovak national camp, as indeed it did. Unlike the Štúr group, Kollár and other conservatives were satisfied with linguistic and cultural concessions. They viewed the acknowledgment of language rights and the rearrangement of

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For the text of the Memorandum and the relevant proposals, see ibid., pp. 52-53 and 64-81. See also Redlich, Das österreichische Staat- und Reichsproblem, Vol. II, pp. 280-281.
the district administration as a satisfactory solution. It must be emphasized, however, that in doing so they expressed the wishes of the majority of the Slovak national leaders, who continued to rely on Vienna because of the inflexible Hungarian national policy. 63 Counting on Russian intervention to help subdue the Hungarian revolution, the government in Vienna did not have to hold out promises to the subject nationalities to procure their assistance against the Magyars. Nevertheless, the government argued pro forma against the Slovak national program by reminding the Slovaks of the lack of historical rights on which to base their demands for national autonomy and by emphasizing the fact that the Slovak leaders did not represent the wishes of the great majority of the population. This last argument could not be denied because the efforts of the Slovak national leaders to mobilize the support of the masses for the national cause utterly failed. 64

After the 1848 Revolution, Slovakia was divided into two districts, Bratislava and Košice, which more or less approximated the Slovak ethnic territory. Language concessions were limited to lower educational and administrative institutions. Because of the linguistic controversy between Štúr's


and Kollár's Czechoslovak concepts, concessions could be utilized to hinder rather than to promote the emerging national unity among the Slovaks, much to Vienna's satisfaction. During the course of the 1848-1849 revolution the Slovaks recognized their weakness as never before. They realized the hopelessness of cooperation with either Vienna or Budapest and became acutely aware of the fruitlessness of both Slavic reciprocity and Czech Austrofederalism. Their awareness of the weakness of their position had an important impact on Slovak politics, which matured in the post-revolutionary period and developed more sophisticated political conceptions and platforms.

II

Where to Go and with Whom

During the Bach era, which followed the Revolution of 1848-1849, the government in Vienna continued to promote divisions among the Slovak national camps. Particularly destructive were Kollar's efforts to "Czechisify" the Slovak language, which triggered a new round of linguistic disputes. The ever widening split between Kollar's and Stúr's followers forced the Slovak leaders to search for new avenues that might lead to a solution of the national problem. Several possibilities became apparent. Stúr, who had left the monarchy after the Revolution of 1848, realized that it was impossible to reach an understanding with the Magyars, and strongly opposed those Slovak leaders who still advocated this option. He also opposed further cooperation with Vienna—a course of action which was strongly advocated by the Slovenské noviny and Viedenské listy. Hurban concentrated his polemics against the federative idea promulgated in Havlíček's review, Slovan, which was marked by a spirit of Czech-Magyar rapprochement, recognizing equality only among the historic nations and accepting a moderate system of political centralism.\(^1\)


\(^2\) Hurban's February 9, 1861, memorandum to the Viennese court, Bokes, Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu, Vol. I, pp. 238-239.
Another Slovak politician, Jonaš Záborsky, the editor of the Slovenské noviny, openly advocated centralism in agreement with Hurban and the majority of the Slovak politicians, who until the fall of the Bach absolutist system thought that a centralistic system of government was the optimal solution. There were, as always, people who supported close cooperation with the Czechs and advocated a federative reorganization of the empire, as proposed by Havlíček. Yet even this tiny group disagreed over the language issue and interpretations of Czechoslovak mutuality, along with other problems of a social and economic character. The third group, represented by Samo Vozár, advocated reaching an understanding with the Magyars.\(^3\)

The Bach neo-absolutist system effectively silenced national agitation and engendered a deep feeling of gloom among the Slovak national leaders. In his Slavanštvo a svet budúcnosti (Slavdom and the World of the Future), which was published abroad, Štúr reached the conclusion that since an understanding with Vienna and Budapest was impossible, the destruction of the empire was inevitable. Dissatisfied with the solution of the nationality problems proposed by the Slavic Congress at Prague, he now promoted the union of all Slavs under Russian leadership. Ján Palárik and Jozef Viktorín advocated a similar idea; a Slovak-Ruthenian union which, they hoped, would later be joined by the Croats and

\(^3\)Butvin, "K státoprávnym snahám Slovákov," pp. 78-79.
Serbs. 4 This idea also was only a pipe dream.

The end of the Bach era brought no essential changes in Slovak national life. Since the Magyars were the most astute opponents of centralism in the monarchy, Magyar-Slovak relations gained in importance. The Slovak national leadership was as divided as ever on the question of a proper political program, and there was not the slightest hope that a common political platform would be unanimously accepted by them. The traditionally pro-Viennese group headed by Hurban overestimated the value of the October Diploma and in 1861 once again submitted a petition demanding the separation of Slovakia from Hungary. Slovakia was to be incorporated into the Austrian part of the empire and to receive a separate regional government. The Slovaks were to have their own schools, in which Slovak was to be the language of instruction. 5 Opposed to the pro-Viennese group was the faction which foresaw the possibility of reaching an understanding with the Magyar liberals. Í. Palárik, the editor of the Priatel školy a literatúry, was the leading representative of the group. He justified his position on the ground that the Slovaks had received no concessions from the government in Vienna during the 1848-1849 revolution. 6

4 Ibid., p. 80.
A third group continued to advocate a Czechoslovak union in the Czech journal Čas. Some of the adherents of this circle favored the secession of Slovakia from Hungary and close cooperation with the Czechs, but, at the same time, they endeavored to safeguard Slovak linguistic and national individuality. Kollár and his followers continued to insist on Czechoslovak linguistic unity. Only during the sixties, after the defeat of the Czechoslovak faction by the majority of the Slovak national leaders, did a new political orientation appear which represented something like a Slovak program. The champions of this trend, led by Štefan M. Daxner and Ján Francisci, resumed the traditional policy of rejecting the idea of alliance with either Vienna or Budapest and proposed to place Slovak politics exactly between the two centers of power with the intention of exploiting the rivalry between the governments in Austria and Hungary to gain advantages for the Slovaks.

Daxner and Francisci formulated the last and probably the most comprehensive Slovak national program of the nineteenth century: the famous Memorandum slovenského národa (Memorandum of the Slovak Nation), which was adopted at a Slovak meeting at Turčiansky sv. Martin on June 6-7, 1861.


8 For the text of the memorandum see Bokes, Dokumenty k
This memorandum again demanded the recognition of Slovak national individuality. Home rule was demanded for the Slovaks in the so-called Hornouhorske slovenské okolie (The Upper Hungarian Slovak District), that is, the region where the Slovaks constituted the majority of the population, as well as the exclusive use of Slovak in schools and offices. All laws violating the principle of national equality were to be abolished. Since the Memorandum was based on the spirit of the October Diploma, which provided for the restoration of constitutional rights only to the nationalities with historical state rights, nothing was said about a federal Hungarian state based on the principle of nationality. Aware that some demands were unattainable in Hungary, the petitioners did not demand an autonomous Slovak diet. Permission for Slovak representation in the Hungarian diet satisfied them for the time being. The original Memorandum slovenskemu národneemu hnutiu, Vol. I, pp. 364-377. An English text can be found in Joseph Mikuš, Slovakia: A Political History (Milwaukee, Wisc.: Marquette University Press, 1963), Appendix I, pp. 320-330. See also Daniel Rapant, Viedenske memorandum slovenske z r. 1861 [The Slovak Viennese Memorandum of 1861] (Turčiansky sv. Martin: Matica slovenská, 1944), pp. 136-157; Ľudovít Holotík, "Memorandum slovenského naroda z r. 1861" [Memorandum of the Slovak Nation of 1861], Historický časopis, Vol. XI (1963), pp. 3-33; Redlich, Das Österreichische Staat- und Reichsproblem, Vol. II, pp. 282-283. For the text of the memorandum presented to the Hungarian diet, see Seton-Watson, Racial Problems in Hungary, Appendix I, pp. 421-424. For the Hungarian government's reaction, see ibid., Appendix II, pp. 425-428. For more details see Holotík, "Slováci medzi Viedňou a Budapeštou v rokoch 1860-1867" [The Slovaks between Vienna and Budapest, 1860-1867], Historický časopis, Vol. XX (1972), pp. 525-538.
was addressed to the Hungarian parliament with extreme caution and self-restraint. Slovak desires which were not considered suitable for presentation to the Magyar government came to light only after the original Memorandum was rejected in Budapest, when the Slovaks delivered a more daring list of demands to the emperor in a "Viennese Memorandum" presented by Bishop Stefan Moyses in December, 1861.9

The Viennese Memorandum contained far more radical Slovak national and political demands than the petition presented at Buda. This time the Hornouhorske Okolie was defined as an autonomous Slovak district whose sovereignty was to be constitutionally guaranteed. The district was to have its own legislative system and, most important, an independent national assembly was to meet once a year in the new Slovak capitol, Banska Bystrica. The constitutional position of the Okolie, its relation to the emperor, its internal organization, its position in Hungary, etc., were specified in a special appendix entitled Navrh na privilegium slovenkeho Okolie [Proposal of Privileges for the Slovak District]. The Slovaks demanded the eighteen counties in which the Slovaks constituted the majority of the population. Slovak was to be the official language.

Magyar was to be used only as the language of communication with the central offices in Buda and as the language of diplomacy. All in all, the Viennese memorandum anticipated a degree of autonomy that the Slovaks had never been offered nor achieved in their entire history. It is not surprising that the Slovak demands were rejected by both the governments in Vienna and Buda, not only because they were too radical but also because they were contrary to the spirit of both the October Diploma and the idea of a monolingual Hungarian state, which the Slovaks apparently interpreted (particularly the provisions of the October Diploma) too favorably for themselves. Nonetheless, the Memorandum and the Proposal of Privileges represented the culmination of Slovak nationalist efforts and remained the most comprehensive statement of Slovak national demands until the last months of World War I.

The failure of the Slovaks to gain any of their ends by submitting these memoranda led to another round of internal disputes about tactics and caused a new split in the Slovak national camp. Two factions arose: the New School and the Old School. The adherents of the Old School denounced the Okolie program as unrealistic and proposed a search for new avenues of understanding with the Magyars, who regarded the

claim for a separate Slovak district as a threat to Hungary's territorial integrity. During the critical period preceding the Ausgleich, the Slovaks were handicapped once again by their lack of unity and were unable to elect a single representative of their own to the Hungarian diet. 11 This failure had fatal consequences.

If the Slovaks had objected to "Magyarization" prior to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, after the Ausgleich they were to learn what "Magyarization" really meant. Magyar supremacy was assured and enforced through the electoral system. Only five or six percent of the male population was enfranchised at this time, and, in order to secure their dominant position, the ruling powers did everything they could to prevent any change in the system of representation. The nationalities, having no representation in the Hungarian parliament and very limited representation in local administration, passively observed developments which were aimed at their virtual annihilation. The Ausgleich did not entirely eliminate the chance to benefit from Austro-Magyar controversies, but it did limit them. The Slovaks had little choice but to try to solve their problems within Hungary. There was no possibility of Czech-Slovak cooperation or of receiving help from Bohemia. The two nationalities were cut off from each other through their incorporation in different parts of the empire.

The Hungarian National Law of 1868, drawn up by Ferenc Deák and József Eötvös, was probably the most liberal nationality law of its time in the entire world. Unfortunately, its provisions were never turned into reality and even its minor concessions were confined to paper. The new nationality law did not recognize the non-Magyar nationalities as national and political entities but only as ethnic groups that constituted organic parts of a single Magyar nation. The old ideal of the united Magyar nation-state was thereby legalized. Magyar became the official language, and the minor linguistic concessions given to the nationalities remained purely formal. Parliament approved the nationality law for the purpose of pacifying public opinion abroad rather than making an honest attempt to solve the national problem in Hungary. The national policy of the period following 1868 demonstrated this most clearly. Even before the Hungarian parliament approved the law, the Slovak counties of Spiš, Liptov, Gemer, and still others had rejected the creation of an independent Slovak district within Hungary. They would have been satisfied with the adjustment of district boundaries in accordance with the ethnic composition of each district. Gradually even the official Slovak territorial demands were renounced.


In 1870 Villiam Paulinyi-Toth, a Slovak member of the Hungarian parliament, proposed the enactment of a law to arrange a national compromise between the Magyars and Slovaks. In this proposal he not only denounced the idea of ethnic territory but approved the concept of a single Hungarian political nation which supposedly included Magyars, Slovaks, Romanians, Serbians, Ruthenians, and Germans as equal "ethnic nations" with the right to use their mother tongue in the areas where they constituted the majority.  

However, various individuals unwilling to submit to the pressure of "Magyarization" continued to make radical demands. Joζilo Hloζanský, the publisher of the journal Biele Uhorsko (White Hungary), advocated the establishment of a confederation of Western Slavs.  

His territorial demands went considerably beyond the uncertain ethnic line. He claimed certain areas of Hungary for purely practical, primarily economic, reasons.  


16 This contradicts the later statements of Magyar politicians and historians that the Slovak territorial aspirations never went beyond the ethnic lines. See for example Borsody, Magyar-slovák kiegyezés, p. 59. This writer, however, does not intend to belittle Borsody's work, which he regards as the most insightful and judicious scholarly treatment of the Slovak question in Hungary to date.
edly an exception in his definition of Slovak national aspirations, the question as to who represented or reflected the true Slovak national interests remains to be answered. It was typical in Slovak politics that the self-appointed national leaders maintained an elitist, aristocratic attitude toward the common people. What did they know, and for that matter what do historians know, about public opinion, the true desires and aspirations of the nation? Yet any single member of the upper class elite could declare that his views reflected the "national will" or "national interests" and were "representative" of the nation. In the meantime the masses were indifferent to the "esoteric" problems that concerned the upper-class gentlemen, the masters; so politics was left to the latter and the national interests could be defined by any of these gentlemen who had nothing in common with the Slovak populace except ethnic affiliation.  

In light of these circumstances, the disputes between the Old School, which represented the majority of the Slovak intelligentsia, and the New School appeared to be more or less futile. Nevertheless, the New School, denounced and condemned by the older generation, demonstrated unusual ability to think in modern, flexible political terms. Instead of sticking to old political principles whose

ineffectiveness had been clearly demonstrated time and time again, the proponents of the new trend searched for new solutions—new avenues for obtaining at least minimal concessions from the Magyars. 18 The adherents of the Old School never forgave the New School for their merciless criticism of the memoranda programs, which, in the New School's partisan opinion, made exaggerated demands that removed any chance of reaching an agreement with the Magyars. 19

This criticism was not without foundation. The "memorandists" had not made a realistic estimate of the situation. They might have known that the diet at Buda would never consider their demands and would reject any petition including them. Thus the Slovaks themselves contributed to the failure of all national efforts. The New School also blamed the Old School for complying with the wishes of the government in Vienna and those of the Czechs and the Russians, but most of all for sympathizing with Palacky's federative ideas. In the New School's opinion, the Old School's claims to political independence were illegal because they threatened the territorial integrity of


Hungary. So did the claim for an independent Okolie, they said. Since this claim also contradicted the principles of the integrity of the Hungarian kingdom, the Hungarian government could never accept it. In the eyes of the proponents of the New School, to put forward unacceptable demands was useless nonsense.

The New School's demands were limited to seeking permission to use the Slovak language within the Slovak ethnic area and to demanding the extensive democratization of Hungary.\textsuperscript{20} The application, or rather non-application, of the nationality law of 1868 satisfied neither the New nor the Old School and convinced the followers of the New School that there was little if any chance of reaching a reasonable settlement with the Magyars.\textsuperscript{21} The consequence was that the New School gradually dissolved. The Slovaks were to miss another chance to solve their problems.

The Magyar crusade against the non-Magyar nations became ever more vigorous and ruthless. The Magyar politicians were largely responsible for the failure to conclude a Czech-Austrian compromise in 1872. Bela Grunwald, the deputy lieutenant-governor of the Zvolen district, began a noisy campaign of "Magyarization," demanding that the Magyar schools must turn all Slovak children into Magyars. Concrete results of the increasing "Magyarization" were demon-

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., pp. 68-72, 74-79, 163-168, 82-83, 85-90, 90-99, 141, and 142.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., pp. 146-147 and 169-170.
strated in the closing of the Slovak gymnasia in 1874 and of Matica Slovenska, the supreme Slovak cultural establishment, a year later. The Slovak national movement lost ground. The pressure of "Magyarization" broke the spirit of many Slovak intellectuals, who, instead of pursuing a policy of opposition, chose to conform to Magyar policy to safeguard their existence and careers. The coming to power of Kálmán Tisza's government in 1875 marked the beginning of the high tide of "Magyarization," as well as the most depressed period in Slovak national life.

The Slovak situation was worsened by the absence of a single political party able to put up effective resistance. The Slovak National Party was by no means a real political party. It was simply an association or club of loosely connected individuals who read the same newspapers and more or less adhered to the same political program: the demand for the creation of the Okolie district, which lacked even the slightest hope of realization. Some members of the party attempted to negotiate with Czech politicians in hope

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of gaining their support, but they found no backing either in Prague or in Slovakia.24

In the meantime, Magyars like Béla Grünwald openly advocated the forced "Magyarization" of all non-Magyar nationalities.25 A law passed in 1879 introduced Magyar as the exclusive language of instruction in all state elementary schools. Almost no school in which Slovak was the language of instruction remained.26 There were rare individuals in Hungary such as Lajos Mocsáry who warned the Hungarian diet against the consequences of such policies, but this was so exceptional that Mocsáry was called "a white crow" by the Slovaks.27 On the whole, the Magyars were determined to carry out their program of assimilation of the non-Magyars. In Upper Hungary this task was assigned to the


25 For Grünwald's activities and the anti-Slovak campaign in the journal Svornost, edited by Karol Kabáňi, which became the mouthpiece of the opponents of Slovak cultural institutions and the entire nation, see Bokes, Dokumenty k slovenskemu narodnemu hnutiu, Vol. II, pp. 367-368 and 427-437; See also Tibenský, Slovensko dejiny, p. 561; and Holotík, "Slovak politics," pp. 50-51.


Felsőmagyarországi Közművelődési Egyesület (FEMKE) [Upper Hungarian Cultural Association], a "cultural organization" established in 1883.

In the face of the hopelessness of their situation, the Slovak National Party retreated into passivity. The Slovaks now concentrated their efforts on making improvements in the economic area. A feverish effort was made to promote Slovak economic interests. As for politics, Turčiansky sv. Martin, although it continued to be the sanctuary of the Slovak national idea and the guardian of the national traditions and the national spirit, remained practically passive until the turn of the century. The traditional Slovak messianism emerged once again and some Slovaks believed that Russia, the alleged protector of all Slavs, would eventually "deliver them."

The Slovak national movement was now dormant, but the Magyar ruling circles had failed to suppress it entirely, although they did succeed in eliminating Slovak from the schools—a program which, however, backfired for the Magyars. In the absence of Slovak schools, the non-conformist nationally-conscious students had no choice but to continue their education abroad, often in Moravia.


and Bohemia, where their national consciousness was reinforced and where they were freed from the depressing impact of Slovak political parochialism. In 1882 a small group of Slovak students in Prague established a cultural society, the Detvan. It would have been hard to predict what impact this and similar groups were to have on the future of Slovak politics.

The Magyar repression of non-Magyar peoples encouraged them to form ties with each other. The 1895 Congress of Nationalities, although without noteworthy political results, served as a warning to anyone ready to listen, that the non-Magyar nationalities were determined to oppose "Magyarization." Yet it appeared that nothing could alter the resolve of the Magyar rulers to "Magyarize" the whole kingdom. The millennial celebrations of 1896 marked a high point in the suppression of national minorities in Hungary.


In the 1890's the Catholic populist movement reached prominence in Slovakia. *Katolícké noviny*, the populist press organ, defended the national rights of the Slovaks by criticizing the government's chauvinistic policies and agitated for the formation of self-aid cooperatives to reinforce the economic base of the Slovak national movement. The journal also endeavored to win over the rural clergy and the teachers, through whom the populists hoped to reach the broad masses of the population. At the turn of the century the Slovak populist group began to cooperate with its Czech counterpart, the Moravian Catholic movement, although it still refused to work with the Czech progressive liberals.\(^3\)

Czech progressive liberalism under the personal influence of Professor Tomáš Garigue Masaryk made an impact on the Slovak students in Prague which was soon felt in Slovakia as well. Some time before their departure for the university and during the early years of their studies the young Slovak generation on the whole generally accepted the political platform of the Slovak National Party without significant reservations. In concrete terms this meant that they supported little more than cooperation among all non-Magyar nationalities of Hungary. By the end of the century, when these endeavors as well as efforts to cooperate with the Magyar, Néppárt turned out to be futile, the Slovak

students abroad became critical of the pettiness, inefficiency, and lack of vigor of the Slovak National Party. Young Slovak students at Prague such as Vavro Šrobár, Pavol Blaho, Ján Smetanay, and others became the forerunners of the neo-Czechoslovakism which evolved from the renewed interest in Slovakia of such Czech politicians as Masaryk, Karel Káčal, Jan Pastrnek, and several others who realized the strategic importance of Slovakia in the context of the Czech struggle for national and political emancipation.

The Slovakophile trend in Bohemia gained an explicit political character. Along with expressing the usual slogans of brotherhood and cultural unity, the Slovakophiles had genuine political and economic interests which encouraged them to form the Českoloslovenská jednota (The Czechoslovak Union) in 1896 to promote the economic and cultural development of Slovakia and reinforce the Czech-Slovak bond.

35 Josef Jírašek (compl.), "Z korespondencie predstavitelov českého a slovenského národného hnutia na prelome 19. a 20. storôčia" [From the Correspondence of the Representatives of the Czech and Slovak National Movements at the Turn of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries], Historický časopis, Vol. XVII (1969), pp. 270-284 and 427-437. See also Masaryk to Dušan Makovický, February 24, 1895, ibid., pp. 278-279.

36 Vavro Šrobár to Miloš Štefanovič, December 11, 1894, Bokes, Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu, Vol. III, pp. 246-248; See also ibid., pp. 400-402; Masaryk to Kramár, January 2 and 29, 1889, as quoted in Krajcoviová, "K problemu slovenská otázka," p. 117; and Kramár to Josef Kaizl, January 2, 1898, as quoted in Karel Herman and Zdeněk Sládek, Slovenská politika Karla Kramáře [Karel Kramár’s Slavic Policy] (Prague: Academia, 1971), p. 8 ns. 18 and 19.

37 Urban, "Rozmach, zmeny a paradoxy," pp. 140-144, especially p. 142.
The foundation of the Union was enthusiastically welcomed not only by the Slovak students in Prague but also by Matus Dula, the future chairman of the Slovak National Party, and Svetozář Hurbán-Vajansky, the party's ideologist, who were all present at the inauguration festivities.38

The honeymoon was shortlived, however, and relations between Prague and the Turciansky sv. Martin rapidly cooled. The reappearance of the Czechoslovak ideas about national and linguistic unity was rejected by the majority of the Slovak national leaders, who quickly realized that the neo-Czechoslovak group represented by Masaryk, Karel Kramar, and Kalal aimed at establishing a strong foothold in Slovakia by paralyzing the dominant position of the Turciansky sv. Martin leadership and creating a pro-Czech or Czechoslovak fifth column composed of former Slovak students at the University of Prague.39 The conservative group in Turciansky sv. Martin did not intend to rejuvenate Slovak political life but concerned itself mainly with maintaining its own position


of leadership in the Slovak national camp. Anybody who appeared to threaten the dominant position of the conservatives had to be considered an enemy, not of the conservative leadership but of the Slovaks and Slovakia. The conservatives claimed to be the only real representatives of the Slovak nation, and in a way they were. Slovakia itself was conservative and backward, and this was the atmosphere which awaited the young graduates from Prague and elsewhere when they returned home. Their self-assumed task of creating the necessary preconditions for gradual Czech-Slovak national unification ran into considerable difficulty from the very beginning. The followers of Masaryk's liberal ideas simply were not welcome in Slovakia.

The Czech cultural, political, and economic circles, aware of Slovakia's importance for them, made considerable efforts to influence Slovak politics. One way of doing so was to indoctrinate the young students. The Masaryk group of Czech political leaders also did not hesitate to play a disruptive role in Slovak politics, directly or indirectly. Although no moral justification could be found for such practices, the Czech leaders felt that the stagnant Slovak political life had to be stirred up by any means. In 1897 Karel Salva began to publish and edit the Slovenské listy, financed by Prague, to serve the interests and purposes of the Czechs. Official leadership of the pro-Czech group was entrusted to Pavel Blaho and Vavro Šrobár, who had already conceived the idea of launching their own journal while studying in Prague.
The journal was to serve as the mouthpiece for the views of their small group of followers. Publication of this journal, *Hlas* [The Voice], began after Šrobár and Blaho returned to Slovakia. The first issue, which was edited by Blaho, appeared in Skalica in mid-1898. Since the journal gave its name to the whole group, the Slovak Czechoslovakists became known as Hlasists.  

The Hlasists presented no comprehensive program of their own because they had none. Their ideology was that of their spiritual father, Masaryk, from whose teaching his pupils seemed able to find the answer to any question. They treated Masaryk's teaching as a universal medicine to cure all ills and had absolutely no doubts about its effectiveness. Masaryk's notions about "cultivating one's own garden" and about the need for a moral renaissance of the nation were enthusiastically embraced by the young Slovak intellectuals, although their attitude toward Masaryk's concept of national unity remained ambivalent.  


Masaryk, well acquainted with the situation in Slovakia, warned his followers in Prague and those he contacted during his frequent visits to Slovakia to proceed with extreme caution in propagating the Czechoslovak idea. To achieve their ultimate goal of Czechoslovak national unity, Masaryk suggested they begin by revising Stúr's national program—the demand for recognition of the Slovak national identity and right to independence—and promulgating Kollár's and Šafárik's program of Czechoslovak "oneness" instead of "separatism."

In the 1890's the Hlasists had stirred up the quiet waters of Slovak national and political life and made quite a showing on the Slovak political scene. However, the Hlasist leader Šrubař lacked the ability to apply Masaryk's ideas and program to Slovak conditions. Šrubař transferred Masarykism to Slovakia in a simplistic, mechanical manner. Small wonder that his program did not work. And yet when the time arrived for decision in 1918, Šrubař gained national recognition because during the first month after an independent Czechoslovakia was established the Slovak national leaders were glad to welcome persons like Šrubař who had cooper-


ated with the Czechs while the majority of Slovak leaders had played an entirely passive role.

At the outset the Hlasists were unable either to devise an imaginative critique of the old Slovak national leadership or to come forward with a constructive proposal for the solution of the Slovak question. By assuming a hypercritical attitude, no matter how justified, the Hlasists antagonized the bulk of the Slovak national leadership without establishing mass support before launching their political campaign. Moreover, their attacks on the Slovak national leadership failed to take into account how much the political ineffectiveness of the Slovak national leaders was caused by Hungarian politics. The Hlasists' political Czechoslovakism and their general ineptitude deprived them of the fruits of initial success. As a consequence, their own ranks became divided when serious conflicts arose between the two most prominent Hlasist leaders, Šrobá r and Blaho. The Hlasists indisputably brought new impetus to Slovak political life, but the Hungarian reality which they had to face and the position of the Slovak nation sapped their initial enthusiasm. Their tactless procedures and their ruthless agitation for the Czechoslovakist programs hurt their cause.44

At the turn of the twentieth century the Slovak nationalist political leaders turned to new tactics. Drawing on past experience, they accepted the premise that modern poli-

44 Ibid., p. 265-273.
tics is not possible without mass support. It was not the Turciansky sv. Martin leaders but their Slovak critics who had cooperated with the Magyar Neppart who induced them to adopt these tactics. Pavel Blaho and others initiated the self-aid cooperative movement for the peasantry, who constituted the bulk of the Slovak population, for the purpose of integrating them into Slovak political life. The effort to establish a base for mass political movement was one of the most outstanding features of early twentieth century Slovak politics.45

The Slovak political scene at the turn of the century was characterized by considerable polarization. New personali-ties entered politics; new demands were raised and new tactics were proposed, tried, and applied. The younger generation, searching for a place in Hungarian political life, determined to mobilize the national masses and gain their political support. The Czechoslovak group failed to receive any substantial support in Slovakia. The clerical populists gained some popular support, but this was due more to the activities of the Neppart to whom they had attached themselves than to the skill of the Slovak populists themselves.46 But this alliance proved ineffective, for the Slovak clericals soon learned that the Neppart was no less chauvinistic

than most of the Magyar parties. Whether the Slovak national leaders realized it at the time or not, the denationalization of the Slovak nation failed not because of the effectiveness of their work or because of the ineffectiveness of "Magyari-
ization" but because of the traditional suspicion the peasants had for outsiders, whether Slovak or Magyar, and because of their opposition to change. This cut two ways. The basic opposition of the peasants to what might be called progressivism, liberalism, or simply social progress prevented the Slovak leaders from mobilizing mass support for their nation-
alistic aims; at the same time, the high rate of illiteracy and territorial isolation of ethnically Slovak peasants saved them from "Magyarization."

Among the new faces appearing on the Slovak political scene at the turn of the century, the most conspicuous was Milan Hodža, who was probably the most skillful Slovak politi-
tician of the twentieth century. 47 From the outset Hodža linked his critique of Magyar politics with his critical at-
titude toward the weakness of the policies pursued by the Slovak leaders. However, unlike Šrobár, Hodža was so tactful in criticizing the Slovak politicians that he did not antago-
nize or alienate them. Even more important, again unlike Šrobár, Hodža not only called for the activization of Slovak political life but also made an effort to present a specific, comprehensive political program which fitted into the Hungar-

ian political environment. A perusal of the social structure of Slovak society suggested to him that any realistic political program must be supported by the rural masses and must be pursued in cooperation with the non-Magyar nationalities of Hungary. His program, especially in the cooperative movement, did not even exclude or reject cooperation with the Magyars. Within the framework of the cooperative movement, Hodža was willing to cooperate with the Magyar peasants. He was willing to make an alliance and secure the cooperation of the Magyar liberals to settle the national political question. Hodža developed into a modern political realist par excellence partly because of his training and previous experience. He had studied in Transylvania (in Sibiu and Cluj) and had been trained in the finest political university for learning the modus operandi of Hungarian politics: the Hungarian parliament. There he kept in close touch with Romanian, Serbian, and Magyar parliamentarians and became an active member of the so-called "Workshop" of Francis Ferdinand, where he effectively received "post-doctoral training" in political intrigue. Hodža became the most efficient, the most successful, and the most opportunistic Slovak politician.

48 Ibid., p. 222.
In 1901 the Slovak National Party decided to reenter Hungarian political life by presenting an electoral program offering concessions on national demands in favor of the Magyars. Fully aware that the "okolie program" of the 1860's might result in the abolition of elections, Hodža made a devastating critique of the National Party's program during the electoral campaign. However, in spite of Hodža's slashing attack, the electoral campaign revitalized the National Party. A new statute and order of procedure was approved by the party, and a central committee consisting of forty-two members was elected. Four Slovak deputies were elected to the Hungarian diet. Everyone realized that it would be illusory to expect the Hungarian parliament to solve the Slovak question. Yet the very presence of the Slovaks in the diet forced it to pay attention to the Slovak question until the dissolution of the Hungarian kingdom in 1918.

Milan Hodža, Federation in Central Europe (London: Yarrolds, 1942), pp. 35-53; Keith Hitchins (compl.), The Nationality Problem in Austria Hungary: The Reports of Alexander Vaida to Franz Ferdinand's Chancellery (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), p. x. The clandestine collaboration with Francis Ferdinand was coordinated by Alexander Brosch von Aarenau, the chief of the military chancellery. Besides Vaida (code name Fidus), the collaborators consisted of József Kristóffy, the former Hungarian minister of interior, Edmund Steinacker, the leader of the Hungarian Germans, Baron Paul von Rausch, of Croatia, and Milan Hodža (code name Tenax), among others.


51 Tibenský, Slovensko: dejiny, pp. 574-575.

52 Ibid.
Another new element in Slovak politics was the increased cooperation between the political leaders and the American Slovaks, who actually published more Slovak newspapers with a greater circulation than the Slovaks at home. Attempts were also made to establish various cultural and political centers in Slovakia in order to avoid the centralization of the entire national-political life at Turčiansky sv. Martin. Probably even more significant from a political point of view were Hodža’s efforts to establish a strong co-operative movement and to found various self-aid organizations in recognition of the need to create a strong economic basis for the national movement. The dominant position of the Turčiansky sv. Martin leadership remained unaltered, but the clerical populists became the strongest political party in Slovakia. They were joined by the former Hlasists, whose group had dissolved at the beginning of the century.

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The idea of a unified Czechoslovak program ran into determined opposition, even hatred, on the part of the majority of the Slovak intelligentsia. The blame lies to a great extent with the Hlasists, because of their uncompromising criticism and their lack of constructive programs. But it was also due to the failure of the Czechs to provide expected assistance in time. The unending attacks on the Slovak language, the persistent efforts to discredit the Slovak national leadership, and the Czech attempts to create an alliance with the Magyars to gain support in the struggle for Czech historical state rights all contributed to destroy the Hlasists as a political force. In 1902 Blaho resigned from the editorship of his journal. During the same year Hodža ceased to contribute articles to it and left for Budapest, where he launched a publication of his own, the weekly Slovenský týždenník, in July, 1903.

Hodža's Slovenský týždenník, which immediately appealed to the Slovak peasantry, marked the beginning of the Slovak agrarian movement. Hodža was in accord with the National Party on the national question, but he opposed its tactics and on the whole supported those of the populists. National, (Bratislava: Vydavatelstvo SAV, 1962), pp. 40-42, Karol Sidor, Andrej Hlinka (1863-1926) (Bratislava: Tlacou Knihtlačiarne sv. Andreja, 1934), pp. 135-136 and 226-229.


57 Ibid. For more details, see Tibensky, Slovensko: dejiny, pp. 577-578.

populist, and agrarian trends created a broad base on which cooperation with the Czechs became possible without yielding on the question of Slovak sovereignty. Hlas ceased publication in 1904, and Šrobár desperately searched for a potential ally among the nationalists of Turciány swarm Martin and even considered one with the populists and social democrats. His letters to Masaryk are the most convincing proof that Masarykism did not find a fertile soil in Slovakia. The Slovak leaders remained hostile to Masaryk and his ideas and particularly resented his advocacy of the Czechoslovakist program. The official Slovak leadership did not face reality; they waited a magical solution of Slovak problems in the wake of anticipated political changes in Europe. Svetozár Hurban-Vajansky, the ideologue of the National Party, never gave up his conviction that the Russian big brother would ultimately liberate the Slovak nation. Messianism of this persuasion, though subject to a number of ups and downs, persisted in Slovakia until the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

59 Ibid., pp. 209-212.

Soon after the turn of the century there was abundant proof that chauvinism had deeply penetrated not only the ruling circles of Hungary but the middle and lower social strata as well. Some liberal Hungarian politicians, however, opposed the national policies of their government. This is not to say that the liberals renounced assimilationist policies, but they did reject the methods which the government used to accomplish them. Their opposition derived not from their concern for the non-Magyar nationalities but from a genuine feeling of Magyar patriotism. In their eyes, the Magyar nation and its future had the highest priority. They criticized the programs of the national parties as detrimental to the Magyar nation and to Hungary. The liberals maintained that the Magyars could be successful in their struggle for independence from Vienna only if they succeeded in winning the cooperation and support of the subject nationalities. In their opinion, this could be achieved only through pursuing liberal national policies, making concessions to the nationalities, and furthering the economic development of Hungary. The common economic interests of all Hungarian citizens, they felt, would guarantee the preservation of Hungary's territorial integrity. A democratized Hungary, the liberals insisted, would still guarantee Magyar hegemony in the economic and social spheres, and the superior Magyar culture and science would eliminate the need for forced assimilation since Hungary would be attractive to the non-Magyar
nationalities and they might assimilate voluntarily. The Magyar liberals, of course, were a miniscule minority rather than a political party, but their actual influence in society far outweighed their small number.

Characteristically, instead of listening to the warnings of the liberals, the Hungarian government pursued policies diametrically opposed to them. In 1907 it approved the ill-famed Apponyi education act, which provided that all subjects in all schools had to be taught in Magyar. Nevertheless, in spite of, or perhaps because of, such ominous occurrences, the great majority of Slovak national leaders continued to cherish messianistic dreams about the tsar liberator. In politics the concern shifted to the Catholic wing of the National Party and to Hodža’s rising agrarian movement. Instead of the National Party’s Národné noviny, the populist Katolícke noviny and Hodža’s Slovenský týždenník became the most important vehicles in supporting political mobilization.

61 Jaszi, A nemzeti államok, pp. 485-495, 496-509, and 529-534; Jaszi, The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, pp. 337-338. "Progressive Hungary unfortunately never had a word in the direction of the affairs of the country." Ibid., p. 342. For more details see Andics, A magyar nacíonalizmus, especially the contributions by Endre Arató, György Szabad, and Tibor Erényi.

62 Although the Apponyi education act and the Černová massacre outraged all of Europe, especially after Seton-Watson wrote what is his Racial Problems in Hungary, it is interesting to note that, probably due to extreme apathy, the Slovaks themselves did not demonstrate any significant opposition to the Apponyi education act. See István Dolományi’s "Kritik des Lex Apponyi," in Péter Hanák (ed.), Die nationale Frage in der Österreich-Ungarischen Monarchie, 1900-1918 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), pp. 233-288, especially p. 295, ns. 113, 116, 118, and 119.
Hodža's and the populists' appreciation of the need for mass politics was the most outstanding feature of Slovak politics in the years immediately before World War I. In the Budapest parliament Hodža did his best to ensure close cooperation between the non-Magyar members of the diet. In February, 1905, his efforts resulted in the formation of the Parliamentary National Party, composed of Slovak, Serbian, and Rumanian deputies. But little was actually accomplished by this action. The National Party existed more in the minds of its members than in actual fact. Still, Hodža revealed his ability and political skill in demonstrating a willingness to cooperate with the Magyars without being totally blinded by nationalism. His willingness to cooperate with the Magyars was expressed publicly in the March, 1905, issue of the Magyar journal Egyetértés. In this issue Hodža argued that the key to solving the national problem in Hungary lay not in the area of state rights but in the democratization of the country by liberalizing the entire social system. For obvious tactical reasons, Hodža refrained from emphasizing the national question, the solution of which he linked with the overall democratization of Hungary, i.e., he was


64 Hodža, then 27, entered the Hungarian parliament in February, 1905; his call for cooperation between the non-Magyar nationalities, however, goes as far back as 1898. See Bokes, Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu, Vol. III, pp. 414-415. See also Zuberec, "Formovanie slovenského agrárneho hnutia," pp. 210, 214, and 217-218, especially p. 222; and Hodža, Federation in Central Europe, p. 4.
convinced that the introduction of a free franchise would produce strong non-Magyar representation in the Hungarian parliament where the national problem could be dealt with in an orderly parliamentary manner; with the support of some open-minded Magyar deputies the nationalities could secure their rights. This, however, was not understood by the leadership of the National Party, which launched in the Narodnie noviny a vicious attack on Hodža, accusing him of selling out to the archenemies of the Slovaks. Without much concern about the opinion of the nationalists, Hodža dismissed their charges by simply stating that as far as he was concerned the 1848 Hungarian constitution provided means of asserting human liberty, including national rights.65

Notwithstanding the National Party's objections to Hodža's willingness to cooperate with the Magyar liberals, Slovak politics was in no position to ignore supportive alliances from Budapest, Prague, or anywhere else. In fact, the search for allies and assistance characterized Slovak politics until the outbreak of the First World War. It was under these circumstances that the Czechs reentered Slovak political life in 1905. According to Hodža, this was the year when he, together with some other Slovak politicians, signed a formal agreement with the Czechs concerning future Czech-Slovak cooperation. If this was the case, this cooperation was to be based on other than national issues, mainly

65 Zuberec, "Formovanie slovenského agrárneho hnutia," pp. 219-220.

in areas which involved mutual economic and financial interests. The alleged agreement was supposed to have been signed in Hodonín, where Hodža supposedly emphasized that the Slovaks were determined to solve their problems on Hungarian soil, making it clear that secession from Hungary was not under consideration. He did not ask for favors. He demanded the exclusion of linguistic questions from the agenda in the negotiations, in favor of exclusive economic, political, and cultural support from the Czechs. Hodža extended his search for allies to the ranks of the Slovak Social Democrats. The main aim of his national program at that time was to induce the Magyars to adhere to the Nationality Law.

Hodža advocated Czecho-Slovak cooperation at the end of the nineteenth century. See his article "Hospodárska politika" [Economic Politics], in Slovenské listy, October 24, 1898, and February 11, 1899. See also Bokes, Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu, Vol. III, pp. 454-455. (Bokes, however, claims that the author of the article is unknown.) In this article Hodža, who addressed it to the Pesti Hírlap and whose editor apparently objected to the presence of Slovak students in Czech schools, declared: "Give us schools; carry out at least what Article 44 of the famous 1868 national law provides for in this regard. In this case, we won't go to Bohemia but will work on the soil of the state." Hodža's speech at Hodonín appeared in Slovenské listy, on August 18, 1905. He emphasized that the Slovaks were searching for their freedom within the framework of Hungarian statehood and emphatically opposed attempts to force the Czech language on the Slovaks. Hodža's account of the meeting at Luhačovice was published in an article entitled "Tri dni v Luhačovicích" [Three Days in Luhačovice], Slovenský týždenník, August 11, 1910. In this article he makes it clear that cooperation was to concentrated primarily in the economic sphere. Hodža championed cooperation and even accepted the idea of mutuality, but, as he said in reaction to a Czech article on this subject, whose author demanded the introduction of Czech in Slovakia, the meaning of mutuality is self-explanatory: "mutuality is not Czechization." Slovenský týždenník, December 17, 1903. See also Zdeněk Urban, "Česko-slovenská vzájemnost před první světovou válkou," especially pp. 242-249.
of 1868. According to the available evidence, this would have satisfied the Slovaks until the last month of the war. On account of his work seven Slovak deputies were elected to parliament in 1906.

This unexpected success, together with information concerning Slovak cooperation with the Czechs, Romanians, Serbians, and even Russians, caught the attention of the Hungarian authorities. They reacted in a predictable manner. "Magyarization" was intensified, and the national leaders and others who advocated opposition were persecuted. The Magyars proved unable to yield even an inch. Their chauvinism increased. As one result of their intransigence, American Slovaks mobilized themselves to support their kinfolk at home. They united in the Slovenská liga, established in Cleveland on May 26, 1907, to fight barbaric political practices in Hungary.

The ill-fated bloodshed at Černová in 1907, where several Slovak demonstrators were killed by Hungarian gendarmes, was a minor incident in the general context of the Hungarian political environment. Yet it turned out to be an event which drew world attention to ethnic relations in Hungary and turned the Slovak question into a European problem. The massacre resulted from a planned provocation aimed primarily against Andrej Hlinka, the well-known Catholic priest and a prominent Slovak national leader. Its ultimate aim was to demonstrate unshaken Magyar supremacy. Černová also be-

Tibensky, Slovensko: dejiny, pp. 590-591.
came an issue to the Czechs. Because of the publicity the massacre received in the international press, it backfired against the Magyar government. Hodža skillfully exploited this opportunity to approach Francis Ferdinand about the national problem in general and to intensify the archduke's hatred of the Magyars. From this time on Hodža remained in constant touch with Francis Ferdinand. Through the chief of the Archduke's military chancellery, Major Brosch, he was kept informed about important events in the monarchy. He soon became a permanent member of the group around Francis Ferdinand that was called "The Workshop," and he was considered for a possible ministerial post when Francis Ferdinand came to power.

Though frequently accused of being a simple informer, Hodža conducted his clandestine collaboration with Francis Ferdinand with the knowledge of the National Party's leadership. The party obviously appreciated the fact that through

69 See Hodža's report on the events in Černová, Bianchi, "Listy Milana Hodžu," pp. 429-430; and his correspondence that follows up to 1911, in ibid., pp. 429-447, including the "Promemoria" compiled by Hodža and the Romanian politician Julius Maniu, on December 25, 1911. Ibid., 443-447. In addition to this, see the minutes of the audience given by Francis Ferdinand to a Slovak political delegation on March 14, 1913, in Vladimir Zuberc, "Alternativa tzv. belvederskej politiky," pp. 123-126. For Zuberc's commentary on this highly neglected trend in Slovak politics by historians, see ibid., pp. 111-123. From the aspect of Czech-Slovak relations one of the most interesting facts was Hodža's remark in his letter to Fedor Houdek of March 19, 1913, that since there was no hope for an individual Czechoslovak state, the nationalities needed a centralized monarchy which would secure a national balance to make the Slovaks an indispensable, dynastic, monarchial element. Zuberc, "Formovanie slovenského agrárneho hnutia," pp. 112-118.
Hodža the Slovak question was placed in the middle of imperial politics. Since some Slovak leaders with genuine trust placed their hope in Francis Ferdinand, and Hodža was the only Slovak politician with access to the highest level of imperial policy, he could not be, and was not made accountable to the party leadership for his activities. This has been understood. However, as Hodža gradually assumed a position of privilege, he ceased to feel accountable for his deeds to the National Party; indeed, he obviously felt that he was above the petty squabbles of Slovak political parochialism. This was a high price the Slovaks paid for their hopes in Francis Ferdinand, which Hodža seemed to symbolize, particularly when these hopes were not to be realized.

Although the period between 1905 and 1907 marked a high point in Slovak politics, the actual results were relatively meager. Turčiansky sv. Martin did not become the center of authority in the national movement. The real initiative came from the groups of intelligentsia in the editorial offices of the Ľudové noviny and Slovenský týždenník rather than from the Martin leadership. After 1907 Slovak political activity rapidly declined and reached a standstill. It was clear that the Hungarian government's power remained unimpaired.

Now Hodža and, thanks to him, the Slovaks had a chance

Robert W. Seton-Watson wrote in his A History of the Czechs and Slovaks (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965): "The Czechs were free to go forward at a growing pace, while the Slovaks were falling behind in the race, if not actually beginning to go backwards." See p. 283.
to play an important role in imperial politics. Many Slovak politicians were suspicious of him and did not appreciate what he was doing, but they did not curtail his activities. Hodza could always counter criticism by arguing that he was only following the "tried and true" methods of Slovak politics: the exploitation of conflicts between enemies to best advantage. These methods never really produced results, but despite countless examples to the contrary, the Slovaks continued to believe that they could outsmart their adversaries.

Francis Ferdinand was by no means a Czechophile; he actually despised the Czechs. But this did not prevent Hodza from remaining in contact with the Czech politicians. Even though he always kept his distance from the Hlasists, never identified fully with them, and never bound himself to accept their doctrinaire position, in actual political practice Hodza was more a true disciple of Masaryk than most of the orthodox Hlasists. Not surprisingly, the remnants of the former Hlasists, now regrouped around the review Prudy, began to gather around Hodza. Out of despair after the Cernova massacre, even some of the Turciansky sv. Martin leaders began to support the Czechoslovak trend in Slovak politics. Although the cooperation with the Czechs did not become the Slovaks' only iron in the fire, the pro-Czech sentiments and the desire for economic and political cooperation were rising in Slovakia. These sentiments were, on a limited scale, reciprocated in Bohemia.
III
Czechs Plus Czechs Equals Czechoslovakia?

The Memorandum on the Solution to the Slovak Question submitted to the Hungarian diet in 1911 represented the last statement of national demands that the Slovaks presented to the Hungarian authorities. Although the Slovaks asked in essence no more than adherence to the 1868 Nationality Law, the Budapest authorities dismissed the petition as excessive. Consequently, when liberal political currents began to surface in Hungarian political life, the Slovaks were unable to consider cooperation with the Magyars.

In June, 1913, when Mihály Károlyi became the leader of the Magyar Independence and Forty-Eight Parties, the Magyar liberals paid the price for the past record of Magyar politics. Károlyi sincerely intended to grant universal suffrage once his party came into power, but the Slovaks refused to support him. Their accumulated resentment may have cost the Slovaks more than it cost the Magyars, for Károlyi, Jášzi and other liberals of this stripe perhaps represented the last chance for the liberal cause to succeed in Hungary. As it was, Hungarian liberalism was one of the many casualties of the First World War.

1 Tibenský, Slovensko: dejiny, p. 616.
2 Milan Podrúmavský, "Oszkár Jášzi a národnostná otáz-
Responsibility for the failure to cooperate with the liberal Magyars lies at least partly with Hodža. The universal suffrage advocated by Károlyi represented the principal demand in Hodža's political program, but in 1907 Hodža had become a supporter of the Austrian heir-apparent, Francis Ferdinand. Hodža advocated the so-called "Belvedere orientation" in Slovak politics, i.e., cooperation with the future emperor on the assumption that after the archduke assumed power the non-Magyar nationalities would be rewarded for their loyalty to the throne.\(^3\)

Hodža found an avenue to clandestine collaboration with Francis Ferdinand's "Workshop," organized in 1907 by the Chief of the archduke's military chancellery, Major Alexander Brosch, in which nearly all the nationalities in the empire were represented. Although some Slovak national leaders were supposedly aware of it, Hodža's collaboration began as and remained Hodža's own private affair.\(^4\)


It appears that Hodža would not have opposed a Czecho-Slovak political union as part of a federated Austria-Hungary. However, as a political realist, he knew that such a union was improbable. He favored a future centralistic monarchy, favorable to the non-Magyar nationalities. In cooperation with Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the Transylvanian Romanians, Hodža summarized these ideas regarding the future of the empire and the role of the nationalities in it in a memorandum to the heir apparent on December 25, 1911.⁵

If the dynasty and the empire were to fulfill their historical mission, Hodža and Maniu argued, they must rely on the support of the small non-Magyar nations, particularly the Slavs. The non-Magyar nationalities, they insisted, were pro-monarchical in nature and represented an integrative force, in contrast to the Magyars, who represented a separatist and divisive element. Once Magyar hegemony was destroyed, the small nations would form the pillars of a powerful centralized monarchy. The key to this ultimate solution, Hodža and Maniu suggested, was universal suffrage. The enfranchisement of the citizenry would create non-Magyar majorities in all the representative bodies of the empire. In purely Magyar areas the problem could be solved by the nomination of non-separatist Magyar representatives. In return for their support of the dynasty,

⁵A copy of this memorandum can be found in Bianchi, "Listy Milana Hodžu," pp. 443-447.
the small non-Magyar nations should be granted a status of equality with the other nations of the empire. Hodža repeated these arguments almost verbatim as the spokesman of an official Slovak delegation to Francis Ferdinand on March 14, 1913, and he adhered to the program perhaps as late as 1917.

The reconstructed minutes of the audience of March 14, 1913, as found in Zuberec, "Alternativa tzv. belvederskej politiky," pp. 123-126. In his Federation in Central Europe (London: Yarrolds, 1942), pp. 35-53, Milan Hodža wrote about his collaboration in the workshop. Take Jonescu, the Romanian politician, won Hodža over for cooperation with Francis Ferdinand by pointing out that such action would not preclude the adoption of any other alternative possibilities and political maneuvering. Hodža alluded to another memorandum on the solution of the Slovak question which he submitted to Francis Ferdinand in April, 1914, when the old emperor fell seriously ill and a change in sovereign was once again a possibility. Hodža was to occupy a seat in the envisioned new government, the Slovak question was to be resolved through granting universal suffrage and the re-delination of the counties in accordance with their ethnic composition. The county assemblies elected by the enfranchised polity were to form "a common organism, administrative as well as legislative, and endowed with powers corresponding roughly to the non-Magyar scheme as formulated by [Aurel] Popovici." Hodža, Federation in Central Europe, p. 52; Arthur Polzer-Hoditz, Kaiser Karl. Aus der Geheimmappe seines Kabinettschefs (Zürich: Amathea Verlag, 1929); pp. 415-416. Polzer-Hoditz wrote about his familiarity with many reports and memoranda submitted to Francis Ferdinand's workshop by his collaborators. Polzer-Hoditz, Kaiser Karl, p. 75. His own memorandum on the solution of the nationality question submitted to the emperor in May, 1917, strongly resembled the suggestions made by Hodža in 1911. For the full text of the memorandum, see ibid., pp. 416-418. In Slovenský prevrat [Slovak Coup] (4 vols., Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1930-31), Vol. I, pp. 229-300, Karol Medvecký mentioned that Hodža had been invited to an audience with the emperor in May, 1917, to give his opinion regarding the national problem, but Hodža rejected the invitation. Nonetheless, Hodža maintained a consistent position on the solution of the Slovak question within the monarchy at least until the end of May, 1918. He summarized his views in a letter sent to the Slovak National Party which met on May 24, 1918. This was its first and only meeting during the war. Hodža suggested
Although Francis Ferdinand was not in a position to offer practical assistance to the small nations of Hungary, at least some of the Slovak political leaders agreed with Hodža's Belvedere politics. The chairman of the Slovak National Party, Matúš Dula, headed a delegation sent to Francis Ferdinand on March 14, 1913. Dula believed that once Francis Ferdinand became emperor the Slovaks would achieve national recognition and political rights. The wording of the inscription on the wreath which the Slovaks later laid on Francis Ferdinand's grave, "To the lost hope—the deeply grieving Slovaks," suggests that Hodža's and Dula's sentiments were widely shared. 7

that the Slovaks should ally themselves with any Magyar or non-Magyar political party. Though Hodža alluded to the right of self-determination, it was evidently intended that it should materialize within Hungary. There was not a single word about Czechoslovak unity, let alone any hint about a Czechoslovak state. The maximum of what Hodža demanded was the correction of the latest Hungarian electoral law and, as always, Hodža was willing to make an alliance "with the devil himself" if it would promote his immediate political goals. In other words, he kept his options wide open for any eventuality and advised the National Party to do the same. He was ready to cooperate with Budapest, Prague, Vienna or any other government. Hronsky, "K slovenskej politike v období prvej svetovej vojny" [Slovak Politics during the Period of World War I], Historický časopis, Vol. XVII (1969), pp. 495-496, n. 54.

7 Dula's report on the May 24, 1918, meeting of the Slovak National Party can be found in Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. III, pp. 344-349. It is also quoted in Hronsky, "K slovenskej politike," p. 477, n. 9. See also Samuel Zoch to Dula, March 11, 1918, ibid., n. 10. For Father Ferdiš Juriga's laudation of Francis Ferdinand's memory, see the record of his October 19, 1918, speech in the Hungarian diet in Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. III, p. 458. For the inscription on the wreath, see Slovenský tyždenník, July 17, 1914. See also Marián Hronsky, "Tajná porada slovenskej národné strany" [The Secret Consultation of the Slovak National Party], Dějiny a současnost, Vol. III (1965), pp. 35-37.
Other Slovak nationalists favored cooperation with the Czechs,\(^8\) but the idea of unification with them was vehemently opposed by the majority of the Slovak national leaders, particularly those in the conservative wing, which always represented the National Party.\(^9\) The conservatives kept alive a hope of messianic Russian deliverance, an or-

\(^8\) The hardline Hlasists without exception thought that the political cooperation between the Czechs and Slovaks had to be postponed, since the authorities in Budapest considered even lesser "crimes" a treason, which, according to martial law, called for capital punishment. No Slovak would take such chances. Anton Štefánek, one of the most outspoken Czechoslovak-oriented Slovak intellectuals, was compelled to leave Budapest for Prague shortly after the war broke out. In Prague he soon learned that the Czech politicians lacked interest in Slovakia and Slovak affairs. The outcome of the war being unpredictable, not even the Slovakophile Czechs knew what, if anything, should or could be done for the Slovaks. Karel Káhal to Jaroslav Heyduk, October, 1916, as quoted in Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," p. 475. Though thoroughly disgusted with the Czech political environment, Štefánek soon began to work for the Národní listy [National Newspaper], and, together with the handful of Prague Slovaks and Czech Slovakophiles, he launched a campaign on behalf of the Slovaks in the journal Národ [Nation], although the Slovaks themselves kept absolutely silent.

\(^9\) The National Party and the Martin leadership "remained conservativé and anti-Czech until the end of the war." Vavro Šrobár, Pamäti z vojny a väženia (1914–1918) [Memoirs from War and Prison (1914–1918)] (Martin: Matica slovenská, 1946), p. 46. Shortly after the beginning of the war Kornel Stodola, who lived in Vienna and was one of the leading Slovak politicians, visited Slovakia. While there he remarked in his diary: "With Hurban [Svetozár Hurban Vajanský, the editor of the Národné noviny and the most influential Slovak national ideologue] strong anti-Czech sentiments, they rely on Russia." Kornel Stodola, "Vojnový denník" [War Diary], in Milan Hodža, publicista, politik, vedecký pracovník [Milan Hodža, Publicist, Politician, Scholar], edited by Anton Štefánek, František Votrubá, and František Sedá (Prague: Ceskomoravské podniky tiskářské a vydavatelské, 1930), p. 134.
genic tenet of Slovak politics since time immemorial. Others such as Hodža denounced the notion by pointing out that the many Slavs in the empire would not be dependent on Russian liberation if they formed a united front themselves. 10

Through their tactless criticism of the traditional national leadership and the very core of Slovak national ideology—the demand for universal recognition of autonomous Slovak national identity—the pro-Czech Hlasists did more harm than good for the cause of Czecho-Slovak cooperation. It had been common knowledge among the leading Slovaks that the "youngsters" had no political program of their own. Educated in Prague, these young Slovaks promulgated Masarykism as their general political-ideological platform, without fully grasping its essential meaning. 11

10 His sympathies toward the Russian nation notwithstanding, Hodža warned his co-nationals against dependence on the Russian tsar. See Slovenský týždenník [Slovak Weekly], May 9, 1913. At the same time, he expressed disbelief over the possibility that the Czechs and Slovaks could survive as an independent national entity sandwiched between the Germans and the Magyars, but he rejected the notion that the Russians could free the small Slavic nation. Ibid., September 26, 1913. Consequently, he thought it expedient for the Slovaks to cooperate with the Czechs, since "we are one anyway—only many do not want to know it," and to strive for an Austria-Hungary federalized along the outlines proposed by Palacký. Ibid., May 29, 1914. It should be remembered that Hodža was first and foremost a practical politician who was capable of manipulating ideological slogans but who was never swayed by them. Thus Slovak-Czech cooperation was economic and social in character. Czech cultural assistance to Slovakia was welcome, but under no circumstances would Hodža allow the subjugation of Slovakia to Czech supremacy or force the Czech language upon the Slovaks. He made this crystal clear as early as in 1905. See Slovenské listy, August 18, 1905.

11 Milan Podričmavský, "Kollárovská a Štúrovská koncep-
Relations between the Slovak national leaders and the Hlasists were strained, although the need for cooperation with the Czechs was generally understood and accepted.

Only shortly before the outbreak of the war a new attempt was made to revitalize Slovak national political life. On May 26, 1914, representatives of all Slovak political leanings met on a consulting basis in Budapest, where a decision to establish a supreme central coordinative organ, the Slovak National Council, was accepted. The meeting produced a draft proposal supporting close cooperation with the Czechs. At the same time, however, the Slovaks demanded full recognition and respect for autonomous Slovak national identity as the sine qua non of such a partnership. The party leadership was to inform its Czech counterpart about this resolution, the validity of which still depended on approval by the plenary meeting of the Slovak National Party. Because of the war this meeting, how-


12"Slovenske porady v Pešťbudíne" [Slovak Consultation in Budapest], Slovenský týždenník, May 29, 1914. Approximately thirty persons participated in the deliberations, most of them leading Slovaks and some Czech political leaders such as Kramár, Sedláčik, Udrižal, and Stanek. In an article "Česi a Maďari - Češi a Slováci" [Czechs and Magyars - Czechs and Slovaks], published in the same issue of the Slovenský týždenník, Bodza urged his Slovak readers to form and keep up the brotherly relations between the Czechs and Slovaks, both of whom he declared one and the same.

13Vyklad programu Slovenskej národnej strany [Explanati
ever, did not take place until October 30, 1918.

The outbreak of the war brought political activities in Slovakia to a full halt. The draft program of the National Party remained on paper and had no chance of being implemented. Few Slovaks absolutely opposed cooperation with the Czechs, but national unification with the Czechs was an entirely different matter. If anything, anti-Czech sentiment gained new momentum during the initial stage of the war, as chimerical visions of the "white liberator Tsar" turned the hearts of many naive Slovak nationalists toward the East.

Immediately following the outbreak of hostilities the Slovak press published several patriotic proclamations of readiness to sacrifice Slovak lives and property on the altar of the Austro-Hungarian fatherland. The Slovaks could hardly do otherwise in the climate of mandatory patriotism which prevailed at the beginning of the war. However, after a few such outbursts the Slovaks retreated into

tion of the Slovak National Party’s Program], compiled by Jozef Gregor (Martin: n. p., 1914).


15 Srobár, Pamäti, pp. 23–24. While the common people were allegedly preparing welcoming parties for the Russians, Srobár and his friends supposedly studied the frontiers of future Slovakia on maps already drawn up. Srobár related that there were three variant shapes of Slovakia and that the second of them became almost the exact boundary line of the post-war Slovakia. The third, maximalist version, seems to be identical with, or approximately, Kramár’s imperialistic designs vis-à-vis Hungary.

16 Narodnie noviny, August 6, 1914.
almost absolute silence. This was also in line with Slovak political reasoning: if things turned out well for the monarchy, demands based on resistance would be senseless; if, on the other hand, Austria-Hungary were defeated, liberation would come automatically. Later the Slovak leaders justified their passivity by the need to protect individuals, safeguard the nation, and avoid senseless persecution and terror. Some apologists went so far as to declare that wartime political passivity was the most heroic deed of the Slovak nation. Except for a few patriotic pro-Hungarian proclamations, the Slovaks remained silent despite the Budapest government's occasional efforts to secure statements in support of governmental policies.

The westward advance of the Russian army revived latent Slovak Russophilism. By November, 1914, the Russians had occupied some eighty communities in Eastern Slovakia, where the population welcomed them as "redeemers from the yoke of the Magyar tyranny." But after the breakthrough at Gorlitz the Russian army retreated, and expectations of an early liberation were disappointed.


18 Zoch to Dula, March 11, 1918, as cited in Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," p. 477 n. 10; and Dula's report to the May 24, 1918, meeting of the Slovak National Party. Ibid., n. 9.

Nevertheless, Slovak and Czech political leaders were strongly pro-Russian, at least during the first two war years. Russia was the first of all the Allied Powers to formulate war aims in which much consideration was given to the small nations and the areas inhabited by them. The well-known thirteen points of Sergei Sazonov, the Russian foreign minister, outlining Russian war aims and the recently reprinted Russian Map of Future Europe in a war propaganda leaflet, conclusively demonstrate this fact. The map is particularly interesting in regard to its delineation of the future Slovakia. The legend printed on the margin shows that the Russians intended to divide Austria-Hungary into a triple monarchy: the empire of Austria, the kingdom of Bohemia, and the Hungarian kingdom. Except for the extreme western portion of the country (the Zaborie and the city of Bratislava), Slovakia was to remain part of the Hungarian kingdom. Both in the west and in the north, the borderline was to follow the ridges of the Carpathian mountains. Although the Russian foreign minister disclaimed the official character of these political-


geographic designs, the evidence shows that the tsar both knew and approved of them. 22

Clearly, Russia regarded this part of Europe as exclusively within her sphere of influence. It appears that had Russia come out of the war on the side of the victorious Allies, the Russian leaders would have expected a free hand in determining the fate of East-Central Europe. The French actually gave Russia a free hand in this area in an agreement signed March 11, 1917, in return for Russian promises not to interfere in France's handling of the western borders of Germany. 23 The almost exclusively pro-Russian orientation of Slovak and Czech politics thus appeared at the time to be realistic. This orientation did not change in Slovakia until after the Bolshevik Revolution in November, 1917.

Concurrently with the Russian advance, political difficulties in the summer of 1915 forced István Tisza, the Hungarian premier, to muster as much political support for himself as possible. Consequently, he invited the Slovak leaders to make up a list of their most pressing demands and promised to grant them all the rights the Romanians


already enjoyed except for universal suffrage and progressive taxation.  

The Slovaks reacted quickly to Tisza's invitation. Dula, the chairman of the Slovak National Party, issued a circular letter to all Slovak political leaders informing them of Tisza's proposal and urging them to comply, not only to demonstrate their good faith but also to prove the Slovaks' awareness of their national Hungarian patriotic obligations. The proposal could not be ignored, Dula insisted, because the time would come when the Slovaks would be called to account for their behavior during the war and would be asked to present proof of their loyalty to Hungary. A delegation was ready to embark for Budapest when, for reasons still unclear, Hodža prevented it from leaving. It seems most likely that Tisza's reluctance to grant universal suffrage and his poor reputation for keeping promises accounted for Hodža's opposition.

The Czech political program for the solution of the Czech Question was based on the assumption that the Austro-Hungarian empire would continue to exist. The outbreak of the war did not alter this position substantially. Most Czech political parties were loyal to the monarchy. The


\[25\] Dula's circular letter of August 9, 1915, as printed in ibid., p. 478. Dula explained Tisza's motives in his letter to Vladimír Makovický on August 16, 1915. See ibid.

\[26\] Stodola, "Vojnový denník," pp. 138-139, seems to be the only source which explains that the action failed because of Hodža's opposition to it.
main supporters of the territorial integrity of the empire were the Catholic conservatives and the radical Social Democrats. Their program was not one of separatism but rather of reorganizing the empire along federalistic lines. Moreover, they wanted to "democratize," not to destroy it.27

There was nothing left for Czech political leaders but obedience to the empire and conformity with its policies.28

No one possessed a comprehensive program of action to pursue in case war broke out. There was no "well-thought-out policy of resistance," although the feeling that something had to be done in case war broke out between Austria and Russia had haunted the Czech and Slovak nationalists for decades.29 Masaryk's Realist Group was numerically limited

27 Věra Olivová, Českolovensko v rozrušené Evropě [Czechoslovakia in a Disturbed Europe] (Prague: Melantrich, 1968), pp. 11-14 (also in English under the title of The Doomed Democracy: Czechoslovakia in a Disrupted Europe, 1914-1938 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972). George Theiner, the excellent translator of this work, somewhat weakened Dr. Olivová's categoric statement that "before the First World War the idea of creating an independent Czechoslovak state as an absurdity void of any foundation" by translating it as "Yet as recently as the years leading up to the First World War, the idea of an independent Czechoslovak state was just so much pie in the sky: that generation was used to the idea of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy." (The italics are mine). The specialists are in agreement regarding the reformist rather than destructive character of the Czech attitude toward the empire. See, for instance, Pichlík, Zahraniční odboj, pp. 13-28; and Milada Paulová, Tainý výbor [MAFFIE] a spolupráce s ČJH v letech 1916-1918 [The Secret Committee (MAFFIE) and the Cooperation with the Yugoslavs, 1916-1918] (Prague: Academia, 1968), pp. 9-11 and 15.

28 Paulová, Tainý výbor, pp. 23-30 and 49-56; Olivová, Českolovensko v rozrušené Evropě, p. 20.

and its impact on the masses was miniscule. Even the Realists had no idea what policy to follow under the new circumstances. Although the group later gained enormous prestige as a result of Masaryk's achievements during the war and his role in creation of an independent Czechoslovakia, the Realists had neither priority nor a monopoly of influence when the Czech irredentist movement began.

In both Czech and Slovak political cultures the so-called catastrophic solution of their respective national question always played a prominent role. Proponents of this solution, such as Lev Borský in Bohemia, and Jozef Škultéty and Svetozár Hurban-Vajansky, the two outstanding ideologists within the Slovak national camp, believed that a clash between the Great Powers would result in a Russian victory, which in turn would bring about the liberation of the small oppressed Slavic peoples. Vaclav Klofác, the leader of the Czech National Socialist Party, proposed in conversations with several leading military personalities in Saint Petersburg in January, 1914, that an intelligence network be established since if war broke out various groups in the monarchy would work for the Russians.

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30 Ibid.

Along similar lines, Donát Scheiner, the chairman of the Sokol sport organization (which was also organized for para-military training) conducted talks with leading Russian military and political personalities. The Czech proposals were not accepted because the Russian military command expected that hostilities between the Entente and the Central Powers would not begin before 1917, but they were not forgotten. Scheiner and Klofač played an important role in organizing the Czech military forces which first entered Slovakia in 1918, but there is no evidence that they put forth territorial demands concerning Slovakia during their negotiations with the Russians. The demand for Slovakia, however, was made in a secret plan which the recognized leader of Czech politics, Karel Kramar, sent to Russia in May, 1914.


33 Pichlík, Zahraniční odboj, p. 29.
The outlines of the "Constitution of the Slavic Empire," as Krámar entitled this memorandum, are similar

34 Milada Pauločová, Dějiny Maffie. Odboj Čechů a Jiho-
slovanů za světové války 1914–1918 [History of the Maffie. The Resistance of the Czechs and Yugoslavs during the World War, 1914–1918] (2 vols., Prague: Československá grafická unie, 1937–39), Vol. I, pp. 635–640. Appendices I and II are the transcripts of Krámar's memoranda, "The Constitution of the Slav Empire" and "The Slav Empire and its Neighbours," which were written by Vsevolod P. Svatkovsky, a Russian journalist and informer for the ministry of foreign affairs. Svatkovsky dispatched Krámar's draft memorandum and another one written by himself which was based on conversations with Krámar and some Yugoslav politicians to Saint Petersburg by the way of the Russian embassy in Vienna. The Russian embassy to Vienna forwarded the three proposals to Moscow with a covering letter. Curiously, when the Czech historian Jaroslav Papoušek discovered these documents in the Russian archives and published them in 1934, Krámar denied his authorship. See Jaroslav Papoušek, "Krá-
márove ústava slovanske říše z června 1914" [Krámar's Con-
stitution of a Slavic Empire of June 1914], Národní osvo-
bození [National Liberation], June 24, and July 5, 1934. Papoušek proved, in effect, that Krámar had been keeping two irons in the fire. Though Pauločová refuted Papoušek's notion, in Pauločová, Dějiny Maffie, Vol. I, pp. 62–66, the most recent scholarship seems to corroborate Papoušek's thesis. See Karel Herman and Zdeněk Sládek, Slovanská po-
politika Karla Krámarove [Karel Krámar's Slavic Politics] (Prague: Academia, 1971), pp. 39–42 and 43. Another interesting point worth mentioning was the remark of the Russian Ambassador to Vienna, Shebeko, who in his covering letter wrote that Krámar's plans were of "a rather fantastic na-
ture." See Papoušek, "Před dvaceti léty" [Twenty Years ago], Národní osvobození, June 24, 1934. The characteriza-
tion of Krámar's ideas by the Russians as "fantastic" is interesting because the British foreign office found Masaryk's ideas, as presented in Seton-Watson memorandum on "The Future of Bohemia" on November 5, 1914, "so incre-
dible" that Sir George Clerk felt it necessary to assure the Foreign Office about Masaryk's importance in the Czech politics and the seriousness of his ideas which, Clerk wrote on the margin of the memorandum, were "worth bearing in mind." Kenneth Calder, Britain and the Origins of New
Europe, 1914–1918 (Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 27–28. And as late as May 1, 1915, when Masaryk submitted his memorandum "Independent Bohemia" Sir George once again wrote on the margin that "the Allies have a long way to go before the points in this memo can come up for their consideration." Ibid., p. 81.
to the plans which Masaryk outlined for the Western Allies later. Besides constitutional demands, Kramár's plan contained specific territorial claims for the future Bohemian kingdom. Kramár's plan contained the very first delineation of the proposed southern border of the new country and the first seed of Magyar-Czechoslovak conflict over Slovak territory. From the outset Kramár assumed an extreme expansionist position. According to his plan, the frontier line was to follow the middle course of the Danube up to Visegrád, a few miles north of Budapest, and from

35 Although these Czech territorial demands had no relevance for Slovakia, it seems to be important to mention them as an example of early Czech expansionism. According to Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 13, in December, 1914, Kramár discovered that to become an integral part of the future Slavic empire the size of the Czech kingdom should be increased by adding Upper and Lower Austria, down to the Danube (but without Vienna). However, during their audiences with Sergei Sazonov, the Russian minister of foreign affairs, and with the tsar himself, in September 1914, the delegates of the Czech societies in Russia came up with a map which clearly anticipated the annexation of Vienna. See Vladimír Lebedev, "Chekoslovatskaia politika tsarskogo pravitelstva" [Czechoslovak Policy of the Tsarist Government] Vоля России [Liberty of Russia] (Prague), Vol. VIII-IX (1924), p. 210. No matter what might have been the case in 1914, after the war there was much talk in the Kramár cabinet itself, not to mention among extreme expansionists, about the great number of Viennese Czechs, which would indicate that the government contemplated, and some extremist explicitly demanded, the annexation of Vienna. "The incorporation of Vienna to the Czech state is as much in the interest of Vienna as it is in that of the Czechs," insisted Emanuel Chalupný, a well known Czech sociologist, in a memorandum presented to the government. See Ferdinand Pergutka, Budovaní státu: československá politika v letech popřevratových [The Building of the State: Czechoslovak Politics, in the Post-coup Years] (4 vols. in 6, Prague: F. Borový, 1933-36), Vol. I, p. 225. By adopting this logic to Hungary, the Czechoslovaks would have had good reason to annex Budapest, in which some 90,000 Slovaks lived, and also to occupy Chicago, Illinois, which had a Czech population larger than any city except Prague.
there it was to follow a straight line eastward. Thus the annexation of northern Hungary was for some of the Czech leaders a matter of course from the outset. The Slovak leaders naturally knew nothing of Kramár's actions. Neither did Masaryk before December, 1914.

The Czech political leaders who had remained in the monarchy were concerned with much simpler questions, such as what should be done in the Czech lands, if, indeed, anything could be done. Should a domestic resistance movement be initiated or should the Czechs support the monarchy, or should they start an irredentist movement abroad, and, if so, where and how? Shortly after the beginning of the

war the Czechs established three resistance centers abroad. The first link between the Czech domestic leadership and the outside was established by Lev Sychrava, a member of the States Rights Progressive Party, who left Austria and went into exile on September 21, 1914. The Young Czech Party associated itself with the Russian representatives in Bulgaria through František Sís, whose brother Vladimír lived in Sofia. This channel was controlled exclusively by Kramár; consequently, its efforts centered on the promotion of a Slavic empire. Masaryk, determined to work against Austria and, knowing that this could not be done at home, left Prague for good in December, 1914, and formed the third irredentist "group." His group was to become the most important center of Czechoslovak anti-Austrian resistance, and it gradually became the leader of the entire irredentist movement abroad.37

Before his departure from Bohemia, Masaryk founded a clandestine resistance organization known in the annals of Czechoslovak history as the "Maffia." It was organized in Masaryk's absence and led by Eduard Beneš, a young sociologist who had graduated only a couple of years earlier from the University of Dijon. Beneš also had to flee abroad in September, 1915. After Beneš's departure, Premysl Šamal, the chairman of the Realist Party, took over

the leadership of the "Maffia" and remained its head until
the end of the war. 38

Masaryk's plans for the future assumed the annexation
of Slovakia to Bohemia from the very beginning. 39 A de-
tailed exposition of the Czech national-political and ter-
ritorial aspirations was presented to the British foreign
office in a memorandum prepared by Robert Seton-Watson.
Seton-Watson summarized Masaryk's thoughts as they had been
elaborated in the course of their conversation in Rotter-
dam, where they met in mid-October, 1914. The memorandum,
which was entitled The Future of Bohemia, contained the
"maximal" Czech demands: the restoration of "historical
Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and add to this the Slovak dis-
tricts of Hungary (Slovensko)." 40 It was unclear what con-
stituted Slovensko, unless it was those areas where the
Slovaks were in a majority. However, it was substantially
smaller and more ethnically compact than the territory
which was annexed and later became known as Slovensko:
the areas annexed by Czechoslovakia in 1919.

Masaryk's plan could materialize only if Germany and
Austria-Hungary were totally crushed. Masaryk's aspira-
tions contained an inherent contradiction between the prin-
ciples of historical rights, upon which he would base his

38 Masaryk, The Making of a State p. 48; Beneš, War
Memoirs, pp. 46-50.


40 Robert William Seton Watson, Masaryk in England
(Cambridge: University Press, 1943), pp. 43-44. The ital-
ics are mine.
claim to the Bohemian kingdom (Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia), and the claim to Slovakia, based on natural right, which had never formed a part of ancient Bohemia.\textsuperscript{41} Masaryk asked for a frontier line in southern Slovakia following the Danube from the mouth of the Morava river but north of the Velký žitný ostrov (Grosse Schütt), that is, not the main stream of the Danube but the Malý Dunaj (Small Danube), the northernmost branch of the river to the mouth of the Ipel; from there "to near to its sources and as closely as possible to the ethnographic boundary between the Slovaks and the Magyars, and later between Slovaks and Ruthenians."\textsuperscript{42} This was a far cry from Kramár's plan and from what was eventually to be annexed by Czechoslovakia. The cities of Bratislava and Košice were to be included in Czechoslovakia, but not the Tokaly region, which Kramár had demanded. Užgorod, Mukacevo, and Sighet (Marmaros Sziget) would have been left in the Russian empire.\textsuperscript{43}

Masaryk's territorial demands for an independent Czechoslovak state closely resembled the traditional Slovak aspirations, the Okolie. He wanted to incorporate into Czechoslovakia the Fourteen to sixteen ethnically Slovak districts, rather than all of Upper Hungary, and he did not demand the annexation of Ruthenia. Masaryk used the ethnic argument cautiously because of the intricate problem

\textsuperscript{41}Statements to the contrary lacked and still are devoid of any scientific foundation.
\textsuperscript{42}Seton-Watson, \textit{Masaryk in England}, p. 45. The italics are mine.
\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}
posed by the German minorities in Bohemia and Moravia. In these areas Masaryk proved flexible, ready to make minor adjustments along ethnic lines. In Slovakia, however, with the possible exception of the Žitný ostrov, he was unwilling to compromise. Nonetheless, Masaryk demonstrated much more respect for the ethnic principle than did most of the Czech leaders, especially Kramár. Unfortunately for all concerned, Masaryk represented a minority, while Kramár reflected the attitude which proved to represent the opinion of the majority of the Czechs after the war.

When Masaryk left Bohemia in December, 1914, he took along a sketch of Slovakia with her future boundaries, which far exceeded his original claims in Slovakia. The sketch, to be sure, was not drawn under Masaryk's supervision but was produced rather hastily by an officer of the Austrian army. The map included Žitný ostrov and other extensive areas in northern Hungary that Masaryk had not originally claimed. These territories appeared in the memorandum entitled "Independent Bohemia" submitted by Seton-Watson to the secretary of the British foreign office, Sir George Clerc, in April, 1915. Clerc promised to forward it to Sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary.

44 Perman, The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State, pp. 20–21. Masaryk contemplated making some minor adjustments in the northeast along the ethnic line which separated the Slovaks from the Ruthenians. After the war, however, he was willing to make concession in the southwest, namely to leave the Žitný ostrov in Hungary, but he would not compromise an inch in the east.


In this second memorandum Masaryk proposed the reorganization of Bohemia into an independent nation-state, as desired, he claimed, by nearly all Czech political parties. Masaryk stated that this "is the alleged aim of all Bohemia and of all political parties." He insisted that "there are few individual adherents of Austria. No politician of any repute is among them." Stretching the truth further, Masaryk insisted that the Slovaks "are Bohemians in spite of their using their dialect as their literary language," and they "strive also for independence and accept union with Bohemia." If these statements were to be taken at face value, the territorial problems involved would have seemed mere technicalities. Masaryk claimed the Slovak districts of northern Hungary for the new Bohemian state, from Užgorod to Košice "along the ethnographic boundaries," down along the Ipel River up to the Danube, including Bratislava and all of Upper Hungary up to its northern border.

The Slovak national leaders at home did not have the slightest knowledge of Masaryk's activities abroad. It is certain however, that no Slovak, abroad or at home, would have accepted Masaryk's statement that the Slovaks

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49 *Ibid.* The italics are mine.
were Czechs and that their literary language was only a Czech dialect. And neither did the bulk of the Czechs.

While Masaryk concentrated on convincing the Allied leaders that the Slovaks joined the Bohemians in demanding independence, opportunistic Czech political forces at home organized themselves into the so-called Národní souročenství (National Coordination) representing a concentration of the major political parties—Social Democrats, the Czech Agrarian, and, gradually, the Young Czech Party—with the common aim of improving Bohemia's lot by impressing the empire with a show of Czech loyalty. The leadership in exile clearly was isolated from domestic politics. The program of the domestic leaders reflected narrowly opportunistic Czech aspirations. Not a single word was said about Slovakia. Czech leaders within the Habsburg monarchy made no attempt whatever to adjust their political aims to those promoted by Masaryk until it became clear that the Central Powers had lost the war. However, since Masaryk's support came from the western hemisphere and from the Czech and Slovak emigre organizations and communities abroad, this gave his group enormous importance.

In October, 1915, the leaders of the Czech National Union and the Slovak League, the two most important organizations of Czechs and Slovaks in the United States, met

51 Paulová, Tájný výbor, pp. 28 and 49-56; Pichlík, Zahraniční odboj, pp. 129-130.

52 Pichlík, Zahraniční odboj, p. 169; Olivová, Ceskoslovensko v rozrušené Evropě, p. 71.
in Cleveland, Ohio. This joint meeting produced the so-called "Cleveland Agreement"—one of the most important documents for Czecho-Slovak relations. The émigré organizations expressed support for a joint goal: "the unification of the Czech and Slovak nations in a federative union of states with full autonomy for Slovakia." The Cleveland Agreement confirmed the right of the Slovaks to a diet of their own, as well as a separate administration and full cultural freedom, including the free use of the Slovak language, which would also be the official language of the separate Slovak financial and political administration. Only after the agreement had been signed and Albert Mamatay, the chairman, and Ivan Daxner, the secretary of the Slovak League, received assurance of Masaryk's consent to the stipulations of the agreement, did they agree to add their names to the signers of the "Proclamation of the Czech Action Committee Abroad" issued by Masaryk on November 14, 1915. Masaryk published the proclamation without consulting anybody at home, again usurping the right to speak and act on behalf of both Czechs and Slovaks. In

53 The italics are mine. For the text of the Cleveland Agreement, see Miloš Gosiorovský, "K prěstavám zahraničných (amerických a ruských) Slováků a Čechov o štátoprávném postavení Slovenska po vojne 1914-1918" [Slovakia's Constitutional Status after the 1914-1918 War in the Conceptions of Slovaks Living Abroad (in the United States and Russia)], Zborník Filozofické Fakulty University Komenského. Historica, Vol. XIX (1968), p. 20.

this proclamation, Masaryk for the first time publicly demanded "a completely independent Czechoslovak state."\(^{55}\)

The year 1916 marked the beginning of the peace offensive launched by the Central Powers. The ensuing secret peace negotiations, of which the Czech exiles could have only limited knowledge at best, brought the entire irredentist movement to the verge of crisis. Peace without victory, based on a *status quo ante bellum*, would have defeated all that Masaryk and his followers were fighting for.\(^{56}\) In addition to the adverse Allied attitude toward Czech cause, Masaryk's problems were further aggravated by disagreements between the Czechs and Slovaks abroad over linguistic questions.\(^{57}\)

By 1916 Masaryk was treating the linguistic problem as a marginal issue which he thought would not play as important a role in the future as financial questions. In economic areas the Czechs were the power upon which the Slovak economy would have to depend. Masaryk employed this

\(^{55}\)Ibid., pp. 1 and 3. In the text of the manifesto the word "Czechoslovak" appeared in a single instance; otherwise it ran: "From the Allied victory we expect total Czech independence and the reunion of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia under one government." The italics are mine.

\(^{56}\)Benes, *War Memoirs*, p. 133, recalled Masaryk saying sometime in the mid-1916: "When I take everything into account I often consider whether I ought not to go home again. Of course, they would hang me, but at least I should see my wife once more."

\(^{57}\)Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, pp. 210-211, touched upon the problem; the most penetrating analysis, however, is in Gosiorovsky, "K predstavám zahraničných Slovákov," pp. 3-35.
argument to point out the advantages which the Slovaks might derive from unification. Beneš pointed toward industry as one of the areas in which the advantages of union seemed self-evident. Besides Czech financial support for the development of the backward Slovak economy, opportunities would open for the Slovak intelligentsia in the administration, education, and other areas. The United Czechs and Slovaks would constitute a majority of nine million Slavs which could cope with the non-Slav minorities more easily than either nation could do separately. Addressing the Czechs, Štefan Osusky, an American Slovak and the future ambassador of Czechoslovakia to London and Paris, explained the desire and determination of the Slovaks to safeguard their national identity. As for Slovak national and political rights in the future common state, Osusky insisted that it would be up to the Slovaks to work for the fulfillment of their national-political aspirations within the constitutional framework of the new state. He advised them to secure constitutional guarantees of self-administration, free cultural development, and all other prerogatives in economics and politics. These were long-range goals. For the present, Osusky suggested, the Slovaks should fight for the destruction of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia. 58

58 The articles of the three exile leaders, prompted by the growing Slovak-Czech controversies abroad, were published in the exile journal Československá samostatnost [Czechoslovak Independence], December 12, 1916. See Pichlík, Zahraniční odboj, pp. 213-214; and Gosiorovsky, "K
This kind of thinking was alien to domestic political leaders in Bohemia, not to mention in Slovakia. The Czech Social Democrats and the State Rightists resisted the incorporation of Slovakia into the future state on principle; the constitutionalists because it was contrary to historical state rights, and the Socialists because they feared the atomization of their power-base, the Austro-Hungarian labor organizations. In Slovakia, unification still

predstavám zahraničných Slovákov," pp. 29-30. The controversy arose in all Allied countries, with various degree of intensity, and threatened to destroy any chance for Czecho-Slovak cooperation abroad and seriously to impair the relations among them in the future. Slovaks everywhere observed with apprehension that the Czechs were always talking about a Czech state or a Czech or Czechoslovak nation, terms which the Slovaks resented. A group of Slovaks in Russia, including some leading Hungarian Slovaks, such as Vladimír Hurban, the son of the notorious anti-Czech Svetozár Hurban; Jozef Gregor Tajovský, the secretary of the Slovak National Party; Ivan Markovič, one of the influential Markovič brothers; Janko Jesenský, the writer; Vladimír Daxner and Jan Janček, all of them Russian prisoners of war; and Gustáv Kosík, the representative of the American Slovaks and Jozef Országh, the leader of the Russian Slovaks, who was also their representative in the audiences with the tsar and Sazonov, launched a press campaign under the central slogan "Our aim is—the free Slovak nation." This group accepted the notion of cooperating with the Czechs but demanded that Slovakia must have a constitutionally guaranteed autonomous status in any future Czechoslovak state. This, of course, corresponded with the expectations of the American Slovaks, the numerically strongest group abroad, but ran contrary to the plans of Masaryk and Beneš, not to mention those of the absolute majority of Czech domestic leaders. The Slovaks at home were so remote from such practical considerations, at the time when the controversy abroad began, in mid-October, 1915, that they had no idea about what they should want and demand.

Zdeněk Kárník, Socialisté na rozcestí. Habsburg, Masaryk či Smeál? [Socialists on the Crossroads. Habsburg, Masaryk or Smeál?] (Prague: Svoboda, 1968), offers the best analysis of the socialists' policies and the dilemmas they faced. For the state-rightist's attitude, see Josef Pekař, "K českému odboji státoprávnímu za války" [The
seemed remote. As late as May, 1918, Slovak politicians considered a proclamation in support of unification premature. The deep gulf between domestic policies and the plans of the irredentist leaders appeared in sharp contrast following the January 10, 1917 proclamation of the Allied war aims, in which the liberation of Czechoslovakia was mentioned for the first time.

The exiled leaders considered the war aims proclamation a great success for themselves, despite their dissatisfaction with its vagueness. The officials from the French foreign ministry made it clear to Beneš that the proclamation was worded so vaguely because the French government wanted to avoid promises which it might be unable to honor later. In light of the French reluctance to make any


Marián Hronský, "K otázke aktivizácie a diferenciácie slovenského politickeho táboru na jar 1918" [Activation and Differentiation] Historie a vojenství, [History and Military Affairs], Vol., 1968, No. 5, pp. 756, 758, 762, 767, and 782-783; Štrobár, Památi, p. 131. The discussion about the feasibility of an open declaration or even renewal of the party's activity reached its peak in March and April, 1918. Ľudovít Bazovský, one of the leading Slovaks, advised against making any public statement as late as the second half of May, 1918. See Bazovský's letter to the May 24, 1918, meeting of the Slovak politicians, in Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. I, p. 257.


specific commitments on behalf of the oppressed nations, it is strange that Beneš claimed that French officials fully understood the Slovak problem and that the exiled leaders supposedly would not encounter difficulties on that point. There were other difficulties, however; for the exiled leaders were soon to learn that their endeavors were being denounced by the Czech political leaders who had remained in the monarchy.

The foreign minister of Austria-Hungary, Count Otakar Czernin, countered the proclamation of the Allied war aims with a declaration signed by opportunist Czech politicians and published in the name of the Czech Union, the Czech Reichstag deputies, and the National Committee.

In fact, the initiative for the denunciation of the Entente came from the Slavs themselves. Father Korošec, the leader of the Slovene Catholics, submitted a statement to this effect to Czernin dated January 19, 1917, stating that "our Croatian-Slovenian nation as always so is now firmly determined to remain, in life and death, faithful and devoted to the monarchy and to the holy Habsburg Imperial House." Korošec went on asking Czernin to use this assurance as he liked and deemed useful. The Czech Union deliberated about a similar public statement at its meetings on January 22 and 23, 1918, but none of the statements which came out from the deliberations was worded sufficient-

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63 Ibid., pp. 227-228.
64 Korošec to Czernin, January 19, 1917, Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 83.
ly strongly to satisfy Czernin. Czernin thus asked Staněk, the Chairman of the Union, to let him use only those parts of the statement and in such form as he (Czernin) thought useful. At the Union's request Czernin granted an audience to the Czech deputies on January 30, 1917 and on this occasion he simply put in front of them his own version of the proclamation which had been released to the press. There was no objection and no dispute about it. For their service the loyal Czechs received nothing but a promise from Czernin to arrange an audience with the emperor.

The proclamation denounced the Entente in the following terms: "The Czech Union rejects this insinuation," i.e., that the Czechs aspired to independence, "which is based on completely erroneous premises," since "as always in the past, the Czech nation today and in the time to come sees its future and the conditions for its development only under Habsburg rule." The denunciation was "solemn, unreserved, definite. It bound the entire nation." Czernin thus secured a clear statement aimed at demonstrating to the world that the imperial Austro-Hungarian government rather than a handful of irresponsible extremists in the

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65 For a detailed account based on the testimonies of Zdeněk Tobolka and František Staněk, both of whom participated in the anti-Allied action, see ibid., pp. 81-98.


67 Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 91.
Allied countries represented the true desires of the subject nations. The public proclamation of loyalty to the empire, of course meant the renunciation of any Czech claim to Slovakia, since such a demand would flagrantly violate the constitutional rights of the Hungarian kingdom and would run contrary to historic Czech state rights.  

Although Beneš partly succeeded in convincing the Allied leaders that the domestic Czechs had been forced to sign the declaration, it nevertheless left an unpleasant after taste and created doubts abroad about the validity of the dreams of the representativeness of the irredentists.

While in his early 1917 messages Beneš had expressed his pleasure over the Allies' January 10th proclamation, his confidence in the Allied capacity to fight to the end for total victory had been shaken. French military exhaustion was obvious. In view of this, Beneš wavered on the possibility of annexing Slovakia, because he understood that if the war did not culminate in a complete Allied victory, the best the Czechs could hope for was an independent Czech state, as part of some kind of federation. At the same time, Beneš expected somewhat illogically that even in the case of a partial Allied victory, the Czech state would consist of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Slovakia.

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69 Beneš, War Memoirs, p. 403, recorded that Balfour, the British foreign secretary, as late as June, 1918, confronted him with this touchy, nagging question.
70 Ibid., pp. 229-231. Beneš published his April,
It was obvious that the Czech politicians both at home and abroad had to be ready to cede their claims to Slovakia in case the war resulted in the establishment of only an independent Czech state. But at this juncture the Czech domestic resistance leaders, relying on information gathered on the status of the economy in the monarchy, particularly of war industries, concluded that Austria definitely had lost the war. Even as the irredentist leaders were losing confidence in Allied victory and the possibility of realizing Czech national aspirations, in Bohemia a gradual radicalization of the home resistance movement was taking place.

In mid-May, 1917, in anticipation of the convocation of the Austrian parliament (Reichsrat), the Czech intellectuals and the Union of Czech Writers published a message to the "Czech Deputation to the Reichsrat" in which they demanded that the deputies fight for a new national program and abandon their opportunist pro-Austrian policies. 71

1917, message to Prague. However, in his March 12, 1917, message he conceded the possibility that Austria-Hungary might survive, in which case the Czechs could have hoped for an autonomous Bohemian state, without Slovakia, within the empire. See Beneš, Světová válka, Vol. III, pp. 100-104. Even Beneš's April message was characterized by dark pessimism with regard to the future of Bohemia. Ibid., pp. 111-113. See also Zdeněk V. Toloka, "K historii dopisu Českého svazu hr. Czerninovi, 30, ledna 1918" [The History of the Czech Union's Letter to Count Czernin of January 30, 1918], Naše Revoluce [Our Revolution], Vol. III (1925); and Paulová, Tajný výbor, pp. 185-187.

71 "The Manifesto of Czech Writers," can be found in Ješina, The Birth of Czechoslovakia, pp. 7-9. The manifesto itself underwent four editions; the final draft contained no single word about the Slovaks, in spite of Srobár's strong efforts to include the Slovaks in the Czech program. Srobár, Památi, pp. 53-54. The action had been
Nonetheless, at the first session of the Reichsrat on May 30, 1917, the chairman of the Czech Club, František Staněk, made a statement emphasizing Czech loyalty to the Habsburgs. At the same time he affirmed the determination of the Czechs to fight for the "union of all branches of the Czechoslovak nation into a democratic Bohemian state." initiated by and the timing had been decided by the Maffia. At the beginning of April, 1917, Přemysl Šamal, the head of the Maffia, gave "a go-ahead" to Jaroslav Kvapil, the main organizer and a Maffia man, by saying: "Now is the time." Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 187, and for more details, pp. 188-203. See also Jaroslav Kvapil, Projev českých spisovatelů r. 1917 [The Czech Writers' Manifesto of 1917] (Prague: Památník odboje, 1924). Paulová explained that Alois Jirásek, the adored writer of the Czech people and an ardent Slovakophile, was responsible for leaving the Slovaks out. Jirásek, who abhorred the collaboration of the Czech Union with the Habsburgs and wanted to have nothing to do with politics in general, thought it hopeless to do anything with the politicians. "Please," he supposedly implored Kvapil, "Who would listen to us writers? Those gentlemen [the politicians] would do as they wish." Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 192. But the manifesto came to life anyway. The Maffia hesitated about publishing it. The agrarian evening paper, however, got hold of the text and without asking anybody published it under the heading "The Czech Nation spoke through the Mouth of its Writers." Večer [The Evening], May 18, 1917. Thus Kvapil could rightfully call the action of the Večer a "happy indiscretion." Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 199.

72 Stenographische Protokolle. Haus der Abgeordneten, 1917-1918 (4 vols., Vienna: K. K. Hof- und Statsdruckerei, 1917-1918), 22nd session, 1917, Vol. I, p. 34; "Czech Declaration in the Austrian Parliament," in Ješina, The Birth of Czechoslovakia, pp. 9-10. Since there is great confusion in terminology, it is almost impossible to ascertain precisely what Staněk, the chairman of the Czech Union, actually said in regard to the Slovaks. In the protocols the words "Czechoslovak," "Czechoslovene," "Czecho-Slovak" are indiscriminately interchanged. The pertinent part of Staněk's proclamation has been recorded in the protocols as follows: "Wenden wir an der Spitze unseres Volkes zu einem demokratischen Staate ansterben, wobei nicht ausser acht gelassen werden kann jener tsc...
This mild, vague hint regarding the Slovaks was understood in Budapest. But it was not clearly understood abroad, where the assurances of Czech loyalty to the throne were regarded with some misgivings on the part of the Allied statesmen.

The Magyar press immediately launched a chauvinistic anti-Czech campaign and pressed the Slovaks into a public denunciation of the Czech demands. Tisza, too, demanded a public disavowal from the Slovaks, first by the two Slovak deputies in the Budapest diet and, when that failed, from the leaders of the Slovak National Party. The Národní noviny "complied" with the government's demand on July 28, 1917, but the statement was so evasive that the censorship thought it better to suppress it. The Slovak statement was unacceptable in Budapest. See Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. I, pp. 318-1319.

IV

The Czechs, the Allies, and Slovakia

In April, 1917, Beneš had complained about the constant Austrian intrigues and attempts to conclude a separate peace. He again reminded the domestic Czech leaders that France's total exhaustion might compel her to conclude a premature peace. In the face of this danger, Beneš insisted, only the domestic leaders could save the Czech national cause. If there were no resistance at home, he warned, "you would deprive us of our last weapon and justify the Entente in concluding with the dynasty a separate peace in whose formation we would have no say." If the domestic resistance did not take radical steps, "we are lost," grimly Beneš concluded. He still wanted the Maffia leaders to do nothing that might prejudice the annexation of Slovakia. At this time the Czech political leaders had no formal contact with the Slovak national movement. For one thing, since there was no political movement in Slovakia at all, the right to speak on behalf of Slovakia lacked foundation and was vulnerable to attack. It was not until the critical moment when the writers' proclamation was in preparation that the first significant contact between the Czechs and Slovaks since the beginning of the war finally materialized when Vavro Šrobár suddenly appeared in Prague.

1 Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 229-231.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Šrobář got in touch with Jaroslav Kvapil, the chief organizer of the writers' proclamation, and advised him that the Czechs should demand the annexation of Slovakia. Since the Czech demands were based, as always, on the historical rights of the Bohemian Kingdom, Šrobář at first met with little success. Undaunted by this surprisingly negative attitude, he continued his efforts to gain Czech support for the Czechoslovak cause, stating that "not only in western Slovakia but also in the east the people have a burning desire for unification with the Czechs." Far from "burning" with a spirit of pro-Czech nationalism, Slovakia at that time was going through a period of political passivity. The leading Czech politicians also minimized and ridiculed such intellectual efforts as the writers' proclamation by questioning them, as František Staněk, the chairman of the Czech Union, did when the organizers requested his endorsement of the proclamation: "Now, gentlemen, in what way do

4 Šrobář, Památi, pp. 53-56, Šrobář confirmed the fact that before his trip there had been no contact whatever between Prague and Slovakia. Ibid., p. 56.

5 Ibid.; Paulova, Tajný výbor, p. 193. Kvapil was allegedly much impressed by that part of Šrobář's statement. Quite understandably so, because no one could have ever heard such sheer nonsense. And in Kvapil's case it must have been doubly so, because he happened to be one of the few Czechs in Slovakia during the war who had at least some limited knowledge about the Slovaks. Kvapil's trip to Slovakia in the spring of 1916, however, had nothing to do with the Slovaks per se, for he had been sent by the Maffia to secure a new channel of contact with the exiles through a Slovak industrialist. Ibid. By no stretch of the imagination could anyone expect Kvapil to find or see anything encouraging in the way of a political or national movement in Slovakia in 1916. There was none. As for the "burning desire" for unification with the Czechs, it existed only in Šrobář's imagination.
you think that the Quadruple Alliance would help you? ⁶
As Paulová, the most outstanding scholar of the period re-
marked, this was far from an isolated case. Staněk's atti-
tude was typical of the majority of the spiritual and poli-
tical leaders of the Czech nation. ⁷ No matter how Šrobár
might impress the Czech leaders, they restricted themselves
to claims for Bohemian historical rights in which Slovakia
had no place. Consequently, the writers' proclamation con-
tained not a word regarding Slovakia. This, however, does
not minimize the proclamation's impact on Czech and, indir-
ectly and belatedly, on Slovak politics. ⁸

⁶Jaroslav Kvařil, O čem vím. Sto kapitol o lidech
a jejich mého života [What I Know. A Hundred Chapters about
People and the Events of my Life] (Prague: Orbis, 1932).
Šrobár's Czech friends obviously were only joking when they
asked him about Slovak preparations to take over administra-
tion of Slovakia; the Czechs themselves were still far from
entertaining such considerations on their own behalf. How-
ever, unknowingly they had touched upon the most sensitive
point of the Slovak dilemma: Šrobár attempted several times
to compile a list of "reliable" Slovaks who might be counted
upon in a position of responsibility when circumstances
should call for it. Šrobár admitted that he was never able
to come up with more than fifty names—there were no reli-
able and qualified Slovaks in Slovakia. Šrobár, Paměti,
p. 53. In fact, at the time of the coup in October 1918,
a Hungarian "enemies list" of Slovak nationalists in twenty
counties listed only 516 names, including 24 teachers and
a female postal worker. See Šrobár, Osvobodene Slovensko:
Paměti z rokov 1918-1920 [Liberated Slovakia: Memoirs of

⁷Paulová, Tainý výbor, p. 197.

⁸Slovenský denník [Slovak Daily], May 1, 1928. Hodža
writes about the cooperation that existed between the Vien-
nese Slovaks and both the deputies and the Maffiosi. Of
singular importance was Šemal's trip to Vienna in March,
1918, where he began to put pressure on the Slovaks to make
some public statement in favor of Czechoslovak unification
and, in effect, to give the exiles an endorsement also to
speak in the name of the Slovaks.
The writers' proclamation made a tremendous impression on the Czech public, if only because of the peculiar position of the Czech intellectuals among the Czechs. In the name of the nation, "the conscience of the nation," the intellectuals announced that the people had lost confidence in their parliamentary representatives and cast doubt on their right to represent the nation. The writers' proclamation was the first public statement made in Bohemia which the exiles abroad could fall back on as proof of a genuine Czech national feeling favoring their stand. After that, the activist, i.e., the "Kaisertreu," politicians could not ignore the proclamation or public opinion, even though a pro-Austrian trend continued to dominate Czech politics. The war was still going on, and its outcome was uncertain. The Czech political leaders wanted to keep all their options open.

In an interview given to the correspondent of the Magyar daily Az Est (The Evening), Bohumil Šmeral, one of the outstanding leaders of the Czech Social Democrats, re-emphasized the pro-Austrian character of official Czech politics. Šmeral pointed to the Czech Union's denunciation of the Allied war aims declaration as a prime example of a Czech desire to remain part the monarchy and a confirmation of the Czech nation's conviction that its free development was best secured under Habsburg rule. Šmeral also pointed

9 Benes, War Memoirs, pp. 231-232.
out that the Czechs wished to maintain the best possible
relations with the Magyars, thus clearly implying an absence
of a genuine Czech interest in acquiring Slovakia. In
the Právo lidu (People's Right) issue of May 8, 1917, Šmeral
called the division of Austria-Hungary into small buffer
states an unfortunate solution for the national question. To reinforce the propaganda effect of Šmeral's statement,
the Prague agrarian Večer (The Evening) printed under a ban-
er headline an article on "Czech Social Democracy against
the Utopia of the New Buffer States." The re-evaluation of the political development both
abroad and at home, brought about an unexpected and radical
change in the political platform of the National Free-
Thinkers' Party, the pillar of Bohemian activism, the oppor-
tunistic policy of supporting the monarchy. This drastic
shift in political orientation shook the traditional Czech
politics to its very foundations. A newly-elected executive
committee announced the aim of the Czech national movement
as "the independence and organic unity of the Czechoslovak
lands in order to unify all branches of the Czechoslovak
nation in a single geographical unit." This was

10 Az Est [The Evening], April 22, 1917; Národ [The Na-
tion], May 3, 1918.

11 Právo lidu [People's Right], May 8, 1917; Kárník,
Socialisté na rozcestí, pp. 50-63 and 91-99.

12 Večer [The Evening], May 8, 1917.

13 Paulová, Tajný výbor, p. 221 and appendix 9, pp. 556-
557, which contains the information that Dr. Slavík gave
to Professor Paulová.
an open call for the establishment of an independent Czecho-
slovak state, i. e., for accepting the exiles' program.
The party resolution called for the immediate implementation
of the program at the opening session of the Reichsrat.
The radical shift in the orientation of the Free Thinkers
and of the Czech Union marked the beginning of a new rad-
cally nationalist and separatist trend in Czech politics,
but it was still not a united anti-Austrian front.

Staněk's proclamation at the opening meeting of the
Austrian Reichsrat on May 30, 1917, reflected this new devel-
opment. In its final version, the proclamation led to bit-
ter conflict, particularly over the Slovak question, and
was approved only by a bare majority.\textsuperscript{14} The conflict was
inevitable because the Czechs based their claims on historic
rights. Slovakia could be claimed only on the ground of
natural right. This contradiction was resolved by the Czech
deputies' argument that in Bohemia's case the natural rights
were supported by undeniable historical rights as well.
On this basis the Czech delegation to the Reichsrat pro-
claimed its national determination "to work for the union
of the Czechoslovak people in a single democratic state,
including the Czechoslovak branch whose territory adjoins
our historical fatherland."\textsuperscript{15} Thus the Slovaks finally were
included in the official Czech national program.

\textsuperscript{14} Mořic Hruban, \textit{Z časů nedlouho zašlých} [From the Re-
cent Past], edited by Jan Drábeč, (Rome: Křesťanská akade-

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Stenographische Protokolle. Haus der Abgeordneten},
1917-1918, Vol. I, p. 34.
The difficulties which resulted from the inclusion of the Slovaks into the demands of the advocates of Czech states' rights soon became apparent. The Czechs feared that the Slovak question would jeopardize their own case. The mixing of the historical argument with natural rights might be used by the Viennese court to dismiss Czech demands as unfounded and contradictory. Because of this danger Šrobár had to expend enormous efforts to have the Slovaks included in the Czech political program. In April, 1917, Šrobár, Štefánek, and Votruba, all Czechoslovak-oriented Slovaks, negotiated to convince the Czech agrarian leader Antonín Švehla of the desire of the entire Slovak populace to create a common state with the Czechs. Šrobár marshalled a broad range of arguments. He appealed to Švehla's sentiments by painting the present state and the future of the Slovaks in somber tones. Continued Magyar domination would doom the Slovaks, Šrobár argued, because "the number of Slovak intelligentsia is so insignificant that in a few years [the Slovaks] will succumb to the pressure of 'Magyarization' in the towns and then also in the villages."16 Šrobár won Švehla's political support by offering to turn over the votes of the predominantly peasant Slovak constituents to the agrarians.17 Švehla declared that his party was ready to "take full responsibility for

16 Šrobár, Památi, pp. 54-55.
17 Zuberec, "Formovanie slovenského agrárneho hnutia," p. 245.
everything that would evolve in Slovakia after the declaration." It is thus quite plausible that the agrarians were instrumental in bringing the Slovaks into the Czech national plans expressed in the Reichstag proclamation, as both Šrobár and Štefának believed. Švehla, one of the shrewdest Czech political personalities, could hardly be influenced by emotional appeals, but he perfectly understood and appreciated the vote count in the future state.

In addition to internal stimuli, Czech politics were stimulated by international events. Count Otakar Czernin's reply to the Soviet peace proposals of December, 1917, contributed to the radicalization of Czech politics. Czernin made public his opposition to an international solution for the nationality problems, as suggested by the Soviets; in Czernin's opinion, these problems were subject to internal solution in any given state. Czernin's position provoked the Czechs into vigorous and determined political action. To demonstrate their opposition to Czernin's stance on the nationality question, the general assembly

18 František Votryba to Šrobár, July 10, 1917, in František Votryba, Korešpondencia, 1902-1944 [Correspondence, 1902-1944], compiled by Alexander Simkovic and Štefánia Votrubová (Bratislava: Slovenská Akadémia Vied, 1961), p. 384; Šrobár, Památi, p. 55. Šrobár mentioned that he received detailed reports from Votryba, but he did not disclose the contents of Votryba's communications.

19 Ibid.; Anton Štefánek, Slovensko pred prevratom a počas prevratu [Slovakia before and during the Coup] (Prague: Pamätník odbaje, 1923), pp. 48-49.

of the Bohemian diet met on January 6, 1918, and issued
the famous Epiphany Declaration in which they took a rad-
cal anti-Austrian stance. Although the Slovaks were absent
from the meeting, the declaration spoke on their behalf
more emphatically than had been done in any domestic Czech
statement before: "Slovaks, the hour of liberation is ap-
proaching," said Staněk, "and we solemnly promise to you
that we will hold out in the common struggle, and we are
looking forward to the moment when we may welcome you in
the legislative assembly of the independent Czechoslovak
state." 21 The Epiphany proclamation claimed to speak "in

21 "The Epiphany Declaration," in Ješina, The Birth
of Czechoslovakia, pp. 21-23. For an abridged text of
Staněk's festive speech, see František Soukup, 28. Říjen
1918, předpoklady a základy našího odboje domácího [October
28, 1918. The Basis and the Development of our Resistance
at Home] (2 vols., Prague: Orbis, 1928), Vol. II, pp. 608-
611. For the full text of the declaration, see ibid., p.
614. The abridged text is in Beneš, Světová válka, Vol.
III, pp. 310-313. Ješina took his text from the distorted
propagandist version published in Vladimír Nosek, Indepen-
dent Bohemia: An Account of the Czechoslovak Struggle for
Liberty (London: J. M. Dent, 1918), pp. 126-129. The Eng-
lish translation deviates from the Czech original in more
than one way. For instance, there is no word about Slo-
vakia in the last paragraph, which reads "Ours and our Slo-
vak branch's" territories, and the very last sentence does
not mention the Czechslovaks but uses the pronoun "our:" 
"we demand in the sense of that right [of national self-
determination] that all nations, thus also ours, would be
granted full freedom to defend their rights at the peace
conference." The italics are mine. For the genesis of
the declaration, see Paulová, Tainý výbor, Appendix 24,
p. 568, which is the account Dr. Šamal gave to the author.
The most important sections of Staněk's speech were sup-
pressed by the censor. Yet Seidler, the Austrian premier,
made the mistake of mentioning and thus admitting the exis-
tence of the declaration at the January 22, 1918 meeting
of the Reichstag. After this the Austrian press bureau
distributed the text through normal channels. Simultane-
ously, General Kestraňek accused the Prague censorship of
senselessly suppressing whole pages in the Czech press.
This only aroused curiosity. The blank spaces were the
the name of the Czech nation and of the oppressed and forcibly silenced Slovak branch of Hungary." On behalf of both branches it demanded the right of self-determination. Citing the unbearable situation of the Slovaks in Hungary, the Czech deputies refused to consider any peace which would not bring full freedom to all nations. As one of the essentials of such a freedom, they demanded the unconditional right to establish an independent democratic state on the territories of the Bohemian lands and Slovakia, and the right to be represented in the peace negotiations to protect their national interests.23

Infuriated by the Czech public denunciation of his policies, and encouraged by the conclusion of peace with Russia and the success of the German offensive on the western front, Czernin launched an open attack on the Czechs on April 2, 1918. He condemned the Epiphany declaration as outright subversion of the Austrian state idea, denounced Czech prisoners of war fighting in enemy countries against their Austro-Hungarian fatherland, and accused the Czechs of seeking to prolong the war for their own selfish interests. He blamed them for endeavoring to separate Slovakia from the territorial and political framework of the

most looked for and after being reproduced they were distributed through a system of an early Czech "samizdat." Paulová, Tainý výbor, p. 378, n. 9.

22 Paulová, Tainý výbor, p. 378.

23 Ibid.; Benes, War Memoirs, p. 347. Benes confirmed with delight the good use the exiles made of Seidler's faux pas in their anti-Austrian propaganda.
Hungarian kingdom. "The wretched and miserable Masaryk," Czernin fumed, "is not the only one of his kind!" Without realizing the consequences, he went on to say that "there are also Masaryks within the border of the monarchy." No action could serve the interests of the irredentist movement better than did Czernin's speech. The Czech resistance movement had now received a badly needed endorsement from the most credible corner.

This happened at a moment when the Czech resistance needed all the publicity it could muster. The vaguely neutral or even pro-Austrian statements of Czech political representatives had left the genuineness of the Czech desire for independence open to doubts. The diplomatic and military achievements of the irredentist movement abroad were very modest at this point. The Nazdar Company in France and the Česká družina in Russia, which were completely subordinated to the French and Russian military authorities, had little practical political or military

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25 Report of the Royal and Imperial Police Commission of Prague, No. 3761, April 6, 1918, in Arthur Polzer-Hoditz, Emperor Karl (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, n. d.), Appendix XIV, pp. 447-450, especially p. 448. The report contains abstracts of a meeting of the activist leaders who criticized Czernin's April 2, 1918, speech which "had merely meant an enormous advertisement for Masaryk." The Czech nation had nothing more to lose, the loyalist leaders concluded. There was nothing else left for them but to support the radicals because opportunistic cooperation with Vienna was by now a totally discredited policy and "those who still attempted conciliatory talk would forfeit their influence with the people and lose their confidence."
significance. No Czechoslovak military force as yet existed in other countries. The Czechoslovak brigade turned itself into an army corps only after the March, 1917, Russian revolution, and then it was still subject to Russian military command. The anticipated transfer of 30,000 Czechoslovak troops from Russia to France, stipulated in the French-Czechoslovak agreement of June, 1917, the very first diplomatic treaty concluded between Czechoslovak representatives and a foreign government, had not materialized. The diplomatic achievements of the irredentist leaders were even less spectacular than their military ones.

Briand's promise to support the Czech national cause, the mention of the Czecho-Slovaks in the Allied war aims note of January 10, 1917, and Miljukov's non-committal promise to support the Czechoslovak effort for national unification had little but propaganda value. The Allies clearly and consistently refused to commit themselves to the principle of national self-determination. Beneš in particular suffered from this non-committal policy of the Allies. His endeavors to include in official Allied statements terms such as "Czechoslovak state" and "Czechoslovak government" were consistently frustrated. Beneš's draft initiative bore fruit only in one exceptional case: the decree on the formation of the Czechoslovak army in France of De-

cember 16, 1917, contained a statement, originating with Beneš, assuring the Czech nationalists that "France always supported the national aspirations of the Czechs and Slovaks." While the word "Czechoslovak" was carefully avoided, the document declared that the achievements of Czech and Slovak soldiers in the field justified the formation of their own army. More significant, however, was the recognition of the political sovereignty of the Czechoslovak National Council over the troops. This was probably the most important diplomatic achievement of the exiles up to that point. It also demonstrated the crucial importance of the military forces fighting on the Allied side—the strongest trump in the irredentist leaders' hand. Credit


must go to them for cashing in on this asset when the moment was ripe.

Masaryk realized the importance of the fighting forces early in the war. "If we establish an army," he told Benes as early as 1915, "we shall acquire a new juridical status with regard to Austria. A further step," he reasoned,
might possibly consist of formal declaration of war upon Austria-Hungary, which in turn will create a political situation enabling us to attain at least our minimum demands when peace is negotiated. The Allies and our people at home will have a compensatory means of obtaining concessions to our national cause, even if it were to turn out badly. But without a decisive and military struggle,

Masaryk argued (correctly, as it turned out), "we shall obtain nothing from anybody." France's concession of the National Council's political authority over the Czechoslovak military forces and Russia's recognition of the exiled leadership's sovereignty over the Czechoslovak Legions proved Masaryk's profound political farsightedness. The military forces abroad, not the Allied government's sympathies for the oppressed peoples, proved to be the most important single asset in achieving the ultimate political and national aims set forth by Masaryk and his followers.

By November, 1917, Benes realized that the French inclination to make concessions to the Czechoslovaks originated in military expediency. The forty to fifty thousand Czechoslovak prisoners-of-war in Russia and their potential deployment in France carried greater weight with French

\[29\text{Benes, War Memoirs, p. 123.}\]
political decision makers than did sympathy for the subject nations. The significance of the Czechoslovak troops in Russia appeared in a new perspective after the March revolution. The Allied Supreme War Council in its meeting of December 23, 1917, decided to support all national armies in Russia willing to continue the war by all available means. Notwithstanding their urgent need, the French had very little to promise in return for the use of Czechoslovak military forces. As previously mentioned, the French decree on the establishment of the Czechoslovak army in France did not contain a single word of support for an independent Czechoslovak state. It became obvious that the aspirations of the irredentist leaders substantially differed from the Allied politico-military aims regarding the future of Austria-Hungary.

The Czech exiles realized that the dismemberment of the Habsburg empire was the elementary prerequisite for the establishment of a fully independent Czechoslovakia. The Allies, however, considered Austria-Hungary an organic part of the European balance of power and had no intention of destroying her. Their intentions with regard to Austria were limited to detaching her from Germany, in order to

weaken the primary adversary, and to reorganizing her along vaguely-conceived federalistic lines so as to appease the subject nationalities by ensuring their free autonomous development but by no means their separation and independence. National independence as implied by the principle of national self-determination was never the Allies' war aim. The promises they made to the nationalities, whether in actual documents or by implication, were always subordinate to the existing military needs of the Allies and their ultimate war aim--victory over the enemy. The exploitation of the national sentiments of the subject nations, however, turned out to be an effective means of serving this purpose.  

In his message to Congress on December 4, 1917, declaring war against Austria-Hungary, President Wilson made it clear that the United States did "not wish in any way to impair or rearrange the Austro-Hungarian empire. It is no affair of ours," Wilson went on to say, "what they do with their own life, either industrially or politically." Only the desperate situation on the Western Front in the spring of 1918 moved the Allies to revise their attitude toward the subject nationalities with military forces in Allied countries, and consequently their Austrian policy.


Until this time the desires of the Czechoslovak irredentist leaders and their hope of success through diplomatic dealings with the Entente lacked any real foundation.\textsuperscript{33}

The breakthrough occurred in Italy, where it might least have been expected, because of the conflict between Italian and Yugoslav interests. After the disastrous defeat at Caporetto, the Italians sought a way out of the hopeless impasse in adopting a new approach to the oppressed nations. By giving support to the small nations, Italy intended to prevent the Allies from concluding a separate peace with Austria while Italy was strategically in a disadvantageous position. Italy, the only ally with territorial designs on Austria, endeavored to confront the rest of the Allies with a fait accompli by creating a block of anti-Austrian nations. In addition, the Italian military commanders were the first to appreciate the strategic value of the demoralization that could be inflicted upon enemy forces by the Czechoslovak volunteers. Expecting an offensive, the Italian military command urged their government to give full support to the Czechoslovak armed forces in Italy.\textsuperscript{34} The new political course culminated in the Congress of Oppressed Nations in Rome, April 8-10, 1918.


\textsuperscript{34} Beneš, \textit{War Memoirs}, pp. 278-299.
The Rome Congress produced a resolution claiming the right of every nation to establish an independent state. It proclaimed the determination of all the subject nationalities in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to fight against Austria-Hungary until full national unification and political independence were attained. Beneš used this occasion to put on record the fact that the Czechs were fighting not only against Vienna but also against Budapest. He emphasized that for the Czechs "the most important question was that of unity with the Slovaks." 35

Consistent with the new Italian political course, a Czechoslovak-Italian agreement providing for the formation of independent Czechoslovak military units in Italy under the political control of the Czechoslovak National Council was concluded on April 21, 1918. 36 Although later the Italian officials declared this act tantamount to de facto recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council, the real value of the act is open to question. 37

Parallel to these international developments, events at home were taking an important new turn. On April 2, 1918, Count Czernin denounced Czech soldiers abroad and


36 Agreement between Italy and the Czechoslovak National Council on April 21, 1918, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Supplement I, pp. 802-803.

Czech politicians at home as warmongers. The speech back-fired; it provoked the Czechs into a resolute openly anti-Austrian action. The Czech domestic politicians reacted to Czernin's intransigence with the National Oath of April 18, 1918, which stated that the Czech nation, which "stands like a rock behind the memorable and historic declaration of its representatives, will never give way and will hold out until the Czech nation obtains independence." Slovakia and the Slovaks neither contributed to nor participated in this Czech action; nor were they mentioned in the national oath.

The very first proclamation in Slovakia in favor of Czech-Slovak unification was made by Vavro Šrobár at the May 1st rally in Liptovský sv. Mikuláš. Although the organization of the rally was arranged by the Social Democrats, they had no part in the preparation of the proclamation itself. Šrobár acted as a private person rather than as a representative of the views of the Slovak national leaders, let alone those of the masses. The resolution which Šrobár read at the Mikuláš meeting contained a demand for the "unconditional right of self-determination not only outside the frontier of our [Hungarian?] monarchy but also outside the nations of Austria-Hungary, among them the Hun-

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38 Beneš, Světová válka, Vol. III, pp. 327-329; Právo lidu, April 14, 1918; Paulovs, Tainý výbor, pp. 424-435. For the text in English translation, see Nosek, The Independent Bohemia, pp. 103-132. In its notoriously distorted form, the word "Czechoslovak" appeared only once in the appeal as, "Národe československý" [Czechoslovak Nation]; all other instances where both Nosek and Beneš used the word "Czechoslovak" were in original Czech or Bohemian.
garian branch of the Czechoslovak family.

Šrobar merely had the approval of some Slovak Social Democratic leaders to attend the meeting and read a speech. Urged for some time by the Maffia circles from Prague to support unification, Šrobar produced a badly-needed statement—one of only two Slovak public statements of any kind produced during the war—which the irredentists abroad could use as proof that the Slovaks wanted to unite with the Czechs. There is no evidence that Šrobar spoke in any official capacity for the Slovak National Party.

39 A Resolution of the Slovak People, May 1, 1918, in Ješina, The Birth of Czechoslovakia, pp. 30-31; Resolution adopted at the Popular Meeting in Liptovský sv. Mikuláš on May 1, 1918, in Jozef Lettrich, History of Modern Slovakia (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955), p. 237; Šrobar, Pamäti, pp. 70-74 and 75-79. Hodža explained the background of the events, as well as the Czech pressure exerted on the Slovaks, finally to make some public statement, in Slovenský dennik [Slovak Daily], May 1, 1928.

40 Uninformed about circumstances in Slovakia, šmal, in his March, 1918, conversations with the Viennese Slovak group, assumed that the statement would be made by the Martin leadership, thus giving it an official stamp. He soon learned, however, that nothing could be expected from Martin. Slovenský denník, May 1, 1928. Only the Robotnícke noviny, in the issue of May 8, 1918, published the Mikuláš resolution in its original form. The editors of the Národnie noviny, however, rejected the phrase "the Hungarian branch of the Czechoslovak tribe" and replaced the word "Czechoslovak" with "the Slovaks," noting in a footnote that a different word was used in the original. Národnie noviny, May 4, 1918. The Czech press, without exception, translated the "Hungarian branch of the Czechoslovak tribe" into "the Czechoslovak nation." See Šrobar, "K desatletiu mikulášskej rezolúcie" [To the Centennial of the Mikuláš Resolution], Slovenský denník, May 1, 1928; Marian Hrons ký, "K slovenskej politike," pp. 490-492; and Šrobar, Pamäti, pp. 128-136. Šrobar confirmed that he had brought a typed copy of his draft resolution to Mikuláš, thereby admitting that the Social Democrats had not contributed to its formulation. Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. I, pp. 338-339, corroborated Šrobar's statement by saying that Šrobar "sur-
Under the impact of the Rome Congress of the Oppressed Nations and in compliance with an express request directly from the irredentist leaders, a Congress of Oppressed Austro-Hungarian Nations was organized in Prague on May 16-17, 1918. The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Czech National Theater was used as a pretext for convening this gathering. The meeting consequently became known as the Theater Celebrations.\textsuperscript{41} Besides the representatives of other subject nations, a Slovak delegation of some twenty persons, led by Šrobár, attended the festivities. Yet once again the Slovaks were not specifically mentioned either in the speeches or in any written documents produced by the meeting. The only possible reference to them was in the term "Czechoslovak nation" in

\textsuperscript{41}Jan Hajsman, \textit{Kongres utlačovaných národů rakousko-
the official draft resolution. The Slovaks were an almost unknown entity to the Czech public. The Czech political leaders were better acquainted with the Yugoslavs than with the Slovaks. Hajsman, one of the Czech Social Democratic leaders, noticed at the time of the taking of the Czech national oath that people confused the Slovaks with the Yugoslavs and were cheering the Yugoslavs when the speaker was talking about the Slovaks. The conference of delegates which preceded the Theater Celebrations fol-

42 The censorship again confiscated the declaration, and the publication of several Czech newspapers was suspended. The Slovaks took no part in the all-important, though little-known, secret consultations conducted between the representatives of various nationalities in the morning of May 16, which dealt with such far-reaching concerns as the establishment of a future federative state, "the backbone of which would be Bohemia, Poland, and Yugoslavia and which," it was anticipated, "would serve as a powerful attraction" for other nations as well. Paulová, Tainý výběr, pp. 460-461 and n. 33. On this occasion the Czechs agreed with the Poles regarding how Těšín was to be divided: the division of the region was to be decided by bilateral negotiations from which the "local factors", i.e., functionaries, were to be excluded. The policy concerning the future of the district Těšín seems to have some relevance to the solution of the Slovak question. Apparently Prague intended to handle Slovakia in an analogous manner: the Slovaks, the "local factor," were to be excluded. However, while the Těšín matter could be negotiated between Prague and Warsaw, Slovakia and the size of the territory which the Czechs wanted had to be negotiated with the Magyars; and, although Czechoslovak-Polish relations were by no means better after the war than relations between the Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the anticipated solution proved to be impossible. Yet, the Těšín question was settled between Poland and Czechoslovakia after years of complex negotiations, and the "local factors" were indeed excluded. In Slovakia only the "locals" were pushed aside and the future of the region was decided not by negotiation but by force.

allowed similar lines. As the list of participants shows, no Slovak was present at the deliberations. Neither were Slovaks invited to the party which Kramár gave in his villa after the festivities.\(^44\) Czech politics were always Bohemocentric, and the intensity and intimacy of Czech-Yugoslav cooperation far outweighed the Czech-Slovak contacts. For the majority of the Czech national leaders Slovakia was terra incognita and the Slovak question was but a marginal affair. The Slovaks were not treated as equals or as representatives of a separate nation, as were the Yugoslavs, Ukrainians or Poles, but merely as regional delegates.\(^45\)

The inability of the Slovak national leaders to initiate and concert national-political activities of their own certainly contributed to putting them in the position of

\(^44\)The list of those attending both the Congress (an incomplete one) and Kramár’s parties can be found in Paulová, Tainý výbor, Appendix 5 and pp. 460-463.

\(^45\)The assumption about Prague’s intention to adopt identical methods in Slovakia as in Těšíň, that is ignoring the "local authorities," cannot be ascertained. However, the occupation of Slovakia has been de facto carried out in the same way as the annexation of Těšíň—by using military force. The locals were ignored as much in Slovakia as in Těšíň, if not more so. However, whether this procedure was premeditated in Prague and materialized according to some plan cannot be determined for the lack of evidence. For more details, see Jan Galandauer, "Jak se slovenská otázka prosazovala do českého politického programu v období přípravy samostatného československého státu (1916-1918)" [How the Slovak Question asserted itself in the Czech Political Program during the Period of Preparation of the Independent Czechoslovak State (1916-1918)], Historický časopis, Vol. XIX (1971), pp. 177-196. The Czech-Polish-Yugoslav relations were so far advanced that their representatives were contemplating future treaties of mutual military assistance against Austria. See Paulová, Tainý výbor, pp. 461-462.
outsiders. In all fairness, however, it is necessary to recognize the hardships which the Slovaks experienced under Hungarian rule during the war. The Budapest government exerted extreme pressure on Slovak politicians to renounce publicly the Czech claims for Czecho-Slovak unification and to condemn those who attended the Theater Celebrations in Prague for compromising the Slovak nation. The Magyar press and government officials demanded a public statement to the effect that the Slovaks wanted to remain with Hungary and that those who collaborated with the Czechs were traitors to the Slovak nation.\textsuperscript{46} Intimidation was coupled with tempting offers of concessions if the Slovaks cooperated with Budapest. During the summer of 1917 an emissary of the Hungarian government approached Dula, the chairman of the Slovak National Party and expressed his hope that although the Slovaks were free to claim their national kinship with the Czechs, they would openly oppose and protest against the notion of political unification with the Czechs and insist on continued Slovak adherence to the principle of the indivisibility of the Hungarian kingdom.\textsuperscript{47} Despite

\textsuperscript{46} On September 8, 1918, Hodža was referring to the articles published in \textit{Az Új Szak} and other Hungarian newspapers. Šrobár had been arrested for a speech he had made on May 1 and on account of his participation in the Prague Theater Celebrations; he was imprisoned almost until the very end of the war. Šrobár, \textit{Památník}, pp. 75-76 and 84-85. The Magyar Újság [Newspaper], August 21, 1918, openly threatened the Slovak leaders, asserting that if they would not denounce all anti-Hungarian statements, they would pay a dear price for their behavior. Quoted in Madvecký, \textit{Slovenský prevrat}, Vol. I, p. 256 n.5.

\textsuperscript{47} Šrobár, \textit{Památník}, pp. 57-64.
the pressure which the Hungarian premier, István Tisza, exerted with particular vigor, the Slovaks avoided public protest against the Czechs. Instead, the Národné noviny announced that since the real intentions of the Czechs with regard to Austria-Hungary were unknown to them, the Slovaks could adopt no position in the matter. More dangerous to the Czechoslovak cause than the Magyar pressures were the people who were ready to seize any opportunity to negotiate with the Magyars.

Aware of the existence of this opportunistic attitude in Slovakia, Tisza invited a Slovak delegation of its exponents to Budapest. The delegation was to consist of some eighty of the most notorious "Panslavs," headed by Ján Mudroň, a notorious Magyarophile. This "small son of a great father," the son of Pavel Mudroň, the former chairman of the Slovak National Party, was not only a known pro-Hungarian, but also, as the recently disclosed list of the members of the Magyar Galilei Circle shows, a member of this organization at least since 1912. The delegation


50 Ibid., p. 757 and n. 13. Hronský insisted that Mudroň collaborated with the Magyar authorities until the very end and repeatedly endeavored to induce the Slovak leaders to submit to Magyar promises and to compromise. So also does Šrobár, in Pamäti, pp. 60-61. Though he refers to a "Mr. M." there is no doubt about whom he meant. See also Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. I, pp. 333 and 337-338.
was to formulate an anti-Czech proclamation in return for
a promise of substantial Hungarian concessions to the Slo-
vaks: several high schools, language rights in the admin-
istration and the judiciary, the relaxation of censorship,
etc. The leaders of the Slovak National Party approved
the idea of sending the delegation to Budapest.\textsuperscript{51} There
were always politicians in Slovakia ready to engage in nego-
tiations with Budapest. However, after several sessions
with Mudroň and his followers, Šrobár succeeded in dissua-
ding them from making the trip, and the entire pro-
Hungarian, anti-Czech action failed to materialize.\textsuperscript{52}
Still, the mere fact that the Slovaks were willing to nego-
tiate and to cooperate openly with the Magyars at a time
when the Czechs were proclaiming Czechoslovak national-
political unity was of gravest significance. People like
Mudroň believed that when the Central Powers won the war,
the tactic of collaboration would pay off in more Magyar
concessions on behalf of the Slovaks in return for their
wartime services and good behavior. Despite their years
of experience with Tisza, the Slovak politicians, with a
few exceptions, took Tisza's word as a gentleman for the
promised concessions.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{51} Šrobár, \textit{Pamäti}, pp. 57-64. Since all accounts
which deal with the subject are based on this single
source, there is no reason to list them.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid}., pp. 60-61. See also Ján Mlynárik, "Sloven-
ská národná rada a včlenovanie Slovenska do českoslo-
The messages of Anton Štefánek to Šrobár from Prague reflected the alarm caused by the Magyar cajolery and the insecurity of the domestic Slovak politicians about their position. The exchanges between Štefánek and Šrobár also illustrate the seriousness with which the Magyar proposals were taken in Slovakia. "Do not let yourself be lured by any promises," warned Štefánek, "even if Hodža and K[ornel] Stodola should try to take advantage of this opportunity." Štefánek evidently distrusted the impeccability of Hodža's Czechoslovakism; indeed, he feared that Hodža might be ready to compromise with the Magyars. He considered it wrong because, as he wrote: "I think I see the situation from Prague more clearly than Hodža from Vienna." At the beginning of 1918, however, Štefánek thought that the danger of compromise with the Magyars was over. In his opinion, the traditional leadership of Dula and Škultéty had been abandoned by everyone and the Slovak "spiritual leadership" was firmly in Šrobár's hands. Štefánek concluded that although it had taken great effort, the Czecho-


54 Bronsky, "K otázke aktivizácie a diferenciacii," p. 772. Obviously worried about possible blunders, Štefánek conveyed his Czech masters' advice to the Slovaks to remain silent.

55 Štefánek's message to Slovakia of November 11, 1917, as quoted by Bronsky in "K slovenskej politike," p. 483.
slovak idea had won over the Slovaks. Such an assessment of the situation was as remote from reality as Prague was from Košice. The traditional, middle-of-the-road, conservative and temporizing leadership was far more representative of the parochial Slovak national-political environment than was the handful of radical pro-Czech Slovak politicians.

The conservative leadership's position was illustrated by its reaction to Lloyd George's January 5, 1918 speech, and to President Wilson's "Fourteen Points." The mouthpiece of traditional Slovak politics, the Národnie noviny, dismissed both speeches as diplomatic double-talk and a mere adaptation of Russian Bolshevik slogans. The Allies' real purpose, the Slovak press claimed, was to win over the Bolsheviks to their side to fight the Central Powers. It is not surprising that Šrobár's attempts to incite these people to political action invariably failed. Šrobár was forced to act on his own, as he had done on May first at Liptovský sv. Mikuláš.

Šrobár must be credited with unfailing persistence, personal courage, and a depth of conviction for which he was willing to sacrifice his freedom and his life. But his efforts to prod the conservative Martin leadership into action produced only more evidence of the reluctance of


57 Národnie noviny, January 29, 1918.
the conservatives to make any public statement in favor
of Czecho-Slovak unification. Šrobár found that the person-
al predilections of the Slovaks lay in quite the opposite
direction, and he warned that Dula would do everything to
prevent the making of any public statement in favor of
union with the Czechs. 58 Dula and many other Slovaks, by
no means conservative, considered any pro-Czech public
statement premature under the circumstances which still
prevailed during the first half of 1918. In their judg-
ment, the time was inopportune for commitment. 59

The generally well-informed Slovak politicians headed
by Hodža, comfortably settled in the military press office
or the censor's quarters in Vienna during the war, had as
good, if not better, liaison with the Czech political lead-
ers after the opening of the Reichstag in 1917, as Šrobár.
They knew perfectly well which way the wind blew. They
countered Šrobár's agitation for public action against the
Magyars by pointing to the success of the Central Powers'
1918 spring offensive as a factor which produced an atmos-
phere unfavorable to any anti-Austrian move. 60 Under these

58 Šrobár, Památi, p. 131.
59 Ibid.; Milan Ivánka to Vladimír Makovický, March
7, 1918; Makovický to Ivánka, March 12, 1918; Samuel Zoch
to Dula, March 11, 1918; and Ján Slavík to Dula, March 19,
1918, as printed in Hronský, "K otázke aktivizácie a difer-
enciácie," pp. 783, 784, 787, 792, and 783, n. 59.
60 Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," pp. 448-449.
circumstances, if the Slovaks attempted independent action, they would become a laughing-stock. The Viennese group favored proposing a meeting of the National Party but were opposed to any solemn public proclamations of the kind that Šrobár wanted. The Martin conservatives embraced this position and reaffirmed the resolution of the party to remain silent—the position which had been adopted at the beginning of the war. The Viennese Slovak group under Hodža eventually changed its position to favor Czecho-Slovak unity after some persuasion by Šamal, the leader of the Maffia. The Slovak domestic leaders, however, remained firmly opposed to unification.

Premysl Šamal persuaded the Viennese group to oblige the Maffia in its desperate effort to get some public document from Slovakia for use by the irredentists abroad that would buttress the irredentists' claims to Slovakia. Šamal's pressure on the Viennese Slovaks may also explain Šrobár's May 1st message as presented in sv. Mikulás. This train of events signaled a warning to the conservative lead-

Narodnie noviny, on March 28, 1918, called for a retreat and nullified the March 5, 1918, appeal for a meeting. See also Ivánka's message to the party leadership on behalf of the Viennese group on March 7, 1918, in Hronský, "K otázke aktivizácie a diferenciácie," p. 783.

61 Ivánka to Dula, March 7, 1918, as printed in Hronský, "K otázke aktivizácie a diferenciácie," p. 783.

62 Narodnie noviny, March 28, 1918. The successful advance of the Germans on the western front undoubtedly contributed to the Slovak trust in the Central Powers' victory and undermined their confidence in the one-sided Czech orientation and dangerous anti-Hungarian actions.
ership: if they did not want to risk total isolation, they needed to make themselves felt. The extended presidium of the Slovak National Party decided to convene a convention on May 24, 1918; it was the very first step in the activation of Slovak national-political life since the beginning of the war.

At the time of the May 24, 1918 meeting, which became known as the May Consultations, the Slovak leaders were so disorganized in regard to political news that no single political program of action could be presented at the meeting. Still, it would be imprecise to contend, as is generally done, that in spite of the presence of diverse political groupings, no one at the meeting brought any action program "of his own." Šrobár, for one, recommended a program of action, and so did Emil Stodola. Stodola's program, rejected on the ground that it was "outdated," was

63 Hronský, "Tajná porada slovenskej národnej strany," pp. 35-36, appears to have drawn on the original minutes of the meeting. Important as these documents are for Slovak history, they have mysteriously disappeared. The reconstructed minutes of the May 24, 1918, meeting were published in Slovák on January 6, 1925. This version was reconstructed by Dr. Dušan Halaša and published in his "Zápísnica, písaná 24. maja v Turčianskom sv. Martine v porade "Slovenskej Národnej Strany" [Record. Written at the May 24, 1918 Consultation of the Slovak National Party], which is appended to Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. IV, pp. 344-349. The records are sketchy in both cases. In the version published by Medvecký the text is at least verified, but this does not enhance its credibility.

64 "Navrh deklarácie Slovenskej Národnej Strany k Slovákom, k národom Rakúsko-Uhorska a k demokracii kultúrnych národov sveta" [Proposal of a Declaration to the Slovaks, the Nations of Austria-Hungary, and the Civilized Nations of the World], Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. IV, 349-352, regards this document as the letter sent to the meet
the only one which paid serious attention to the idea of national self-determination. He embraced this as an ideal but rejected it as a practical political program unless it were made clear "how we imagine the practical implementation of this self-determination."\(^{65}\) It is safe to state that, with the possible exception of Hodža, the Slovak politicians did not have the slightest idea what Stodola was talking about. True, the Slovaks were not the only, nor even the main, users of the slogan of national self-determination. Woodrow Wilson and V. I. Lenin probably had as little understanding of the practical ramifications of the slogan as did the parochial Slovak politicians. But for these major politicians the slogan was a conscious means of propaganda, while the Slovaks soon had to cope with the practical problems generated by the slogan. The answer to these problems was far beyond the reach of the Slovak politicians. In the absence of any alternative proposal, the Czechoslovak program asserted itself.\(^{66}\)

\(^{65}\) Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," pp. 486-487 and n. 32. Though somebody is certainly wrong—most likely Medvecký, the notion that no group presented a program of its own to the meeting could be safely dismissed; there were several draft proposals.

\(^{66}\) Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," p. 497, might be right in asserting that under the given circumstances
The political discussions at the May 24 meeting avoided the central issue of Slovak politics, until Father Andrej Hlinka pronounced what everyone was afraid to say:

We will never achieve the desired goal by circumlocution. We must say definitely whether we will go on with the Magyars or with the Czechs. Let us not avoid the question. Let us say openly that we are in favor of the Czechoslovak orientation. The thousand-year-old marriage with the Magyars has failed. We must part.

No one objected. The meeting endorsed a draft resolution, subject to final approval by the party plenary meeting at an unspecified later date. In the draft the Slovaks emphasized that

the Slovak National Party stands on the position of the unconditional right of self-determination for the Slovak nation and on this ground vindicates for the Slovak nation the right to participate in the formation of an independent state consisting of Slovakia, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. 66

Several committees were established to carry on the work, but nothing further happened. Everything—the session, the consultative meeting, the draft resolution—was kept secret, so that the meeting had no effect whatever on pub-

the Czech program had no real competitor in Slovakia and was, therefore, unanimously adopted. But this seems to be an oversimplification. Emil Stodola demonstrated an ability to penetrate as deeply as anyone into the problem of national self-determination. The problem, therefore, was by no means exclusively theoretical, but political and intellectual. The majority of Slovak leaders, no doubt, did not comprehend the question which they had to face.


68 Ibid. The italics are mine. Obviously Hronsky found the original records. His version differs in detail, if not in essence, from the ones published by Medvecký.
lic opinion. "Nothing new in Slovakia," Kornel Stodola wrote in his diary after visiting Slovakia shortly afterwards. "After the Martin consultations everything fell asleep." 69

Aside from Hodža's articles which appeared (heavily edited, it seems) in the Czech agrarian daily, Venkov, and in Hodža's own Slovenský týždenník, the Czech press gave the impression that it was totally indifferent about Slovak affairs. In an article entitled "Slovaks and Czechs. Some Thoughts of a Hungarian Slovak," 70 an anonymous Slovak wrote-

69 Stodola, Vojnový denník, entry of June 23, 1918.

70 Národ [The Nation], August 23, 1918. The article might have been authored by any of the Prague Slovaks, but the most likely author was Štefánik, who at this time was working for the Czech Narodni listy [National Journal]. The first issue of Národ, published on March 8, 1918, reflected a significant turn in Czech politics. It denounced the activist, loyalist course of collaboration with Vienna, and rejected the Czech Union's and the National Council's anti-national policies. The Young Czech group virtually accepted the political line of the exiles as expressed in Benes pamphlet "Detruissez L'Autriche-Hongrie." See Paulova, Táiní výbor, pp. 127 and 125-133. Štefánik, who, by the way, is incorrectly listed in Professor Paulova's opus as Atun Štefánik, a Slovene Journalist, rather than as Anton Štefánik, a Slovak, belonged to the Národ group from the very beginning. Ibid., p. 606. The very first issue of the Národ contained Štefánik's article "Uherští Slováci" [The Hungarian Slovaks], and he was responsible for the June 14, and August 30, 1918, special issues devoted to Slovakia and the Slovak question. The assumption about Štefánik's authorship of the article in question is supported by one of his letters to Šrobár in which he used similar arguments as in the article. Štefánik warned Šrobár about putting his hopes too high because, he argued, in spite of the Czech Reichstag declaration of May 30, the battle was far from won. The "Slovak formula" was, in fact, an obstacle to the Czech Union, Štefánik argued, which both stood in its way and sheltered it at the same time. Štefánik to Šrobár, July 11, 1917, as given in Hronský, "K Slovenskej politike," p. 483. See also Galandauer, "Jak se slovenská otázka prosazovala," p. 192.
er, most probably Anton Štefánik, bitterly reproached the Czech politicians for this attitude. In the anonymous author's opinion, few Czech politicians had any real knowledge of Slovakia, and the only thing they looked forward to was a Slovak renunciation of separatism, i.e., the denunciation of the linguistic differentiation made by Štúr and his generation. Otherwise the Czechs regarded the Slovak problem as a cuckoo's egg in the Czech Union's nest, the author complained, which as far as the Czech politicians were concerned, had appeared there through haste and compromise and whose presence the Czechs now regretted. The Czechs wanted to get rid of the Slovak problem now because it did not fit in with their original states-rights' program both for theoretical reasons and for reasons of practical politics. The Czech politicians used the excuse, the author claimed, that the Slovaks were not Czechs. They resented the leading Slovak political national ideologues, such as those of the Hurban-Vajansky and their mouthpiece, the Národní noviny, that openly voiced their dislike for the Czechs. The present day Czech leaders, basing their views on those of Havlíček and Rieger, had omitted the Slovaks from the Czech national programs of the past century, etc. The writer protested that leading Czech political personalities had been ignorant of the intricate circumstances of Hungarian politics and the complexities the Slovaks faced in Hungary. Besides, he argued, the Štúrian linguistic schism, employed as another Czech excuse for
ignoring the Slovaks, was something the Slovaks regretted and publicly admitted as a mistake a long time ago. He insisted that the Czechs would have to adopt an alternative position on the Slovak problem, since neither the state-rights' program nor the outdated stereotypes of traditional Czech political practice offered a framework within which the Slovak question could be resolved.

The article produced no response. If Štefáněk did indeed compose this lamentation of "a Hungarian Slovak" it is worth mentioning that Štefáněk, an ardent Hlasist and one of the staunchest believers in Czechoslovak political and cultural unity, soon became so disgusted with Czech politics and politicians that he was determined to return to Slovakia as soon as the war was over and have nothing to do with the Czech politicians who, as he saw it, were "interested only in eating and beer [drinking]."  

It is undeniable that only a few Czechs grasped the intricacies inherent in the Slovak question and, that many outstanding Czech politicians past and present opposed the annexation of Slovakia, and consequently her inclusion in their national program. In any case, probably no leading Czech politician perceived the future of the unified Czecho-

71 Štefáněk to Blaho, n.d., as quoted in Hronsky, "K otázke aktivizácie a diferenciacie," p. 767 n. 36. Štefáněk, however, assured Blaho that he adhered to the Czechoslovak program in spite of his disappointment in the Czech political life. By this time, however, Blaho himself was wavering between his Hlasist political philosophy and the imperatives of practical politics which more and more brought him closer to cooperation with the clerical Populists of western Slovakia.
slovak nation in terms of other than gradual, voluntary assimilation of the Slovaks into the Czech national cultural life. 72

Characteristically, before this the Slovak question had been considered a mere folkloristic, cultural, and linguistic problem which would resolve itself automatically in time. Like the Magyar liberals who had believed that if Hungary became independent, there would be a single Magyar nation-state in thirty years and no forced assimilation would be necessary,73 Kramár was convinced that the assimilation of the Slovaks would come about through natural evolution. In the end, he believed, everything would flow together and the Slovaks would identify with the Czechs, "as they will increasingly regard our Czech language as their own. Thus nothing would rend or even weaken the inner unity of the entire Czechoslovak nation."74

According to the information now available, the only contemporary Czech intellectual who was aware that there was more to the Slovak problem than mere folklore was Karel Kálal, one of the best-known of the Czech Slovakophiles. Kálal urged in one of his letters to Kramár that at least one Slovak representative should be seated in the Czech National Committee and that the Slovaks should be allowed to use their own language. "I have thought about the thing for thirty years" said Kálal, "and I propose that we grant the Slovaks


73 This was what Hodža accused Karolyi of saying. See Venkov [Country], September 8, 1918. Hodža's statement, however, was almost a verbatim quotation of Karolyi's.

self-determination." This would work like magic and the Slovaks would want unification. "I know very well," he went on to say, "that for many Slovaks, it is as evil to be Czechized as to be Magyarized."75 Needless to say, there were fewer people in Slovakia who still needed to be Magyarized than those who needed to be Czechized. According to Kalal, Cajda, the editor of the Narodnì noviny, once told him that he preferred the Magyars to the Czechs, and the Catholic priest Kmet, the founder of the Slovak National Museum, wrote him once that the Slovaks had two enemies, the Magyars and the Czechs, since both wanted to denationalize them.76 Kalal admitted the desirability of assimilation of the Slovaks by the Czechs, but he felt it should be left to natural development. He envisaged that Slovak authors intending to reach a wider public would choose to write in Czech. But a proclamation which would guarantee the free usage of Slovak seemed imperative to Kalal, because only this would win over the Slovaks for unification. He illustrated the complexity of the problem by pointing out the division among the Slovaks in Prague over the linguistic problem; some were for the introduction of Czech on a mandatory basis; others insisted on retaining Slovak. Kalal thought that if the Slovaks disagreed among themselves as to what language to use, a delicate hint

75 Karel Kalal to Kramar, July 17, 1918. The full text is published in Galandauer, "Jak se slovenska otazka prosazovala," pp. 195-196.

76 Ibid. The persons mentioned by Kalal were Jan Cajda and Andrej Kmet.
might help them to make up their minds in favor of Czech.\textsuperscript{77} What Kalal of course missed was that the Slovaks in Prague were about as representative of the real sentiments among the population and the intelligentsia in Slovakia as he himself was among the Czechs.

Both Kramár and Kalal clearly illustrated the ever-present Czech tendency to assume peaceful assimilation of the Slovaks as a logical outcome of evolution. This, of course, ran contrary to the desires of the major Slovak national political and ideological leaders.\textsuperscript{78} The fact that the Slovaks took future legal-constitutional guarantees for their autonomous national development for granted, might explain why they did not exert more effort to secure them beforehand. The Czechs, on the other hand, were not asked for and did not volunteer such guarantees; nor did they secure proportionate Slovak representation in the executive and legislative bodies of the prospective state.

It could be argued, as Osusky suggested some time before the actual unification, that it was the Slovaks' duty

\textsuperscript{77}\textit{Ibid.} Kalal believed that the Prague National Council had the prerogative to decide the question.

\textsuperscript{78} This had been obvious by then and became even more pronounced after the Czecho-Slovak unification, both among the Slovaks at home and those living abroad. Yet, despite the difficulties which the exiles were to cope with on account of the Slovak problem, incredibly there was not a single instance, when Beneš instructed the domestic Czech leaders to assure the Slovaks that their secular rights will be honored in the future common state. From everything known about Beneš, particularly his attitude toward the Slovaks throughout his life, it might be safely concluded that this behavior was anything but coincidental.
to fight for their own interests. Since they did not do so and later became dissatisfied with the outcome, they had only themselves to blame for their lack of organization, negligence of constitutional issues, and, most of all, their failure to secure the necessary bargaining power for negotiating with their Czech partners over the principles involved in unification. But the Slovaks did not even attempt to bargain seriously when the time came. If, therefore, it could be said with some justification that Czech policy "proceeded toward the Czecho-Slovak state-unification with enviable carelessness," it was even more true in Slovakia. In Slovakia only a handful of the intelligentsia—a self-appointed and disunited group of individuals claiming to represent the entire Upper Hungarian citizenry—was involved in the negotiations over unification. These individuals stampeded the populace, without asking or even caring about obtaining its consent, into joining the Czechoslovak state, that is, into Czechoslovak national unity, without prior assurances of autonomous status, or any status for that matter, and without securing constitutional guarantees for Slovakia's rights.

The evidence that is available indicates that scarcely anybody in Bohemia envisaged unification in any other way than the assimilation of the Slovaks into Czech culture.  

79 Galandauer, "Jak se slovenská otázka prosazovala," p. 196.  
Even though by mid-1918 Štefánik and the handful of his associates in Slovakia had changed their attitude, obviously realizing that the Czech politicians, whom he found disgusting because their taste for good food and beer which he thought to be their exclusive preoccupation, were effectively working and that the Slovaks could only gain by joining forces with them, reinvigorated their old Czechoslovakist ideological-political platform. However, by this time there were few zealots among the Slovaks who would resign to the idea of being denationalized and assimilated, although the Czech attitude toward the Slovaks remained unaltered. The few Czechoslovak Slovaks considered unification in both the cultural and political sense to be the only solution of the Slovak question, and some of them had embraced it years ago. The sentiments of the Slovak national

Some of the Czech press, the Narod among them, recognized at least the linguistic individuality of the Slovaks. It might be safely assumed that besides those peoples who wanted to have nothing in common with the Slovaks, for whatever reason (Josef Pekář, the famous Czech historian, opposed the annexation of Slovakia because of his unwavering adherence to the historic rights of the Hungarian Kingdom which he honored equally as the identical rights upon which the Czechs based their national demands), the "silent majority," millions of common folks, did not care one way or the other. The man in Prague's streets knew nothing about the Slovaks and this mutual ignorance has been reciprocal in Slovakia. However, those who counted at the moment, both the policy and opinion makers, favored the assimilation of Slovaks, if only for practical political reasons. Though the Czech leaders were aware of and unceasingly complained about German cultural barbarism, the deprivation of Slovaks of their cultural and national identity, which Prague was determined to accomplish at any price (without publicizing its intentions, of course), obviously did not appear to them as being the same, that is cultural barbarism exercised against people without whom no Czechoslovakia could exist.
ists, if they took them into account at all, only irritated them. When the time came, the former Hlasists, in collaboration with a few ambitious Slovaks, made certain that the Slovak nationalists and the only Slovak representative political organization, the National Council, were cut off from participation in matters concerning the nation.
V

The Path to Czecho-Slovak Statehood

Before 1918 the Czechoslovak irredentist movement had enjoyed little success. None of the Allies had so far envisaged, far less promised, full independence for the subject nations of the Habsburg empire. Such a promise would have upset the Allies' central aim of detaching Austria-Hungary from Germany, their most dangerous enemy. At the end of 1917 the defeat of Germany had appeared very remote, and in the spring of 1918 the opposite outcome seemed more likely. In light of this situation, the Czecho-

slovak political leaders abroad made only limited demands on the Allied governments and offered as much help as they were able to muster. In the Allied leading circles this Czechoslovak tactfulness was deeply appreciated. Both the Czechoslovak exiles and the Entente politicians understood that as long as the prospect of a separate peace with Austria-Hungary existed the Allies could not promise the subject nations anything since it would destroy the chance of achieving their primary objective—the military defeat of Germany by separating from her Austria-Hungary.

Nonetheless, guided in their "national policy" by the imperatives of war, the Allies made numerous minor commit-

ments to those nationalities which seemed willing and able to fight against the Central Powers, not as part of a pro-

gram for the future of Central Eastern Europe, but to facil-
itate military success. Military setbacks in the second half of 1916 and during 1917 compelled the Allies to seek a separate peace with Austria-Hungary regardless of the aspirations of the nationalities (Italians, Serbs, Romanians) to whom they had formal commitments. Under these circumstances the Czechs, who had obtained no formal commitment whatever, could hope for nothing, as their exile leaders were well aware.

The January 10, 1917, Allied statement of war aims, though it mentioned the liberation of the Czecho-Slovaks (so named) as one of the aims for which the Allies were fighting, was little more than propaganda aimed at the American public and President Wilson. Not until the Allied military and political leaders were definitely convinced of the impossibility of concluding a separate peace with Austria-Hungary—the moment of recognition differed from country to country—did the Entente genuinely decide to give full support to the subject nations' struggle for independence without, however, pledging to accept the nation-


alities' own programs. The Allies wanted to retain their freedom of action for the future in dealing with the nationality question and the political-territorial problems inherent in the irredentist programs. It appears that they could not decide whether it would be better for their interests to maintain the Habsburg empire untouched, reorganized and alienated from Germany, or to destroy it and replace it with a number of small states united in some federation.


4 Hanak, "The Government, the Foreign Office and Austria Hungary," p. 174; Perman, *The Shaping of Czechoslovakia*, pp. 55-58. Lord Milner, the most influential member in Lloyd George's war cabinet, thought in 1917 that it was beyond the power of the Allies to dismember Austria-Hungary. Instead he proposed to detach the empire from Germany. After Germany was defeated Austria and Italy would themselves form a barrier-state against Germany's southeast advance, Milner thought. See Chapman Houston, *The Lost Historian*, pp. 268-270. Colonel House noted on April 28, 1917, that he and Balfour thought that "Austria should be composed of three states, such as Bohemia, Hungary and Austria proper." See Kernek, "Distraction of Peace during
Yet the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire was the prerequisite for the materialization of the Czechoslovak irredentists' designs. Mere autonomy within the empire, the maximum that both Lloyd George's address of January 5, 1918 and Wilson's Fourteen Points conceded, was unacceptable to the exiles. Thanks to military rather than diplomatic events, the exile leaders soon found themselves in a more advantageous position.

the War," p. 50 n. 46. However, as Kernek pointed out, this sentence was omitted in Charles Seymour (ed.), The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (4 vols., New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1926-1928), Vol. III, p. 43. Kernek observed that House sometimes changed the diary when the Intimate Papers were prepared. This practice has been clearly documented by Inga Floto in her Colonel House in Paris: A Study of American Policy at the Peace Conference, 1919 (Copenhagen: Universitetsforlaget i Aarhus, 1973), pp. 13-14. For a specific example see ibid., p. 286, n. 232. Various members of the American Inquiry prepared several studies on the potential federalization of the Austro-Hungarian empire. See Robert Joseph Kerner, "Memorandum: Brief Sketch of the Political Movement of the Czechoslovaks tending toward the Federalization or Dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. Explanation of Economic and Social Bases of Nationalism," March 14, 1918, National Archives (Washington, D.C.), American Commission to Negotiate Peace. Records of the Inquiry, Record Group 256, Carton 46, Doc. No. 305, and an almost identical study which Kerner presented to the Inquiry on May 17, 1918, ibid., Carton 47, No. 316. On May 25, 1918, Charles Seymour, the head of the Austro-Hungarian section of the Inquiry, submitted a similar study entitled "Austria-Hungary: Federalization within the Existing Boundaries," ibid., Carton 64, No. 509. Seymour considered federalization the only possible solution of the Central European problem perhaps for the rest of his life; however, he became aware that due to the national rivalries which pervaded the region after the war, this solution was out of question. See Harold B. White, Jr. (ed), Charles Seymour, Letters from the Paris Peace Conference (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 109, n. 47, and 112.

From the modest beginnings of the irredentist movement, when every alien in the Allied countries was suspect, the Allies increasingly employed exiles in propaganda and espionage in the United States and later in Russia, and eventually sent them behind enemy lines, and used them on the military front and, as the need arose, in actual combat. The 1918 German offensive created in France a desperate need for the military service of every available man. Already in November, 1917, Marshal Pétain had estimated that in case of a collapse on the Eastern front the Germans would be able to transfer forty divisions to the West unless the Russians and Romanians stopped them. With the Germans only forty kilometers from Paris, the Allied premiers scarcely exaggerated in their joint message with President Wilson on June 6, 1918, that 162 Allied divisions were confronting 200 superior German divisions and that the Entente faced the specter of actual defeat unless immediate help came from the United States. Under these cir-

6 Calder, Britain and the Origins of New Europe, pp. 140-143. See also Kalina, Krví a železem, pp. 60-61; and Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 286-288.


cumstances the Czechoslovak troops already fighting on the Allied side, both on the Western front and in Siberia, became a crucially important military asset for the Allies and perhaps a still more valuable asset for the Czechoslovak exiles.

Well before the meeting of the Congress of Oppressed Nations in Rome in April, 1918, Italian military commanders had convinced some of the crucial Allied political leaders of the usefulness and efficiency of former Austro-Hungarian soldiers, presently prisoners of war in Italy and France, in combatting the enemy and, more importantly, in intelligence gathering and subversive propaganda activities. The Italian military, primarily the intelligence service, urged the government to form separate Czechoslovak military units under Italian command. On April 27, 1918, the governments agreed to sign an Italo-Czechoslovak military convention which acknowledged that the Czechoslovak troops were an Allied army that was politically under the authority of the Czechoslovak National Council. At last Masaryk's assertion about the crucial significance of establishing an independent national army, the first step toward political independence, was vindicated. The troops eventually proved to be the most important asset in the hands of the exiles, who from now would use the existence of this military force as a strong argument in negotiating with the Allied governments.

9 Perman, The Shaping of Czechoslovakia, pp. 33-34, especially n. 21.
The Allies needed the Czechoslovak legions; the French made this clear: Clemenceau told Beneš that he wanted all the Czechoslovak forces on the French front. In return, he promised to give him a public statement of support and promised that France would never desert the Czechoslovak cause. The deployment of the Czechoslovak legions was a subject of the April 27, 1918, meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council. A resolution which was definitely approved at the May 2, 1918, Abbeville conference, provided for the transfer of the Czechoslovak troops from Russia to France. The British seemed to have second thoughts about the wisdom of this decision. They would have preferred to have the legions in Russia to fight the Germans and/or the Bolsheviks and reestablish the eastern front. Although these deliberations were carried out without the knowledge of the local Czechoslovak commanders in Siberia and without consulting the Czechoslovak National Council, Beneš soon learned about the French-British controversy over the legions. Beneš, eager and ready to make the best of it, began a kind of shuttle diplomacy between Paris and London. He promised the French to comply with their wishes and bring the legions to Europe. While nego-

10 Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 362 and 506, n. 32.

titating in London, he promised as a matter of course to leave the troops in Russia. Although this might appear to be double dealing, the responsibility for the deployment of the Czechoslovak troops was in the Allies' hand, since it was a military matter, and the dispute over the issue was one between France and England, not between Beneš and the Allies. The dispute dragged on until the end of May, 1918, when it was finally agreed to leave the Czechoslovak legions in Russia. The Allies did not anticipate that the Czechoslovak soldiers in Siberia would take matters into their own hands.

On May 14 a train with Hungarian and German prisoners of war was passing another train stationed in the small rural Siberian village of Chelyabinsk. As could be expected, some "pleasantries" were exchanged between the soldiers, but the verbal duel was complicated by a brick thrown from the "enemy" train which landed on the head of one of the Czechoslovak "warriors." This led to a brawl of such magnitude that the local Soviets felt compelled

to interfere, halt the fight, and put the instigators in jail. This proved to be a mistake; the Czechoslovaks entered the town, disarmed the local Soviet, and released their comrades from jail. The Chelyabinsk soviet, of course, immediately reported the incident to Moscow. Trotsky ordered the Soviets to disarm the Czechoslovak troops immediately, and, if they resisted, to shoot them on the spot. Beginning on May 20, 1918, representatives of the Czechoslovak troops met in Siberian Penza. Rejecting the Allies' plan to transfer part of the legions to Murmansk and Archangel, they decided to proceed on their own to Vladivostok and leave Russia for France as soon as possible. By the end of May the legions were fighting the Soviets in earnest. The important point is that the Czechoslovak legions began to fight the Bolsheviks prematurely, contrary to the Allies' plans and the wishes of the National Council.¹³ This did not prevent Beneš from cashing in

¹³ Bohdan Pavlíček, one of the representatives of the Russian branch of the Czechoslovak National Council to the Soviet government, May 23, 1918, Ježina, Birth of Czechoslovakia, p. 33. "Disarm the Czechoslovak immediately. Every armed Czechoslovak found on the railway is to be shot on the spot." Trotsky to the local Soviets, May 25, 1919, ibid., p. 38. For a brief but accurate description of the incident see Pichlík, Zahraniční odboj, p. 425. See also Mamatey, The United States and East Central Europe, pp. 169-170. The conviction that Czechoslovakia obtained her independence as a reward for the actions of the Czechoslovak Legions is the very essence of Kalina's thesis. Kalina maintained that it was fortunate that at that time i. e., the end of May, 1918, it was the local military commanders in Siberia, such as captains Rudolf Gajda, Kadlec, and Lieutenant Čekák with their troops who actually were the policy makers and not Masaryk and Beneš, who opposed the Siberian intervention. The Legions, who acted contrary to Masaryk's and Beneš's orders, were rewarded by the Allies and together with them the entire action abroad received well
on the value of Czechoslovak military assistance to the Allied cause, and the Allies realized that they had to give the Czechoslovaks something in return. The obvious military value of the Czechoslovak legionnaires allowed the exiles to press for political concessions in return for military cooperation. The future relationships between the Czechoslovaks and the Allies, France in particular, were to follow this pattern.

Military cooperation was certainly an important factor in determining the Allies' attitude toward the Czechoslovaks, but it was not the only factor which influenced the Entente's policy toward the subject nations of Austria-Hungary. Change was brought about by an entire chain of events: the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the Russian peace proposal of December, 1917, and the consequent signature of the Brest-Litovsk treaty on March 3, 1918; collapse of the British efforts to negotiate a separate peace with Austria-Hungary; the defeat of Italy at Caporetto in October, 1917, which prompted even the most reluctant Italian politicians to change their policy toward the nationalities in return for their military cooperation; the April, 1918, Congress of Oppressed Nations in Rome; the deceptively sim-

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15 Perman, The Shaping of Czechoslovakia, pp. 46-47.
ple American May 19, 1918, acknowledgment of sympathy for
the nationalities' struggle for freedom; and other events
which clearly signaled the realization on the part of the
Allies that diplomatic negotiations could not bring peace.
Austrian overconfidence in the victorious outcome of the
German offensive on the Western front was responsible the
Count Czernin's mistaken policy of rejecting the idea of
a negotiated peace and supporting Germany to the hilt.
Even President Wilson had to reconcile himself to the inev-
it able: the door to a negotiated peace settlement was de-
initely shut. Shortly thereafter he accepted Secretary
of State Robert Lansing's argument that the collapse of
the empire was inevitable.¹⁶ It did not follow, however,
that Wilson or any other Allied leader automatically adop-
ted a definite policy for dealing with the successor na-
tions.¹⁷ Beneš, however, must be credited for correctly
assessing the situation and recognizing that the moment
was ripe for forcing the Allies to make more definite, bind-
ing political commitments to the Czechoslovak cause.

¹⁶Lansing to Wilson, August 19, 1918, Foreign Rela-
tions of the United States. The Lansing Papers, 1914–1920
(2 vols., Washington, D. C.: United States Government Print-

¹⁷As late as October 16, 1918, in conversation with
Sir William Wiseman, the chief of the British intelligence
service in the United States, Wilson remarked that point
ten of the Fourteen Points, which concerned Austria-
Hungary, would require more consideration. See John L.
Snell, "Wilson on Germany and the Fourteen Points," The
Although in April and May, 1918, the Allies shifted from a hesitant policy toward the subject nations to a determined anti-Austrian propaganda offensive in which the exiles were expected to play a crucial role, the change in Allied strategy did not signify acceptance of the principle of national self-determination.18 The British foreign office, for example, under pressure from a handful of partisans of self-determination, after long hesitation and with serious reservations consented only to the use of psychological warfare to the fullest extent "to weaken the power of Austria-Hungary by supporting all anti-German and pro-Allied people within her border."19 Even the staunchest proponents of this policy, such as Wickham Steed, Robert Seton-Watson, and Sir Arthur Evans, wished to keep these people in a federation rather than to fragment the Danubian Basin into disjointed nation-states.20 James Balfour, the British foreign secretary also made it clear that he agreed to this policy on condition that it was understood that the British government "did not promise independence to any of the Habsburg peoples."21


The American Inquiry experts took an almost identical position. They suggested to President Wilson as early as December, 1917, that he adopt a policy of stirring up the nationalities of Austria-Hungary against their government—a policy which the president resisted on the ground that such a strategy was tantamount to provoking insurrection against the legitimate government. But the members of the Inquiry advised the president to stop short of the ultimate logic of the national movement: the establishment of independent national states. The Allied policy makers


The document is undated; however, Klaus Schwabe was able both to establish the date when the memorandum was complete as December 22, 1918, and determine the authorship of this remarkable piece of Realpolitik. In a letter to Schwabe of April 21, 1966, Walter Lippmann acknowledged that he wrote the memorandum and Colonel House handed it to President Wilson on January 4, 1918. See Klaus Schwabe, Deutsche Revolution und Wilson Frieden. Die amerikanische und deutsche Friedenstrategie zwischen Ideologie und Macht- politik 1918-19 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1971), p. 46, n. 11. This author also came to the conclusion that Lippmann played a role in composing the memorandum by comparing the handwriting with that of another memorandum written by Lippmann: "Draft of a Reply to the Proposals of the Central Powers," dated December 31, 1917, Inquiry Documents, Carton 75, No. 588. This document is a translation of the December 22, 1918 memorandum for propaganda purposes. It apparently was intended to be a draft proposal for Wilson's Fourteen Point speech. Robert J. Kerner wrote a special memorandum for Lippmann regarding the suggested
treated the subject nations with a combination of pragmatism and skepticism. Robert Cecil, one of the most outspoken and influential British political leaders dealing with the nationality question, warned the government that "nationalism produced nothing beneficial for England as yet," that it was a source of constant turmoil in Europe, and that the Slavs had never demonstrated an ability to govern their own affairs. 24 Despite these warnings the partisans of the cause of the subject nationalities in the Allied countries, in England in particular, were diligently working to commit their governments to the cause of the subject nations far beyond the limits to which official policy had ever intended to go. 25 Certainly none of the Allies ever intended to go on fighting until the independence of the Poles, Czechoslovaks, or Yugoslavs was secured. 26 Though some Allied leaders may have sympathized with the oppressed peoples, their liberation and future political status could only come as a by-product of and not as the unconditional aim of victory over the enemy. The leading Allied circles obviously did not realize the extent to which their own propaganda machines, such as George Creel's Committee for


24Rothwell, British War Aims, p. 159.

25Calder, Britain and the New Europe, pp. 177-189.

26Houston, The Lost Historian, pp. 267-268.
Public Information, Lord Northcliffe's Crew House gang, or President Wilson's rhetoric had committed them to the national cause. With the help of the proponents of the national cause in the Allied countries Beneš now proceeded to secure everything possible for the Czechoslovaks.

Beneš decided to present the Allied governments with a demand for recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council as the supreme Czechoslovak political organ with prerogatives both abroad and in (as yet non-existent) Czechoslovakia itself. He was determined to force the Allies to recognize the long-range political program of the exiles, to get the Allied governments' support, and establish the exile leadership as the de facto government of Czechoslovakia; in other words, to bring an independent Czechoslovakia into existence. The Allies, and particularly the French, under the heavy pressure generated by the German offensive, were ready to yield on almost any point. Beneš took advantage of the situation to extract as much from the Allies as possible.

It should be remembered that this recognition of the Czechoslovak military forces as autonomous military units under the political jurisdiction of the National Council was by no means tantamount to recognition of the National Council's political prerogatives to direct Czechoslovak affairs abroad, let alone at home. Though the agreements concerning the Czechoslovak legions could be claimed as a form of political recognition of the National Council,
or even of Czechoslovakia, it was a very limited recognition, indeed, certainly not the kind which would satisfy the exiles. Agreements amounted to nothing that could not be withdrawn by the Allies at will and without much embarrassment, although the Czech exiles tended to interpret these Allied acts, particularly in their messages home, as a binding commitment to Czechoslovakia.\textsuperscript{27} It would appear that what amounted to the Allied recognition promised to the exiles up to the end of the war was limited to recognition of the National Council's authority over Czech and Slovak subjects abroad and the direction of their national affairs in the Allied countries but by no means in Czechoslovakia itself. The exiles, and even the domestic Czech and Slovak leaders, did not and could not exercise sovereignty, either legal or political, over the territory which they claimed for Czechoslovakia. The National Council was not even in a position to guarantee the transfer of Czechoslovak forces from Siberia to France, though Beneš made promises to this effect. All this was out of Beneš' hands; yet he was able to extract public statements from the Allies in support of the Czechoslovak cause.

On May 29, 1918, the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, issued a proclamation announcing the United States' "earnest sympathy" for the "nationalistic aspira-

\textsuperscript{27} Beneš to Samál, July 26, 1918, as printed in Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 387-389.
tions of the Czecho-Slovaks and Yugo-Slavs for freedom."  

Beneš considered this statement "too Platonic," when the European allies associated themselves with the Lansing statement in a declaration issued on June 3, 1918, in which they expressed their "most earnest sympathy for the national aspirations for liberty of the Czecho-Slovak and Yugo-Slav nation," Beneš found the statement outright disappointing. He wanted more than what he called "mere demonstrations" of support. On June 5, 1918, Beneš made what he wanted clear in a memorandum sent to the French ministry of foreign affairs: a clear and precise statement that the Czecho-Slovaks had been independent for centuries, that they had been deprived of their independence by violent usurpation by the Habsburgs and the Germans, that France recognized the historic rights of the Czecho-Slovaks, that the Slovaks would be united with the Czechs in a Czecho-Slovak state and would no longer be dominated by the Mag-


29 Beneš, War Memoirs, p. 379.


31 Beneš, War Memoirs, p. 382.
yars, and that the Czechoslovak state would be composed of the four historic provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia, and Slovakia.\(^{32}\)

Beneš wanted a joint Allied declaration supporting these demands. In default of one, he elicited individual statements to this effect by the individual Allied Powers. On June 29 Pichon, the French foreign minister, sent Beneš a letter in which he declared it "equitable and necessary to proclaim the rights of your nation to independence and to recognize publicly and officially the National Council as the supreme organ of the general interests and the first core of the future Czechoslovak Government. True to the principle of nationality, "and the liberation of the oppressed peoples," Pichon continued,

the Government of the Republic considers the claims of the Czech nation just and well-founded and at the proper time will endeavor with all its means to secure your aspirations to independence within the historic boundaries of your provinces finally liberated from the oppressive yoke of Austria and Hungary.\(^{33}\)

Though the declaration carefully avoided mentioning Slovakia, Beneš made good use of the semantic worth of the term "Czechoslovak" (with or without hyphen). The employment of such terms as Czechoslovak, Czecho-Slovak,


\(^{33}\)Pichon to Beneš, June 29, 1918, Archív diplomatických dokumentů, Vol. I. See also Ježina, The Birth of Czechoslovakia, pp. 48-49.
Czechs and Slovaks, historic land, historic provinces, national territory, etc., was designed to establish the word "Czechoslovak" to denote the Czechs and Slovaks as a single nation and to use the term "historic territory" when the political, geographical and historic unity of the Bohemian lands and Slovakia was meant.  

This usage was clearly politically motivated. Czechs alone would not constitute even a simple majority of the population in the territories which they claimed for themselves. Only by fusion with the Slovaks into an artificial Czecho-slovak nation could they hope to form a majority of 50-60 percent of the citizenry without being exposed to imminent danger of being both overnumbered and outvoted in a democratic system of government. Attempts to explain the use of the word "Czechoslovak" on purely linguistic grounds miss the point. To conceal the real meaning

34 Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 244-245 and 383.

35 Ibid., p. 89. See also "Memorandum of a Conversation with Dr. Eduard Beneš, at the Ambemarle Club, London, May 13, 1918," National Archives, Washington, D. C., Records of the Department of State. American Commission to Negotiate Peace, Record group 256 Inquiry Documents, Cartoon 44, Doc. No. 283. Beneš spelled out the most pressing reason for unification with the Slovaks in terms of securing a majority over the 30-35 percent German minority in future Czechoslovakia. When asked what he proposed to do with this great minority, "Beneš admitted that this was the most serious difficulty of all." He went on to say that "the seriousness of the question of numbers was one of the vital reasons for insisting on uniting 3,000,000 Slovaks with the Czechs. They mutually require one another to make up an important independent nation." Ibid. Clearly, Beneš thus emphasized the necessity of creating a strong Czechoslovak nation which would outweigh the excessive number of minorities.

36 Unlike Galandauer, who limits the problem to merely
of this terminology was an important facet of Beneš' policy throughout his life, but it is clear that it represented a conscious effort to hide the fact that the Czechs were demanding the unification of two distinctly different nations. Once the usage became generally accepted, the exiles could demand the recognition of the National Council as a de facto government representing a single nation, which, of course, in fact had never existed, and of a country within historic boundaries which had never existed either.

Despite his caution, Beneš received from the Allies no more than token commitments to the Czechoslovaks, and Allied statements cautiously avoided promises regarding the territory to be included in the future state. As a matter of fact, the allusion to the "historic boundaries of your provinces" made by Pichon, was the maximum promise that any Allied official or government made until the war was over. By no stretch of the imagination could Pichon's linguistic interpretation. See Galandauer, "Jak se slovenská otázka prosazovala," p. 193. The deliberations of the Czechoslovak cabinet on January 2, 1919, leave no doubt that the reasons for the national unification with the Slovaks were on political necessity, though economic and strategic imperatives played equally important roles. See minutes of the January 2, 1919, meeting of the Czechoslovak cabinet, in Alois Kocman et al. (eds.), Boj o směr vývoje československého státu [The Struggle for the Direction of the Development of the Czechoslovak State] (2 vols., Prague: Nakladatelství ČSAV, 1965-69), Vol. I, pp. 36-42, especially the statistics dealing with the ethnic composition of Czechoslovakia. Ibid., p. 37.

37 Calder, Britain and the Origins of New Europe, pp. 204-213, especially p. 211. See also Perman, The Shaping of Czechoslovakia, p. 44.
letter be regarded as having the "binding political and diplomatic character" which Beneš desired and claimed to have received in his messages to the Maffia in Prague.  

In his report to Masaryk about the French declaration, Beneš stated that the French understood the Slovak question perfectly (obviously meaning the Czech need for Slovakia), but they were afraid to make their position public on the issue as yet. Beneš followed up his Paris negotiations with an attempt to secure an identical or, if possible, a still stronger statement from London; but there he ran into a more non-committal attitude toward the subject nations than he experienced in France.

Following the French declaration of June 29, 1918, "it seemed to me," Beneš wrote in his memoirs,

that the time had now come to embody the results of everything we had hitherto achieved in the form of a decisive diplomatic document which, from the point of international law, would denote the establishment of a state and government of an independent nation.

To this end he implemented negotiations with the leading British politicians in August 1918. Though Beneš later claimed that these negotiations were the most successful

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40 Beneš, War Memoirs, p. 397.
accomplishment of the resistance movement abroad, 41 Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, flatly turned down Beneš' request for recognition of Czechoslovak independence under the National Council, insisting that it was impossible to recognize "a state, the territory of which was occupied by the enemy, to whom it still thus belonged both in international law and in actual fact." 42 Moreover, Balfour thought it impossible to separate the Czechoslovak case from the overall settlement of the Central European problem. He questioned whether the émigrés actually represented the opinion of the entire nation and questioned "how far [the National Council] was legally entitled to act on behalf of or become [the nation's] government." 43 The British counterproposals to Beneš' original draft memorandum avoided even the mention of such words as "sovereignty," "state," or "Czechoslovak government," let alone any allusion to specific territory, and declined to recognize the National Council as an interim government, calling it instead a "trustee of the future Czechoslovak government." 44 The British statement which expressly stated that "Great Britain regards the Czechoslovaks as an Allied Nation," 45

41 Ibid., p. 398.
42 Ibid., p. 402.
43 Ibid., p. 403.
44 Balfour to Beneš, August 9, 1918, in Ješina, Birth of Czechoslovakia, p. 61; Archiv diplomatických dokumentů, Vol. II. See also Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 404-405.
45 Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 407-409, Robert P. Skinner, consul general at London, to Lansing, August 14, 1918,
was open to interpretation as meaning more than the government intended to concede. The word Czechoslovak was much more specific than the general term "people," which could mean all nationalities of a future Czechoslovak state, used in the French and American documents of "recognition."

The use of the term "Czechoslovak nation," whether the British officials realized it or not, had far-reaching significance for Czechoslovakia after it became an independent state.  

46 For the time being, however, the British did not feel committed to Czechoslovak independence. "Our recognition of the Czechs," Lord Cecil wrote, "was very carefully worded and [even] though it would undoubtedly be consistent with the dismemberment of Austria it does not in fact bind us to that solution."  

47 Perhaps even more significant was the British non-recognition of the Czechoslovak provisional government formed in Paris on October 14, 1918. The government of Great Britain "gave no further recognition to the Czechoslovaks and undertook no further commitment to their cause" before the armistice of November 11, 1918. Up to this time, the British were "not committed to Czechoslovak independence or to the territorial claims of the Czechoslovak provisional government."  

48 As will be seen, the govern-


46 Beneš, War Memoirs, p. 409.

47 Calder, Britain and the New Europe, pp. 106, 076, 181, 196, and 210-211. See also Balfour to Pichon, July 1, 1918, Archiv diplomatických dokumentů, Vol. II.

48 Calder, Britain and the Origins of New Europe, p. 211.
ment of the United States, too, remained uncommitted either to the provisional Czechoslovak government, which it did not formally recognize, and especially toward the Czechoslovak state, which lacked clearly defined territorial boundaries, while the United States insisted that the territorial questions were to be definitively settled by the Peace Conference. The American political leadership, then, maintained with regard to the territory of the new states a position similar to that of Great Britain: no state could be recognized without having a clearly defined territory; and the delineation of territories as well as the arbitration of controversial territorial claims were an acknowledged prerogative of the Peace Conference.

Masaryk was still working in the United States to gain recognition of the National Council and of the Czechs' and Slovaks' right to independence. On July 20, 1918, in a letter to the Acting Secretary of State Frank L. Polk, he complained that while he had at his disposal three armies fighting in Russia, Italy, and France, and was called "the master of Siberia and half of Russia," in the United States he was treated only as "a private man."49 He pointed out that other Allied countries had already recognized the National Council and asked for a similar statement from America in support of the Czechoslovak aspirations.

After careful investigation the government of the United States on September 3, 1918, issued a declaration which stated: "The Czechoslovak peoples, having taken up arms against the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires, have placed in the field organized armies which are waging war against those Empires," and since those peoples, "in the prosecution of their independence in the present war have confided the supreme political authority to the Czechoslovak National Council, the government of the United States recognizes that a state of belligerency exists between the Czechoslovaks thus organized and the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. It also recognizes the Czechoslovak National Council a de facto belligerent Government, clothed with proper authority to direct the military and political affairs of the Czechoslovaks."

50 Though the American September 3 declaration recognizing the Czechoslovak National Council used the strongest language to date, by declaring the National Council a de facto government for the first time, a careful reading shows that Wilson

Lansing to Morris (U. S. Ambassador to Japan), September 3, 1918; ibid., p. 824-825. Lansing sent the declaration to the American agents in Siberia with instructions to give it widest publicity and to have it circulated everywhere by agents of the Committee for Public Information. Ibid., p. 822 n. 2. See also in Beneš, War Memoirs, The American Declaration of September 2, 1918, pp. 415-417; and in Archiv diplomatičkých dokumentů, Vol. II. For more details, see Victor S. Mamatey, "Documents: The United States' Recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. XII (April, 1953), pp. 47-60; Mamatey, The United States and Central Eastern Europe, pp. 218-222; and Perman, The Shaping of Czechoslovakia, pp. 47-60.
and Lansing avoided the slightest allusion to any specific territory and, like the French, referred to the Czechoslovaks as a people rather than as a nation. The American declaration was certainly encouraging; yet Masaryk did not find in it a significant departure from the Fourteen Points, which promised the subject nations of Austria-Hungary autonomy rather than full independence.

Working in the United States since May, 1918, Masaryk obviously realized there was no real hope for American endorsement of the exiles' demand for a fully independent Czechoslovak state. Not surprisingly, then, when on October 11, 1918 he was asked by Charles W. Nichols, a representative of the American Agricultural Association, to declare Czechoslovakia independent, Masaryk at first refused. After Nichols' admission that the president was the one who would actually appreciate the issuance of such a declaration, Masaryk finally drafted the so-called Washington Declaration of Czechoslovak Independence. While working on the draft of the declaration, Masaryk agreed to Beneš' proposal to declare the establishment of a Czechoslovak government. Beneš, having Masaryk's consent and allegedly prompted by the French authorities, declared the establishment of the government on October 14, 1918; France recog-

nized it the very next day.\textsuperscript{52} The American government, however, remained silent, announcing neither recognition nor rejection of the Czechoslovak government.

On October 16, 1918, Masaryk sent a draft of the Declaration of Independence to Secretary Lansing. In the cover letter he reminded Lansing of the provisional government in Paris, but no reaction was forthcoming.\textsuperscript{53} At the same time, even as the Austrians accepted the Fourteen Points, Wilson no longer wanted to negotiate peace within the framework of the concessions to the Austro-Hungarian empire implied in them. He needed a pretext, which Masaryk's Declaration would seem to have offered him, to support national independence and the dissolution of the Habs-


burg empire. Wilson first thought the Polish exiles could make a declaration which would diminish the possibility of negotiating peace on the basis of his previously declared principles. The Poles, however, were too disorganized to produce anything in time. Now Masaryk came in handy. He sent his draft declaration to Lansing in undated form, explaining in the covering letter that he did so because no instructions regarding the date had been given to him. The declaration carried Masaryk's signature only, though Beneš' and Štefánik's names were listed on the document. In this form it was published in Paris (which was given as its place of origin) on October 18, 1918.

The declaration in itself was interesting for several reasons. It displayed Masaryk's uncertainty as to Wilson's

54 For the covering letter and the so-called advance copy of the Declaration of Czechoslovak Independence, as well as for the final version, see Masaryk to Lansing, October 18, 1918. Ibid., pp. 847-848.

55 Two versions and a meticulous analysis of the stylistic changes made in the document are published in Kozák, T. G. Masaryk a vznik Washingtonské deklarace, pp. 48-60. Ješina obtained the photocopy of the document from Prof. Arthur Link, the editor of the Wilson papers. The document makes it clear that the declaration was unsigned; Masaryk signed only the covering letter. The text of the declaration was cabled to Paris. It was published as though it had been written in Paris on October 18, 1918. The names of Masaryk, Beneš, and Štefánik are given as its signatories. See Ješina, Birth of Czechoslovakia, p. 93, for the covering letter. An intriguing aspect of the declaration is that Štefánik, in Siberia at the time, though listed as one of the signatories, criticized the declaration point by point and opposed almost everything that concerned the form and substance of the future state. See Štefánik to Masaryk, November 3, 1918, Holotík, Štefánikovská legenda a vznik ČSR, Appendix, pp. 468-471.
intentions toward Austria; consequently, instead of making a categorical demand for independence, he used the phrase, "the Czechs and Slovaks trust in the promises of the Allies." This restraint seems to indicate that Masaryk did not take the recognition of Czechoslovak independence for granted, and, that, contrary to his usual custom, instead of using the word "Czechoslovaks," he was talking about Czechs and Slovaks. But his determination to secure Slovakia for the future state was born out by his deliberate attack on Hungary in the declaration. Masaryk had to claim Czechoslovak independence on the basis of the historic rights of the Bohemian Kingdom, but, at the same time, he denied the same rights to the Hungarian kingdom by demanding the annexation of Slovakia. Masaryk branded Hungarian historic rights a crime perpetrated through the centuries and claimed that it was unthinkable to permit a crime to form the basis for any "right."  

Wilson was supposedly impressed by the Czechoslovak Declaration, but he said nothing about recognizing the Czechoslovak government. Masaryk had no idea whether or not Wilson would support the Czechoslovak government, which

56 See the photocopy in Ješina, The Birth of Czechoslovakia, pp. 94-99. The italics are mine.

57 Ibid.

he himself had proclaimed. In actual fact, the United States refused to recognize it until April, 1919. 59

In the spring and summer of 1918 the opposition on the Czech home front was led by three distinct groups: the Kramár wing, the followers of Masaryk, and the Social Democrats. By the second half of the year all of them were working for Czechoslovak independence, although their ideas about the degree of this independence as well as their tactics differed notably. Kramár's group proceeded with caution, keeping its options open. All three major groups desired independence or, like the left-wing Social Democrats led by Bohumír Šmeral, were resigned to it as an inevitable result of the war though they did not consider

59 Historians dealing with the problem such as Mamatey and Perman have failed to notice that even the official publications of the United States department of state give the official date of recognition of Czechoslovakia as April 23, 1919. See Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919 (2 vols., Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1934), Vol. II, p. 85 n. 1. Lansing informed the Department of State that since "the frontiers of this state have not been determined" any recognition of Czechoslovakia was inadvisable. Lansing to Frank Polk, acting secretary of state, February 12, 1919. Department of State. General Records of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, 1919-1931. National Archives Microfilm M 820, Roll 488, Document No. 860F. 51/4. The entire matter concerning the recognition or non-recognition of Czechoslovakia was reviewed by the Department of State in 1923. Several lengthy memoranda dealing with the subject matter are on file in the National Archives. See Memorandum concerning the Recognition of Czechoslovakia, March 23, 1923, Nation Archives (Washington, D. C.), General Records of the U. S. Department of State, Division of Western European Affairs, Relations to Czechoslovakia, 1910-1929, Carton 9382, Doc. No. 124. 600/3, and several other relevant documents. The explanation of the circumstances regarding this subject would require a special monograph.
it as the best solution for the Central European problem. All, however, were uncertain when and how independence could be attained, whether solely as a result of Allied victory, or as a consequence of the nation's own efforts. There was some truth to the contention that the Kramár group at least left open the possibility that the monarchy might survive and that Czech autonomy could be achieved within that framework. The politics of two arrows to the bow was understandable in the circumstances. An anti-Austrian uprising was out of the question, although Beneš repeatedly hinted at such a possibility to the Allied leaders, and Clemenceau seemed to take it seriously. So also did Secretary Lansing in discussion with President Wilson regarding the recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council. Reports to the effect that in Bohemia the masses were only waiting for a sign from abroad to start an upris-


61 Herman and Sládek, Slovenská politika Karle Kramáře, pp. 44 and 45.

62 Beneš, Světová válka, Vol. II, p. 146. As early as April, 1918 Beneš, in discussion with the Allied military leaders, talked about an anti-Austrian uprising in Bohemia as a matter of course. On August 27, 1918, he told Robert Cecil that the preparations were almost complete and that the revolution would take place either at the end of 1918 or in April, 1919, depending on the strategic situation. Calder, Britain and the New Europe, p. 207; Perman, The Shaping of Czechoslovakia, p. 36; Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, Vol. II, pp. 127 and 128.

ing were delivered to the state department from the American embassy in Switzerland, though the Czech domestic leadership invariably dismissed the idea as absurd and are dangerous even to consider.

Beneš, obviously aware of the situation at home, echoed in his dispatches to Prague both fear and dissatisfaction over the policies of the domestic parties, particularly the exiled leaders' fear of the possible reaction of the domestic leaders to concessions to the nationalities by the Austro-Hungarian government. Beneš demanded "most emphatically" that the domestic politicians take an uncompromising stance against Austria and, disregarding the government promises, leave the Reichstag. He assured the domestic politicians that all active participation in Austrian political life would be viewed from abroad as collaboration with the enemy. If this happened, he admonished them, the Czechs would have to assume their share of responsibility for the war. Beneš also warned Prague that France, in view of her extreme exhaustion,

54 "I learn from confidential sources that Bohemia is fully prepared for a revolutionary outbreak when signal is given." Stovall to Lansing, May 16, 1918, National Archives (Washington, D. C.), Records of the Department of State relating to World War I and its Termination, Microcopy 367, Roll 388, No. 763.72119/1669.

55 Beneš to Šamal, September 5, 1918, Beneš War Memoirs, p. 422. See also Perman, The Shaping of Czechoslovakia, p. 36; and Šamal to Beneš, October 11, 1918, as given in Pichlík, Zahraniční odboj, pp. 439-440 and 454-455.

56 Beneš to Šamal July 12, 1918, Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 343-344; Beneš to Šamal, September 5, 1918, ibid., pp. 387-389.
might accept a separate peace in order to end the war as soon as possible. In order to preclude this possibility, Benes urged the domestic front to stiffen its resistance to Austria and thus help the irredentists to convince the Allies of the impossibility of reaching a compromise solution. Only then, he insisted, would the Allies fight to the very end; the Allies could abandon the Czechs only if the Czechs themselves resigned and abandoned their own national cause.67

To boost the morale of the domestic dissidents, Benes informed them that France not only recognized Czechoslovak independence but also "took a positive attitude with regard to Slovakia." In other words, Benes implied French approval for the annexation of northern Hungary and a French commitment to secure "all our aims" at the peace conference. (Benes went on to say that it had been "arranged with the [French] Foreign Ministry to establish an actual state - structure so that we may at once come into existence via facti as a state, and proceed to the peace negotiations as such." ) For the time being, however, the main emphasis was on the need for unity between the government in exile and the domestic resistance movements, because if disagreements between the two reached the attention of the Allies

67 Ibid., p. 388. It should be noticed that in this communication Benes exaggerated the Allies alleged unlimited support for the Czechoslovak case which generated the unwarranted overconfidence of the Prague government during the first weeks of its existence.
nothing would be left for the exiles, Beneš warned, but "to leave the whole matter and resign." 68

To substantiate his call for active resistance to Austria, Beneš insisted that Pichon's letter of July 28, constituted "a commitment and a total recognition of our rights and demands, denoting the absolute victory of our policy here" 69—obviously meaning not only in France but in all Allied countries. Even in the United States, Beneš insisted, as the result of Masaryk's talks with President Wilson "our case there has been won so completely that Wilson and the American government have promised not to make any fundamental decision on Austro-Hungarian affairs without us or without our approval." 70 Shortly after the war Czech politicians claimed publicly that Masaryk and Beneš had dictated the Allies' Central European policies. Beneš repeated this story during the discussions with the delegation of domestic leaders in Geneva, and it became a propaganda gimmick after their return home. 71

68 Ibid., pp. 387-388.
69 Ibid., p. 388.
70 Ibid. The italics are mine.
71 Peroutka, Budování státu, Vol. I, pp. 220-226. Dagmar Perman used a quotation from Šrobár's memoirs, Šrobár, Osvobodené Slovensko; pamäti z rokov 1918-1920 [Liberated Slovakia: Memoirs of the Years 1918-20] (Prague: Čin, 1928), p. 260, to illustrate the euphoric atmosphere which dominated Prague and the Czechoslovak politicians at the time. At the moment in question, however, Šrobár was absent from Prague and the passage in his memoirs about the Czechoslovak exiles dictating the Allies Central European policies is almost a direct quotation from
Beneš's exaggeration of the Allies' guarantees was rooted in the mistrust and insecurity which the exiles felt toward the domestic politicians. Even if they wanted to, the exiles could not settle for less than the dissolution of the empire if they did not want to spend their lives in exile. "It was almost certain that if the Austrian government had made some concessions to Czech political demands, the domestic leaders would very gladly and quickly have settled with the empire." Even the National Committee, re-activated in July, 1918, despite its formal acceptance of the exiles' political program, continued to keep the door open in case the empire should survive the war. Irredentist agitation notwithstanding, the domestic leadership was determined, even in the optimum case, to hold on until Austria-Hungary capitulated, and only then to take over power. No one abroad or at home expected the monarchy to fall as soon as it actually did. Consequently, not even Wilson's reply to the Austrian plea for the

the message which he received from his Slovak colleagues who participated in the meetings of the Prague National Assembly and heard Kramář's exalted speeches. See Peroutka, Budování státu, Vol. I, pp. 220-221.

72 Gajanová, ČSR a středoevropská politika velmoci, pp. 11-12.

73 Herman and Sládek, Slovanská politika Krala Kramáře, pp. 42-43.

74 Ibid., p. 43 n. 196. The authors maintain that Kramář did not expect the end of the war prior to 1920. This was consistent with Beneš's information from abroad, though he estimated that the end would come some time in 1919.
conclusion of a separate peace moved the Czech home
front into action. Only the sloppily-worded October 27,
1918, Andrassy note recognizing the independence of the
Czechoslovaks (interpreted as recognition of Czechoslo-
vakia's independent existence, though this certainly was
not what Andrassy meant) unleashed an avalanche of national
revolution, since it seemed that there was no longer any
danger of resistance or reprisal. Only then did the do-
mestic leaders take the slightest calculated risk and dec-
lare Czechoslovakia independent. The Czech political lead-
ers did not expect the coup to occur on October 28, 1918.
It is unthinkable that Kramár and his associates would have
left Prague for Geneva and missed the opportunity to lead
the revolution and stand at the birth of the new state.
The delegation to Switzerland learned about the Prague Octo-
ber 28th events only two days later. All of them feared
reprisals and bloodbath in Prague. Yet everything went
smoothly. With Vienna's consent the old Austrian bureau-

75 For notes concerning the conditions of an armis-
tice, exchanged between the governments of the United
States and Austria-Hungary see Lansing to Ekengern, October
19, 1918, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918,
Supplement I, Vol. I, p. 368; Stovall to Lansing, October
25, 1918, ibid., pp. 396–397; and Eckergen to Lansing, Octo-
ber 29, 1918, ibid., pp. 404–405.

76 Richard G. Plaschka, Horst Halsesteiner and Arnold
Supan (eds.), Innere Front. Militärassistenz, Widerstand
und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918 (2 vols., Graz: Ver-
lag für Geschichte und Politik), Vol. II, p. 153; Věra Ol-
vová, Československo v rozrušené Evropě, p. 89.

77 Beneš, War Memoirs, pp. 441–443.
cracy stepped into service of the new Czech masters and the old bureaucratic machine functioned with usual efficiency. Slovakia, however, despite all confusion which prevailed in Central Europe, at the end of the war, remained, if only loosely, under Magyar control. The new Károlyi government came to power only on October 31, 1918 and during the first few days of its existence it was preoccupied with more pressing problems than Slovakia seemed to be. Yet the question as to whom would Slovakia belong was a crucial one and her separation from Hungary became one of the determinants in Hungary's foreign policy following World War I, and one of the powderkegs placed directly in the heart of Europe. In Slovakia the circumstances surrounding the separation from Hungary and the region's integration into Czechoslovakia were totally different from those under which the Prague events evolved. Therefore, it is the internal development in Slovakia and the triangular Magyar-Slovak-Czech relations, which are the central subject of this study, where the attention has to be refocused.
VI
Unification without Unity

The Slovak politicians were, if possible, even less prepared for the unexpected turn of events than the Czechs. After the May 24, 1918, conference of the national leaders, Slovak politics were silent again. Like the Czechs, the Slovak leaders practised the tactics of having several irons in the fire in order to gain advantage from whatever way the war might end. The Slovak national leaders had no rational political program. The resolution endorsed at the May 24 conference was kept secret until a more opportune moment might make it advantageous to disclose it. No one had any idea when that moment would come. All the Slovaks had done to gain freedom up to September, 1918, was to convene an informal gathering of a handful of national leaders, in which little more was accomplished than a general exchange of opinions and a unanimous agreement that an attitude of total passivity was no longer possible. Fearing reprisals, the national leaders discouraged every kind of political activity among their followers but even dampened all efforts to formulate a national-political program, to protest against government policies, or to make any public declarations. Šrobár blamed this inactivity both on the Martin leadership and on the Viennese group headed by Hodža, which likewise opposed public declarations.

Šrobár, Osvobodene Slovensko, p. 131.
on the ground that the moment was inopportune and that any action would result in a setback for the Slovaks. 2 Šrobár claimed that only his own Ružomberok group and a few active Slovaks in Liptovský sv. Mikuláš had rejected the official policy followed by the majority. But there was little to show for the activities of this minority.

Nobody could blame the masses for their passivity. The Slovak people had been passive and disinclined to follow their real or self-proclaimed leaders during most of their history, in part because the aristocratic attitude of the Slovak politicians toward the common folk was notoriously snobbish and never changed. Since the resolution of the May 24 conference had been kept secret from the general public, it could not and did not mobilize a Slovak national-political consciousness or even touch the Slovak masses. The Slovak nation remained outside the mainstream of the national movements of non-Hungarian peoples of the monarchy, even though modern Slovak and Czech authors would like us to believe that at the time of the October 30, 1918, Martin Declaration the Slovak people enthusiastically supported Czecho-Slovak unification. 3


Not even the major figures of the period tried to conceal the fact that the truth was much more prosaic. The Slovak national leaders took a temporizing attitude. As Šrobár said, the central slogan of Slovak politics was: wait, wait and wait.\footnote{Šrobár, Oslobodene Slovensko, p. 188.} Unsure until the last moment how the war would turn out, The Slovaks, as Hodža openly admitted, were anxious "to be ready for any event."\footnote{Slovenský denník [Slovak Daily], August 9, 1927.} Although those Slovaks who took an active part in politics desired the dissolution of Austria-Hungary as the precondition for escaping from the Magyar supremacy, they had little confidence in an Allied victory. It could be said that the majority of politically active and nationally-conscious Slovaks actually favored unification with the Czechs in a common state as the best answer to their problem. But it must always be kept in mind that the politically active leadership was limited to a dozen or so persons at most.

Even the miniscule group of self-appointed (there was no other kind) Slovak national leaders was divided on all questions regarding the future. Should they aim to attain national unity or just political unity with the Czechs, provided that the Czechs guaranteed Slovak national autonomy and a constitutional status for Slovakia in the future state? The non-Slovak and anti-Czechoslovak minorities posed a major problem for the pro-Czechoslovak Slovak politicians. The few partisans of centralism among the
Slovaks considered the establishment of a centralised administration a temporary, if inevitable, measure; after a certain period of time during which Slovakia would be de-Magyarized (thought to be about ten years), it would be discarded, leaving an independent Slovakia with autonomous political institutions and privileges. Because of the enormously powerful Magyar element of the population, the Slovak national leaders dared attempt to realize their desires only after they secured cultural and political predominance for the Slovaks in Slovakia. The Slovak leaders thus claimed to represent a territory in which they themselves felt insecure. Some of them, such as Samo Zoch, the Protestant priest of Modra, doubted that the Slovaks could become masters of their own affairs even if a decentralized state could be attained at the end of ten years.

Power relations within the socio-economic structure of society in post-War Slovakia left little doubt about the difficulties which the Slovaks would have in coping with non-Slovak alien minorities, let alone in de-Magyarizing Slovakia.

Political power relations and the feeling of insecurity in regard to the future constitutional status of Slovakia dominated the negotiations of the Slovaks with vari-

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7 Samo Zoch, "Spor o tajnú klauzulu Martinskej deklarácie" [Controversy over the Secret Clause of the Martin Declaration], Slovenský denník, April 8, 1926.
ous Magyar, and, of course, also Czech, politicians. The Slovaks wanted to keep open the traditional alternative settlement with Budapest and their chance to secure the greatest possible independence from the Magyars. Numerous Slovak leaders engaged in negotiations with liberal, as well as conservative, Magyar politicians before Czechoslovakia was declared independent. On October 10, 1918 the Budapest daily *Az Est* reported that negotiations were under way between the Magyars and the Slovak leaders. The information revealed in *Az Est* obviously concerned Count Mihály Károlyi's sincere efforts to win the support of the leaders of the nationalities for his endeavors to form a liberal government. His efforts were effectively blocked by the reactionary Magyar politicians, but failure of the leaders of the nationalities likewise contributed to the miscarriage of his program. With military defeat already in sight, Károlyi, an ardent Hungarian patriot, attempted to form a government which would be able to save Hungary from the worst consequences of defeat by accepting President Wilson's principles. Although no one doubted that a price would have to be paid for losing the war, a liberal, democratic government could (theoretically at least) hope for better treatment by the victors than a regime representing the circles responsible for the war and its worst excesses.

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8 Venkov [The Countryside], October 15, 1918. See also *Memoirs of Michael Károlyi. Faith without Illusion* (London: Johnathan Cape, 1956), p. 98; and *Az Est* [Evening], October 10, 1918.
Károlyi began his campaign to win the support of the leaders of the non-Magyar nationalities almost immediately after the collapse of Bulgaria toward the end of September, 1918. Károlyi's effort, following Jászi's blueprint for the solution of the nationality question, was as close to an honest attempt to find an acceptable solution for all parties involved as was ever attempted by anybody in Hungarian history.

As early as September 27, 1918, Hodža wrote Anton Štefánek in Prague that one of Károlyi's men had approached him with a proposal for negotiations to settle the Slovak question. It would be fair to assume that the man to whom Hodža referred was Oskár Jászi. The principal concessions made in the pourparlers was a promise of universal suffrage—which had been Hodža's prime demand for some time—and the appointment of several Slovaks to higher administrative offices in Hungary. Hodža told Štefánek that he had warned Károlyi's emissary of the futility of approaching the Slovaks with such proposals, since they would not be interested in receiving offices from Károlyi when "much bigger things were in the making." Károlyi's representative confided to Hodža that Károlyi intended "on the basis of their demands, to prepare a complete plan of confederation for the peace conference." Hodža asked Štefánek to inform concerned Prague circles about this Magyar plan and requested him to make sure that no one either in Prague or Yugoslavia talked with Károlyi. Hodža supposedly rejec-
ted Károlyi's plan by questioning Károlyi's authority to meddle in such important matters. Hodža declared his high regard for Károlyi's honorable effort to save Hungary, but he implied that the Slovaks could play nothing more than the role of intermediaries between the Slavs and the Magyars, and this only because the Slovaks sympathized with the Magyars because of their long association with them. He claimed that the Slovaks did not want to see the Magyars end up as the Serbs did after the Balkan wars and be denied access to the sea.  

The above attitude of the Slovaks as reported by Hodža was not a clear-cut anti-Magyar attitude such as Hodža voiced publicly afterwards when he was angered by reports in the Magyar press about the understanding which was allegedly reached between the Magyars and the Slovaks. Hodža had already demonstrated considerable apprehension because the Prague leaders were displeased with his discussions with the Magyar leaders, threatening the Magyars that the time was approaching when Hungary would be territorially reduced to "Budapest and its environs." By taking an apparently uncompromising stance, Hodža theoretically strengthened the position of the Slovaks, if only by hinting at their potential significance as mediators between the Magyars and the non-Magyars. He also sought to enhance.

9 Hodža to Štefánik, September 27, 1918, as given in Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," p. 772, n. 14a.

10 Ženkov, October 15, 1918, and Slovenský týždenník, October 18, 1918.
the Slovaks' bargaining position by claiming that the Magyars could no longer take the Slovaks for granted. (It is noteworthy that while Hodža demonstrated considerable bargaining skill with the "eternal enemy," the Magyars, he, as well as the others Slovak leaders, failed to demonstrate the same ability in dealing with the "eternal friends," the Czechs.) Confident of his ability to handle Károlyi, Hodža only asked Štefánek to make sure that the Prague gentlemen would not disavow him, thereby demonstrating his hesitation to speak and act on behalf of his own people without previously obtaining the consent of the Czechs, who at this point had no authority over Slovakia whatever. Some Slovak politicians already had been promised positions and/or money, although Hodža is not listed among those who were known to be on the Czech payroll.

In other Slovak political quarters the situation was not so clear. Hodža wrote to Dula, the chairman of the National Party, that Károlyi was sending Dula an envoy. At the same time he sent his letter to Štefánek, Hodža informed Dula about the Magyar offers. Although no details are known about what advice Hodža gave Dula, his letter


to Štefánek reveals that he was inclined to negotiate, if only to temporize and fool the Magyars. There is good reason to believe either that Hodža did not discourage Dula from entering into negotiations or that Dula on his own, together with Emil Stodola and Vladimír Makovicky, actually began to negotiate, first with an intermediary and then with Károlyi himself. The readiness of the National Party to negotiate exemplified the Slovak feeling of insecurity. A contemporary Slovak historian claims that since Dula had visited Prague at the beginning of October, 1918, he was familiar with the Czech plans for Slovakia. The documents which the author has seen do not support this contention. Moreover, it is hard to imagine that the Maffia would take Dula, of all men, into their confidence. If this information is correct, Dula may have had some inkling of the exiles' repeated warnings against negotiating with the Austro-Hungarian ruling circles. The irredentists had repeatedly warned against independent domestic Czech, let alone Slovak, action, and negotiations, naturally, were at the top of the list of forbidden things, since they might imply a willingness to compromise with the enemy. However, the Slovak political leaders lacked regular contacts with Prague and in consequence knew nothing of Benes's instructions to the Maffia to prevent any kind of

13 Martin Vietor, "Zapojenie Slovenska do ČSR r. 1918" [The Integration of Slovakia into the Czecho-Slovak Republic in 1918], Pravnéhistorické studie [Studies in Legal History], Vol. XIV (1969), p. 79.
negotiations with the Hungarian government. Indeed hardly any of the Slovaks had ever heard of Beneš.

Unaware of the tactics of the exiles, the Slovak leaders became involved in negotiations with the Magyar liberals. Károlyi needed the support of the non-Magyar nationalities as proof that his party was able to settle the Hungarian national problem amicably. This, in turn, would demonstrate that Károlyi deserved support for his proposed policies both at home and abroad. With the end of the war approaching, the Magyar liberals desperately tried to save Hungary. Károlyi, who had followed an almost consistently pro-Allied policy since the beginning of the war, seemed to be the only person and his policies the only means to secure Hungary's salvation, but others also genuinely desired a modus vivendi with the non-Magyars. On September 26, 1918, Oszkár Jászi, the foremost Hungarian authority on the national question, though without actual political power, invited the nationalities, the Slovaks among them, to participate in a public discussion of the nationality question. The obvious aim of this move was to obtain public statements from leaders of the non-Magyar peoples that would demonstrate urbi et orbi the strong desire of all Hungarian peoples to live peacefully together in a united democratic Hungary. Jászi's efforts failed in Slovakia, supposedly because of the simultaneous Magyar endeav-

\[14\] Slovenský týždenník, September 27, 1918.
or to exploit the existing controversies between the Catholics and the Protestants.\(^{15}\)

Yet the Slovak-Magyar negotiations were by no means at an end. Various attempts to negotiate and settle outstanding differences marked by various degrees of sincerity continued until early December, 1918, and on a limited scale beyond that date. On October 15, 1918, Dula informed Milan Ivánka of another Magyar effort to negotiate.\(^{16}\) This time, no less a personality than István Tisza himself, until the end of his life the real power in Magyar politics, communicated his eagerness to negotiate with the Slovak National Party. His contacts with the party leadership went far back, it will be recalled, and had continued on lesser issues throughout the war. Kurthy, the lieutenant governor of the county of Turiec, once again acted as his representative. However, neither side seemed to be serious about reaching an agreement and settling the Slovak question. Hlinka supposedly bluntly told Kurthy that the Slovaks had already lost all confidence in Magyar politics and politicians. The Magyars, he went on to say, had already had plenty of time to satisfy Slovak national aspirations but had failed to do so. Now, however, when the Magyars themselves were in trouble, they wanted to negotiate.

\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{16}\) *Slovenský týždeník*, September 27 and October 15, 1918; *Venkov*, October 15, 1918; Dula to Ivánka, October 15, 1918, as quoted in Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," p. 509, n. 87.
It was too late for negotiations, Hlinka maintained, particularly now; when "others are taking care" of the Slovaks, the Slovaks were not about to thwart their well-wishers' efforts. The *divide et impera* strategy would no longer serve to split the Slovaks because, as far as Hlinka was concerned, while a Slovak Protestant was a brother a Catholic Slovak "Magyarone" was a national degenerate, an enemy aiming at the destruction of his own nation.¹⁷

In another attempt at negotiation, Alexander Erdélyi, a Magyar lawyer in good standing with the Slovaks, approached Dula, but it seems that his intentions were mainly limited to sounding out the Slovaks, particularly about their position with regard to Czecho-Slovak unification. On this occasion Tisza's obdurate national policy revealed itself. Erdélyi was to commence negotiations only if the Slovaks demonstrated their adherence to Hungarian territorial and political integrity. Then Budapest was allegedly willing to grant "substantial concessions all along the line, even a seat in the government."¹⁸ To precede negotiations by putting forward conditions on matters in which even the Slovaks were undetermined was a serious political blunder. This kind of arrogance on the part of Tisza surprised no one. At least he did not threaten the Slovaks as he had the Yugoslavs in Sarajevo shortly before by saying that though the Yugoslavs might bring Hungary down to

¹⁸ Ibid.
ruin, the Magyars would still have enough power to destroy them too. Predictably, the Erdélyi mission came to nothing.

Károlyi's negotiations with the Slovak representatives in Budapest on October 9, 1918, were conducted in an entirely different spirit, but produced no better results than those achieved by Tisza's emissary. Károlyi offered the Slovaks autonomy, conceived of in cultural rather than political terms. The Slovak leadership did not reject the idea outright, but as Emil Stodola pointed out, the Slovaks could not accept a pledge of autonomy from Károlyi because they felt sure that the Magyars would not honor such a pledge. Dula countered the Károlyi proposals by saying that Slovak "public opinion had advanced much further" than to be satisfied with half-measures. The real reason for declining Károlyi's offer was somewhat more pragmatic.

Dula made it known that he, as the chairman of the Slovak National Party, was in full agreement with Károlyi's liberal national policy, but he insisted that the Slovaks "could


21 Venkov, October 15, 1918.
not pledge themselves definitely to the leader of the opposi-
tion, whose word was not binding upon official Hungary.\textsuperscript{22}
The "other Magyars," official Hungary or that segment of
Magyardom which for centuries had been the real holder of
power, were obviously the group Stodola feared, no doubt
correctly. The Magyar liberals were paying for the sins
of "official Hungary," which had nothing in common with
people like Jászi and Károlyi. The Slovaks failed to dif-
ferentiate between the two, and consequently they refused
to support the liberal wing in Hungarian politics. Even
if the Slovaks seceded from Hungary, it would be incompar-
ably easier to live in the neighborhood of a democratic
rather than an atavistic Hungary. But then the Slovaks
themselves were neither liberal nor the kind of politicians
who would take long-range perspectives into consideration
or act on them.

Károlyi was bitterly disappointed, since the unrespons-
siveness of the Slovaks hindered his endeavors to convince
the Hungarian parliament of his ability to keep the non-
Magyars from breaking away, and thereby save the territori-
al integrity of the country and substantiate his claim to
be the leader of the only force which could salvage Hungary
from the ruins of the lost war. For the rest of his life
Károlyi believed he could have used an agreement with the
Slovaks at that time (even if the Slovaks did not adhere
to it later) as a strong argument for demanding a plebis-

\textsuperscript{22}Károlyi, \textit{Faith without Illusion}, p. 98.
cite in northern Hungary. If the Magyar liberals had assumed power sooner and had maintained at least a working relationship with the subject peoples even after they seceded from Hungary, the Magyars would have had more than a good chance to receive favorable treatment from the victorious Allies. 23

Following the failure of the above negotiations Hodža reported in his Slovenský týždenník that members of the Magyar ruling circles seriously discussed to offer extensive autonomy for the Slovaks, perhaps even more extensive, he insinuated, than that enjoyed by Croatia. Almost while the negotiations were going on, the Magyar press trumpeted to the world that an agreement had been reached with the Slovaks, hinting that the Hungarian nationality problem had been settled. Such tendentious misinformation was by no means unusual in the Magyar press, but unfortunately for the Magyars it became commonplace during the Karolyi period. It proved counterproductive. The embarrassed Slovaks concluded from this incident that in future it would be safe to talk with Magyar politicians only in the presence of a notary.

Hodža explained to the public that Karolyi had invited the Slovaks to join him in a coalition of Magyar democratic liberals and socialists, and had promised, in return for their support, in cooperation with the Slovak national leadership to work out a mutually acceptable program for

23 Ibid.
a satisfactory solution for the nationality question. The only serious limitation of any nationality program, Hodža maintained, was Karolyi's insistence on the principle of Hungarian territorial integrity. Any alternative could be considered only as long as it did not violate the territorial and political integrity of Hungary, i.e., everything was negotiable short of separation. The Slovaks avoided any commitment by claiming that since Slovakia was under martial law the National Party could not hold meetings and, consequently, there was no authorized body to decide such vital questions as those brought up by Károlyi.

This, of course, was only partially true; the National Party was not functioning normally, but it never had. Hodža declared that Károlyi's policies enjoyed neither confidence nor approbation of the Slovaks anyway. It was a misleading statement, to be sure, for Károlyi's nationality policy was identical to Jász's concept, which had long been appreciated and supported by those few Slovaks who were familiar with it. Hodža himself, together with such staunch Czechoslovakists as Anton Štefánik, was among them long before the war. The war might have changed the opin-

24 Venclov, October 15, 1918; Slovenský týždeník, October 18, 1918.

25 Milan Podržámský, "Oskar Jászí a národnostná otázka" [Oscar Jászi and the Nationality Question], Historický časopis, Vol. XX (1972), pp. 82–85. Ferdinand Juriga, one of the two Slovak deputies in the Hungarian diet, in his October 29, 1918, speech in the parliament, praised Jaszi as one of those exceptional Magyars who appreciated the nationality question but no Magyar politician would listen to him. Juriga's October 19, 1918, speech as translated into Slovak and printed in Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat,
ions of many Slovak politicians with regard to Jaszi's ideas about the solution of the nationality problem and undermined their confidence in it, but it seems unlikely that those Slovaks who knew Jaszi would have lost their trust in his personal integrity and his well-known good will toward the nationalities. Jaszi was guilty of the cardinal sin as far as the non-Magyars were concerned; he still believed in Magyar hegemony, even within a Danubian Federation patterned after eastern Switzerland.  

Hodza had correctly assessed the Magyar endeavor to save Hungary's integrity before the final catastrophe set in. In his opinion, Karolyi's effort to put together a new government with representatives of the nationalities in it was an attempt to salvage the country even at the price of federalization and making relatively far-reaching concessions in national policy. Most importantly, as Hodza was quick to point out, not even the most liberal Magyar would admit the right of the non-Magyar nations to self-determination if it meant separation from Hungary.  

Vol. IV, pp. 31-61. Hodza himself voiced his sympathy with Jaszi's concept of the solution of the nationality problem as late as the end of August, 1918. See Slovensky tyzdenik, August 30, 1918.

Jaszi believed as late as the end of September, 1918, that if the Magyars granted autonomy to the non-Magyar nationalities, Hungary could be saved and the Magyars could retain their position of primus inter pares both in Hungary and/or in a Danubian Federation of Central Eastern European states. Vilag, September 22, 1918.

Slovensky tyzdenik, October 18, 1918.
anybody else would permit any encroachment on Hungarian territorial integrity. As for Károlyi’s optimism, Hodža commented that as long as the Magyar press was talking about the willingness of the nationalities to participate in some kind of Károlyi-Andrássy coalition the Magyar leaders were deceiving both themselves and their people.

During the summer and fall of 1918, Hodža attempted to formulate Slovak national demands on the basis of the principle of national self-determination. In view of his political modus operandi, his language and ideas must be regarded, at least in part, as an exercise in demagoguery, of which he was a master. Under no circumstances could Hodža be expected to dismiss the possibility of Slovak-Magyar negotiations. As a matter of fact, he became more and more involved in complex and potentially dangerously far-reaching negotiations with the Magyar political leaders, some of which were suspect. There, however, is no tangible evidence however, that he was dealing with both the Czech nationalist leaders and Wekerle and Kristóffy, two Magyar politicians who were generally despised at the end of October, 1918. That Hodža was an incurable negotiator, however, was demonstrated at the end of November.

28 Venkov, October 15, 1918.

29 Ibid.

and early December, 1918, when he was in Budapest in the capacity of Czechoslovak minister plenipotentiary. Here he negotiated with the Magyars, contrary to the wishes and contrary to the express instructions of the Prague government. Clouds of suspicion and doubt as to Hodža's real intentions at that time still hang over his head and, due to the lack of documentary evidence, will likely remain so.\textsuperscript{31}

While the Slovaks tried to decide what to do, events in Central Europe gained momentum. On July 13, 1918, the re-activation of the Bohemian (Prague) National Committee under Karel Kramar's chairmanship was announced in Prague. In its very first public proclamation the Prague National Committee demanded "the right of self-determination in a fully independent Czechoslovak state with its own administration and its own borders, and with its own sovereignty."\textsuperscript{32}

Though the proclamation could be interpreted to include them, its text contained not a word about the Slovaks per se. No Slovak was among the members of the National Com-

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid. For Hodža's own account of his actions at that time, see Slovenský rozchod s Maďarmi roku 1918. Dokumentárný výklad o jednaniach Milana Hodžu ako Československého splnomocníka s Károlyho maďarskou vládou v listopade a prosinci 1918; o ústupu maďarských vojsk zo Slovenska [The Slovak Break with the Magyars in 1918. Documentary Expose Concerning the Negotiations of Milan Hodža as Czechoslovak Plenipotentiary to Karolyi's Hungarian Government in November and December, 1918, about the Retreat of Hungarian Troops from Slovakia] (Bratislava: Nakladatelstvo Slovenského demíka, 1929).

mittee. The Prague National Committee was conceived, like the Slovak National Party or National Council, as an umbrella organization, the supreme representative of all Czech political parties and trends. The Slovak National Council, as projected by the Slovak national leaders during their September 12, 1918, Budapest conference, was to be constituted similarly, with six to eight members, which later rose to twenty. Its functions were to parallel rather than to integrate with those of the Prague National Committee; i.e., one was to be the supreme representative Czech political organ; the other, as confirmed in the Slovak Declaration of Independence, the sole representative of the Slovaks and of their national-political interests. 33

The idea of a supreme organ of the Slovak nation to act as moderator in the national camp and as the representative of the national will abroad had been conceived as early as May 24, 1914, at the last pre-war conference of the Slovak national leaders in Budapest. Similarly, Hodža's May 15, 1918, appeal to establish the Council, which was published in the Slovenský týždenník, sought in accordance with the original conception to create a representative political body which would represent Slovak national interests in Hungary. If the occasion presented itself, the Council would have the right to express the wishes of and speak on behalf of the entire nation. 34

33 Národnie noviny, October 31, 1918.
34 Slovenský týždenník, May 15, 1918.
Hodza's appeal was an important step towards the calling of the October 30, 1918, meeting in Turciansky sv. Martin, which produced the final declaration of the Slovak position. The secret meeting in Turciansky sv. Martin, which made the definitive decision to establish the Slovak National Council on May 24, 1918, outspokenly rejected the Czechoslovak proposals. Although the Mikulas declaration of May 1, had used the words "Czecho-slovak nation," Srobar's draft proposal at Turciansky sv. Martin claimed the right of self-determination for the "branch of the Slovak nation counting three million individuals left in Upper Hungary through an unfortunate prank of destiny, separated from its living stem." The formula was clumsy; the important point, however, is that Srobar could not afford to use among his own peers formulas dictated from Prague. On the other hand, with growing political experience Srobar had avoided a clash with either the Prague government or the Slovak majority by inserting a phrase which could be interpreted at will.

The May conference produced an important resolution urging the speedy formation of the National Council. Chairman Dula sent a circular to the members informing them of the results of the meeting as well as a list of proposed candidates for membership in the National Council.36

Both the May resolution and Dula's circular make clear that the National Council was originally conceived and designed to be endowed with both legislative and executive powers. This point can not be overemphasized, since the Slovaks acted on this premise almost until Šrobár formally abolished the Slovak National Council at the end of January 1919, when he became the Czechoslovak Minister Plenipotentiary with full powers from the government in Prague.37

As the end of the war approached it appeared that Czechoslovakia had been recognized by the principal allies. It had a government in exile, its independence had been declared, and its domestic political leaders had declared on several occasions that the Czechoslovak problem was no longer an internal Austro-Hungarian one but an internation-

36 Dula's circular of September 23, 1918, in Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. III, pp. 252-253 and 354-355. For the minutes of the September 12, 1918, meeting, see Juraj Slávik, "Kde sa zakladala Národná Rada" [When the National Council was being Founded], Slovenský denník, October 23, 1928.

37 Úradné noviny, January 8, 1919. For more details, see Katarína Urbanová, "Vznik Ministerstva pre správu Slovenska" [The Origins of the Ministry for the Administration of Slovakia], Historický časopis, Vol. XIX (1971), pp. 199-220.
al problem which would be resolved only by an international body. The Prague National Committee had made known the determination of the Czech people to fight for their independence and freedom and had rejected the imperial manifesto of October 16, 1918, which announced the reorganization of Austria into a federation of autonomous nation-states, even before it had been published.

For the Slovaks, the imperial manifesto was meaningless. The Hungarian Wekerle cabinet, invoking the historical rights of the Hungarian kingdom which the emperor had sworn to honor, declared the stipulations of the manifesto invalid in Hungary. The Hungarian diet would never consider reorganizing the empire along federalistic lines. As late as October 22, 1918, Wekerle insisted at the session of the common ministerial council that he possessed first-hand information about Slovak aspirations and that the Slovaks would not even hear of autonomy, far less demand it. Tisza went on record with an astonishing state-

38 Polzer-Hoditz, Emperor Karl, p. 407. At the October 17, 1918, meeting of the Hungarian diet, Tisza declared that the Czechoslovak issue was nothing but a cover for Czech land-grabbing and imperialism. Vietor, "Zapojenie Slovenska," p. 62.

39 Miklós Komjáthy (ed.), Protokolle des gemeinsamen Ministerrates der Österreich-Ungarischen Monarchie (1914-1918) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), pp. 669-703, especially pp. 698-699. As a matter of fact the council of ministers intended to use the Slovaks as an example of people who never lifted a finger against Hungary, who were a separate nation, different from the Czechs by admission of the Slovak national leaders themselves, and who wanted to have nothing in common with the Czechs. Consequently the council believed that no such people as Czechoslovaks
ment that Hungary needed to make no reform because freedom 
and democracy had already existed in the Lands of the Crown 
of Saint Stephen for a long time. As far as Tisza was con-
cerned, the nationalities had always been treated fairly 
in Hungary. He agreed with Wekerle that the non-Magyar 
nationalities had no desire to separate from Hungary; the 
agitation of a few nationalist extremists by no means re-
lected the true sentiments of the loyal Hungarian peoples. 40

Wekerle rejected the Czech claims to Slovakia, stat-
ing that the establishment of the Czech National Council 
had nothing in common with Hungary. Talk of a Czecho-
Slovak state was tantamount to interference in Hungary's 
internal affairs—a flagrant violation of the historical 
rights of the Hungarian kingdom. 41

The imperial manifesto did create a political plat-
form upon which the nationalities could demand rights equal 
to those granted to the peoples in the Austrian part of 

existed. These and similar arguments were to be used in 
the reply to President Wilson's October 18, 1918, note to 
the Viennese government in which Wilson stated that it was 
up to the Yugoslavs and Czechoslovaks to decide what accord-
ing to their wishes. Wekerle had in his hand declarations 
of formal protests against the separation of Slovakia from 
Hungary issued by the Bratislava and Trenčín counties and, 
of course, these documents were to be used to the fullest 
extent. Ibid.

40 Ibid. See also Népszava [People's Word], October 
17, 18, and 19, 1918.

41 Népszava, October 22, 1918. For Károlyi's October 
22, 1918, speech in the Hungarian diet, see Mihály Károlyi, 
Az új Magyarországért. Válogatott írások és beszédek, 1908-
1919 [For the New Hungary. Selected Writings and Speeches, 
1908-1919] (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1968), pp. 237-
244. See also Juhász-Nagy, A magyar októberi forradalom, 
pp. 154-156.
the empire. It did not matter to the leaders of the non-
Magyars whether the Magyars liked this policy or not. They
demanded that the Magyars recognize the validity of these
rights in Hungary. They made it known in the Hungarian
diet that they were determined to base their national as-
pirations on the principles espoused in the manifesto.

During the October 16, 1918, meeting of the Hungarian
diet Count Károlyi declared that Hungary had lost the war
and urged the parliament to adjust Hungarian politics to
the realities of the situation. He proposed that a govern-
ment composed of people uncompromised in the eyes of the
world replace the old politicians who had been responsible
for the war and who symbolized the atrocities committed
against the peoples of Hungary. ⁴² The very next day, Ist-
van Tisza proclaimed that Károlyi was right in maintaining
that Hungary had lost the war. ⁴³

The Hungarian political atmosphere was ripe for the
nationalities to make their demands public. Alexander

⁴² Károlyi’s speech in the Parliament on October 16,
1918, Az új Magyaroszágért, pp. 218-231. On the same day
the Károlyi party submitted a program to the emperor, which
consisted of twelve points. Point four obliged the new
goverment, if approved, to defend the integrity of the
country at the Peace Conference by all means available.
According to point six the nationality problem was to be
handled on the basis of the Wilsonian principles: all non-
Magyar peoples in the kingdom were to be assured the right
of freedom of cultural and economic development and the
free usage of their languages in administration, education,
in self-governing institutions and in the jurisprudence.
Ibid., pp. 235-236. Also published in Magyaroszág, October
17, 1918.

⁴³ Károlyi, Az új Magyaroszágért, p. 537, n. 3.
Vaida-Voevod, the leader of the Transylvanian Romanians, in a statement delivered to the Hungarian diet on October 18, claimed the right of self-determination for his constituency. Ferdiš Juriga, the only Slovak deputy currently in the Hungarian diet (the other, Pavel Blaho, was on active military duty), prepared to make a similar statement on behalf of the Slovaks. The leadership of the National Party was horrified by this possibility, and at first wanted to prevent Juriga from speaking.

The distrust between Juriga and the National Party was mutual and well-known. Juriga was an independent man who had the reputation of being stubborn and uncontrollable. He rejected cooperation with the National Party and called it a cadaver with which he wanted to have nothing in common. Though by October, 1918, Hlinka reported that he had talked to Juriga and was confident he "would behave." Dula and other leading Slovaks were unconvinced, and Dula immediately sent Milan Ivánka to Budapest to prevent Juriga from making any statement contrary to the National Party's political platform. However, after his arrival in Budapest on October 17, Ivánka found that there was no reason to be afraid. Despite the National Party's mistrust, and in the face of protests and insults from the

44 Hlinka to Rotnágl, October 20, 1918, as given in Hrons ký, "K otázke aktivizácie a diferenciácie," p. 765.

45 Dula to Ivánka, October 15, 1918, and Ivánka to Dula, October 17, 1918, Hrons ký, "K slovenskej politike," p. 508, n. 84. See also Juriga, Blahozvest kriesenia, p. 89.
Magyar deputies, Juriga delivered a courageous speech on October 19 which in essence was based on the secret resolution of the May 24 conference demanding the right of self-determination for the Slovaks and declaring that the Slovaks denied the right to speak in their name to anyone except those nominated by the Slovak National Council. Only persons with such a mandate would be entrusted to represent the Slovaks at the Peace Conference.  

Juriga, in his official capacity and in an official forum, had made Slovak national aspirations publicly known for the first time since the beginning of the war, although he made no reference to territory. This step was taken by Hodža a few days later in what was perhaps the only public statement of Slovak territorial aspirations during the twentieth century. In a speculative article published in the Slovenský týždenník, Hodža, basing his calculations on Hungarian statistics, attempted to gauge the size of the ethnic regions that would constitute sovereign Slovak territory.

Hodža pointed out at the outset that the area under consideration was traditionally called "Hungaria Superior," that is, Upper Hungary, or, as the Slovaks called it, "Horniaky." The Slovaks had inhabited this territory for centuries, Hodža argued, except for a few hundred villages.

46 For the Slovak version of Juriga's October 19, 1918, speech, see Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. IV, pp. 31-61. For a summary of his statement, see Slovenský týždenník, October 25, 1918.
in the south which were Magyarized: i.e., the region north of Nitra and Levice. At the same time, however, the number of "Magyarized" Slovaks was compensated for by hundreds of thousands of Slovaks who had emigrated to Hungary proper.

Hodža estimated that the number of Slovaks in Hungary proper, (about a quarter of a million) equaled the number of the Magyars and Germans who had settled in Slovakia. Hodža included the county of Bratislava, in Slovak territory excluding Velký žitný ostrov, with its 22,000 inhabitants. The total population of Bratislava itself was 78,000, of which 32,000 were Germans, and 31,000 Magyars; and the rest were other Slovaks or belonged to a few other nationalities. Out of the 457,000 inhabitants of the county of Nitra, 100,000 were Magyar and 28,000 German. The 310,000 people of the Trenčín, 56,00 of the Turiec, 79,000 of Orava, 87,000 of Liptov, 173,000 of the Spiš, and the 175,000 of Šariš counties were to become part of Slovakia in their entirety.

Only half of Zemplín county was sought by Hodža for Slovakia. Thus only 171,000 of the county's 343,000 total population would come under Slovak administration. Similar division was envisaged in the case of Užhorod county: only one quarter of the total population (some 40,500) were expected to be included, Abaúj county, including the city of Košice, would bring some 83,000 more people to Slovakia. Only the northern part of the county of Gemer, with some
98,000 inhabitants, was envisaged as part of Slovakia. Hont, including Banská Štiavnica with 74,000 people, and Tekov, including the Magyar populated region south of Levice, would add 178,000 more. Novohrad, where the Slovaks constituted two-thirds of the total population, was included, as was the area north of the line Balassagyarmat--Lučenec, which included only 86,000 of the total 261,000 inhabitants.

According to Hodža's calculations, Slovakia thus would have a population of two and a half million. He freely admitted the existence of purely Magyar and German enclaves in all parts of Slovakia: i.e., in Bratislava, outside of the Žitný ostrov, south of Galanta, north of Nitra, south of Levice, in Tekov, and in many other places. All in all, he estimated that, some 160,000 Magyars and Germans would remain in Slovakia. However, Hodža argued, by way of compensation 214,000 Slovaks would remain in Hungary proper. Hodža also acknowledged that in most of southern Slovakia most people spoke both Slovak and Magyar. The Slovak leaders knew only too well that if the national principle were applied and honored, they had no justifiable claim to a considerable part of northern Hungary (which was later incorporated into Czechoslovakia).

Hodža's territorial delineation of the Slovak ethnic territory was as vague as his demographic calculations, but it was definitely less ambitious than the expansionist Czech territorial demands on Hungary. While Hodža at least
publicly restricted himself to the ethnic principle as the basis for territorial aspirations, the Czech demands from the very beginning had been based on economic and strategic self-interest. For the Czechs, the ethnic principle was merely a front, and one cannot escape the impression that there was an element of malevolence involved—an effort to weaken Hungary as much as possible. As a past and conceivably a future enemy of the Slavs, Hungary had to be drastically weakened since the total elimination of Hungary from the map of Europe, the optimum Czech solution, was unfortunately impossible.

With regard to eastern Slovakia, Hodža anticipated that the greater part of the region would be allotted to a Ukrainian state, which he expected would arise after the war. Hodža thus, like perhaps most Slovaks, did not expect the annexation of Ruthenia to Czechoslovakia. Curiously, Hodža also granted the right to exercise self-determination to ethnic Germans but not to the Magyar minority in Slovakia.47 In general, Hodža anticipated that controversial questions would be judiciously resolved by the Great Powers at the Peace Conference. This assumption played an important role in Hodža's subsequent conduct. The Slovaks simply did not expect a solution by force. Even if the Prague government were to confront the Peace Conference with a fait accompli by occupying the area, the Slovaks believed that the Peace Conference would abrogate acts made without

47 Slovenský tyždenník, October 18, 1918.
the Allies' approval and that some of the already occupied territories might be restored to Hungary. When this occurred, Magyar reprisals would inevitably follow. This explains, in part, the reluctance of many leading Slovaks as late as 1919 openly to begin service in the Czechoslovak administration, as well as the behavior of the former Magyar civil servants, including the railway personnel, who resisted Czechoslovak authority not only because of their loyalty to their official oath but also because they, too, regarded the Czechoslovak occupation of northern Hungary as most temporary until the "world court of justice," the Peace Conference, would announce its final verdict. 48

Knowing their people, the Slovak national leaders would not even have dreamed of making use of the ultimate criterion of national self-determination, the plebiscite, to attain their ends. The Slovak polity was traditionally on such a low level of national and political consciousness that, particularly in the mountainous Slovak regions, the most convincing political argument was the amount of alcohol the candidate or his sponsors could provide for the illumination of the illiterate masses. Since Slovak national leaders, most of them relatively poor, could not finance a "competitive electoral campaign", and the rich Magyars of Slovakia could, the Magyars invariably achieved their

goals. Moreover, under Hungarian electoral practices and the limited franchise, the majority of the Slovak populace had never participated in elections of any kind during their whole lifetime. Consequently, they would have had to be told how to vote, whom to elect, etc. And those who were to advise the population, in at least ninety-nine out of a hundred cases, would have been Magyars or pro-Hungarian "Magyarones," as dictated by the composition of the opinion makers in Upper Hungary.  

On the very day on which Hodža's article about the putative extent of Slovak territory was published, a Czech delegation to the leadership in exile in Geneva stopped in Vienna and had an informative conference with the Slovak group there. The Czech delegation informed the Viennese Slovaks that one of the central issues they wanted to clarify in Geneva was the extent to which Slovakia's unification with Bohemia was guaranteed by the Entente. Clearly then, despite Beneš's assurances to the contrary, the domestic Czech leaders had their doubts about the possibility of obtaining Allied consent to Czech annexation of Slovakia. The meeting in Vienna presented the very first opportunity for a Czech-Slovak exchange of opinions with regard to the

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legal and constitutional status of Slovakia in the planned Czechoslovak state. There had, of course, been occasional informal discussions between the Czech politicians and the Slovaks in Vienna before, but the present delegation included some of the leading Czech politicians such as Karel Kramár.

Very little is known about the deliberations in Vienna. The delegation to Switzerland, Ivan Derer later reported, asked the Slovaks to refrain from public declarations, particularly demands for clarification of Slovakia's status in the future Czechoslovakia. The Czech delegation cautioned the Slovaks either to make no explicit statements about unification or else to express such desires only in the vaguest possible terms. The Czech political leaders promised to inform the Slovaks about the status of the Czechoslovak question as soon as possible. Until then, however, they thought it better for the Slovaks to keep quiet and make no statement at all. 50

The Czech delegation assured the Slovaks that relations between the two nations, and the constitutional status of Slovakia would be settled domestically after formal unification, but two leading Czechs, Alois Rasin, the future Czechoslovak minister of finances, and Dr. Ferdinand Pantuček, Counsellor of the Austrian Supreme Court of Admi-

istration and future President of the Czechoslovak Supreme Court, remained in Vienna to discuss in detail the constitutional issues relevant to the future administration of Slovakia with Hodža and some of his colleagues.\(^{51}\) It seems that Pantucek anticipated a unified administration for the future country, with some provisions for Slovakia in the form of a compromise solution between the administrative systems of Austria and Hungary. Hodža, however, wanted to secure such long-range Slovak national interests as national-cultural and political autonomy. He proposed to secure these aims by nominating a commission composed of members of the Slovak National Council—perhaps something resembling the later executive committee of the National Council. Hodža's plan envisaged elections to be held in Slovakia for deputies to the Slovak National Diet. These representatives, with a valid mandate from the Slovak people, would then declare the unification of the Slovaks with the Czechs in a common state. Five or six members of the Slovak diet were to be members of the central Czechoslovak National Assembly and simultaneously to exercise a supervisory function over the administration of Slovakia.\(^{52}\)


evidently expected that Slovakia would have autonomous status in the new state. The demand for Slovak autonomy was a traditional component of Slovak national aspirations, but this autonomy and its character had always been conceived of in vague and essentially non-political terms. Hodža's proposal strongly resembled the administrative and representational organization of the Habsburg lands, where there were separate provincial diets and a Reichstag in each land, and a high commissioner for Cisleithenia as a whole.

Hodža's plan was flatly rejected by the Czechs, especially by Rasín. Pantuček, as the author of the official Czech position on the constitutional and administrative structure of the future state, a priori dismissed the possibility of giving special autonomous status to any one part of the country. In view of the inclusion of substantial non-Czech minorities into the new state, the Czechs considered centralised administration inevitable. Later reports claim that the Czechs promised the highest office in Slovakia to Hodža at the Vienna meetings; this might account for the softening of Hodža's opposition to the centralist plan. Hodža was to be nominated the high commissioner for Slovakia, an office which due to unexpected circumstances, he never received. Hodža, an extremely ambi-

53 Mikus, Slovakia: A Political History, p. 10.

54 During the negotiations with the Czech political leaders in Vienna at the end of October 1918, the highest political-administrative position in Slovakia has been promised to Hodža. Slovenský týždennik, August 29, 1927.
tious man, supposedly played a double game up to the last moment "to insure for himself a political role in either event." While negotiating with the Czech deputies in October, 1918, he was supposed to be flirting with the Hungarian politicians Kristoffy and Wekerle. If the Magyars won, he could say: "I was with you." And if the Czechs won, he could say: "I was one of you." In both cases he had reliable witnesses." "When the Czechs learned of his duplicity," Rašín is supposed to have declared that "Prague would have a rope in store for Hodža as soon as Czecho-Slovakia was established." 

The irony of history is that Hodža entered into negotiations with the Károlyi cabinet on almost the identical platform which Rašín and Pantůček had rejected and, despite the goodwill of Jášzi, the majority of the Károlyi cabinet was unable to overcome its Magyar nationalist bias and grant the Slovaks the autonomy they desired even though this Magyar intransigence marked the end of the old Hungary.

However, since Šrobár happened to be in Prague at the decisive moment, he and not Hodža became the dictator in Slovakia. No wonder that no love was wasted between the two of them for the rest of their lives. For more details see Immer, "K maďarsko-československým vzťahom," pp. 57 and 99 n. 30.

55 Mikuš, Slovakia: A Political History, p. 10.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
During their stay in Vienna, Rašín and Pantůček sensed that something significant would soon happen. Leaving behind Vlastimil Tusar, the Social Democratic deputy, to keep watch, they rushed back to Prague. During the night of October 27-28 Tusar informed Rašín about the Andrassy note to Wilson recognizing the rights of the "Czecho-slovaks," and Rašín, in the editorial office of the Národní listy, immediately printed Pantůček's and Rašín's ready-made declaration of Czechoslovak independence of October 28, 1918, which proclaimed the formation of a single Czecho-slovak nation state, without consulting Slovak opinion on the matter. By coincidence, although it was long believed to be a consequence of some kind of "premonition," Vavro Šrobář appeared in Prague and, without a mandate from anybody, put his signature on the proclamation. This


60 Chaloupecký, Zápas o Slovensko, p. 109. Šrobář maintained that he went to Prague in search of "certainty" regarding the future of Slovakia and the Slovaks and to find out whether there were some plans for action in case of a military collapse. Šrobář, Osvobodené Slovensko, pp. 108-109. Ján Mlynárik, who is definitely not an expert on this subject, argued that Šrobář was not prompted by any mysterious inspiration but by a determination to do something about Slovakia with the help of Prague. Mlynárik, "Slovenská národná rada," p. 510, n. 155. However, when Rostislav Kocčák, who actively participated in the military operations in Slovakia, asked František Votruba, the Slovakophil literary historian, about the reasons for Šrobář's trip to Prague at the end of October 1918, he was told that
satisfied the Czechs as being sufficient proof of Slovak consent to the creation of a common Czechoslovak state, though the Slovaks met in Turciánsky sv. Martin only two days later to issue a proclamation of their own.

At the September 12, 1918, conference at Budapest it had been decided that the Slovak National Council could act temporarily without the party's formal approval, if the circumstances did not permit the convocation of a plenary meeting of the party to approve the Council's program. 61 On October 24 Dula invited the party membership to attend a plenary meeting in Martin. 62 The delegates arrived at irregular intervals, and there were several informal exchanges of opinions before the actual meeting of 106 members of the Slovak National Party began shortly after noon of October 30, 1918. The discussion focussed on two draft

he went there to get married and Šrobar, his best man, was accompanying his bride Štefana on her way to Prague. The wedding took place on October 28, 1918, and the guest knew nothing about the Prague events until the reception was over. Only then, when they entered the streets and it became evident that something was going on did Šrobar proceed to the premises of the Prague National Committee, where he put his signature under the Czechoslovak proclamation of independence, which was by then circulating through Prague both in the form of a special issue of the Národní listy and as a leaflet. František Votruba to Rostislav Korčák, October 28, 1918, as given in Rostislav Korčák, "28. Říjnen 1918—a co tomu předcházelo" [October 28, 1918, and what preceded It], Historie a vojenství, 1968, p. 895.


62 The meeting was approved by the government, and the Národnie noviny, October 24, 1918, carried the invitation. In addition, Dula sent out personal invitations to the most prominent Slovaks.
proposals for a public declaration, one submitted by Samo Zoch, a priest, and the other written by Emil Stodola, an experienced lawyer. The meeting, was held in the Tatra Bank building and a Hungarian military unit, by coincidence or by order, was stationed in front of the building.\(^{63}\)

Just as the discussion about the central subject matter began, Ivan Dérer arrived from Vienna and informed the delegates of the Czech request that they take no public stand. The Czech message reflected the uncertainty of the Czech political leaders and the absence of a previous understanding between the leaders in exile and the home front. The Czechs thought it wise to postpone any statement which could prejudice a decision about Slovakia's future which the Entente might have reserved for itself. The Slovaks did not seem dismayed by the Czech warning, and they proceeded to formulate and make public a declaration claiming Slovakia's right to self-determination and independence.

\(^{63}\) Krajčovičová assumed that the presence of the Hungarian troops played such an important role in the wording of the Martin Declaration. Krajčovičová, "Slovenská národná rada," pp. 178-179. However, Adolf Horváth, a Slovak Social Democrat, who both participated in and spoke at the Martin gathering, dismissed this fact as insignificant and noted that the commander of the Hungarian military unit refused to interfere even when he was asked to, asserting that he had no instructions to interfere in the meeting. Consequently, the Magyars knew little about the deliberations in Martin, except that a correspondent of the Népszava whom, by the way, Horváth literally threw out of the Tatra Bank, informed the Hungarian public that a bunch of crazy Slovaks were meeting in Turčiansky sv. Martin for unknown purpose. Adolf Horváth, "Moje rozpomienky z prevratového robotnícke hnutia" [My recollections of the Worker's Movement at the Coup Period], Hedvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. IV, pp. 128-144.
Stodola submitted a draft proclamation in two parts, one for public consumption, and the other, the so-called Ohlas [Appeal], to remain secret. The first part of Stodola's resolution contained an enumeration of atrocities committed against the Slovaks who, in consequence, were on the brink of national extinction. Since there was no hope that the Magyars would ever fulfill the justified aspirations of the Slovak nation, Stodola appealed to the "council of the free nations" for self-determination for the Slovaks.64

The secret Ohlas contained a statement, later not included in the public declaration, to the effect that "the Slovak National Council, on the basis of the principles and conditions recognized by Wilson and Andrassy, declares in the name of the Slovak nation that it joins the fraternal Czech nation, and together with it is forming an independent Czechoslovak state."65 Stodola's formula was carefully worded; it distinguished between the Czechs and Slovaks as two separate national and political entities. That this passage was to be hidden in the secret Ohlas demonstrated the uncertainties and fears crippling the actions of the Slovak politicians, particularly the fear of possible Hungarian reprisals. If the Slovak demands were not met and the "council of civilized nations" decided to leave

64Stodola published his draft resolution in Národnie noviny, on May 11, 1923; it is reprinted in Medvecký, Slovenský prevráť, Vol. IV, pp. 3-4.

the Slovaks to Hungary, the Slovak politicians faced serious problems indeed; under the Hungarian penal code statements such as Stodola's were treasonous and severely punishable.

Zoch objected that Stodola's proposal acknowledged the Slovaks' inability to establish an independent state by themselves. He insisted that it was time to speak to the Slovak people themselves. This was a "Slovak talking;" it must have appealed to all those who had spent at least the last four years hiding, afraid to say a single word in public, obviously guilt-ridden and ashamed of themselves. Zoch, instead of carefully incorporating legal safeguards for the secular Slovak rights and interests, really expressed the thesis that "the Slovak nation is a part of the Czechoslovak nation, united in its language, history of its culture," and on this ground claimed the logical right for political unification of what he already defined as a single cultural entity. It must be remembered that the Slovaks usually objected to this claim.

The exact text of the draft of the proclamation approved by the plenary meeting is unknown to this day, but there is reason to suppose that Hodža "adapted" it, ostensibly on stylistic grounds, in a form which would make it agree with his own ideas. In consequence, the demand for

67 Národní noviny, October 31, 1918; Roboťnícke noviny, November 11, 1918. For an English text, see Lettrich, History of Modern Slovakia, pp. 288-289.
a separate Slovak delegation to the Peace Conference, which supposedly figured in the original text (evidence substantiates this) was dropped. There was no claim for Slovak political autonomy as far as the available sources allow us to determine.

Though the wording of the Martin Declaration was from the beginning, and still is, the subject of endless controversies, the real issues were discussed at an "unofficial" conference of the delegates who remained in Martin after October 30. The main speakers at the meeting were Stodola and Hodža, and the subject of discussion was the constitutional status of Slovakia in Czechoslovakia—a subject which, according to the evidence that is available, was not considered at the meeting the day before. There were warnings that the Czechs would swallow up the Slovaks and overwhelm their economy. Others called for breaking away from the Magyars, even if the Slovaks "were a thousand times Czechized." Even such a clear-minded person as Stodola believed that the Czechs were giving the Slovaks carte blanche to write their own demands. By October 31st the Slovaks, particularly Hodža, must have known about the


69 Ibid., and Opocensky, The Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, pp. 163-167. The list of authors differing on the issue could, in fact, go on ad infinitum.

Prague coup d'état of October 28. Yet the participants

Despite the fact that it is almost the unanimous opinion of both the Slovak and non-Slovak historians that in Martin no one had the slightest idea about the Prague events, it seems almost impossible to believe that no Slovak knew about the Prague coup of October 28, 1918. In Vienna the developments in Prague were known almost immediately, and it is unlikely that the military headquarters in Budapest was not informed. Richard Plaschka, Catarro-Prag (Revolte und Revolution). Kriegsmarine und Heer Österreich-Ungarns in Feuer des Aufstandbewegung vom 1. Februar und 28. Oktober 1918) (Graz: Verlag Herman Böhlau, 1963), p. 232, n. 16. The Slovaks, both in Vienna and Budapest, had at least twenty-four hours to hear about the Prague coup. This fact, however, is consistently dismissed and both the participants of the Martin gathering and Slovak historians insist that the Slovaks had no idea about what was happening in Prague and were unaware that an independent Czechoslovak state had been proclaimed. Hungarian historians have asserted, as a matter of course, that the events in Prague, which became known in Budapest on October 30, 1918, acted as a catalyst for the Hungarian revolution. Tibor Hajdú, Az 1918-as Mavaronszági polgári demokratikus forradalom [The Hungarian Bourgeois Democratic Revolution of 1918] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1968), p. 46. Hodža, as it is known, was in Budapest at least until the noon of October 30th. If the news about the Prague coup were known in Budapest at that time he could not help but learn about it. Adolf Horváth either had a lapse of memory in his recollections or a lapsus linguae when he asserted that "the majority of us," that is the participants at the Martin meeting, "knew nothing about the Prague events." Medvecký, Slovenský prevrat, Vol. pp. 345-346. Does this mean that only a minority knew about what had happened in Prague? Perhaps even more conspicuous lapsus linguae occurred in Juriga's testimony, when he stated that after his arrival at Martin, about 11:00 p.m. on October 30, 1918, Hodža informed those still present at Martin about the events in Budapest, about Tisza's assassination, and about "the declaration of the republic," which according to Juriga, was the reason why the clause about a separate Slovak delegation to the Peace Conference was dropped from the draft declaration. Ibid., p. 345, n. 6. Since Hungary did not become a republic until November 16, 1918, Juriga obviously meant the Czechoslovak Republic and not Hungary. This reasoning is reinforced by the logic of Juriga's October 19, 1918, declaration in the Hungarian diet, in which he denied the Magyars' right to represent Slovakia at the Peace Conference and claimed that such right belonged exclusively to the duly appointed representatives of the Slovak nation. And this, that is the existence of a Czecho-
concealed from posterity their awareness of what was happening in Bohemia, presumably because they wished to create an impression that Slovak desire for unification with the Czechs was spontaneous. 72

The discussion about Slovakia's constitutional status focused from the beginning on the Pantůček scheme. The recently discovered fragmentary record of the meeting shows that Hodža recommended the acceptance of Pantůček's proposal ad interim "until the combatants and the American legionaries should arrive." (It was commonly believed at that time that Central Europe would be occupied by Allied forces.) Hodža obviously envisaged only a brief period of centralized administration of Slovakia. Once the Slovak state, formed the basis of Hodža's argument against the demand to send a separate Slovak delegation to the Peace Conference. Hodža argued that the train of events overtook the spirit of the Martin Declaration; if the Slovaks accepted the Czechoslovak state, it follows that they accepted the Czechoslovak government as well, and that Štefánik represented the Slovaks. Hodža agreed, however, that the Slovaks should participate in the peace negotiations but only as experts—advisors to the official Czechoslovak representatives. Vietor, "Zapojenie Slovenska do ČSR," p. 73. Although Hodža had the government in exile in mind, since there was no other Czechoslovak government on October 30, his reference to the existence of a Czechoslovak state might indicate that he knew that such a state had been established in Prague two days earlier.

Consequently historians could state that the Martin Declaration "was an absolutely spontaneous manifestation of the Slovak public opinion, a kind of plebiscite by which the Slovak branch of the Czechoslovak race offered itself" to participate in the establishment of a Czechoslovak state. Opočenský, The Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, p. 168. Juriga, who participated in the Martin meeting, however, stated years later that the pretense of Czechoslovak unity was supposed to last only until Hungary signed the peace treaty. Slovák, February 24, 1928. The italics are mine.
vaks were protected by military forces, they could take over the administration of their part of the country. In the meantime, the entire administration was to be closely supervised—obviously because the administrative personnel would be mostly Magyar—and the workers' support was to be won for the new state by making them the dominant element in the towns and cities. Indeed, Hodža suggested, it would be useful to make it appear to the workers that they were the ones who created this state, and thus that they were defending their own.

Stodola wanted a (preferably international, not only a Czech) guarantee of self-determination or home-rule for Slovakia, something along the line of the relationship between the Moravian and Bohemian lands in which each had separate diets and a clearly defined status of autonomy as well as a right to conduct their common affairs. Stodola insisted on a contractually defined relationship since the Slovaks were so weak compared to the Czechs that if the Czechs decided to break the agreement the Slovaks would be too impotent to do anything about it. 73 Because of a total lack of qualified Slovak administrative, educational or, for that matter, any kind of personnel to carry out the functions required in an independent Slovak administration of Slovakia, the Slovaks were inclined to use the interim period to "de-Magyarize" Slovakia, to strengthen the

Slovak national element, to encourage their own intelligentsia, and to strengthen their economic position, so that when the time came to establish an autonomous administration they could ensure maximum independence in every sphere of socio-economic-political life, particularly in language and culture. The centralist regime was to last as briefly as possible, but under no circumstances, in Stodola's judgement, should it last longer than ten years. Ten years was the deadline so often referred to by the Slovak autonomists and separatists, at which the Slovak-Czech relationship was to be re-evaluated; the anticipated result of this revision was an autonomous Slovakia.

Even Juriga agreed to Pantuček's proposal, but he also demanded firm assurances that the individuality of the Slovak nation would be maintained, that the right to territorial self-determination would be upheld (it is not clear whether Juriga wanted a guarantee of the Slovak right to separation from Czechoslovakia, though this seems im-
plied). Juriga envisaged the future coexistence of the Slovaks and Czechs as guaranteed by democracy and federalism.76

There was thus a general consensus among the participants of the meeting about the inevitability of a temporary centralistic system of government with a clearly-stated proviso that as soon as the Slovaks were strong enough they would govern their part of the country as an autonomous entity. Zoch, though he also agreed with the arrangement, expressed some reservations. He was wary of autonomy, not because of his preference for centralism but because he doubted whether even after ten years the Slovak nation would be strong enough to cope [with], since there was such a powerful non-Slovak element in the country.77 Juriga said that the individuality of the Slovak nation must be guaranteed no matter what. Stodola, too, concurred; clara pacta boni amici.

The final resolution of the October 31 meeting stipulated that the Czech proposal was to be accepted provided that after the expiration of the transitional period, which was to last no more than ten years, the legal-constitutional relationship between the Czechs and Slovaks and the Bohemian lands and Slovakia would be adjusted through agreement between the legitimate representatives of Slovakia, Bohe-


77 Slovenský denník, April 8, 1926.
mia, Moravia, and Silesia. Only this statement was to be published. A secret part of the resolution, however, stipulated that during the transitional period of ten years dictatorial rule must be imposed upon Slovakia as the only means to "de-Magyarize" the country. Only this part became a reality, although Šrobář's dictatorship sanctioned by the Prague government did not last a decade, and Slovakia was by no means totally de-Magyarized. The decision to introduce a totalitarian regime in Slovakia to subjugate the non-Slovak national minorities was one of the obvious reasons for concealing the resolution accepted at the October 31 meeting. The other apparent reason was Slovak caution in advertising to the world—especially the Magyars—that they did not bind themselves to the Czechs unreservedly, leaving open the option to decide, at a suitable moment, under what circumstances and conditions they wished to coexist with the Czechs in a united state. Secrecy fitted in with the Czech promise given in Vienna on October 25 that matters concerning internal political ques-


81 Šrobář, Osobodene Slovensko, p. 405-408.
tions would be solved and decided domestically, as between brothers.

The majority of the Slovak national leaders believed, on October 30 and 31 that their right to autonomy had been granted and that the Slovak National Council and later its executive committee retained their exclusive right to speak and act in the name and on behalf of Slovakia. This assumption, clearly stated in the Turčiansky sv. Martin Declaration, was never questioned in Slovakia proper, although it was denounced by a handful of Slovaks in Prague a couple of weeks later. As for autonomy, discussions on October 31st were concerned with the extent, organization, and time when the autonomy of Slovakia was to begin. The autonomous status of Slovakia was taken for granted from the legal and the socio-political point of view. Autonomy was considered the answer to the Slovak question, and it was the way and form in which the Slovaks envisioned their life in Czechoslovakia—and the fact that it was always contemplated within Czechoslovakia could not be overemphasized. There were separatist tendencies in Slovakia. There was e.g. an Eastern Slovakian Council headed by Victor Dvorsák, and a Slovak Republic under the leadership of Karoly

82 This was the message of the Czech politicians which Dérer brought to Martin on October 30, 1918. Hronský, "K slovenskej politike," p. 511.

Bulissza which was pro-Hungarian, demanded the unification of Slovakia with Hungary, but these movements did not threaten the Slovak National Council's claims to uphold the right of self-determination for the future. The western Slovak National Council (to differentiate between this body and the Dvorcsak's Eastern Slovakian National Council) was not separatist and envisaged autonomy within Czechoslovakia and not outside of this territorial-political entity. If Slovak aspirations had materialized, Czechoslovakia would have become a federative state, perhaps similar to what it is today, because Slovak aspirations were considered realizable within Czechoslovakia.

After October, 1918, the handling of the Slovak problem rested almost entirely in Czech hands. The Slovak politicians were thus primarily responsible for the developments about which they complained so loudly later. Instead of increasing independence, a deepening dependence on the stronger partner should logically have been anticipated. This, in turn, called for the strictest and clearest legal and constitutional safeguards for Slovak national-political

and economic interests, which the Slovaks failed to secure for themselves. The Czech politicians neither intended to let the Slovaks choose separation, nor were they unaware that once the Slovaks were enclosed in a centralist bond there would be no way for them to break out. It was evident that the Slovaks would be dependent on Czech industry, finances, military assistance, etc. The Slovaks sensed and feared but did not yet fully grasp the implications of their dependence on the Czechs in all spheres of life. Once again, when it came to negotiations with the Magyars, the Slovaks were extremely cautious and more than once they skillfully maneuvered out of the traps which the Magyar politicians set for them. Yet in dealing with the Czechs they were often found off guard and failed to secure effective guarantees of their national interests and rights, no matter how vaguely defined.

The very first law of the Czechoslovak Republic, which was in fact the Declaration of Independence of October 28, slightly modified by Pantůček, made it clear that there were no specific provisions for a separate Slovak nation. The constitution recognized only the Czechoslovak nation and provided no separate representation for an independent Slovak or any other political organ, as a legal and cultural entity.\textsuperscript{85} The October 31, 1918, conference

\textsuperscript{85} Kramar repeatedly declared: "This state will be Czech, and only Czech!" Kocman, \textit{Boj o směr vývoje}, Vol. I, p. 371; the Slovaks expressed their apprehensions about this very possibility already at October 30th Martin meeting when Dérener informed the gathering about Pantůček's plan
was thus in fact meaningless from the aspect of the constitutional law, but it took the Slovaks some time to become aware of this.

At their October 30 Turčiansky sv. Martin meeting the Slovaks seemingly accomplished their formal secession from the Kingdom of St. Stephen, but not their actual liberation from the Magyars, let alone the unification of Slovakia with the Bohemian lands. The Slovak National Council still felt absolutely free to negotiate with the Magyars or with any foreign nation, for that matter. Yet, after October 28 this was not a right which the Prague government would share with anybody.

During the period immediately following the Turčiansky sv. Martin Declaration and the formal separation from Hungary the Slovak National Council no longer exercised control over Slovakia. It did not and could not rule the country without outside help. Although a great number of former Magyar officials, fearing social and national turmoil, escaped from Slovakia, real power still remained in the hands of local Magyar officials: priests, teachers, notaries, landlords, etc., and the Magyar troops mostly garrisoned in the cities. All these elements were either under the direct command or the decisive influence of the Budapest authorities. As far as the Czechs were concerned,

Slovakia still remained to be conquered, but not by the Slovaks and definitely not for the Slovaks. Srobar was evidently right when he told the government in Prague that in the power vacuum created by the dissolution of the old regime, "the one who first put his hand on it [Slovakia] would have it for keeps." Those hands were Czech hands, primarily because there were not enough able Slovaks to liberate their own country and rule it on their own.

Those Magyar officials who escaped from Slovakia to Budapest were the most zealous opponents of the new state of affairs and demanded from the Karolyi government energetic action (preferably military action) to restore Slovakia to Hungary. Prague, meanwhile, decided to occupy Slovakia by military force, not to liberate it from Magyar domination but to annex it as a territory to serve Czech economic, military, and political self-interests.

86 Srobar, Osvobodene Slovensko, p. 211.
89 On November 2, 1918, Fieldmarshal Divis, Commander of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces, issued an order in which he announced that, as of now, he was taking over the Military authority (as delegated to him by the National Committee), over the entire territory of Czechoslovakia. Kocman, Boj o smér vyvoje, Vol. I, pp. 124-125. See also Beneš
The Czechs could not be blamed for looking after their own interests. If the Slovaks soon began to complain about the neglect of their interests, they had nobody to blame but themselves. The Slovaks were in a position to assert Slovak aspirations in the new state. After all, it was well known both to them and to the Czechs that a Czech state without Slovakia was unthinkable. 90 The situation to the French foreign ministry, November 3, 1918, demanding the Czech occupation of Slovakia as a necessary measure against the spread of Bolshevism from Vienna and Budapest, among other places—virtually all areas of Central Eastern Europe which Czechoslovakia planned to occupy. All of these, of course, were to serve the interest of the Allies and the mankind in general rather than any particular Czecho-Slovak desires, which "only Czechoslovakia" Beneš emphasized, "was able and ready to secure." Ibid., pp. 17-19. The italics are mine.

90 Both the Czechs and the Slovaks were aware of this. Beneš admitted that both during and after the war the Czechs unconditionally needed the Danube. See conversation with Beneš, May 13, 1918, National Archives (Washington, D. C.), Inquiry Documents, Carton 44, No. 283; and Beneš' report to the national assembly on September 30, 1919, after his return to Prague from the Paris Peace Conference, when he said, among others, that the Czechoslovak delegation insisted in Paris that Slovakia was an integral part of Czechoslovakia and that it would not even admit discussion about this matter. Czechoslovak Review (Chicago), Vol. III (November, 1919), p. 331. As for the Slovaks, Hodža, in his contribution to Alois Kolíšek's pamphlet "Slováci do státu Československého" [Slovaks into the Czecho-Slovak State], pointed out the vital interest of Slovakia for Bohemia and argued that the attainment of ports on the Danube was the crucial political motive for unification of the two nations; without Slovakia, Hodža pointed out, Bohemia and Moravia would form but a fragment of a state. Slovakia was opening new economic and financial vistas and it secured the survival of Czechoslovakia, because without the Danubian shipping facilities Bohemia would remain a vassal of its neighbors as it has been in the past, precisely because it lacked an avenue leading toward the east. If Hungary remained intact, Hodža thought, it will be stronger than Bohemia, which, in turn, would be driven into the hands of Germany. If Slovakia
tion clearly called for a *quid pro quo* position on the part of the Slovaks to secure the maximum of the possible. By the time Czechoslovakia was established, however, too many Slovak leaders had succumbed to Czechoslovakism and neglected the still undefined Slovak national interests in favor of the now Bohemian-dominated government. Some of them went to such extremes as to demand the use of Czech in the administration—an absurd policy which even Kramár rejected.\(^9^1\) This and similar occurrences only illustrate that there were few people who cared for Slovak national interests, although it took less than a couple of months for the Slovaks to realize that their aspirations were in jeopardy.\(^9^2\) By then it was too late to assume a *quid pro quo* position. Šrobár became dictator of Slovakia and the Slovaks lost all influence over their own affairs, now firmly in Šrobár's hand in which the administration remained part of Hungary both Bohemia and Poland would gradually be subdued by Germany and its Hungarian ally. See Milan Hodža, *Články, reči, štúdie*, Vol. II, pp. 288-289. Hodža was aware of these facts in 1918 and he did not forget them. As he wrote, "Without Slovakia, the Republic, consisting only of Bohemia and Moravia, would be an island state, not merely without any access to the sea, but without access to the Danube." Hodža, "Political Evolution of Slovakia," in Seton Watson, *Slovakia Then and Now*, p. 65. The Slovaks, however, never capitalized on this invaluable asset in their bargaining with the Czechs.


in some instances was now even more dictatorial than if Slovakia had been governed directly from Prague. 93

A plebiscite to decide the fate of the multinational northern Hungarian territory was consistently and steadfastly opposed by both the Czech and the Slovak politicians. 94

The Slovaks, unable to establish sovereignty over their part of the country, had no choice but to approve Prague's decision to accomplish this end. The Czech leadership first attempted to secure Slovakia with the help of a small number of gendarmes and soldiers. The number was so small

93 Kramár complained that at the time when the notion of sending Slovaks from Prague to govern their part of the country was discussed, only Rasin showed some wisdom in opposing the idea. Rasin, as far as Kramár was concerned, proved to be right, and it is to be regretted that the National committee made the mistake of delegating powers to the "Slovak gentlemen," since the entire enterprise turned out to be a failure and the Czechs found it necessary to send their own "reliable" people to Slovakia. The Slovaks were sent to Prague and appointed to positions in ministries as assistants., Kramár to Masaryk, February 28, 1919, Kocman, Boj o směr vývoje, Vol. I, p. 195. On the other hand at home the Slovaks, especially Hlinka, complained that Šrobár and his cronies came to govern Slovakia invited and welcomed by no one, and that Šrobár became the "dictator of Slovakia." Slovák, February 24, 1923.

94 "No plebiscite can be admitted," argued Masaryk in an interview with Leo Margittai, a Hungarian journalist, in January, 1919, "except in the cases where a people have a highly developed culture and even this is a double-edged sword because a decision is usually won by the side agitating most. Regarding the Slovaks, we must say that they have been oppressed in such a way that they never had an opportunity to develop themselves in a political sense and, therefore, do not know how to decide, and that is the reason why the opinion of their leaders must be accepted." Venkov, January 12, 1919. The Hungarian reaction to Masaryk's statements has been summarized by the Czechoslovak representatives to Budapest. See Archiv Ministerstva Zahraničí, Prague — Parížský archiv, Doc. No. 4266. For more details see Immer, "K maďarsko-československým vztáhom," p. 100, especially n. 37.
that even under normal circumstances there were not enough to constitute an effective local garrison. Their failure demonstrated that Czechoslovakia lacked power to overcome even the slightest resistance. This incident was harmful to Czechoslovakia's international reputation.

Almost the very day when the Czechoslovak military forces began their advance into Slovakia Beneš presented the Allies with a long memorandum in which he declared that the Czech occupation of Slovakia was as necessary for the Allies as for the Czechs and claimed that Czechoslovakia was the only bulwark in Central Europe against the advance of Bolshevism and German expansion. Beneš had the temerity to make these and similar claims despite the fact that all the German-populated regions of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia were beyond the government's control, as were Slovakia, Ruthenia, and Těšín. The majority of the Slovak leaders did not consider the separation of Slovakia from Hungary as settled. They still believed that territorial questions could be decided only at the Peace Conference.

Despite attempting to act before the Allies had a chance to decide the Czechoslovak question, the Prague government consistently treated the territorial question


as the prerogative of the Peace Conference. In practice, however, Czechoslovakia decided to proceed by force in securing all the territories which it desired. Slovakia, among others, became part of the new state by virtue of the military occupation of the region by Czechoslovak military forces. A ruling of the Supreme Court of the Czechoslovak Republic which reviewed the case several years later produced the above verdict. Thus, aside from adding insult to injury, the Hungarian revisionist claims were substantiated by the highest Czechoslovak judicial authority.

In 1934, Count Bethlen, the Hungarian premier, truthfully argued that the Slovaks were not Czechs and that they had no chance to express their wishes freely simply because Slovakia has been annexed to Czechoslovakia not in response to the desires of the population, which was never asked, but simply as a result of forceful military occupation. This argument became the diplomatic foundation of the Hungarian revisionism though the Magyars understandably were interested not in the Slovaks but in the territory and resources of Upper Hungary. Revenge on the Czechs had played an important role in Hungary's foreign policy since well

97 Protocols of the January 2, 1919, meeting of the Kramar government, ibid., pp. 38-42.

98 Lipscher, K vývinu politické správy na Slovensku, p. 20 n. 26.

before the signature of the Trianon Peace Treaty. Hungary set out on the road toward alliances with anyone who would oppose the Versilles settlements, a course which ultimately led Europe to war.
CONCLUSION

Between October 1918 and March 1919, Czechoslovakia, with the help of Allied Italian and French military forces, occupied the entire area which became known as Slovakia. The territory taken from Hungary was demanded arbitrarily by Prague, and was limited only by the military capability of the Czechoslovak forces and fear of Magyar protests at the Peace Conference. Prague did not want to arouse international opposition to Czechoslovak expansion by moving the Magyars to claim that their neighbor was virtually annihilating Hungary, but the Czechs were unconcerned with the socioeconomic imperatives of Hungary's survival as a nation. The leaders of the new state felt entitled to decide the destiny of a part of Hungary on the ground that it was the homeland of the Slovaks, and because the new Czechoslovak state needed that territory for strategic and economic reasons. The fact that this territory had belonged to Hungary for one thousand years and was of vital importance to her, was simply disregarded both by Czechoslovakia and by the victorious Allies. Rather than judging this and similar controversial claims from the broader perspective of how they might serve the best interests of a lasting peace, the Great Powers allowed the successor states to take the decisions into their own hands.

Slovakia was one of the numerous spots where the nations most immediately concerned, as well as the Allied Powers, failed to secure a mutually acceptable territorial settlement, although there was little hope that everyone
could have been satisfied fully. The disposition of Slovakia played a far more important role in the development of post-war international relations than is generally realized. For twenty years after the First World War, Hungary burned to restore the northern part of her former kingdom at any price, although by this time Hungary had survived economically without Slovakia. The Magyars had a tradition of reacting more fiercely to injuries to their pride than to their actual needs for national survival; never, they swore would they recognize the finality of the mutilation of historic Hungary, and they meant what they said. Hungary never regained Slovakia in its entirety, but she recaptured the southern part in 1939-1940, and her drive for the revision of the post-World War I territorial settlement drew Hungary and the rest of Europe into war.

What, after all, was at stake? An outstanding feature of the Slovak national movement since the national renaissance seems to be that the Slovaks reacted to Magyar nation-building acts rather than initiating the development of their own nationality. While the Magyars were demanding equal recognition for their own language from the Habsburg authorities in Vienna, the Slovaks claimed that their language too was unique and therefore entitled to recognition and the right to separate development. Likewise, their nationality was culturally different from that of the Magyar, and if the Magyars claimed secular rights for their nationality, the Slovaks believed that equal rights should be granted also
to their nation. In the peculiar Hungarian socio-political milieu, not even the majority of ethnic Magyars had been considered by the ruling strata as part of the nation. The only nation in Hungary was the political nation, the *natio hungarica*, which had nothing to do with the ethnic origin of its members, but was based on social status and privilege. Consequently, recognition of nationality was equivalent to recognition of citizenship, and in the Hungary of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this right was preserved for the privileged few.

To demonstrate their separateness from the Magyars, the Slovaks found distinction in their past. The memory of the Great Moravian empire and of the Cyrilo-Methodian traditions were a source of national pride inasmuch as they supposedly proved that the land which they presently inhabited belonged to highly developed Christian Slavs before barbarian Magyars occupied it. Here, they thought, was the source of their unique Slavic culture and the roots of the Slovak nation.

Language was a second distinguishing trait. It seemed to them self-evident that no one could deny their right to use and cultivate their language, which, the Slovaks were convinced, was the most autochtonous of all Slavic languages. Yet language posed a problem that divided the Slovaks among themselves. As a consequence of the religious division of the Slovaks, an archaic Czech dialect, the language of the Králická Bible, was the liturgical language of the Slovak
Protestants, who stuck to their language as strongly as to their religion. This made the union of the Slovaks in a common national front very difficult, if not impossible, even though the Protestants constituted a numerically, if not culturally and politically, insignificant sixteen percent of the total Slovak population of Hungary. The Slovak Catholics felt most urgently the need to devise a literary language to enable their clergy to communicate with the greatest number of parishioners in pursuing their pastoral work. Anton Bernolák and a handful of his followers chose the dialect spoken in western Slovakia (Trnava and the surrounding regions) for the basis of a literary language. Almost concurrently the great Slovak poet Ján Kollár, inspired by Herder's prophecy of a glorious future for the Slavs, began to advocate a theory of Slavic mutuality. Kollár was carried so far in his belief that he declared the Czechs and Slovaks a single Czechoslovak nation having a single language. Surprisingly, this created a controversy in Slovakia. Some Slovak intellectuals rejected the notion of union, and still more of a single language, with the Czechs. Not unexpectedly, Kollár ran into a similar reaction among the leading Czech intellectual leaders of the period when, in an effort to minimize the Slovak resistance to a Czechoslovak language, he proposed to Slovakoczechize the Czech language, that is to introduce Slovak words into Czech. Nothing was more remote from the ideas of the leaders of the Czech national awakening, who strove to modernize their archaic language, rather
than to introduce the vocabulary of earlier periods. When the younger Slovak generation led by Žudovíc Štúr rejected Kollár's choice of linguistic reform and decided to make the central Slovak dialect the basis of a new literary Slovak, Kollár reacted as an offended old man and sent some five thousand copies of his pamphlet Hlasové to Slovakia (the number of copies of Hlasové far exceeded the total circulation of the entire Slovak press of the time). To make things worse, Kollár induced Czech intellectuals to sign articles which he himself had written so as to make it appear that Czech outrage was widespread over what later became known as the Czecho-Slovak linguistic schism. Some Czechs still held this 'act of betrayal' against the Slovaks more than half a century later. This only reinforced the young Slovaks' determination to further their own separate linguistic and cultural development and to declare emphatically that theirs was not a Czech or Czechoslovak language but a distinctly Slovak tongue which belonged by tradition and right to the Slovak nation.

These philological disputes took place at a time when the Czechs and Slovaks needed each other's support, the Czechs in their intensifying struggle against Vienna, the Slovaks against the threat of forced Magyarization. Both the Czechs and the Magyars courted a Slovak alliance shortly before the 1848 revolution when everybody wanted to mobilize their forces against Habsburg absolutism. On the Magyar side it was the future leader of the revolution, Lajos Kossuth, who demanded all non-Magyars of Hungary give up their nation-
ality and declare themselves Magyars in return for a bill of rights. Karel Havlíček made a similar attempt on behalf of the Czechs, since it seemed self-evident that a Czechoslovak nation of nine million had a better chance of success than seven million Czechs separated from two million Slovaks. Havlíček was not a believer in romantic Slavic reciprocity. After his return from a trip to Russia he declared that for the Russians, Slavic mutuality meant nothing else than the assimilation of other Slavs. He then turned on the Slovaks with the same voracity he blamed the Russians for showing toward the Czechs. Havlíček made Czecho-Slovak cooperation and unity conditional on the submission of the Slovaks to the numerically stronger Czechs. When the Slovaks turned down his courtship, he accused them of separatism and betrayal. Thus, the Slovaks were branded as separatists because of their demands for cultural autonomy by both the Czechs and Magyars alike.

After the outbreak of the 1848 revolution the Magyars used both propaganda and the power of the state to coerce the Slovaks into becoming Magyars. Štúr and Hurban, the two most outstanding leaders of the Slovaks, were forced to escape from Hungary when Kossuth personally signed warrants for their arrest. Even in a life-and-death struggle for independence from Vienna the Magyars continued to deny the same rights to the other nationalities within Hungary that they themselves demanded. When the spectre of inescapable defeat finally wrung from the Magyars the relatively liberal nation-
ality law of 1849, they were crushed before the law could be enacted. Both Magyar and Czech liberals should have learned from the events of 1848–49 that a democratized federalization of Central Europe could only be produced through the united action of equal peoples. But there was no united action. Štúr concluded that only the destruction of the Habsburg empire would facilitate the liberation of the small nations.

Under the skillful manipulation of Vienna, the Slovaks took up arms against Hungary during the revolution and sided with the counterrevolution. Afterward, they received nothing in return for their loyalty to the throne. Unable to produce political pressure they were limited to petitioning Buda and Vienna. The same petitions containing Slovak national grievances and demands that had been presented to the parliament in Buda and to the Viennese court several times before were offered again during the revolutionary years without any tangible results.

The most comprehensive list of Slovak political demands was submitted first to Buda and, when no response was forthcoming, to Vienna in 1861. In the 1861 petition the Slovaks demanded the creation of a Slovak ethnic district based upon the area of chief Slovak population in Hungary, Okolie. Within the confines of this predominantly Slovak region the Slovaks asked for self-administration and cultural autonomy, with Slovak as the language of administration and education. Magyar was to remain the diplomatic language, Slovak the lan-
guage for common affairs. Politically, Slovakia would remain 
an organic part of the Hungarian kingdom, a constant tenet 
of Slovak politics with very few exceptions. In Štúr's word, 
"politically we are Hungary." The Slovak national leaders 
of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries rarely denied their 
Hungarian citizenship, but they did demand citizenship 
rights, which in the Slovak interpretation, meant national 
and cultural rights as well.

Czech interest in Slovakia during the revolutionary 
period surfaced in Palacký's plan for constitutional reform 
and the federalization of Austria, a concept lately called 
Austrofederalism. In one of two versions proposed by Pa-
lacký, Slovakia was to be united with the lands of the Bohe-
mian kingdom in case the German populated areas of Bohemia, 
Moravia and Silesia were separated from the Czechs; Slovakia 
was to compensate for these territorial losses. This sense 
of Slovakia as a territorial prize remained a constant fea-
ture of the Czech politics whenever the Slovak question came 
under consideration. Shortly after the revolution of 1848-
49, it disappeared from the Bohemian political agenda, and 
the Slovaks were left to the tender mercies of the Magyars.

Following the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867, the 
Slovaks were separated from the Czechs even in a constitution-
al sense, and any claim to Slovakia, whether political or 
territorial, became from that moment an infringement on Hun-
garian constitutional and historical rights.
The experience of the 1848-49 revolutionary years taught the Magyars a lesson about the nationality problem. A few influential Magyar leaders, Széchényi, Deák, Eötvös and others, attempted to impress upon their compatriots the vital importance of the national question for Hungary, and the crucial significance of the attitude of non-Magyars toward Magyars and Hungary in general. They called for moderation and more subtle methods of Magyarization, as opposed to those which Kossuth employed and which were largely responsible for the failure of the Magyar bid for independence from Vienna. The result of the moderation was the National Act of 1868, perhaps the most liberal national law of the century. The Slovak national leaders on numerous occasions expressed their satisfaction with the provisions of both the 1848-1849 national laws and the 1868 National Act, if only they had ever been implemented. Most Magyar historians believe that, if implemented, the 1868 National Law would have satisfied the non-Magyar nations of Hungary, and the catastrophic outcome of 1918-1920 could have been avoided. The Slovaks up to the very moment of their formal separation from Hungary in 1918 repeatedly pleaded for at least the rights guaranteed in the 1868 Nationality Law.

When the petitions of the 1850s and 60s produced no results, the Slovaks once again split over the question of what political strategy should be employed to secure the best possible position for their nation in Hungary. The New School argued for cooperation with the Magyars in the convic-
tion that this approach would be appreciated by Budapest to the Slovaks' benefit. They agreed with the Hungarian government that Slovak self-administration was constitutionally unsound and a threat to Hungarian territorial integrity. The Okolie program did not, in fact, jeopardize the territorial integrity of Hungary in any way, except that the Slovaks threatened, in case of Budapest's refusal to meet their demands, to seek autonomous status within the Austrian part of the empire. The majority of the Slovak leaders apparently remained faithful to this program until the end of World War I. Budapest, however, discounted both the Okolie program and the well-intended endeavors of the New School to gain concessions in return for cooperation and loyal Slovak Hungarian citizenship. Instead of moderating, the Hungarian nationality policy turned gradually more coercive. The Magyars demanded the Magyarization of all subject nationalities through the abolition of all non-Magyar educational and cultural institutions and the exclusive use of Magyar in the schools. By the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Slovaks regarded their situation as so hopeless that they retreated into almost total political passivity. Magyarization reached its peak with the infamous Apponyi Education Act of 1907, by which time the Slovaks were both nationally and politically so incapacitated that they raised no serious protest.

The Magyar political and educational policies which forced a number of young Slovaks to pursue their education
in Bohemia and Moravia inadvertently produced a politically and nationally conscious generation of intellectuals, no matter how small its numbers, which would one day turn with full force against Hungary. Studying in Prague, Slovak students came under the influence of Professor Thomas Masaryk and other Czech liberals interested in Slovak affairs. Masaryk advised his pupils to renounce Štúr's "separatism" in favor of Kollár's Czechoslovakism. After graduating from Czech schools, Masaryk's disciples launched a noisy campaign in their newly-founded journal *Hlas*. Politically inexperienced and tactless, they alienated the traditional Slovak national and political leadership, so that Masaryk and his ideas met with hostility in Slovakia.

The Slovaks were anxious to gain the Czech economic and financial support which had been available since the foundation of the Československá jednota in 1896, but they steadfastly opposed the linkage of this assistance to cultural and linguistic matters. The editors of the *Národní noviny*, Svetozár Hurban-Vajanský and Škultéty, impartially attacked Masarykism, liberalism and Czech atheism, in which they had the support of Catholic populists, the strongest force in Slovakia by virtue of numbers (representing well over eighty percent of the population). Though their writings appear to make the *Hlasist* generation the most important force from which Czechoslovak unity emanated, the facts show that their ideas fell on barren soil among the Slovaks and remained the ideological religion of a handful of young intel-
lectuals. From this limited ground no Czechoslovak cultural (not to mention political) union could ever evolve. Yet the Hlasists did not struggle entirely in vain. At the end of World War I Prague was to choose exactly this handful of faithful for the leading offices in Slovakia.

The Slovaks re-entered Hungarian political life during the 1901 elections, but except for the election of a few Slovaks to the Hungarian Diet, they had nothing to show as political achievements. Slovak petitions continued to reach the Hungarian parliament with as little success as before. The only promising avenue toward future political change seemed to be collaboration with the Heir Apparent, Francis Ferdinand, well known for his anti-Magyar sentiments. This strategy was cultivated by Milan Hodža from 1907 with the knowledge of at least some leading Slovak personalities, though several Slovak politicians had serious misgivings regarding Hodža's activities. The collaboration in the clandestine "Workshop" of Francis Ferdinand was and remained basically Hodža's private affair, but the National Party rested great hopes in it. The most important step toward concrete exploitation of access to the future emperor was Hodža's promemoria, presented on December 1911. This was an attempt to persuade Francis Ferdinand of the loyalty of the non-Magyar nations as opposed to the disruptive character of the Magyars. Hodža suggested universal suffrage for the population of the entire monarchy, thereby creating a loyal majority of the subject nations as the pillar of the imperial power. The small na-
tions were to be rewarded by both political and cultural concessions which would not jeopardize the coherence of the empire on which the nations depended as protection against outside threats and Magyar oppression. With the death of Francis Ferdinand the Slovaks lost their last hope, though it is noteworthy that many considered the situation entirely hopeless as early as 1911, when the last Slovak petition to the Hungarian diet failed to produce a result.

The outbreak of the war silenced Slovak politics entirely. The Slovak political leaders took refuge in daydreams of Russian deliverence, another constant in Slovak national ideology. This hope was intensified and seemed even substantiated by the initial success of the Russian armed forces.

In Bohemia, some Czech leaders went to Saint Petersburg to offer their participation in the struggle against Austria-Hungary whenever the Russian authorities gave the signal. Karel Kramář secretly sent two memoranda to the Russian government with a geopolitical plan for the creation of a Bohemian kingdom as part of a Slavic empire under the Romanovs. Here for the first time were outlined the territorial aspirations of the extreme Czech nationalists—incorporation of Upper and Lower Austria (in one version including Vienna, in the other without Vienna, but with Danube as a border), the Danube region down to Visegrad and the Bük and Mátra mountains, the Tokaly wine region, and from there to the upper reaches of the Tisza river in Upper Hungary. This was the most ambitious official territorial plan ever designed
by the Czechs. The choice of Russia as the "pivot of Slavic freedom" seemed logical at the time, since it appeared obvious that it would be she who would decide the future of Central Eastern Europe (if, of course, the Allies were victorious, and Russia's eastward advance at the beginning of the war seemed to justify such hopes).

For other Czech politicians such prospects promised nothing good. Masaryk's book on Russia, published shortly before the war, made him persona non grata with the Russian authorities. Thus, his only chance to do something lay with the West. Even before his final departure from Austria, Masaryk met with Robert Seton-Watson to whom he explained his plan for the inclusion of Slovakia in an independent Bohemian Kingdom on the grounds, according to Masaryk, that the Slovaks were Czechs despite their Slovak dialect. Seton-Watson compiled a memorandum based on these conversations for the British Foreign Office. This memorandum, together with Masaryk's own plan for independent Bohemia, outlined the territorial shape of a future Czechoslovak state. After reaching some important Allied politicians, these documents were put away ad acta, since at the moment realization of the Czech aspirations appeared remote. No serious consideration was given to the Czech or Slovak question by Entente countries until the end of 1917. The Allies, who had not entered the war for the national or political independence of the small nations, had no intentions of committing themselves to diverse nationalistic goals, a fortiori as most of the repre-
sentatives of the nationalities were irredentist of doubtful representativeness.

Masaryk, Eduard Beneš and Milan Rastislav Štefánik, a Slovak by origin and a naturalized French citizen at the time, established an irredentist Czechoslovak National Council claiming to represent all major Czech political parties. If anything, the opposite was true. The Czechs at home were collaborating with the Viennese government and letting those abroad keep open the lines of contact to other potential victors in the war. Both the exiles and the Czech domestic politicians desired the annexation of Slovakia to the prospective new state, but this clearly depended on the outcome of the war.

If Germany were not totally crushed, the Czechs could hope for an independent Bohemia within the old Habsburg realm at best. For the majority of the Czech political leaders this prospect seemed not only satisfactory but highly desirable. Even the Czech Social Democrats wished to retain the largest possible socio-economic unit as their political base. However, the Czech State Rightists saw the contradiction between Masaryk's claim based on Bohemian historic rights and the appeal to natural right when Slovakia was in question. From a purely legal viewpoint the two principles appeared irreconcilable and therefore their simultaneous application as a basis for Bohemian national demands seemed to jeopardize the very core of the Czech program—the attainment of autonomy within a reorganized empire reorganized along federal
lines. The Allied declaration of January 10, 1917, of the
liberation of the Czecho-Slovaks as one of their war aims,
was thus rejected by the Czech domestic political leadership.
Consequently, the exile leaders found themselves isolated
from the home front and, at the same time, without serious
couragement from the Allies. Their situation could have
been worse only if they were in Austria.

The Allies assured Austria-Hungary through the speech
of Lloyd George on January 5, 1918, and President Wilson's
Fourteen Point speech of January 8, 1918, that the Entente
did not aim at the destruction of the empire but rather the
liberalization of the Austro-Hungarian national policy. Un-
til the Allies found themselves unable to detach Austria-
Hungary from Germany, the principal enemy power, the dissolu-
tion of the Habsburg empire was out of the question, and so
was the materialization of the aspirations of the exiles.

Masaryk perceived the war from the beginning as a world
war which would last a long time. It followed that the Al-
lies would sooner or later need all the military force they
could muster. Hence Masaryk pressed for the organization
of a Czechoslovak army from among the Czech and Slovak pri-
soners of war in the Allied countries, especially in Russia
and France, which had captured the greatest number of them.
He hoped the Allies would compensate them with political con-
cessions, such as the recognition of the National Council
as the supreme organ of the Czechoslovak movement for indepen-
dence, recognition of a government in exile, and ultimately
the public acknowledgement of Czechoslovakia's right to independent statehood. By the end of 1917, and during the spring of 1918, Masaryk's scenario materialized almost perfectly. A combination of military, political and diplomatic setbacks, which the Allies suffered during that period, forced them to mobilize all available military resources. Realization of the military value of the Czechoslovak legions forced the Allied leaders to turn a considerably more receptive ear to the nationalistic claims of the Czechoslovak exiles than ever before. The French in particular were anxious to concentrate all military forces on the western front, but the bulk of the Czechoslovak forces were still in Russia. Now this army became the central issue in an Allied dispute over its deployment and in the exiles' bargaining with the Allied politicians for a public statement supporting the Czechoslovak exiles' political ambitions.

Though no joint Allied proclamation on behalf of the Czechoslovak movement for independence materialized, the Allied governments felt nevertheless obliged to give the Czechoslovaks something in return for their services. The resulting French, British, Italian and American statements recognized the political authority of the National Council over the Czechoslovak troops and civilia in subjects abroad, although the Allies were careful not to make any territorial commitment on behalf of a Czechoslovak state. The British in particular insisted that territorial questions must be treated as part of an overall European settlement, obviously
meaning the restoration of the European balance of power. Nevertheless, Allied statements on behalf of the National Council and the exile government founded on October 14, 1918, were interpreted as recognition of Czechoslovakia by the exile leadership, who so notified the domestic leadership in Prague. It is possible, even probable, that the Allies intended to recognize Czechoslovakia after it had been established with a clearly defined territory and government, but the territorial matters were to be reserved for the decision of the Peace Conference. The war-time declarations of the Allies were obviously not intended as, nor did they mean, the recognition of Czechoslovakia in any shape or form. The documents found by this author in the United States prove conclusively that the Wilson administration, the first to declare the National Council as a government de facto, did not equate this with the recognition of Czechoslovakia exactly because the country had no clearly defined territory or borders. Although this fact was highly relevant for Slovakia, in all of this the Slovaks had no say, though the first "military forces" to enter Slovakia with the sanction of Prague in November, 1918, were headed by Šrobár and four of his companions.

The Slovaks were unable to produce any political action at home until May, 1918. The demand for the right of national self-determination "also for the Hungarian branch of the Czechoslovak nation" raised by Šrobár at the May first rally at Liptovský Štiavnička (now Liptovský Mikuláš) actually emanated from Prague under
the increasing pressure from the Maffia. While the exiles demanded the incorporation of Slovakia into the future Czecho-
slovak state, they still needed evidence that they were ex-
pressing the authentic desires of the Slovaks. In fact, the Slovaks were afraid of Magyar reprisals and convinced that any declaration on their part was meaningless, since their destiny would be in any case decided by the Great Powers.
Slovak political activity reached its war-time peak on May 24, 1918, when a handful of national leaders met and produced a secret resolution which proclaimed a Slovak national desire to establish a common state consisting of Slovakia, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. It should be noted that no clear state-
ment regarding the political unification of the Slovaks with the Czechs was made public until the Martin Declaration of
October 30, 1918,—two days after Czecholovakia, including Slovakia, had been declared an independent state on October 28, 1918, the date of the establishment of an independent Czecholovak state generally recognized ever since.

Slovak fears were well founded. There was virtually no leading Slovak who, at one time or other, was not perse-
cuted, imprisoned, penalized or otherwise discriminated against by the Hungarian authorities. During the war the Slovak national leaders used this circumstance as an excuse for not declaring their support for the emerging liberal forces in Hungary, led by Count Mihály Károlyi and Oskár Jánszki, who were making their bid for power. As the Slovaks recognized, the liberal wing wanted to save Hungary from the
worst consequences of a lost war, specifically from territorial disintegration. However, the Slovak leaders also knew that the liberals were nothing but a minute fraction, while the traditional leaders such as Tisza, Wekerle, Apponyi, and Andrassy still held the real power in the kingdom, and the word of the opposition bound them to nothing.

As far as can be determined, Slovak territorial demands were considerably more moderate than the Czech maximalist plans for Slovak territory. Hodza's outline of Slovak ethnic territory published at the end of October, 1918, was generally limited to the territory whose population was ethnically Slovak. The Slovaks themselves, in the words of no less an authority on the ethnic composition of Upper Hungary than Emil Stodola, denounced the Czech plans for the annexation of Magyar territory up to Vac (let alone the lunatics who wanted to draw the border line through Budapest) as absurd.

The Slovaks treated the issue of constitutional status for Slovakia and the Slovaks in the prospective Czechoslovak state with similar delicacy. From the May 24, 1918, meeting and the formal establishment of the Slovak National Council on September 12, 1918, until the plenary meeting of October 30, 1918, the Slovaks were clearly determined to separate from Hungary, where there was no hope, or so it appeared to them, that the ruling circles would change their oppressive national policy or let the non-Magyars exercise the right of self-determination. The Slovak leaders were reluctant to support even the most liberal Magyar political forces:
the Károlyi Party, the Radicals and the Social Democrats, who acknowledged the nationalities' right to self determination. Even the Hungarian liberals insisted on Hungarian territorial integrity, that is, self-determination was to be limited by the confines of historic Hungary. All three members of the liberal coalition expressed the hope that the nationalities would find a better future in a democratic Hungary, in whose democratization they were invited to cooperate with the Magyar liberals.

The usual argument of Modern historians is that it was already too late for such a compromise, that the nationalities wanted complete independence, or, as in the case of the Romanians, unification with their kin outside of Hungary. This seems to be an oversimplification. If the Slovaks were serious about their national, cultural, and political autonomy, they would have gained more had they negotiated with the Károlyi government, which was at least willing to compromise while Prague was not. Even Juriga's statement of October 19, 1918, in the Hungarian Diet leaves no doubt that he was appealing to the Magyars to acknowledge the validity of and implement the stipulations of the Imperial Manifesto of October 16, 1918, and grant the Hungarian subject nationalities the same rights and privileges as the Emperor had granted to his Cislaithanian peoples. The Viennese authorities had made these concessions both in an attempt to obtain the best possible peace conditions from the victorious Allies (in effect carry out the stipulation of point ten demanded by Wil-
son), and in the hope that the non-Germans of Austria would find a democratic federalized empire the best place to live and develop their cultural and socio-economic-political desires. The contention that the nationalities wanted "more" is questionable; was the breakup of the old socio-economic-political unit into several disjoined fragments really "more"? Were not these fragments of the empire clearly bound to be just as dependent as they were previously, or even more so? Was not Czechoslovakia, with her dazzling capacity to make enemies of all of her neighbors, likely as well to make enemies of her minorities, who constituted almost half of her population? It was not 'too late,' but the establishment of a separate state entity, and the power to be gained in it by a handful of persons, seemed overwhelmingly more attractive to these individuals, and perhaps to the Czechs as the future hegemon of Central Eastern Europe, than the daily competition of interests in a democratic federation of Danubian states.

If the prospect of Habsburg rule had earlier threatened the creation of a democratic federation or confederation out of the constituent parts of the empire, this no longer posed a problem. Austria itself had been declared a republic, and Emperor Karl did not seem inclined to stand in the way of the free will of his former subjects. The problem rested with the chimera of independence 'at any cost,' and the territorial, economic, military, and political aggrandizement regarded as its guarantee. For this the leaders of the na-
tionalities of all subject nations were willing to sacrifice everything, even the freedom of their own citizens, and to risk the prospect of a future war.

The Slovaks displayed such a degree of unpreparedness for the moment which confronted them with the concrete question of their self-determination, that they could hardly blame the Czechs for exploiting the situation. By the same token, the Czechs, who had equal if not greater stake in the new state, by choosing iron-clad centralization as the best means of ensuring the coherence of the state, achieved the opposite. By denying autonomous status to the nationalities of the republic, they weakened the state and promoted internal and external irredentism. In their ignorance of the Slovaks, the Czechs made a decision which was bound to be as detrimental to themselves as to the subjects of centralism. The Slovaks in turn, could have done no greater disservice to the new state which now was to be theirs also, than by their failure to resist centralism from the outset and persuade their Czech partners of the consequences of denying a separate Slovak national and cultural identity.

It was unlikely that the Czechs would have listened, but it seems logical that it was in the Slovak self-interest to make Czechoslovakia, the state where they were forced by circumstances to live in the future, as satisfactory and attractive a place to live as humanly possible. The Slovaks, however, had already demonstrated for decades their inability to exert any serious political pressure in Hungary, no one
could expect to change them overnight. The Czechs, on the other hand, chose the easiest way of listening to only those Slovaks who could not or would not understand the secular problem posed by Slovakia and who carried out Czechoslovak policies regardless of their consequences. Though some Czech politicians later regretted sending "those Slovak gentlemen" to govern Slovakia, Kramár together with the Slovak proponents of centralism, would not compromise an inch on the question of giving a special administrative status to Slovakia and the cultural individuality of the Slovak nation.

Unrelenting centralism alienated the Slovaks and turned the Catholic populists into determined opponents of both centralism and ideological Czechoslovakism. These fighters for recognition of Slovak national rights worked on a scale and with vigor unprecedented in Slovak history, which, they insisted, had been guaranteed in the Pittsburgh agreement signed and later brushed aside, by Masaryk himself. The Slovak autonomists did not advocate the separation of Slovakia from Czechoslovakia, but it was obvious that if Prague did not make at least some concessions, sooner or later the most radical autonomists would turn separatist, in accordance with the old axiom of this school of thought that it is worth making an alliance with the devil himself to promote some demands. The centralistic system of government and Prague's reluctance to affirm Slovak separatedness turned a considerable segment of Slovaks into opponents and later outright enemies of Czechoslovakia. The Czechs were not motivated
by ill-will toward the Slovaks, although they were critical of Slovak traditions which they considered archaic and backward by contrast with the advanced political practices commonly adopted in Bohemian lands, but they did manage to shift the cutting edge of Slovak nationalism from a struggle against the Magyars to a struggle against the Czechs.

Still, it would be unjust to place the blame for mishandling Slovakia with the Czech leaders exclusively; the Slovak zealots of centralism and Czechoslovakism were actually more narrow-minded than their Czech counterparts. People like Šrobár, Štefánek, Hodža, and many others realized, too late it seems, the harm of unyielding centralism, but others, like Ivan Dérer, insisted that it was the correct political line as long as they lived (in Dérer's case, until 1967). A provincial satrap, a ministry bureaucrat, a local or higher military commander, a policeman, a gendarme, and teachers at all levels of education could do pretty much as they pleased in Slovakia, especially during the first years of the republic until the administration had been consolidated and effective control imposed upon them. By that time the damage was done. The forces that spoke of correcting the wrongs of the past instead intensified their impact, exaggerated them in propaganda, and did everything possible to worsen Czecho-Slovak relationships.

The Slovak separatist trend was supported and even instigated from Budapest, and soon found kindred spirits in Berlin. This suggests that the separation of Slovakia from
Hungary, and the determination of the Magyar Horthyite leadership to restore her by force, played a significantly more important role in the shaping of post-war Hungarian foreign and military policy than is generally recognized by historians. The continuing struggle between the Czechs, Slovaks and the Magyars over Slovakia made a mockery of Czechoslovakia's claim to be acting always in the interest of European security and peace, and created, in fact, the most explosive spot in Central Europe. Slovakia was a Slovak problem, concerning the Slovaks, Czechs, Magyars, Poles, Germans, and Ruthenians (Ukrainians) of Czechoslovakia, and an international problem, which involved the Magyar resolution to recapture former territories, which inevitably involved all of Hungary's allies and Czechoslovakia's enemies. As early as August 1919, even before the White forces entered a Budapest still occupied by the Romanians upon the defeat of the Béla Kun regime, Admiral Horthy gained a dubious precedent over Adolph Hitler by issuing an order calling for the restoration of Slovakia by a surprise attack with the help of armed Magyar minorities of Slovakia and the anti-Czech Slovaks themselves. Horthy's military plans are dismissed today as 'adventurism,' yet they were very real at the time and few ventured even secretly to oppose them. There may have been differences as to the means for accomplishment of the goal, but few Magyars questioned their justness and inevitability.

An economically and militarily strong Czechoslovakia, confident in her alliances concluded with the Great Powers,
seemed assured in the face of the Hungarian or any other challenge. Yet her multinational composition coupled with her geographical shape and other problems, weakened the country both internally and internationally. Czechoslovakia's principal allies, France and Great Britain, recognized the factual basis of the demands of Czechoslovakia's national minorities, Germans as well as Magyars. The Great Powers who in 1918-19 created the Versailles system eventually became ready to acknowledge its injustices and correct them, but only when threatened with war by a strong Hitler, and only for the German minority. The tragedy of Munich, the German occupation, the separation of Slovakia, and the occupation of ethnically Magyar parts of Czechoslovakia by Horthy's forces following the Vienna accord of 1938, resembles so much the treatment of Hungary in 1918-19 both by the Entente powers and her neighbors as to be chilling. Reading the Czechoslovak documents of the post-World War I period, one can not escape the impression that Czechoslovakia was not a purely innocent victim of Munich. Nor can she be absolved from responsibility for helping, even if only as an accessory, to put in motion the events which brought down Czechoslovakia and the rest of Central Eastern Europe and left them where they are now, in the "sick heart of Europe." All of this, ever since 1918, was done with the best of intentions by exclusive nationalists who were convinced they were serving the national interests. The Munich case has been used to demonstrate the error of British politicians who incorrectly anticipated that ap-
P easement was in the best national interests of Britain. Analogously, it is permissible to ask whether the Czech and Slovak politicians of 1918-1919 would have treated their neighbors and each other so cavalierly if they had realized where their true national interests lay. Still more intriguing is the question whether the Magyars, Czechs and Slovaks would have been willing to pay that "any price" if they had known what it was. And last but not least: was there any better solution for the Slovaks than their unification with the Czechs? The Czechoslovak solution of the Slovak question was not the only alternative, though it was most probably the best. Neither was the "military solution" of Slovakia's acquisition the only possibility, but it was most probably the worst.
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