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ARTICLES

EUROPEAN WRITTEN SOURCES ON THE COUNTERFEITING OF COINS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

FRANTIŠEK OSLANSKÝ

OSLANSKÝ, František. European Written Sources on the Counterfeiting of Coins in the Middle Ages. *Historický časopis*, 2009, 57, Supplement, pp. 3-14, Bratislava.

Counterfeiting of coins is mentioned in a multitude of medieval written sources, manuscripts and books, starting with the Laws of the Visigoths in the mid 7th century, through the Visitation of the Chapter of Esztergom in 1397, to the Inferno, first part of Dante Alighieri's most important work, the *Divina Comedia* from the first two decades of the 14th century, which reached far beyond its age. The paper gives a selection of only partly used and often entirely unknown facts from medieval documents. This creates the pre-conditions for them to become more widely known and accessible.

History. Written sources on counterfeiting of coins. Europe. Kingdom of Hungary. Slovakia. Middle Ages.

In the Old Testament Book of proverbs, which received its final form perhaps in the 5th-4th centuries BC, we read: "*Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good.*" Good weight could also be lacking in the coins made from precious metals, which continued to be issued into the Middle Ages, which emerged from the merging of ancient Rome with the "barbarians".¹ The wish of the new nations to maintain their own identity was shown in the legislation of the Early Middle Ages. An inhabitant of one of the new kingdoms was not judged according to laws valid for all inhabitants of the territory, but according to the customary laws of the ethnic group to which he belonged. However, from the middle of the 7th century, with Church encouragement, laws valid equally for Visigoths and Romans were applied.²

The Laws of the Visigoths, dated to the mid 7th century, allowed the torture of servants in cases of counterfeit coins, with regard to the person of their lord, who was allowed to use torture to easily find out the truth. Whoever, imitated, counterfeited, clipped or scraped solidi was arrested as soon as a judge learnt of this. If the offender was a

1 *Sväté písmo Starého a Nového zákona.* (Holy Scripture, the Old and New Testaments) Ed. Jozef Heriban/SDB. Rome : Slovenský ústav svätého Cyrila a Metoda, 1995, p. 1180, 1219 (Prís (Proverbs) 20/23), English translation from the Authorized or King James Version. NOHEJLOVÁ-PRÁTOVÁ, Emanuela. *Základy numismatiky* (Basics of Numismatics). Prague : Academia, 1975, p. 50, 63, 77, 83, 124, 143.

2 LE GOFF, Jacques. *Kultura středověké Evropy.* (Culture of Medieval Europe). Prague : Odeon, 1991, p. 44, 50-51.

servant, he had to be punished by cutting off his right hand. Any person, who engraved or counterfeited false coins, had to suffer a similar punishment.³ *The Capitulare missorum from Thionville* probably from 805, originated from service notes of royal officials from their rounds. Its purpose was to enable Charlemagne, who had been crowned Emperor by Pope Leo III in St. Peter's Basilica at Christmas 800, to implement the appropriate legal measures, influenced by the Church, among other things, also against counterfeiting of coins. It had been found that counterfeit coins had been struck in opposition to royal authority and with profit in many places. It was enacted that a mint could only be located at a royal court, unless further authorization was granted. Properly struck denarii were authorized.⁴

At a court held on 25 June 864 at Pîtres in the department of Eure south-east of Rouen, the Western Frankish King Charles the Bald issued the *Edictum Pistense*, which confirmed the Carolingian idea of agreement between the monarch, the clergy and the nobility. The edict emphasized that there was no greater fraud than deciding to strike mixed or low weight denarii, instead of producing them as they should be. If somebody maliciously defrauded the country, the Church and the resources of the poor, while cleaning and exchanging money, he had to lose a hand, as was determined for counterfeiters of coins. The sacrilegious thief, who stole from the poor, had to be subjected to public punishment by the episcopal courts. The counts and royal advisers had to ensure through their counties or other areas of responsibility, that no coins were produced in secret or criminal places.

Whoever was caught and convicted of striking fraudulent coins had to be punished as a counterfeiter by cutting off of a hand. In the case of accessories, a freeman (*liber*) had to pay 60 solidi, a servant, peasant farmer (*colonus*) or pauper had to be punished by beating with a stick. A counterfeiter, who fled to inviolable territory, had to be demanded and punished. Supervision of good coins and protection against false coins had to improve. Therefore, it was decreed that every count had to record all the places where business was done in his county in a brief report (*in breviario*) and inform the king which of them dated from the reign of his grandfather, which from the time of his father and which were established by the king himself or had arisen without a royal decision, whether they had been agreed recently or had continued from the past. If they had changed, then by who. Every count had to bring the requested document (*breve*) to the nearest royal court (*placitum*), so that the king himself could decide which of the places for buying and selling really needed to be preserved, which had originated on the basis of decisions that could be either reversed or renewed. Business could not be done anywhere on a Sunday. Nobody in the country could venture to sell mixed gold and silver in coins. From 1 Octo-

3 JESSE, Wilhelm (ed.). *Quellenbuch zur Münz- und Geldgeschichte de Mittelalters*. (hereinafter QMGM). Aalen : Scientia Verlag, 1983, p. 3, no. 9.

4 QMGM, no. 34, p.10; BOVO, Elisabetta – GOLINELLI, Paolo – ZUANAZZI, Giovanni. *Kaiser, Kalifen und Kaufleute: Das frühe und hohe Mittelalter*. Munich : Adag Verlag GmbH, 1999, p. 23; HATTENHAUER, Hans. *Europäische Rechtsgeschichte*. Heidelberg : C.F. Müller Juristisches Verlag, 1991, p. 130-131, 146-147; *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (hereinafter LM) V. Hrsg. u. Berater: Robert Henri Bautier... Munich; Zürich : Artemis & Winkler Verlag, columns 934-935, 943-946, 960, 967-968.

ber, the feast of St. Remigius, that is the next calends of October, nobody could disribute, sell or buy gold or silver coins if they were not pure.⁵

About 997 King Ethelred or Aethelred II of England issued a *law* according to which every moneyer accused of striking false coins had to be subjected to trial by ordeal three times, and if he was found guilty he was executed. Nobody except the king could have a mint. Every moneyer of bad reputation, that is already punished, could buy legal protection for 12 ounces. In the event of an accusation, the accused had to deposit 6 halfmarks with the king as a surety. If this happened through an earl or bishop 12 ounces, and through a member of a retinue or of the lower nobility, that is a thane, 6 ounces.⁶ In the course of his effort to create an empire, which also included England, King Canute the Great of Denmark issued the first Danish coins. He also issued a *law* including provisions concerning the counterfeiting of coins. The law is dated to the period 1027 – 1034. It was concerned with strengthening peace and security in all areas, including stability of the coinage, to the benefit of the poor and the detriment of robbers. Nobody should disturb the security of the coinage then circulating in the whole territory of England. Whoever was proved to have committed fraud had to be deprived of the hands, with which he had produced counterfeits. Money should not be bought from such people, either with silver or with gold.⁷ The coinage *decree* for Normandy from 1080 enacted that nobody could strike coins apart from the mints in Rouen and Bayeux, and they had to be of the correct weight in silver, namely 8 solidi to the halfmark. If somebody struck coins in another place, or made false coins in the official mint, he was subject to the mercy of the Duke of Normandy. If somebody produced coins outside the recognized mints or struck false coins in them, the court would decide about his land and money.⁸

King Henry I of England, who subjected the Norman barons and gained control of Normandy, issued a charter at Westminster on 25 December 1100 or 1101, through his chancellor William. In the document, the king turned to Bishop Samson, Urson d'Abetot and all the barons, both French and English, from Worcester. He wished and decreed that all inhabitants of castles, could also go into the urban environment, whether they were French or English, they swore to preserve his coins in England and oppose their counterfeiting. He was against moneyers exchanging denarii outside their counties. They had to act in front of two legal witnesses from their own counties. If a moneyer was caught changing denarii in another county, he should be arrested as a counterfeiter. Nobody could change denarii except a moneyer.⁹

5 QMGM, p. 12-14, no. 43; LM VI, Hrsg. u. Berater: Norbert Angermann..., column 2187-2188.

6 QMGM, p. 8-9, no. 26.

7 BOVO – GOLINELLI – ZUANAZZI, ref. 4, p. 229-230; LE GOFF, ref. 2, p. 63, 260, 443-444; LM V, columns 1238-1239; QMGM, p. 9, no. 27.

8 QMGM, p. 53, no. 143.

9 QMGM, p. 16, no. 173; BOVO – GOLINELLI – ZUANAZZI, ref. 4, p. 230; NOVÁK, Jozef. *Chronológia*. Bratislava : Univerzita Komenského, 2004, p. 42-43; SZENTPÉTERY, Imre. *A kronológia kézikönyve: A Chronológia és az Oklevéltani naptár összevont javított és bővített kiadása*. Sajtó alá rendezte: Gazda István. Kiegészítette Érszégi Géza, Raj Tamás, Szögi László. Budapest : Könyvterkesítő Vállalat, 1985, p. 33-36.

The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa from the Hohenstaufen dynasty again strove to put the Empire in a dominant position. Like his role model Charlemagne, he wanted to control the Church in Germany, through bishops subject to him, and he also had in mind the subordination of the Papacy, although the time was already different. His efforts inevitably included written declarations such as the *order* issued sometime in the period 1160 – 1176. The imperial court declared to all the princes that nobody could strike either genuine or false coins in any bishopric, without the knowledge and will of the bishop to whom the diocese belonged. When unprecedented prodigality occurred in the territory of the loyal and favourite Gero Bishop of Halberstadt with the expected offence in relation to coinage, the Emperor was very angry. As a result, he enacted and ordered that no person could strike or imitate or in any way falsify coins in the Bishopric of Halberstadt without the agreement and permission of the bishop.¹⁰

Counterfeiting of coins began soon after their first striking. In the Kingdom of Hungary, it began gradually after the beginning of coinage around the year 1000 and increased in the 12th century.¹¹ The first written evidence of counterfeiting of coins is found in a *donation document*, the original of which does not survive, issued by King Bela IV at Budapest on 10 January 1246. The document mentioned that it was mainly a matter of treason, the crime of insulting the monarch and striking of counterfeit coins. Fulcus son of Simon was punished by confiscation of Fiľakovo Castle and all his property, both movable and immovable. Only after compensating for the harm, which he caused to Archbishop Stephen of Esztergom, could the castle lordship pass from the king into the ownership of the master of the royal cellars or chief cupbearer Mauritius son of Mauritius for faithful service during the Mongol or Tartar invasion.¹²

The favourable conditions for the extraction of precious metals in the territory of Slovakia also had a positive response outside the Kingdom of Hungary, especially from the second half of the 13th century, although this was manifested in the complex social relations in the period between the extinction of the Arpád dynasty and the establishment of the House of Anjou. When there was a ban on trade with Moslem countries. Long before, on 16 September 1266, Pope Clement IV had sent a *mandate* from Viterbo to the Bishop of Maguelone. His dearest son in Christ, St. Louis IX King of France, in whose reign from 1226 to 1270 France became the dominant power in Europe, was dissatisfied with the spreaders of news or rumours about the county of Melgueil. The county was allegedly entrusted to the bishop because of harm and injustice.

The king asked for advice from the Pope, expecting to learn the whole truth and he wanted to comply. It was actually about the *miliarensis coin* (*de moneta miliarensi*),

10 BIHLMAYER, Karl – TÜCHLE, Hermann. *Kirchengeschichte II. : Das Mittelalter*. Paderborn (Munich; Vienna; Zürich) : Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996, p. 181-183; QMG, p. 19, no. 58.

11 HUNKA, Ján. Falšovanie mincí na Slovensku počas 11. až 17. storočia. (Counterfeiting of coins in Slovakia, 11th – 17th century.). In *Ludia. Peniaze. Banky*. Bratislava : Národná banka Slovenska, 2003, p. 131-136.

12 MARSINA, Richard (ed.). *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Slovaciae : Slovenský diplomatár II*. Bratislava : Obzor; Archív mesta Bratislavy, 1987, p. 148-151, no. 217; OSLANSKÝ, František. Z písomných prameňov o falšovaní mincí v stredoveku. (From the written sources on the counterfeiting of coins in the Middle Ages.). In *Slovenská numizmatika*, 1998, year XV, p. 77; BIHLMAYER – TÜCHLE, ref. 10, p. 300.

which he had struck in his diocese. The coin represented one twelfth of a *marabotin* and was struck in southern France and Italy for trade with the Moslem countries of the Mediterranean. The Pope was most concerned about the intention of the bishop, was he acting against the king, if the coin was not made in his property, but also the glory or honour of the king, because outside his domain nobody could act otherwise. The Pope asked in the mandate, how could a Catholic be bound to strike a coin with the name of Mohammed? In the same way that the striker of the coins could provide a foreign coin, when nobody is authorized to strike it, if he had not permission from the Pope or the monarch. Nobody could allow the coin to be struck, because every nation strikes its own. Where granting of legal authority was concerned, as far as it contractually related to another, also the Pope did not know. In the end, the Pope informed the bishop that if he asked the honourable bishop of Agde about this subject, he would certainly learn how he gave stimulus to a very similar act, because he held a different position. And so he directed the brother bishop, that if he did something on royal property, he should avoid this, as in another place, because it offended God and contradicted his position.¹³

At the beginning of the 14th century, lack of clarity in the relations between the rival holders of the highest post in the Church led to the popes living in the southern French city of Avignon for decades. At the same time, there was an increased effort to collect papal tithes in the individual countries of Europe. Collection of the papal tithes was most frequently given official justification by the defence of the Holy Land and the struggle with the enemies of Christianity. According to the surviving registers, the *papal tithes* were collected in the Kingdom of Hungary in 1281 – 1286, 1317 – 1320, 1332 – 1337, 1338 – 1342, 1350 – 1354, 1359 – 1363, 1373 – 1375. A rare record was included in the *Registers of papal collectors of tithes* from 1317 – 1320 from Germany. About 540 Halle pounds had to go to Würzburg north-west of Nuremberg. They were delivered for weighing, received, but not counted or weighed because of fears of the threat to life on the journey.

The amount of money was soon significantly reduced because of the finding of counterfeit and damaged pennies. Money amounting to a sum of 17 Halle pounds was not suitable for further use.¹⁴ Pope John XXII made an extraordinary effort to increase the income of the Papal Curia. *The Chronicle of the Florentine Giovanni Villani* records that in 1322 this Pope had a new gold coin struck in Avignon with the same metal content, weight and design as the gold coins of Florence. The only difference was that the side with the lilly bore the name of the Pope, which caused serious problems, because he wanted to cover up the fact that he was striking the same coin as the Florentines.

13 HLINKA, Jozef – KAZIMÍR, Štefan – KOLNÍKOVÁ, Eva. *Peniaze v našich dejinách*. (Money in our history.). Bratislava : Obzor, 1976, p. 98-100; QMGM, p. 58, 291, no. 154; HÖMAN, Bálint. *Magyar pénztörténet 1000 – 1325*. (The history of money in Hungary 1000 – 1325). Budapest : Kiadja a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1916, p. 134-135; BIHLMEYER – TÜCHLE, ref. 10, p. 287.

14 OSLANSKÝ, František. Desiatky pápežskej kúrie a hodnota cirkevných majetkov na Slovensku v stredoveku. (The tithes of the Papal Curia and the value of Church property in Slovakia in the Middle Ages). In *Slovenská numizmatika*, 1996, year XIV, p. 121-122; *Monumenta Vaticana historiam regni Hungariae illustrantia I/1*. Sorozatszerkesztők: Asztrik Várszegi, István Zombori. Budapest : Efo, 2000, (1-6), (I-II), III-LXXVII, (1-3), (1), 2-520, (521-524), 1 supplement; QMGM, p. 259-260, no. 377.

In December 1325, Pope John started proceedings and imposed excommunications against all who struck imitation and false gold coins of Florentine type. There was action against the Marquis of Montferrat and Spinola of Genoa, but it was found that they had not struck doubtful coins. The Pope was not sparing with excommunications, but he forgot that he himself had struck imitations of Florentine gold coins, with some differences in striking, since the words PAPA.IOANNES were placed by St. John, a mitre as a symbol by John the Baptist and the words SANCTVS PETRVS ET PAVLVS on the side with the lilly. However, for a long time he had taken vigorous steps against counterfeiting of coins, falsification of gold and alchemy.¹⁵

Obtaining an elixir or philosopher's stone with which it is possible to transmute lead or other metals into gold and silver was always regarded as the basic essence of *alchemy*. More than one royal court took a significant interest in use of the occult knowledge of the alchemists, among whom clergymen and physicians prevailed. King Edward III of England was also interested, when he learnt that John le Rous and Magister William de Dalby knew how to produce silver by means of alchemy, and that they had already produced it or were even producing it continually. Their art seemed to be very useful for the king and the kingdom, if it was really true. Therefore, on 9 May 1329 at Eltham, the king *entrusted* Thomas Cary with finding them and bringing them to the king, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, securely and in a good state, with all the necessary equipment. If they wanted to come gladly, they should be treated with appropriate respect and welcome, but if not, they had to be captured and brought before the king wherever he might be at the time.

Geoffrey Chaucer also fought in Edward III's army against France in 1359 – 1360. In his outstanding work *The Canterbury Tales*, written 1387 – 1400, and specifically in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, he revealed the truth about more than one false effort of alchemists. The canon's yeoman comprehensively but also very simply stated that rascals can be found in every group, and he did not hesitate to show how a clergyman is capable of deceiving others. Among other things, he mentioned the false pouring in of precious metal instead of real transformation of base metal into precious, which was only an expression of concealment of a vain search.¹⁶

The Visitation of the diocesan Chapter of Esztergom from 1397 confirmed that the church of Esztergom was founded by the first King of Hungary St. Stephen, who invited a mission from the Apostolic See and laid its foundations in the name of the Virgin Mary and St. Vojtech. He made the church of Esztergom the metropolis, head, mother and teacher (*metropolitanem, caput, matrem et magistram*) of all the churches in the Kingdom of Hungary. He established the archbishop as a prelate and the canons as members. From the beginning, the Archbishop of Esztergom had extraordinary privileges in all the dioce-

15 ŠPIRKO, Jozef. *Cirkevné dejiny II.* (Ecclesiastical History II.). Turčiansky Svätý Martin : Neografia, 1943, p. 18-19; QMGM, p. 87-88, 295, no. 211; HAAGE, Bernhard Dietrich. *Středověká alchymie: Od Zósima k Paracelsovi.* (Medieval alchemy: From Zosimus to Paracelsus.). Prague : Vyšehrad, 2001, p. 39, 124.

16 KIECKHEFER, Richard. *Magie im Mittelalter.* Munich 1992, p. 154-164; QMGM, p. 147-148, no. 280; *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer.* Ed. F. N. Robinson. Cambridge; Massachusetts : Oxford University Press, undated, p. XVI, 255-266.

ses in the kingdom, both in its own and in the Province of Kalocsa. They included regular jurisdiction over all provostries, monasteries and parishes. The grant of privileges from the Apostolic See also included the right to punish alienation of tithes and other rights of the church of Esztergom even in other dioceses.

The reply to the final, forty-ninth point of the visitation, which occurred over 15 days from 24 May 1397, stated that the collectors of the chapter's tithes and incomes, who were selected by the chapter from among its members, could be punished if they did not bring genuine money or coins, if this happened repeatedly that the collectors or their servants received bad, old and false money or coins as well as good. However, all were mixed and so they were delivered into the hands of the person, who distributed them (*ad manus divisoris*).

For this reason, the canons of Esztergom felt and sometimes actually suffered considerable harm. Therefore, it was decided that the collectors of tithes and their servants should be very careful about receiving good and genuine coins as tithes. They should not mix good coins with bad, false and old coins. If a *divisor* found such coins among those delivered to him, he had to take care that they were separated from the good coins. Mixed coins were returned to the collectors of tithes who brought them. Good and genuine coins were demanded in return. If collectors of tithes did not want to take back false, old and bad coins, and replace them with good coins, the *divisor* could impose punishment. Two good denárs (pennies) had to be paid from the collector's share of the tithes for every false, old or bad coin. The good coins had to be handed over to the canons. The divisor could also use a different method of punishment, such as taking the income of the collectors from land and water tolls until the bad, old and false coins were replaced. It could be difficult for the Church to receive tithe payments during periods of fear of war with the Turks, especially when the parliament held by King Sigismund from the House of Luxembourg on 29 September 1397 decreed that tithes had to be paid in denárs (pennies) not in agricultural produce.¹⁷

The royal *decree* of Sigismund issued at Budapest on 21 July 1417 enacted necessary measures because the large number of counterfeiters, strikers of false coins and clippers of coins at various places in the country were causing serious damage to the king, royal treasury, the king's people and the people of prelates, barons and other propertied people and to incomes, tithes, taxes and tolls. Not a day passed without harm arising. Therefore, the barons and nobility insisted that false and clipped coins held by anybody had to returned by 20 January 1418. Anybody, of any estate or origin, who dared to not submit false or clipped money, or who bought or exported it, would be burnt without any hesitation. The decree had to be proclaimed in the name of the king at markets and in public places.¹⁸

17 OSLANSKÝ, František. Z písomných prameňov o Ostrihomskej arcidiecéze a Slovensku v stredoveku. (From the documentary sources on the Archdiocese of Esztergom and Slovakia in the Middle Ages). In *Korene európskej civilizácie. Studia Archeologica Slovaca Mediaevalia*, 2000 – 2001, year III-IV. Scientific editors Dušan Čaplovič, Michal Slivka. Bratislava : Veda, 2001, p. 259-260; OSLANSKÝ, ref. 12, p. 80.

18 DÖRY, Franciscus – BÓNIS, Georgius – BÁCSKAI, Vera (eds.). *Decreta regni Hungariae: Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns 1301 – 1457*. Budapest : Adadémiai Kiadó, 1976, p. 235-237.

The *judicial verdict* issued on 20 May 1409 at Veľký Šariš by the royal judge (*iudex curie regie*) Simon Rozgoň directly concerns the territory of Slovakia. The document includes among the proscribed thieves, robbers and other criminals, a striker of counterfeit coins, the miner Ján called Banyaz. He lived on the property of his wife Tročana. Another counterfeiter of coins, who also lent them, was the goldsmith Peter, who lived on the property of the widow of the Jew Alexej. The document also mentions Martin de Kouak, a vagrant, who also lent counterfeit coins.¹⁹

The disordered situation in the Kingdom of Hungary worsened further after the death of the son in law of Sigismund of Luxembourg, Albrecht of Habsburg on 29 October 1439. There was a continuing struggle for the throne of Hungary, which did not exclude counterfeiting of coins and importing of foreign coins such as Bavarian pfennigs.²⁰ Coins from the Kingdom of Hungary also occurred in connection with counterfeiting in neighbouring countries. The *building accounts* of Regensburg Cathedral contain a record under the name Veit Kramer from the year 1459, written in Roman numerals with the first half destroyed, and the exact date 23 July, the feast of St. Apolinare Bishop of Ravenna. Veit bought Eger, merchants', market and Hungarian hellers (*Egrern hallern, handlern hallern, spengler hallern, ungerischen hallern*), false half pfennigs and others amounting to 37 Regensburg pounds. Every 18 hellers had a value of 1 groschen, while the rest amounted to a sum of 6 pounds, 3 shillings and 6 pennies.²¹

Similarly, the chamber accounts of Hamburg from 1479 record that 15 pounds and 12 shillings composed of 13 Rhinish gulden or florins was delivered to the mint master Johann Scroder by Johann Zoltmann, who was arrested. His coins were false because of clipping.²²

On 5 December 1484, Pope Innocent VIII issued a bull in St. Peter's with the title *Summis desiderantes affectibus* (*Those most strongly desiring*), in which he appealed for the support of two Dominican professor of thology, Henrich Institoris with his actual name Kramer translated into Latin and Jacob Sprengler in their inquisition activity with an emphasis on the territory of Upper Germany. The inquisitors justified their activity in the gradually widened and feared Latin theological text *Hammer on Witches* (*Malleus Maleficarum*), which was completed in 1486 and first published in 1487 with the authorization of the Faculty of Theology of Cologne University. Alchemists, who also occurred in Slovakia in the Middle Ages, did not escape the attention of these writers, and immediately in the first section. The text began with the statement that recognition of the existence of witches is Catholic, and the opposite view is heretical.

A mention of alchemical gold also occurs here, but is actually taken over from St. Thomas, who assessed the power of the devil and the possibilities for its application.

19 MÁLYUSZ, Elemér (ed.). *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár II. (1400 – 1410). Második rész (1407 – 1410)*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, p. 239-240, no. 6 787; ULIČNÝ, Ferdinand. *Dejiny osídlenie Šariša. (History of the settlement of Šariš)*. Košice : Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1990, p. 118-119, 374-376, 401, 461.

20 OSLANSKÝ, František. Ján Jiskra z Brandýsa a Slovensko. (Ján Jiskra of Brandýs and Slovakia). In *Historické štúdie*, 1995, year 36, p. 51-60; HUNKA, ref. 11, p. 139.

21 QMGM, p. 269, no. 387; MAS LATRIE, Comte L. de. *Trésor de Chronologie d'Histoire et de Géographie, l'étude et l'emploi des Documents du Moyen Age*. Paris : Librairie Victor Palmé, 1889, p./col. 679.

22 QMGM, p. 265-266, no. 383.

It involves the idea that although some forms having an essence can be given by the property and strength of natural action, just as the form of fire is given by the property of wood, this cannot happen universally, because one property cannot always reach or merge the property assets with the property liabilities, but may still achieve something similar. Therefore, alchemists only make something similar to gold, because the essence of gold is not created by the glow of the fire, which they use, but by the glow of the Sun on the particular place where the mineral force is accumulated. The authors judged from this that the demons cannot create any essential form without means amounting to more than witchcraft.

At the end of the last chapter, devoted to the three methods by which men and not women perform magic, a section stating that good angels can grant immunity from being bewitched, is followed by a part mentioning counterfeiting of money. It rejects the claim that witches are more apostates than heretics because both have turned against the faith. However, while a heretic wholly or partly hesitates, a magician proceeds directly to rejection. Undermining of faith, which is the life of the soul, can certainly be considered more serious than counterfeiting of coins, which help our temporary life. If counterfeiters of coins and other criminals are immediately condemned to death, it is even more necessary that heretics and apostates should be killed immediately after they are convicted.²³

* * *

Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection, was the most frequent feast day, celebrated from apostolic times. The numerous feast days created a need for cultural activities to fill the free time. These derived from ancient magic rites and celebrations, some of which were incorporated into the Church liturgy in changed forms. Diversification on the Church and lay sides was connected with this. At the same time, it is clear that the feast days had to be distinguished from each other, according to the environment in which they were celebrated and the social groups living in that environment. Purification in the form of abstaining from meat and participating in vigils was required as preparation for these days. This applied to Sundays, to Advent before Christmas and especially to the forty days of Lent before Easter. There was also Friday, which recalled the death of Christ every week as well as at the time of the annual commemoration. Passion plays approached the story of his sufferings as part of the liturgical celebration of Easter. The Alsfeld Passion Play from 1501, which recalled the *Frankfurt Play* from the 14th century, included a dialogue between Judas and Caiphas about the thirty pieces of silver, as follows:

23 INSTITORIS, Henricus, O. P. – SPRENGER, Jacobus, O. P. *Malleus Maleficarum*. Ed. Christopher S. Mackay. Volume I. The Latin Text and Introduction. Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid; Cape Town; Singapore; Sao Paulo : Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 83-84, 121-127, 136-141, 193, 195-196, 199-206, 217-229, 377, 482-492, 718-720; JESENIUS, Miloš. An Outline History of Alchemy in Slovakia. In *The Role of Magic in the Past: Learned and Popular Magic. Popular Belief and Diversity of Attitudes*. Ed. Blanka Szeghyová. Bratislava : PRO HISTORIA Society – Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2005, p. 45-50.

Judas: Der pennigk ist roit!
Caiphas: Der gildet der fleysch und broitt.^{24 a}
Judas: Disser ist krank!^b
Caiphas: Judas, hore, wilch eyn gut klangk.
Judas: Disser ist doch zurissen!
Caiphas: Judas, nym eyn andern and mach dich nit beschissen.^c
Judas: Disser hot eyn hole!^d
Caiphas: Szo nym eyn andern! Hie gildet dir woil.
Judas: Disser hat eyn falsch zeychen!
Caiphas: Willtu en nyt, so wel ich eyn andern reichen!
Judas: Disser ist doch swarcz!
Caiphas: Sehe eyn andern und ganck an eyn harcz!^e
Judas: Disser rycz iss zumaile^f langk!
Caiphas: Judas, wollestu dich hencken, hie gulde dir eyn strangk!
Judas: Der iss blyen!
Caiphas: Wiltu uns dissen tagk gehygen?^g

Judas: The penny is red!
Caiphas: It pays for meat and bread.
Judas: This is bad!
Caiphas: Judas, listen, what a good clang.
Judas: This one's broken!
Caiphas: Judas, take another and you won't be cheated.
Judas: This one has a hole!
Caiphas: So take another! That pays you well.
Judas: This one has a false sign?
Caiphas: You don't know anything, so I'll give you another
Judas: This is too black!
Caiphas: See another and go to hell!
Judas: This crack is a mile long!
Caiphas: Judas, you want to hang, here's your golden rope!
Judas: That is lead!
Caiphas: Do you want to torment us today?

This *Passion* is based on the Gospel according to Matthew, one of the main testimonies about the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, which is thought to have originated about 80 AD, probably in Syria, perhaps in Antioch. It describes the betrayal of Jesus by his apostle Judas Iscariot for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. The coins may have been Tyrian shekels, one of which was equal to four drachmai. After Jesus was condemned to death, Judas regretted everything. He threw the silver coins at the high priests in

24 Notes to the German text: a: hat volle Kaufkraft; b: schlecht, gebrechlich; c: betrogen; d: Loch; e: unerklärte Verwünschung; f: recht sehr, gehörig; g: plagen

the temple with the words: “*I have sinned, because I shed innocent blood.*” And he went and hanged himself.²⁵

It is recognized that the most significant work of poetry in the people’s language, reaching far beyond its age, Dante Alighieri’s *Divina Commedia* was and aimed to be a summary of all existing knowledge. It was intended to show the starting point from the spiritual, intellectual and social chaos, and lead humanity towards a common *Community of nations (Civitas gentium)*, where all disputes would be overcome in a synthesis of external and internal peace. Its three parts were written gradually. One version states that the *Inferno* dates from 1315, *Purgatorio* from 1318 and *Paradiso* from after 1318, but it may be more accurate to state that it originated sometime in the first two decades of the 14th century. In the *Inferno*, Dante concerned himself with four groups of counterfeiters. They were falsifiers of metals that is alchemists, of persons, of coins and of words. Dante reserved the tenth, last and lowest ditch in the series of Evil Ditches (Malebolge) in the next to last or eighth circle of Hell in the *twenty ninth canto*, to the alchemists. Their placing so deep in Hell is explained by the fact that they interfered with nature, which in Dante’s view was the work of God, and they blasphemed not only directly against nature, but also indirectly against God himself. In the thirtieth canto, Dante devoted 99 verses to the counterfeiters of coins in the castle of Romena in the upper valley of the Arno, at Casentin, which belonged at the end of the 13th century to Count Guido, for whom counterfeit florins were struck. One of the possible identifications is as Magister Adam de Anglia or Adam Anglicus. He makes the most significant confession in the following verses:

Ivi é Romena, là dov’io falsai
la lega suggelata del Batista;
per ch’io il corpo su arso lasciai.

There lies Romena, where I counterfeited
the coin stamped with the Baptist: for which thing
I up there at the stake my body quitted.

It is accepted that according to Dante, since his ideal remained the scholar, who achieved knowledge and used it not only for himself, but also in the interest of higher moral principles, the magister had rejected his mission in life and society, by committing

25 OSŁANSKÝ, František. Feiertag und Kirche im Mittelalter. In *Alltagsleben in Mitteleuropa vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Hrsg. Viliam Čičaj, Othmar Pickl. Bratislava : Academic Electronic Press, 1998, p. 47; LE GOFF, Jacques – SCHMITT, Jean-Claude. *Encyclopedie středověku*. (Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages). Prague : Vyšehrad, 2002, p. 282; VAVRA, Elisabeth. Liturgie als Inszenierung. In *Alltag im Spätmittelalter*. Hrsg. Harry Kühnel. Mitarb. Helmut Hundsbichler, Gerhard Jaritz, Elisabeth Vavra. Graz; Vienna; Cologne : Verlag Styria (Edition Kaleidoskop), 1984, p. 319-321; QMGM, p. 275-276, no. 395; *Sväté písmo Starého a Nového zákona*, ref. 1, p. 2129, 2134, 2150, 2179, 2182 (Mt 26/14-16, 27/1-10).

frauds of the sort also used by kings to finance wars. Therefore, he was found at the bottom of the given place in Hell.²⁶

SCHRIFQUELLEN EUROPAS ÜBER DIE MÜNZFÄLSCHUNGEN IM MITTELALTER

FRANTIŠEK O S L A N S K Ý

Zahlreiche mittelalterliche Schriftquellen, Handschriften und Bücher – von Gesetzen, Visitationen von Metropolitankapiteln bis hin zur Poesie – zeugen von Münzfälschungen. Nachweise dafür sind unter anderem die Gesetze der Westgoten aus der Mitte des 7. Jahrhunderts, die Kapitularien von Thionville vermutlich aus dem Jahre 805, das Edikt von Pîtres aus dem Jahre 864, die Schenkungsurkunde von König Belo IV. aus dem Jahre 1246, das päpstliche Mandat Klemens IV. aus dem Jahre 1266, die Register päpstlicher Zehnteinnehmer aus den Jahren 1317 – 1320 aus Deutschland, die Erzählung des Dienstmannes vom Kanonikus der Canterbury-Erzählungen von Geoffrey Chaucer aus den Jahren 1387 – 1400, die Visitation des Metropolitankapitels von Esztergom aus dem Jahre 1397, die königliche Urkunde Kaiser Sigismunds aus dem Jahre 1417, die Akten der Hamburger Kämmerei aus dem Jahre 1479, die vielfach befürchtete theologische Schrift der Hexenhammer (*Malleus Maleficarum*) aus dem Jahre 1486, das Alsfelder Passionsspiel uraufgeführt 1501, sowie Die Hölle als der erste Teil Dantes Göttlicher Kommödie aus dem frühen 14. Jahrhundert. Hierbei handelt es sich um eine Auswahl bis jetzt lediglich zum Teil verwendeter und eigentlich unbekannter Sachverhalte aus mittelalterlichen Schriften als Voraussetzung für eine weitere nunmehr wesentlich tiefere und detailliertere Auseinandersetzung mit diesem Thema.

26 DANTE, Alighieri. *Božská komédia: Peklo* (La Divina Commedia: Inferno). Bratislava : Spoločnosť Dante Alighieri, 2005, p. 93 (XI/97-99), 238, 242-243 (XXIX/52-57, 118-120, 136-138), 244-245, 250-253 (XXX/1-27, 49-148), 292-293, 389-393; DANTE, Alighieri. *La Divina Commedia, a cura de Natalino Sapegno*. Milan; Naples : Riccardo Riccardi editors, no date, p. 335-336, 339, 341 (XXIX/52-57, 118-120, 136-138), 342-343, 345-351 (XXX/1-27, 49-148); Source of the English translation quoted here: DANTE Alighieri: The Divine Comedy, Text with translation in the metre of the original by G. L. Bickersteth. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981, p.219. *Das Mittelalter in Daten: Literatur, Kunst, Geschichte 750 – 1520*. Hrsg. Joachim Heinze. Munich : Verlag C. H. Beck, 1993, p. 225, 227; HERDE, Peter. Die Bestrafung von Fälschern nach weltlichen und kirchlichen Rechtsquellen. In *Monumenta Germaniae Historica : Schriften*. Band 33, II. *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Munich 16-19 September 1986. Teil II. *Gefälschte Rechtstexte: Der Bestrafte Fälscher*. Hannover : Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1988, p. 577-578.

RÁZUS' *ODKAZ MŔTVYCH* AND THE PERCEPTION OF VIOLENCE IN INTER-CONFESSIONAL RELATIONS

PETER MACHO

MACHO, Peter. *Rázus' Odkaz mŕtvych and the Perception of Violence in Inter-Confessional Relations*. *Historický časopis*, 2009, 57, Supplement, pp. 15-39, Bratislava.

The article analyses the literary image of forcible re-Catholicization and maps its perception against the background of the confessionally determined reception of the historical novel *Odkaz mŕtvych* (Message from the Dead). The reception of Rázus' novel was influenced by Protestant and Catholic historical memory, which included the images of the bad Jesuits or the good Jesuits. The stereotype of the bad Jesuits was updated and politically exploited in the conditions of the totalitarian Ludák regime. Thus the novel contributed to strengthening anti-regime views in some segments of the reading public.

Historical novel. Historical memory. Stereotype. Confessional story. Re-Catholicization. Jesuits. Violence.

Martin Rázus published the historical novel *Odkaz mŕtvych* (Message from the Dead) in 1936.¹ He anchored its artistic statement in the period of religious disturbances and political struggles of the 17th century. Already at the time of its origin, the novel was described as unobjective, tendentious, as a work standing in contrast to the historical reality it depicts. Critics from various social science disciplines, confessional environments and political or ideological orientations (Ján Pöstényi, Jozef Buday, Andrej Kostolný, Andrej Mráz, Milan Hamada, Vendelín Jankovič, Michal Chorváth and others) devoted attention to it in reviews, longer essays or publications at the time of its publication or later.

At this point, I would like to observe that the subject of the research preceding the writing of this study was not the literary text by itself, but the text and its reception, first of all in the form of reviews and criticisms, and then the mutual interaction on the level author – text – reader.²

1 RÁZUS, Martin. *Odkaz mŕtvych*. Prague; Bratislava : Leopold Mazáč, 1936. When analysing and citing the text, I start from the more recent edition of this work: RÁZUS, Martin. *Odkaz mŕtvych*. Liptovský Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1995. In this context, I point to the fact that different editions of the novel, sources and other publications use different forms of the names of specific historical personalities. Where this paper is concerned, this mainly involves the names of the following personalities: Mikuláš Kelio/Kellio, Imrich Thököly/Tököly/Tököli, Juraj Szelepcsényi/Selepčeni, Leopold Kollonich/Kolonich, Štefan Bocskay/Bočkej, Gabriel Bethlen/Betlen.

2 The question of the relationship between the work of art and historiography has been considered by Slovak researchers only sporadically. KAMENEC, Ivan. *Historiografia, umelecká tvorba a historické vedomie*. (Historiography, artistic creation and historical consciousness.). In KAMENEC, Ivan. *Hľadanie a blúdenie v dejinách. Úvahy, štúdie, polemiky*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 2000, p. 24-38; KAMENEC, Ivan. *Umelecký literárny text ako prameň historiografického výskumu* (Pokus o aplikáciu na básnické dielo Janka Jesenského). (An artistic literary text as a source for historiographic research (With attempted application to the poetic work of Janko Jesenský)). In BŽOCH, Adam (ed.). *Literárny text a poznanie* (*Zborník z kolokvia, 23. novembra 2000, Rakúska knižnica, Bratislava*). Bratislava : b. v., b. r., p. 19-23.

In research, I relied mainly on the theoretical concept of collective, social or supra-individual historical memory.³ The majority of researchers point not only to subjectivity and emotion, but also to selectiveness as a determining characteristic of collective historical memory.

M. Olejník observes that “*historical memory [...] acts as an integrating factor, it connects the individual on the basis of a jointly experienced past. In contrast to individual memory, historical memory is the memory of groups. Although it is most significantly present in societies organized on the levels of ethnic groups or nations and on the level of multi-national religious communities, communal historical memory is also found in families, economic organizations, sports clubs, societies of various kinds and other groups. The principles and contents on the basis of which historical memory generates sentiments of belonging together are surprisingly similar regardless of the size and character of the community.*”⁴

Religious communities also have their own historical memories on various levels: large social groups in the framework of the national community such as Slovak Catholics or Slovak Lutherans, the members of individual Catholic parishes or Lutheran church communities, or religious orders such as the Jesuits, Piarists and Franciscans. Multiple layers of identity bring with them multiple meeting, overlapping or even possible conflicts of various historical memories.

This study is concerned with the problem of the literary presentation of re-Catholicization violence, as well as with the reception of this presentation by members of the two different religious communities and how this reception was influenced by the historical memory of the different confessional groups.

I also considered the category of the stereotype: “*Stereotypes [...] represent special projection of experiences, which form part of the collective or social memory.*” These mental images “*in the context of the opposition ‘us’ – ‘them’ [...] are connected with deep ‘structures de longue durée’.* In such a conception, stereotypes are standardized ideas about particular groups of people or objects.”⁵

H. H. Hahn points not only to the fact that stereotypes simplify and facilitate orientation in the unclear world in which we live, but also that stereotypes are a factor of integration in the construction of collective identity. They strengthen the definition of the members of the particular social group – “us” – in comparison with members of the other

3 BAČOVÁ, Viera (ed.). *Historická pamäť a identita*. (Historical memory and identity). Košice : Spoločenskovedný ústav SAV, 1996. On the background of the terminological differences (collective memory, social memory, cultural memory), which are the product of different research traditions, see: KREKOVÍČOVÁ, Eva. *Mentálne obrazy, stereotypy a mýty vo folklóre a politike*. (Mental images, stereotypes and myths in folklore and politics). Bratislava : Ústav etnológie SAV, 2005, p. 7, 8.

4 OLEJNÍK, Milan. Základné prvky obsahu historickej pamäti a ich úloha pri formovaní kolektívnej identity. (The basic elements of the content of historical memory and their role in the formation of collective identity.). In BAČOVÁ, ref. 3, p. 43.

5 KREKOVÍČOVÁ, Eva. Sociálna / kolektívna pamäť a stereotypy: K niektorým metodologickým a terminologickým problémom. (Social / collective memory and stereotypes: On some methodological and terminological problems.). In MARUŠIAK, Juraj – FERENCOVÁ, Michaela (eds.). *Teoretické prístupy k identitám a ich praktické aplikácie. Zborník zo seminára*. Bratislava : Veda, 2005, p. 55.

group – “them”, by means of the shared emotions and shared contents, which members of “our” group have in common.⁶

Rázus took a very negative view of the confessionalization of public life, which burdened Slovak society.⁷ He sought a starting point not only in practical politics and public writing, but also in literature, by means of which he wanted to address the wider public. This was why he wrote the novel *Odkaz mŕtvych*.

The author's original intention was to publish a two-volume novel. The first would be concerned with the fate of Lutheran clergy and teachers, who were convicted of cooperation with the Turks and rebellion against the monarch, Leopold I, in the Pressburg trial of 1674 and sentenced to the galleys. In the second volume, the centre of attention shifts to the anti-Habsburg uprising of Imrich Thököly, during which many members of the Catholic clergy were killed. Rázus was well aware that the public reception of the work would not be unambiguously positive. He thought that the first volume would please the Lutherans and evoke dislike in the Catholic environment, while the second volume would provoke the opposite reactions. However, in the end, he only published a one volume novel.⁸ His continued work on the second volume was hindered not only by the extremely negative reception of the novel by some critics, who described the work as anti-Catholic⁹, but also by the political situation, especially the incorrect behaviour of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party towards its ally the Slovak National Party. All this exhausted a large amount of his energy and undermined his impaired health. About a year and a half after writing *Odkaz mŕtvych*, Martin Rázus died on 8 August 1937.

6 HAHN, Hans Henning. 12 Thesen zur Stereotypenforschung. In HAHN, Hans Henning – MANNOVÁ, Elena (eds.). *Nationale Wahrnehmungen und ihre Stereotypisierung. Beiträge zur Historischen Stereotypenforschung*. Frankfurt am Main : Peter Lang, 2007, p. 15, 21-22.

7 This problem has been considered in detail especially by BANÍK, Anton Augustín. *O dialektickej podstate slovenského konfesionalizmu*. (On the dialectical essence of Slovak confessionalism). Martin : Matica slovenská, 2000.

8 J. Buday pointed precisely to the conflict between the advertized form of the novel and its actual final form without the balance of “anti-Lutheran – anti-Catholic” volumes. It gave the reading public the impression that in the background of this case, it was possible to see a wider but not very clearly defined Lutheran anti-Catholic plot, which had the aim of concealing the historical truth or making it inaccessible: “*The work as it comes from the press, contains only the first volume promised by the author. The second volume got stuck somewhere in the author's pen. Why? Perhaps only the author and his fellow believers know.*” Dr. B. [= BUDAY, Jozef]. Martin Rázus: *Odkaz mŕtvych*. Román. Vydal L. Mazáč, Praha – Bratislava 1936. In *Kultúra*, 1937, year 9, no. 2, p. 38. The reviewer was identified as Jozef Buday by: GÁFRIK, Michal. *Martin Rázus II. Osobnosť a dielo (1923 – 1937)*. (Martin Rázus II. Personality and work (1923 – 1937)). Bratislava : Literárne informačné centrum, 2000, p. 211.

9 J. Pöstényi emphasized that “*according to the Lutheran critic [Andrej] Kostolný, Rázus' novel is anti-Catholic. The Slovak Lutherans should have it for their homes!*” KYSUCKÝ, J. P. Nesnášľanosť. (Intolerance). In *Kultúra*, 1937, year 9, no. 2, p. 17-18. Note: J. P. Kysucký is a pseudonym for Ján Pöstényi. See: PAŠTĚKA, Július et al. *Lexikón katolíckych kňazských osobností Slovenska*. (Lexicon of notable Catholic priests from Slovakia). Bratislava : LÚC, 2000, p. 1110-1111, entry: Pöstényi, Ján. A. Kostolný himself reacted to this attack, not only stating that Pöstényi had found in his review something that was not there, but also pointing out Pöstényi's cynical and bile-filled tone and stating that a person with such malicious thoughts “*is not entitled to accuse Rázus of religious intolerance*”. KOSTOLNÝ, Andrej. Ján Pöstényi dáva Rázusov román “*Odkaz mŕtvych*” na index. (Ján Pöstényi puts Rázus' novel “*Odkaz mŕtvych*” on the index.). In *Slovenské smery*, 1936, year 4, p. 198-200.

According to his personal statement, recorded by the editor of the *Národné noviny* Alexander Pakan, the main impulse for writing the novel was the “*present political and religious situation among the Slovaks*”.¹⁰ Rázus substantially completed it by March 1936, that is in the period between the announcement of the formal separation of the National Party and the People’s Party (Ludáks) in December 1935 and his resignation from the chairmanship of the National Party in April 1936. He had just experienced one of the greatest disappointments of his life, namely the collapse of the vision of cooperation between the Lutherans and Catholics, which had been expressed in the Autonomist Block.

* * *

The phenomenon Martin Rázus considered dangerous and a threat to the healthy development of Slovak society in the 20th century, was perceived in the reality of the 17th century. By means of his literary work, he warned against the strong confessionalization of politics or the intensive politicization of confessionalism: the connection of confessional identification, party-political allegiance and loyalty may be associated with feelings of exclusiveness or superiority and lead to the use or misuse of political power to implement a particular political, ideological or spiritual conception, which may be accompanied by various forms of violence and manipulation, ostracism, exclusion, psychological tyranny, physical torture or direct physical destruction. The struggle for a better world, for the good of man, the whole community, the nation, one’s own confession, cannot be carried on through violence in any of its forms. This can be regarded as a brief summary of the message Rázus intended to convey in his literary work.

The leit motiv of the novel is the idea of the Lutheran minister from Brezno Ján Milochovský about two *nationes*. Under the influence of the events connected with the initial phase of re-Catholicization and with Thököly’s uprising, Milochovský, exiled in Germany, wrote that humanity as a whole is divided into a nation of good people and a nation of bad people.¹¹ The dividing line between the *good* and the *bad* is not identical with the confessional boundary between Protestantism and Catholicism, but cuts through the confessions.

However, in spite of this, Rázus work encountered a mostly negative response. It was criticized especially by representatives of the Catholic camp, who accused him of unob-

10 PAKAN, Alexander. Rozhovor s Martinom Rázusom. (Interview with Martin Rázus.). In *Národné noviny*, 1936, year 67, no. 34, p. 2.

11 The original text of this idea: “*Actually we can say, two nationes or peoples are found in the world: One of them is faithful, pious, sincere and brave. The other is unfaithful, bad and impious. The good, wherever they come from, can be decently regarded as compatriots of one nation, aim and blood. Similarly, the bad and unfaithful listen to the bad. We do not have to consider which homeland somebody comes from, but of which homeland he is worthy.*” MILOCHOVSKÝ, Ján. Ornamentum magistratus politici – Ozdoba vrchnosti svetské. In MIŠIANIK, Ján (ed.). *Antológia staršej slovenskej literatúry*. Bratislava : Veda, 1981, p. 814-816 (quotation from p. 815). Milochovský’s text was originally published in 1678 at Dresden. The objections of Catholic critics to the use of Milochovský’s idea in Rázus’ novel as inappropriate and ahistorical are refuted by HAMADA, Milan. Rázusov Odkaz mŕtvych ustavične kontroverzný? (Rázus’ Message from the Dead, permanently controversial?) In *Literárny archív*, 29-30. Martin : Matica slovenská, 1994, p. 315-320.

jective and tendentious presentation of history.¹² One of the reviewers, the administrator of the Society of St. Vojtech Ján Pöstényi, expressed the view that the novel was socially harmful, because it promoted religious intolerance among the people of Slovakia. He accused Rázus of only writing about the suffering of the Lutherans in his book, but remaining silent about the sufferings and deaths of Catholics during Thököly's uprising. This accusation is unjustified for two immediate reasons: 1) it does not correspond to the chronological setting of the novel. The author mentioned the events of the uprising, but the centre of gravity of his literary work lay in capturing lives, stories and historical events, which mostly occurred before the outbreak of the uprising. 2) The author did not avoid thematizing the violence committed by the Kuruci.¹³

Another reviewer, the literary critic Andrej Kostolný, who came from the Lutheran environment, evaluated the novel positively. However, he corrected the basic credo of Rázus: "*the Protestants suffered and the Catholics suffered according to who had power*". According to Kostolný: "*it is scarcely possible to say that the Catholics suffered the same as the Protestants. There is a difference between the conviction of Lutherans by representatives such as Szelepcsényi and Kolonič [an allusion to the Pressburg court of 1674 – P. M.] and a Kuruc soldier pushing a monk into a chasm. Only the offences of the Labanci can really be compared to the offences of the Kuruci.*"¹⁴

Kostolný's review did not cast doubt on the suffering of Catholics as such, he pointed more to the fact that it is necessary to distinguish between suffering caused by the violence organized and approved by the authority of the state with the direct participation of the clergy, from suffering caused by violence as acts of revenge, for example, by

12 The first Catholic response to the publication of the novel was an anonymous review, which generally accepted Rázus' work in spite of some reservations. Na margo Rázusovho románu "Odkaz mŕtvych". (On Rázus' novel "Message from the Dead"). In *Slovák*, 1936, year 18, no. 273, p. 9. The reviewer accused Rázus, among other things, of not achieving the aim he had set – to warn the readers – members of his confessionally divided nation, against religious divisions and conflicts. According to the reviewer, the novel appeared to be the apotheosis of Protestantism, but it is necessary to admit that Rázus "*endeavours [...] to be entirely tolerant and generous towards the other side*".

13 As an illustration, I will give two extracts from the text of the novel: "*And the Kuruc uprising crept in from Transylvania and beyond the Tisa. And when he [= the Piarist František Hanák], closed his eyes to it. About that time, he came to Brezno with two Poles, Brother Ladislaus, who had fallen into the hands of the Kuruci, but succeeded in escaping. He told terrible things about the cruelty of the struggle. The captain of Košice Farkaš Cob had condemned 62 Kuruc prisoners to death. They were ordered to stand on the main square of Košice to watch while one after the other was hung and impaled. To wait for their turn. 'Is it possible?' Hanaciuc covered his eyes. 'It's true' continued the dejected Ladislaus: 'Since then the Kuruci have killed every Labanc and Catholic priest, who fell into their hands. And not only that! However, recently when the Kuruc army of Count Boham thrashed the Imperials near Naláb and in Szatmár, from 1500 prisoners almost 600 were killed in revenge by the same method used by Farkaš Cob and his friends in Košice.' 'Terrible!' his superior turned pale. 'This is no longer war. It is genocide. Let us hope, it will not happen to us'.*" At another point in the novel, Rázus put a description of Kuruc violence in the village of Valaská into the text of a letter: The Kuruci "*looted the church, parish house and nearby forge. They caught the priest Štefan Višnóczy, the cantor and two singers, bound and stripped them. Allegedly, they were freed only for 3000 talers. Here [in Brezno] the cannons roared. The Kuruci fled from the sound. [...]*" Both quotations from RÁZUS, ref. 1, p. 163 and p. 138.

14 KOSTOLNÝ, Andrej. Martin Rázus: Odkaz mŕtvych. In *Slovenské smery*, 1936, year 4, p. 29-30.

soldiers.¹⁵ Thus, he pointed to insufficient distinguishing between institutionalized and uninstitutionalized violence.

The subsequent reactions and responses to Rázus' novel brought to the surface a surprisingly large number of facts, often of a non-literary nature. The reservations of individual critics, who brought their own "truth" about the historical events of the 17th century, revealed the structure of their own identities. They showed how individual actors in this polemic, coming from different confessional environments or different political camps, identified with particular phenomena, processes, events and persons from the past, or, on the other hand, rejected them.

The polemic showed that the contemporary reflection, re-Catholicization and the anti-Habsburg uprisings the specific subjects and objects of violence may be different, but the identification frameworks remain the same. Large social groups, in this case confessional communities, in which violence was practiced in the 17th century, were still accepted and identified with in the 20th century.

However, Rázus rejected such a perception. His novel is directed against schematic considerations, which identify suffering exclusively with "us", who are the victims and so *good*, and violence exclusively with "them", who are the perpetrators and so *bad*. Rázus clearly considered it wrong to identify whole social groups such as confessional communities as *good* or *bad*.

Ján Pöstényi used the following arguments in his review: "*Unfortunately, Rázus does not build on history. He forgets that the times he describes were associated with a Hungarian or Magyar national kingdom. The struggle of the Protestants: of Bocskay, Bethlen and Thököly, those leaders of the Reformation for 'freedom of religion', was in reality a struggle for Hungarian sovereignty. [...] These Hungarian rebels chose Slovakia as their battlefield. It was a struggle against the legal government in Vienna, which had the support of the Catholics. The Protestant Hungarian rebels had friendly treaties with the Turk, to whom they gave as booty great numbers of Catholics, including priests. In Constantinople, in the severe Turkish prisons, they did not have the freedom to write elegies, nobody heard their voices, no touching chronicles of their sufferings have survived. What did these Hungarian Protestant leaders do under the slogan 'for Hungarian and religious freedom' with the Catholics, with the Slovak inhabitants, how many Slovak villages did they loot with their most faithful ally, the Turk, as history knows very well. [...] And what did the Protestant leader Thököly do? This 'great figure' in the history of the civilized world and Western culture played a shameful role! When the Christian world was resisting the final attack of the Turks on Vienna, this hero went to the aid of the Turks. [...] These Protestant leaders would certainly have Magyarized the Slovaks and sold the resistant to the Turks.*"¹⁶

Pöstényi also supported this nationalist interpretation of the conflict between the two warring sides with the alleged demand of Stephen Bocskay included among the conditions for peace: "*In 1605, Bocskay submitted to the heir to the throne Matthias con-*

15 This concerns one of the episodes in the novel, in which a Kuruc soldier, encouraged by a furious crowd of Brezno Lutherans, threw Father Thomas, a member of the Piarist Order, from a rock into a chasm. RÁZUS, ref. 1, p. 222, 223.

16 KYSUCKÝ, ref. 9, p. 17-18.

ditions for peace in 15 points, in which he stated that in the territory of the kingdom, especially in Slovakia, born Magyars would hold office, that only Magyars would be accepted as advisers to the king, and Upper Hungary (modern Slovakia) would be joined to Transylvania, which was being Magyarized by the Protestants."¹⁷

This method of argumentation is not only ahistorical, but also incorrect. Among other things, it shows Pöstényi committing a similar "sin" to the one he accused Rázus of committing, that is confessional prejudice, tendentiousness and lack of objectivity. This explanation, understanding and explanation of the anti-Habsburg struggle as a fight for national freedom specifically by the Magyar ethnic group and not by the multi-national Kingdom of Hungary in general, enabled him to very clearly distance himself from this historical phenomenon and its protagonists.

However, Pöstényi's approach was not exceptional in the Catholic confessional discourse of the 20th century. In connection with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand d'Este at Sarajevo in 1914, the *Ludák* press emphasized the loyalty of the Slovaks to the Habsburg dynasty in a similar historicizing way: "*The Slovak was never imprisoned for offending His Majesty. From the first moment, many centuries ago, when the first Habsburg sat on the Hungarian throne, to the present day, there were many rebellions against the Habsburg throne, but the Slovak nation always stood firmly behind the Habsburgs.*"¹⁸

In the case of this argumentation, there were several layers of mystification. However, the writer of this statement Ferdiš Juriga, was not concerned with faithfulness to historical fact, but expressing Catholic – *Ludák* loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which was outwards presented as the loyalty of the whole Slovak nation. Juriga clearly did not write his article as a historian, something he was not, but as a politically and ideologically committed journalist. In this period, during the First World War, such declarations were not exceptional, but the problem lay somewhere else: Juriga's identification of the Slovak nationality with the Catholic confession and pro-dynastic feeling made a claim to absolute validity in this context, not only in the

17 KYSUCKÝ, ref. 9, p. 18. Bocskay demand was interpreted similarly by another researcher, who presented himself as a Catholic historian: "*The second group of internal-political conditions emphasize especially the rights of the ethnic Hungarian or Magyar nation. In future, all public offices and dignities had to be occupied only by Magyars; Hungarian fortresses had to be occupied only by Magyars.*" HARČAR, Anton. *Historický význam protireformácie v Košiciach z roku 1604.* (The historical importance of the Counter Reformation in Košice from 1604.). Budapest : Spolok sv. Vojtecha v Uhorsku (Society of St. Vojtech in Hungary), 1942, p. 99. Present-day historiography interprets the above mentioned demand in harmony with the historic territorial-political and estate understanding of the Hungarian nation with the nobility as its dominant component, rather than with the ethnic conception. "*The central Hungarian offices and command positions in frontier garrisons had to be held only by noblemen of domestic origin.*" MANNOVÁ, Elena (ed.). *Krátko dejiny Slovenska.* (A Concise History of Slovakia.). Bratislava : Academic Electronic Press, 2003, p. 135. One of the articles in the pre-coronation decree of Archduke Matthias stated that "*positions of command in fortresses have to be held by Hungarians, not foreigners, without regard for their religion*". KOHŮTOVÁ, Mária. Politické pozadie snemu roku 1608. (The political background to the Parliament of 1608). In *Historické štúdie*, 1999, year 40, p. 129.

18 JURIGA, Ferdiš. Za slovenskú česť. (For Slovak honour). In *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 1914, year 5, no. 34, p. 1.

current political framework, but also in the historical context, with the declaration that the Slovak nation had never in the past rebelled against the Habsburgs.

However, Juriga's statement was contradictory, he himself pointed to anti-Habsburg uprisings, but in his argumentation, he ignored the existence of trials of Lutheran priests and teachers, some of them of Slovak nationality, such as those included by Rázus in his novel, and mentioned in the review by Pöstényi, who stated that the sentences "were imposed *'non ex odio religionis, sed crimine rebellionis'* (not from religious hatred, but for the crime of rebellion)".¹⁹

Juriga's selective approach to the national past cannot be interpreted only as a tactical manoeuvre provoked by the situation during the First World War, when it was counter-productive to point to disloyalty of the Slovaks to the throne and dynasty either in the present (around 1914) or in the past (the 17th – 18th centuries). From his side, it meant ignoring the other, confessionally different component of the Slovak national community – the Protestant Slovaks and their historical memory.

Juriga is also connected with Pöstényi by manipulation of the Hungarian phenomenon. Although Juriga's statement does not directly mention the Hungarians, he undoubtedly suggests to the reader the contrast between the Slovaks, who were always loyal to the throne, and the Hungarians, who were always rebellious. This leads in the end to a static division of the historic roles, which are attributed to large social groups, in this case the Slovaks and the Hungarians. Pöstényi proceeded in a similar way. In simplified form, we can summarize his picture of the 17th century as presented in his review of Rázus' novel, in one sentence: The Hungarians (= Protestants) commit violence against the Slovaks (= Catholics). From the point of view of confession, Pöstényi's understanding of the Slovak nation is still a little less exclusivist than that of Juriga: He only pushes the non-Catholic Slovaks to the margin of the national community, and indirectly, but still one-sidedly presents them as participants in the violence associated with "our" enemies – the Hungarians and Turks.

19 KYSUCKÝ, ref. 9, p. 18. In this context, Juriga did not consider the personality of the Lutheran superintendent Daniel Krman, who actually consecrated the Kuruc standards during the uprising of Francis II Rákóczi and died in 1740 imprisoned in Pressburg Castle, where the Habsburg authorities had put him. In 1721, the Catholic clergy accused Krman of insulting the Catholic Church and the Habsburg dynasty. He was convicted among other things, of inciting rebellion among the people of Myjava, when he rejected the royal mandate ordering the arrest of Václav Mlynář, an apostate, who had been received into the Lutheran Church by Krman. For more details see: SZIMONIDESZ, Ludovít. *Proces s Danielom Krmanom*. (The Trial of Daniel Krman). Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1940. If we consider these problems in the context of the nationalist discourse of the first half of the 20th century and the contemporary practice of attributing absolutized national identities to specific historical personalities, often without regard for the mentality and hierarchy of identities in the 17th and 18th centuries, then two natives of the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. Francis II Rákóczi (Hungarian, Catholic) and Daniel Krman junior (Slovak, Protestant) – are a good example of the fact that historicizing distinctions between the *faithful* and the *traitors* in narratives that claim to be objective, cannot be forced on large social groups such as ethnic groups, nations or confessions. On the contrary, the dividing lines between the *faithful* and the *traitors*, and so also between the *good* and the *bad* is not identical with the frontiers dividing individual ethnic or confessional groups, but is also found within these social groups. Precisely the two above mentioned figures (although they come from a later period than that covered by Rázus' novel) illustrate the objective reality that the rebels against the ruling Habsburg dynasty also included Catholics and Slovaks.

It is characteristic of his method of presenting the past, that he uses reduced and rather schematic images: on one side stand the Slovaks – Catholics – loyal supporters of the monarch – [labanci], who are allied with Croats and Germans; on the other side stand the Hungarians – Protestants – traitors to the monarch – Kuruci, who are allied with the Turks. The first collection of social groups represents good, the second is evil and is responsible for violence. Pöstényi sees these two groups as almost hermetically closed, and the pictures of the individual groups in their framework only contribute to the accumulation of negative or positive attributes and characteristics of the respective groups.

The way Pöstényi deals with ethnic categories, the shifting of inter-ethnic or international conflict onto the level of large social groups (Slovaks against Hungarians), which is a product of applying the modern nationalist view to the reality of the 17th century, is associated with his failure to recognize the existence of the community of the Hungarian Estates. Apparently as a result of this, the idea is entirely foreign to him that faithfulness/traitor could relate to an Estates community, which was not linguistically, ethnically or confessionally homogeneous, as well as to the person of the monarch.

However, Slovak historiography reflected and researched at least some of these problems in the given period. The first volume of Rapant's work on the beginnings of Magyarization, in which this historian also analysed the content of the expression *natio hungarica* – the Hungarian Estates nation, was already published in 1927.²⁰ According to Rapant's findings, the term "Hungarians" (in Slovak "Uhri") had a primarily territorial-political meaning before the emergence of modern nationalism, and "Hungarian" in the ethnic sense needs to be distinguished from this in various ways. In this context, he emphasizes: "*We understand the importance of this circumstance sufficiently, when we realize that in the more recent period, the situation has been completely reversed, so that 'Hungarians' in the political sense needs to be distinguished from 'Hungarians' in the ethnic sense, that is from 'Magyars'.*"²¹

However, in the context of the polemics about Rázus novel, it is especially important that the expression *nativi Hungari*, which Pöstényi interprets "*native born Magyars*" (in Slovak: "*rodení Maďari*"),²² and uses as unambiguous proof of the Magyarizing and so automatically anti-Slovak, anti-national character of the Estates uprisings, did not really designate Hungarians or Magyars in the ethnic sense. The correct translation of the expression *nativi Hungari* would not be "*native born Magyars*" as given by Pöstényi, but "*native inhabitants of the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary*" (in Slovak: "*rodení Uhri*"). This term also had a territorial-political content, designating members of the pri-

20 RAPANT, Daniel. *K počiatkom maďarizácie v Uhorsku v rokoch 1740 – 1790*. (On the beginnings of Magyarization in the Kingdom of Hungary in the period 1740 – 1790). Bratislava : Zemedelské muzeum, 1927. The analysis of this term is found especially on p. 66-76. A review of the two volumes of Rapant's scientific work also appeared in the journal *Kultúra*, published by the Society of St. Vojtech (*Kultúra*, 1932, year 4, no. 6, p. 476-479, although we cannot mechanically deduce from this that J. Pöstényi, the administrator of this society, had a good knowledge of its arguments.

21 RAPANT, ref. 20, p. 489, note no. 183.

22 In this case, it is not clear whether it is Pöstényi's own translation from Latin or Hungarian into Slovak, or whether he only mechanically took over a term fixed by Hungarian historiography.

vileged Estates, especially the nobility (in Slovak: šľachta) living within the frontiers of the Kingdom of Hungary without regard for their ethnic or linguistic origin.²³

* * *

However, it is necessary to realize that for Pöstényi and his contemporaries, the basic, although not precisely justified in theoretical terms, distinction or lack of distinction between inhabitants of the historic Kingdom of Hungary (in Slovak: Uhri) and members of the Hungarian or Magyar ethnic group (in Slovak: Maďari), cannot be made dependent only on knowledge of the latest academic texts, such as Rapant's monograph in this case. At least from the 19th century, this distinction was one of the basic keys to interpretation of older history in the Slovak environment.

Finally, Pöstényi himself as administrator of the Society of St. Vojtech, participated in organizing the 300th anniversary celebrations of Trnava University in 1935, and he helped Branislav Varsik to obtain source materials for his scientific work *The Nationality Problem of Trnava University*, the main aim of which was to prove that it was an educational institution for the inhabitants of the territory of the multi-national Kingdom of Hungary and not only for the Hungarian or Magyar ethnic group.²⁴

Thus, J. Pöstényi was connected with the writing of a work, which had the final effect of strengthening in Slovak public life the already existing dichotomy between things connected with the historic multi-national Kingdom of Hungary (in Slovak: Uhor – uhorský) and things connected with the Hungarian or Magyar ethnic group (in Slovak: Maďar – maďarský). The former also belonged to “us” the Slovaks, while the latter were “foreign” and belonged only to ethnic Hungarians. This naturally had an impact on the identification mechanisms and processes on the individual and mass levels.²⁵

Therefore, if we look at Pöstényi's review of Rázus from this point of view, it is clear that his presentation of the Hungarian Estates struggle as an ethnic Magyar, latently Magyarizing and anti-Slovak or anti-national movement, cannot be attributed to a mistake derived from erroneous translation or incorrect interpretation, but to deliberate unwillingness to apply the above mentioned key to the specific section of history, namely the 17th century. Pöstényi deliberately manipulated precisely this dichotomy: He deliberately did not distinguish between the state and ethnic senses of “Hungarian” in the specific historical sources and context, so that in his text he could strengthen the image of the

23 RAPANT, ref. 20, p. 90.

24 VARSÍK, Branislav. *O čom mlčia archívy*. (What the Archives do not Tell). Bratislava : Slovenský spisovateľ, 1987, p. 78. In the introduction to his monograph, he expressed thanks for assistance and provision of source materials by the administrator of the Society of St. Vojtech Ján Pöstényi and the rector of the monastery of the Society of Jesus in Ružomberok Father Jozef Weiss-Nägel. VARSÍK, Branislav. *Národnostný problém Trnavskej univerzity*. (The Nationality Problem of Trnava University). Bratislava : Učená spoločnosť Šafárikova, 1938, p. VII.

25 However, it is impossible to doubt that Pöstényi had long before learnt the correct distinction between the terms Uhor – uhorský and Maďar – maďarský, otherwise he would have been disqualified in the nationally oriented community: confused use of these terms, or their deliberate merging was symptomatic not only for Hungarian politicians and publicists, but also of the rhetoric of the social group described as Magyarone, that is pro-Hungarian in Slovak nationalist discourse.

bad rebels and assign to the category of traitors to Slovak national interests the Lutheran clergy and teachers, who cooperated or sympathized with them.²⁶

* * *

The publication of Rázus novel in 1936 was preceded in time not only by the dispute over the message of Trnava University, which culminated in the publication of Varsik's scientific monograph in 1938, but also by a similar dispute within the non-Catholic community. In 1926 the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutherans) commemorated the 250th anniversary of the freeing of the galley slaves, including Slovak clergy, who had been convicted by the Pressburg court under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Esztergom George Szelepcsényi. The leadership of the Lutheran Church sent a memorandum of thanks to the government of the Netherlands on this occasion, recognizing the noble deed of the Dutch Admiral Michal Adrian de Ruyter, who freed the convicts from the galleys.

The curator of the Reformed (Calvinist) Seniorate of Komárno Pál Erdélyi protested against this symbolic act of the Slovak Lutherans. He declared that the resolution of the district assembly of the Lutheran Church on the sending of the memorandum of thanks to the government of the Netherlands was distasteful because "*nobody can falsify history and least of all a moral body*".²⁷

According to his understanding, the galley slaves were ethnic Hungarians or Magyars, as Ján Drobný comments in his publication *The Pressburg Court and the Galley Slaves*, in the following words: "*The Magyars long ago appropriated the galley slaves and declared them to the whole world as pure Magyars.*" In his polemic against Erdélyi and "*Magyar megalomania*", Drobný wrote: "*We appeal to historical truth and we want to prove the truth that the galley slaves included Slovaks. Even the curator recognizes [...] that the Lutherans in Tomášovce, Filákov, Kalinovo, Lešť, Nová Baňa, Poltár, Strehová, Banská Bystrica, Turčiansky Svätý Martin, Krupina, Ilava and Brezno were Slovaks. In these places, Slovak clergy and Slovak headmasters served Slovak people using the Slovak language.*"²⁸

In the first case, thematizing of the tragic fates of "our" ancestors – the galley slaves from the ranks of the Lutheran clergy and teachers, who are perceived and presented as the innocent victims of organized violence, resulted, among other things, in the production of the image of the *bad* re-Catholicizers, who committed this violence. In Drobný's

26 Pöstényi's rhetoric is symptomatic in this direction. It is also in sharp conflict with the objectivity and absence of prejudice for which he himself calls. To designate the groups of participants in and sympathizers with the anti-Habsburg struggle, he uses exclusively the term rebels, an expression with negative connotations, associated with the Habsburg – Catholic propaganda of the period, and not more neutral words such as insurgents or fighters.

27 Cited according to DROBNÝ, Ján. *Prešporský súd a galejní otroci*. (The Pressburg Court and the Galley Slaves). Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1926, p. 4. In this context, Drobný points to the *Nyugatmagyarországi Híradó*, 26 August 1926, p. 5, where Erdélyi's protest was published.

28 DROBNÝ, ref. 27, p. 4, 5.

text they are represented mainly by means of the figure of Archbishop Szelepcsényi, initiator and chairman of the Pressburg court, and members of the Jesuit order.²⁹

In the second case, thematizing of the life destinies or rather activities or “our” fore-runners – the Trnava University teachers from the Society of Jesus, who are presented in the framework of the above mentioned celebrations and in the wider context of Catholic ecclesiastical historiography, not only as defenders of “our” Catholic faith and Church in the past, but also as nationally conscious Slovaks and authors of Slovak texts, has the result of generating the image of the *good* Jesuits or *good* re-Catholicizers.

The process of distinguishing the sub-set of “our” Slovak Lutherans forerunners from the set of “our” Lutheran forerunners in the whole Kingdom of Hungary on one side, and the similar process of distinguishing the sub-set of “our” Slovak Catholic forerunners from the set of “our” Catholic forerunners in the whole Kingdom of Hungary on the other side, had been proceeding in the Slovak environment for a long time. However, in the inter-war period, these processes became fully integrated into the nationalist discourse: The micro-stories of these forerunners became part of the greater story of Slovak national history. The two similar, but still different historical narratives, growing from the collective historical memory, or to be more precise from the two memories, of the two confessional communities, bring into the national story a latent conflict derived from the stereotyping and opposing of the *bad* re-Catholicizers and *good* re-Catholicizers, or *bad* Jesuits and *good* Jesuits.

Drobný’s description of Archbishop Szelepcsényi is interesting in this context: “*Szelepcsényi was a Slovak renegade, originally named Pohron[e]c and coming from a poor family from Slepčany. As a renegade he was capable of anything. Truth, love and mercy were unknown concepts for him, however, he was a good diplomat and he wanted above all to collect evidence, so that he could apply his whole perverse soul to overthrowing the Lutheran Church. Who would help him in this work? The Jesuits! They took care of the necessary evidence and documents. The plan was this: It was necessary to disgrace the most important clergy, deprive the most important places of religious freedom and the rest would fall into their lap like ripe fruit, and it will be written in the history of the Lutheran Church in Slovakia, in bloody letters, that there was a Lutheran Church, but there is not any longer!*”³⁰

We will examine Drobný’s argumentation in more detail: What method does he use to build up and structure the negative image of the archbishop, a leading representative of re-Catholicization? It was not enough for him to repeat the statement from older

29 The counterpart of J. Drobný’s image of the *bad* Jesuits is the image of the members of the Society of Jesus from the pen of a Catholic church historian: He mapped the fates of the Jesuits settled in Spiš, who were threatened in their rights and exposed to attacks by the Lutheran citizens of Spišské Podhradie. Thus, the researcher presented the image of the *good* Jesuits (= innocent victims) and bad Protestants (= attackers). In spite of the fact that the author of this scientific study is much less expressive and less emotional than Drobný, he does not entirely avoid a black and white vision, corresponding to his rhetoric connected with labelling. While, for example, Peter Pázmány is “great”, in the sense of an important, outstanding man, Gabriel Betlen (Bethlen) is “selfish”. KALINAY, Valentin. Jezuiti na Spišskej Kapituli a protestanti v Spišskom Podhradí. (The Jesuits at Spišská Kapitula and the Protestants in Spišské Podhradie). In *Kultúra*, 1934, year 6, p. 739-748.

30 DROBNÝ, ref. 27, p. 13, 14.

Lutheran historiography, that this high ecclesiastical dignitary was immoral (*“perverse soul”*)³¹, and prepared to use any means to achieve his aims; to make the negative image of this member of the Catholic hierarchy as a *bad* re-Catholicizer fully acceptable as part of the national story, Drobný used a means of discrediting typical of nationalist argumentation. He started his account of Szelepcsényi by pointing out that the archbishop was a renegade or Magyarone, who denied his origin and so betrayed the Slovak nation from which he came.³²

* * *

The description of Szelepcsényi as the main symbol of re-Catholicization and a figure embodying the set of *bad* re-Catholicizers, coming from the pen of the Lutheran minister and church historian Ján Drobný, is structured in a similar way to the description of Thököly written by a member of the Catholic clergy and church historian Ján Pöstényi. He presents Thököly as more than only as a symbol of the negatively interpreted anti-Habsburg and anti-Catholic struggle, and in this sense as the representative figure for the whole set of bad rebels or bad Protestants. This author strengthens the negative image of Thököly by means of the rhetoric and argumentation, which form a typical part of nationalist discourse and the associated practice of categorization, labelling and exclusion from the national community.

The strategy of constructing a negative image of a historical figure is extraordinarily interesting here. While Drobný represented Szelepcsényi as renegade or Magyarone, that is as a traitor to the Slovak nation, Pöstényi depicted Thököly as a potential Magyarizer, that is as an enemy of the Slovak nation. In both cases, the images of these historical personalities are not placed in the context of the Hungarian Estates community. Instead, the authors relate them to ethnic national communities, the primary identification framework is no longer confession here or the historic Hungarian Estates nation, but the modern concept of the Slovak nation.

The same mechanism functions in both cases: since these church historians can undoubtedly be regarded as supporters of a primordialist concept of the nation, according to which national identity is an objective given fact. Therefore, in their understandings, the facts that Szelepcsényi was a Slovak and Thököly an ethnic Hungarian or Magyar are objectively given realities not connected with the characters, properties or activities

31 At another place in the text, the author follows older church historical writings of Protestant origin by describing the archbishop as a person with violent and sadistic tendencies: *“At Eberhardt [now Malinovo – P. M.] near Bratislava, he had his lordship of Szelepcsényi [...] and did not want to miss a good opportunity to witness the suffering of the hated Lutheran clergy [...] During frequent feasts and revels held by Szelepcsényi in his manor house, when the guests were already in rosy mood, he always summoned our clergy, constantly pressurizing them to come over [to the Catholic faith – P. M.] constantly indicating that he would keep them in his court. But when the prisoners could not be enticed and persisted with their position that they were innocent, and would not give up the truth they knew, Szelepcsényi, this old man standing over the grave, took a hammer and hit the prisoners to break their bones with his own hands.”* DROBNÝ, ref. 27, p. 56, 57.

32 In contrast to this, Pöstényi's review emphasizes the Slovakness of Archbishop Szelepcsényi *“so much hated by Rázus”*. In this context, he refers to the work of Hungarian historians (Pauler, Szilágyi). KYSUCKÝ, ref. 9, p. 18.

of these historical figures. From the point of view of constructing negative images, such facts are neutral. Precisely because of this, both researchers resort in their interpretations to an emphasis on activities or actions of the two personalities, which are in conflict with the interests of the national community, or are perceived as a threat to the national community by the writers of these historical narratives and by their consumers – the potential Slovak readers.

* * *

In both cases, the negative definition of the historical figure in relation to the nation, as traitor or enemy, is expressed by means of the phenomenon of language, which embodies the central category of the Slovak national discourse: that nation is given by language. The traitor or Magyarone is the person, who voluntarily gives up his national language and identity, which he originally shared with “us” or with “our” forerunners. The enemy or Magyarizer is the person, who forcible deprives “us” or “our” forerunners of “our” national language and identity.

Figuratively speaking, both church historians – Ján Drobný and Ján Pöstényi – placed themselves in the position of prosecutors obtaining convincing evidence to add to the case against Szelepcsényi and Thököly, as well as against all those who cooperated with them, fought on their side or sympathized with them. They are presented as guilty of committing or assisting the commission of violence.

However, the fact that through the pictures of these two historical figures, Drobný and Pöstényi strengthen the negative perception of whole social groups – *bad* re-Catholicizers or *bad* rebels / *bad* Protestants – they can be said to consolidate the imagined boundary between *good* and *bad*, which is not only in conflict with Milochovský’s idea of the existence of two *nationes* as I cited above, but also with the basic message of Rázus novel, is no less important in the context of the reception of Rázus *Message from the Dead*.

I assume that not only the generalized and automatic evaluation of the Jesuits as *bad* re-Catholicizers, which we find in Drobný’s work, associated with his expressive comments, which are not far from insults, but especially the labelling of specific historical figures, was what repelled Rázus, because he had personal experience of this sort of treatment from his political opponents. This may explain why Rázus did not mention Drobný’s publication *The Pressburg Court and the Galley Slaves* in the list of expert literature he had studied, and which he published after the first attacks on his novel.³³

The sufficiently observant reader will notice that the literary image of the Piarists and Jesuits is different in *Message from the Dead*. This is undoubtedly conditioned by the fact that Rázus reflected the differences in the historical attitudes of the two orders to-

33 The list published originally in the press was published again in MRÁZ, Andrej. *Rázusov Odkaz mŕtvych v službách boja proti náboženskej nesnášlivosti*. (Rázus’ Message from the Dead in the service of the struggle against religious intolerance). Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1942, p. 35. It is very improbable that Rázus as a Lutheran minister did not know the work of his colleague, who he knew personally from his work. Both had worked in the same seniorate for some time.

wards the use of force in the course of re-Catholicization.³⁴ Andrej Mráz already pointed out this fact, which was expressed in the more favourable literary image of the Piarists in the novel.³⁵

* * *

In spite of this, even the depiction of the Jesuits in the novel is not black and white, so that it is impossible to speak of a strict anti-Jesuit orientation of this literary work. A dominant figure in it is the spiritual administrator of the fortress of Leopoldov, the Jesuit Mikuláš Kelio, who embodies the person with sadistic tendencies: “*As an escort [for the Protestant convicts] he seeks a monk, tall, dark, with harsh, sharp features. He is black from head to foot. He has a strict look, flashing like the lightning of cold steel under a black broad-brimmed hat. A face not from stone. With hands placed deliberately on the shoulders, he appears a sad gaunt, bearded figure. It can be seen that he listens with pleasure to the bitter rattling of the shackles.*”³⁶

However, Rázus also created the character of Adam Zeiler, who is the direct opposite of Kelio, namely a good Jesuit. Zeiler acts as the exact opposite of Kelio. He strives to relieve the suffering of the Protestant clergy and teachers imprisoned in Leopoldov. When soldiers force the convicts to participate in the Mass in a Catholic church, “*a grey-haired old man, the Jesuit Adam Zeiler*” addressed the injured and beaten prisoners: “*I beg you, don't provoke the soldiers! If you don't obey, I see they'll treat you cruelly!*”³⁷

Thanks to the literary dichotomy of Kelio versus Zeiler, Rázus strove to break down the traditional schematic perception of the Jesuits exclusively as the *bad* re-Catholicizers, which was preserved in the collective historical memory of the Protestants. By means of the demonized image of Mikuláš Kelio he entered the trajectory of the confessional identity and historical memory of his co-religionists, but by means of the picture of the idealized, humane Jesuit Zeiler, he stepped away from it.

In this context, A. Mráz explains that when Rázus wrote his novel, as an author rooted in the Lutheran cultural and spiritual tradition, he was part of the confessional discourse, which had long been saturated with negative connotations relating to the Jesuits and Jesuitism: “*the embodiment of the spirit and methods of the Jesuits' work in connection with the material Rázus used, was the supervisor of the prisoners in Leopoldov Kelio,*

34 M. Hamada points to the fact that the Jesuits “*started from an exactly and consistently worked out doctrine of forcible re-Catholicization, carried out in alliance with the secular power*”. This brought them into dispute with the Papal Curia and with other orders. HAMADA, ref. 11, p. 317.

35 In connection with the more positive depiction of the members of the Piarist Order, he comments: although they strove to re-Catholicize Protestants, Rázus adopted a sympathetic attitude towards them: “*With subtle perceptiveness, he explains the motives and aims of the activities of the Piarist Fathers and shows respect for them. If we speak of idealized manners in Rázus' writing, he did not idealize only the Protestant martyrs and townspeople, he also found positive characteristics in the members of the Piarist Order; who are positively characterized with psychological penetration*”, although as Mráz comments, as a Lutheran minister, he could scarcely agree with the results of their re-Catholicizing activity. MRÁZ, ref. 33, p. 41.

36 RÁZUS, ref. 1, p. 80.

37 RÁZUS, ref. 1, p. 84.

who had been judged most negatively by later Lutheran historians on the basis of the testimony of Simonides³⁸ and Masník.³⁹

One of the greatest academic authorities in Slovakia at the time, Ján Kvačala commented in *The History of the Reformation in Slovakia* that the cruel imprisonment in Leopoldov was also associated with physical torture. He takes various pieces of information and the general impression of the personality of Mikuláš Kelio from the older church historian Ján Mocko, and gives the following more detailed description: “*The supervisor Kelio, a cruel, unfeeling, harsh Jesuit, who drove them to work in rain and snow, fed them mouldy bread, and forced them to attend Mass with beatings: “The devil is in you and it is necessary to drive him out”. For St. Ignatius especially! Women [the wives of the convicted Lutheran ministers and teachers – P. M.] were not allowed to visit the imprisoned men. Sometimes they disguised themselves as servants to get close to them*”.⁴⁰

The stereotype of the Jesuits as bad, violent re-Catholicizers functioned more or less intensively in the historical memory of members of the Lutheran community from the 17th century. In the social thinking of the Lutherans, the cruel Kelio, who enjoys the suffering of other people and threatens “our” faith, is the true Jesuit. However, as I already mentioned, Rázus rejected the schematic and generalized evaluation of whole social groups, so he balanced the negative figure of Mikuláš Kelio with the positive figure of Adam Zeiler.

Breaking down of the traditional stereotyped perceptions of the bad Jesuits culminates in the novel at the moment, when the author leaves Ján Milochovský to express the following idea: “*I think that there are two nationes in the world, one inclined towards good and the other towards bad. One is for the Kingdom of God, the other for the worse kingdom. Both penetrate the forms of the human organism in nations and churches, peasants and lords. We [Lutherans] also have both. Father Adam Zeiler, the old Jesuit, who stood up for us [imprisoned Lutherans – P. M.] in Leopoldov, certainly does not belong in the same place as Kelio, his superior [...]*”⁴¹

The idea addressed especially to the Lutheran reader that in the 17th century there were also good Jesuits, who did not commit acts of violence, appears trivial at first sight. However, Rázus hoped his literary message would initiate a change in the configuration of the historical memory of the Slovak Protestants. The Jesuits figured in it as a specific

38 Mráz has in mind the writings of the Lutheran exiles Tobiáš Masník and Ján Simonides. The latter was the rector from Brezno, condemned to death by the Pressburg court and later sold to the galleys. He is one of the main characters in Rázus’ novel. In this connection see: MINÁRIK, Jozef. Dobový dokument alebo literárne dielo? (memoárová próza T. Masníka, J. Simonidesa a J. Lániho). (Contemporary document or literary work? (the memoirs of T. Masník, J. Simonides and J. Láni)). In DORUEA, Ján (ed.). *Obdobie protireformácie v dejinách slovenskej kultúry z hľadiska stredoeurópskeho kontextu (z príležitosti 300. výročia úmrtia Tobiáš Masníka)*. Bratislava : Slavistický kabinet SAV, 1998, p. 184-189.

39 MRÁZ, ref. 33, p. 59. See e.g. the work of the church historians MOCKO, Ján. *Tobiáš Masnicius, mučedník pravdy Božej*. (Tobiáš Masník, Martyr for Divine Truth). Ružomberok : Karol Salva, 1896; LÁNYI, Karol. *Prenasledovanie evanjelikov na Slovensku a v Česku*. (The Persecution of Lutherans in Slovakia and the Czech Lands). Myjava : Daniel Pažický, 1921; DROBNÝ, ref. 27.

40 KVAČALA, Ján. *Dejiny reformácie na Slovensku 1517 – 1711*. (The History of the Reformation in Slovakia 1517 – 1711). Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1935, p. 240.

41 RÁZUS, ref. 1, p. 150.

sub-set in the framework of the image of the wider Catholic group. Particular stereotyped characteristics – cruelty, violence, falsehood, hypocrisy – were attributed to members of the Jesuit order as a group and not only to specific individuals, so that negative collective emotions were associated with this stereotyping.

The existence of an undifferentiated sub-set of *bad* Jesuits contributed to the gradual change in the configuration of the historical memory of the Lutherans: Although it was still a matter of the historical conflict between Catholics and Protestants, the “specialists” in violence and suffering in the confessional story of the Slovak Lutherans were no longer the Catholics as a whole confessional group, but especially the Jesuits. The stereotyped perception shifted from Catholics against Protestants to Jesuits against Protestants, and it became fixed and consolidated. Rázus wanted to move this process further. However, I assume that only some of the members of the Lutheran community followed him in accepting the idea that in the mid 17th century there were really also good Jesuits, who did not commit acts of violence. Especially the Lutheran clergy, as guardians of the confessional historical memory, refused to recognize the existence of good Jesuits – not from malicious motives, but simply because they regarded forcible re-Catholicization as a systemic evil.

It is questionable whether the Catholic public read *Message from the Dead* to any significant extent. On one side, we can assume that among Catholic readers, the phenomenon of the Jesuits and Jesuitism formed at least a neutral, if not a directly positive part of their historical memory; while on the other, the reception of Rázus' novel in the Catholic environment could have been influenced by the mostly negative critics and later from 1941 also by an official prohibition by the representatives of the church hierarchy.⁴² The search for answers to these questions must consider the fact that the majority confessional group was not a homogeneous whole, but a structured, internally differentiated community, which was inevitably reflected in the consideration of these phenomena.⁴³ In the framework of the above-mentioned questions, it is necessary to consider the influence on the reception of Rázus' novel of the fact that the mid 20th century Catholic was reading as a member of the majority community, but in the historical period depicted in the novel, his forerunners, with whom he would identify, were the minority confession. However, it is possible to express the preliminary hypothesis that the Catholics had not developed such a strong stereotyped image of a sub-set of Protestants, who specialized in violence and suffering, comparable to the Lutheran image of the Jesuits.⁴⁴

The historian Vendelín Jankovič drew attention to the negative image of Mikuláš Kelio in 1942. He pointed to the fact that other sources describe this member of the Society of Jesus as a good person. At the same time, he accused Rázus of taking his writer's

42 For more details see: GÁFRIK, ref. 8, p. 213, 214.

43 The historical memory of the members of the Piarist order is interesting from this point of view. It also includes a negative image of the Jesuits, resulting from the historical competition between the two orders. The Jesuits appear in historical narratives by Piarist church historians as the group, which wanted to liquidate “our” order. For more details see: ZEMEK, Metoděj – BOMBERA, Jan – FILIP, Aleš. *Piaristé v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku 1631 – 1950*. (The Piarists in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia 1631 – 1950). Prievidza, 1992, p. 4, 5.

44 In this context, we could consider, for example, the negative image of the Husites in the Catholic environment, especially in Ľudák discourse.

fiction beyond the framework of the information that could be found in the appropriate source: “However, we must also emphasize that Rázus gave some facts a different meaning than they had in the sources, and places them in contexts where they acquire an entirely different character and orientation. [...] Simonides in *Galeria omnium sanctorum*, states that the Jesuit Kellio in Leopoldov forced the convicted Lutheran clergy to attend church and that he even used violence in front of the altar. Rázus also included this fact in his novel, but with such emotional emphasis and elaboration, when they beat Simonides because he did not want to kneel. Rázus raised the dramatic tension of the scene even more by making Simonides’ wife a witness of the scene. [...] There is undoubtedly a great difference between Simonides’ brief statement and Rázus heart-rending version!! The convicted clergy unambiguously describe Kellio as a person, who made their lives unpleasant in all possible ways, but this did not entitle Rázus to attribute the following words to Kellio, if he did not find them in the sources: ‘Old man’ said the Jesuit,⁴⁵ ‘I could not forgive you. When you die, I will not forgive even your dead body. I will have you thrown to the dogs as muck!’ [...] Rázus was even less entitled to use such an expression by the fact that the imprisoned clergy gave Kellio a confirmation that he had treated them decently. At the expense of historical truth, Rázus went as far as he could with various possibilities, which were only briefly outlined in his sources.”⁴⁶

On one side, Jankovič stresses that he recognized the autonomous right of the writer “to use historical material in his own way”, but with the same breath he denies this right to Rázus. With a certain dose of exaggeration and irony, it is possible to state that this academic historian places himself in the position of an arbiter, who would like to tell the writer when his characters have to laugh and when they have to weep, or even how many litres of tears they have to shed. According to Jankovič’s understanding, if a historical source is brief, the writer has no right to transform the information derived from this source into an emotionally sharpened form. However, if Rázus had observed Jankovič’s “recipe”, he would have written a difficult to define hybrid, a sort of quasi-historical monograph with dialogue, but not a work of art.

The authors of a more recent monograph on the Society of Jesus have also criticized the negative image of Father Kelio. They state that Rázus “analysed in detail the suffering of the Lutheran clergy, imprisoned in the fortress of Leopoldov, and had Father Kelio speak sentences, in which even he did not believe”, namely extraordinarily harsh and vulgar threats.⁴⁷

On the other hand, at the same time as V. Jankovič was stating his reservations towards the novel, Rázus’ depiction of Kelio was defended by A. Mráz: “There is no convincing evidence that in his zeal to persecute and tyrannize his victims, Kelio would not have gone as far as the testimony of the convicted Protestants has stated.”⁴⁸

45 This concerned an elder named Ján Szentmiklóssi, who, in Rázus’ version, begged Kelio for exemption from work, because he was not capable of doing it. DROBNÝ, ref. 27, p. 60.

46 JANKOVIČ, Vendelín. “Historické” v Rázusovom Odkaze mŕtvych. (The “historic” in Rázus’ Message from the Dead). In *Kultúra*, 1942, year 14, p. 352-359 (quotation from p. 353-354).

47 KRAPKA, Emil – MIKULA, Vojtech (eds.): *Dejiny Spoločnosti Ježišovej na Slovensku*. (The History of the Society of Jesus in Slovakia.). Cambridge, Dobrá kniha, 1990, p. 163.

48 MRÁZ, ref. 33, p.58.

M. Hamada admits that Rázus negative image of Kelio could be exaggerated, but he also underlines: *“Forty Protestant preachers, who had not been forced to renounce their faith by torture, were taken in chains to the galleys at Trieste and Naples. This is a historical fact, as is the fact that Jesuits such as Kelio participated in such cruel proceedings. It is possible to discuss whether Rázus exaggerated the evilness of Kelio, but it is impossible to deny the cooperation of the Jesuits in the forcible re-Catholicization of the Kingdom of Hungary, including Slovak towns, where Protestants were predominant.”*⁴⁹

Therefore, the problem of the bad or good re-Catholicizers reflected through the prism of violence and suffering was reduced in the context of the confessionally determined reception of the novel *Message from the Dead*, to the question of whether a clergyman could really be so cruel, whether Father Mikuláš Kelio was really *“a beast in human form”*.⁵⁰

Jankovič emphasizes that the imprisoned clergy gave Kelio a confirmation, which allegedly proves that he had treated them decently. In connection with this fact, he comments: *“The voluntary signing of this confirmation is doubtful [especially on the Lutheran side – P. M.]. However, I do not know whether there is sufficient reason for this. The question can be definitively solved only after ascertaining who actually signed the confirmation to Kellio, whether they were the clergy, who signed confessions of guilt, or those, who refused. In the second case, the document would have very great value for Kellio's apologists, and perhaps it would be enough to clear Kellio's reputation, although against the unambiguous statements of the exiled clergy.”*⁵¹

The authors of the collective monograph about the Jesuit order cite this contemporary document in translation: *“To defend himself, Father Kelio asked other clergymen released from imprisonment to give him the following declaration: ‘We the undersigned testify with our sincere Christian faith that in our time of greatest need during our imprisonment, we received clothes and in some cases money or food on the orders of the honourable father, Mr. Mikuláš Kelio. We recognize his kindness, which we also experienced in other ways, by signing our names in opposition to thoughtless disparagers, if any are found. In the parish house at Leopoldov, 15 February 1675.’”*⁵²

Thus, the authors state that Kelio demanded a declaration of his innocence from *“other clergy, released from prison”*, but this fact casts doubt on the search for signatories of the confirmation from the group of prisoners from whom Jankovič would like to find them. The logic is inexorable: clearly those who refused to sign release forms and accept the Catholic faith were never released from prison, and were sent to the galleys. This means that the above mentioned confirmation or declaration is at least questionable, from the point of view of the aspect being researched here. However, the question arises, whether it can be considered a relevant historical source for research into 17th century manipulative practices. This would only strengthen the criticized demonic nature of Kelio, not only as a literary, but also as a real historical figure.

49 HAMADA, ref. 11, p. 233.

50 As he was described by the Lutheran church historian MOCKO, ref. 39, p. 12.

51 JANKOVIČ, ref. 46, p. 354, (note no. 7).

52 KRAPKA – MIKULA, ref. 47, p. 163.

It is to some degree understandable that for historians, who research the history of the Society of Jesus and are also members of it, such an idea or negative image of the Jesuit Father Mikuláš Kelio is difficult to digest or even unacceptable. They undoubtedly regard Kelio as “our” forerunner and in harmony with the historical memory of their own wider confessional, Catholic and narrower Jesuit community, as a good re-Catholicizer: *“But Leopoldov played an important role in the Catholic renewal of Slovakia. The Jesuit mission in Leopoldov occupies an honoured place among the seats of the Society of Jesus, which significantly contributed to preserving and extending the Kingdom of Christ in our homeland.”*⁵³

In this context, the present-day researcher can only hypothetically consider how far Rázus’ literary picture of the behaviour and expressions of Mikuláš Kelio is derived from specific historical sources or secondary literature on church history, and how far it is a literary fiction of the writer, or whether we can speak of mixing of the images of several real historical figures. However, it is clear that the unfavourable experience of the Lutheran community with forcible re-Catholicization is concentrated in the negative image of Kelio. The main exponents of forcible re-Catholicization were the Jesuits, and this was fixed in the historical memory of the Lutheran population.

Some of the critics from the Catholic environment perceived *Message from the Dead* as an anti-Catholic novel mainly on the basis of the negative image of M. Kelio, which stood in contrast to their idea of the Jesuits as *good* re-Catholicizers. Hardly anybody notices the figure of the good Jesuit Adam Zeiler,⁵⁴ and nobody notices the specific role of the female characters in Rázus’ novel.

Here, it is possible to point to a particular episode in the novel, in which Rázus was clearly inspired by the memoirs of J. Simonides and T. Masník. When Katarína Simonidesová wants to meet her imprisoned husband, she goes to Leopoldov dressed as a peasant woman and gets work as a servant of wife of the prefect. When she first catches a glimpse of him, she weeps and the lady of the house asks the reason for her grief:

*“‘What did you see?’ – asks the lady with concern. ‘I saw the prisoners’ – [said Katarína Simonidesová] finally breathing out. – ‘You know, those preachers... And I was sorry for them.’ – ‘But my girl’ says [the wife of the prefect] more calmly, – ‘you will see worse things here. You can’t be so sensitive. I was also sorry when I saw how Kelio treats them. It troubled me because these people did nothing really bad! It is only that they are faithful to their religion. I also said to my [husband], [that] the soldiers treat them worse than thieves and murderers. But what can be done? Father Kelio is the all-powerful master here. Whatever he wants, must happen. So I got used to everything. You’ll get used to it as well – don’t be afraid!’”*⁵⁵

53 KRAPKA – MIKULA, ref. 47, p. 163. The authors of this publication regard the accusations against Kelio from the imprisoned Lutherans, specifically Ján Simonides and Tobiáš Masník, as products of the Protestant propaganda of the period.

54 The monograph by Krapka and Mikula (ref. 47, p. 163, 164) represents an exception in this respect. However, it is impossible to identify from the list of authors the actual researcher responsible for the consideration of the Jesuit Adam Zeiler in this publication.

55 Cited according to RÁZUS, ref. 1, p. 81.

When the wife of the prefect learns that her servant is the wife of the imprisoned Lutheran headmaster Ján Simonides, she breaks through the barrier of fear and custom, and decides to help the unfortunate couple. She uses her position as wife of the prefect, the governor of Leopoldov Prison, who has the right to make prisoners do private work. Using almost conspiratorial methods, she succeeds in enabling Katarína and Ján Simonides to meet in her household, in spite of the risk of being discovered and punished like other women, who gave the Leopoldov prisoners help or food.

She, a believing Catholic Christian, who, thanks to the social position of her husband, stands on the other side of the imagined barricade, shows sympathy and solidarity and offers a helping hand to the suffering, who do not belong to her own group, but are assigned to the enemy group. Thus, she reaches across the norms and boundaries dictated by the society of her time. She realizes that what is happening in Leopoldov prison is wrong. She has got used to it and can more or less live with it. She recommends the same to her servant, before she discovers the servant's identity (*"You'll get used to it as well – don't be afraid!"*). However, at a certain stage in her personal development, she refuses to reconcile herself with a specific part of this evil and accept it as a normal part of her life. By means of this episode, Rázus shows us that it is not enough to not do evil oneself, it is not enough to avert the eyes, ignore and not notice it. It still surrounds us and can affect us, because nobody is immune to it.

Several similar episodes of people reaching beyond the boundaries of their own groups, to the enemy, to the other side, can be found in *Message from the Dead*. They do not always have much epic breath, and they usually involve anonymous or fictional figures. Their historical anonymity or fictional nature is one of the problems with the reception of Rázus' novel. The wife of the prefect, who is not given a name by the writer, did not attract the interest of any of the novel's contemporary critics. They do not consider this literary figure; she is not sufficiently important for them, because they regard her as a fictional character, not as a historical personality. They read and decipher Rázus' novel only through his literary pictures of historical figures, whose lives and destinies are recorded in "written" history. But what is "written" history in this context? It is first of all church historiography, which functions in the appropriate confessional environment as an instrument of legitimization of "our" historical truth. It helps to maintain and spread this truth among the faithful, and to construct the historical memory and so also the integrity of the religious community. These historians, who place themselves in the position of arbiters with the right to decide what is historical truth in this confessionalized dispute, confront Rázus' faithfulness or unfaithfulness to historical facts with their historical knowledge.

However, their historical knowledge is not the exclusive product of their effort, of their research activities, it did not arise on a green field, but is built on the results of the research of preceding generations, as is entirely natural. Among other things, this means that it has passed through the filter of the historical memory of the relevant confessional group.

In the polemical contest, which acquired the character of a prestige match, such literary characters as the wife of the prefect have no value or significance for the actors in the mid 20th century confessional dispute. They are not found in the historical memory,

they are invisible in “written” history, so they do not exist as historical personalities. However, the final result was, that ignoring or failing to consider such literary figures, to whom Rázus had given positive roles in the context of his picture of the Catholic camp of the time in accordance with his literary strategy, made it possible to label his novel anti-Catholic.

In his review of *Message from the Dead*, J. Pöstényi defended the existence and actual essence of the Pressburg judicial tribunal of 1674: “[the Protestant] *rebels did not have courts, their executive power was the weapon and ransom, while the legal power of Vienna had courts. They included the Bratislava court mentioned by Rázus.*”⁵⁶

It would be interesting to verify how widely this view was held in the Catholic environment or in Ľudák circles. However, it is reasonable to suppose that a considerable part of the Catholic intelligentsia, especially the clergy, would have held it.

In this context, a noteworthy statement is found in a letter from František Richald Osvald, an important representative of the Slovak Catholics, to Emil Stodola in 1899. Osvald emphasized his friendly relations and working contacts with the Lutherans and stated that he had no religious or confessional prejudices. However, at the same time, he pointed to the negative feelings he had when reading Protestant writings: “*But I already have experience of the pages of the followers of Luther among us. When I read in Cirkevné listy (Church Letters), how the Pope is always called Antichrist, when I read a biography of Lutheran martyrs, among whom every reprimand for alliance with the Turks is proclaimed as persecution for the faith: when I read from the history of the church in Ružomberok, a book I had to return because of insults, I published the work [in Stodola’s view an abuse of Martin Luther – P. M.] which had lain with me for years.*”⁵⁷

Among other things, the cited letter shows that Osvald had the same view as Pöstényi on the existence, essence and meaning of the Pressburg court of 1674. He did not see it as an act of violence, but as an act of justice. He clearly did admit that it could have been a politically manipulated show trial.⁵⁸

The problem of the perception of the legality and legitimacy of the actual judicial process, which resounded in both confessional camps in the 1930s and 1940s in the context of the reception of Rázus novel, especially among the religious intelligentsia, undoubtedly deserves greater attention from researchers. I consider it one of the keys to understanding the contemporary views of specific individuals and of whole groups in the population towards the institutionalized, essentially legal violence, which occurred in the mid 20th century.

56 KYSUCKÝ, ref. 9, p. 18.

57 Text of the letter from 27 July 1899 cited according to: STODOLA, Emil. *Prelom, Spomienky, úvahy, štúdie*. (Turning point, Memories, Considerations, Studies). Prague : Leopold Mazáč, 1933, p. 224, 225 (underlining by P. M.).

58 E. Kowalská comments that members of the Imperial Privy Council, an advisory body to Leopold I pointed “*to serious doubts about the justice of the Bratislava/Pressburg trial of March – April 1674*”. KOWALSKÁ, Eva. Využitie armády v procese rekatolizácie Uhorska. (The use of the army in the re-Catholicization process in the Kingdom of Hungary). In SEGEŠ, Vladimír – ŠEĎOVÁ, Božena (eds.). *Miles Semper Honestus. Zborník štúdií pri príležitosti životného jubilea Vojtecha Dangla*. Bratislava : Vojenský historický ústav, 2007, p. 92.

The negative image of the Jesuits as *bad* re-Catholicizers, as “specialists” in violence and suffering also functioned in the collective memory of the Lutheran community during the Ľudák regime. The Protestant elite suggested to the Protestant population the idea that the new regime was similar to the Jesuit regime of two or three centuries before, especially in the initial phase.⁵⁹ This instrumentalization did not evoke much negative reaction among the Lutherans, because it corresponded to the content of their historical memory and to their individual confrontation of the situation “then”, in the 17th – 18th centuries, and “now” in 1938, 1939 and 1940. When comparing the two time periods, the members of the Lutheran community were entirely logically faced with the pressing question: who are today’s Jesuits? The search for an answer to this question in the context of the national community as the basic identification framework, moved along the axis: Catholics – Ľudáks – members of the Hlinka Guard. Identification of the modern sub-group of “specialists” in violence and suffering understandably depended on a multitude of different factors. Identification of such a sub-group in the reality of the years 1938 – 1939 – 1940 was in harmony with the traditional configuration of the Protestant historical memory, but it also meant a turning away from Rázus’ literary message or a failure to understand and accept it.⁶⁰

In the conclusion of this study, it is possible to ask a basic question: Should we regard the failure of particular groups and individuals, regardless of their confessional environment, to understand or accept Rázus’ message, as a result of the weak artistic quality of the novel, or can we consider the identity and historical memory of these readers at least partly responsible? I incline to the view that confessional identity, in which historical memory plays an important role, programmed part of the reading community into traditional reading of the text of the novel, thanks to which these people did not understand Rázus’ novel, or they rejected it, because according to their preconceived ideas it depicted the past in conflict with their views, which they considered to be objective. This manifested the fact that people read any text with particular preconceived ideas, which are encoded in them.

59 See the studies: MACHO, Peter: “Vzpomínejte na vůdce své...” Oslavy 200. výročia smrti Daniela Krmana roku 1940 v kontexte Ľudáckeho režimu a protestantskej rezistencie. (“Remember your leader...” The celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the death of Daniel Krman in 1940 in the context of the Ľudák regime and Protestant resistance”). In *OS*, 2006, year 10, no. 1-2, p. 116-129; MACHO, Peter: Priležitostná poézia – nástroj zápasu proti Ľudáckemu režimu (A. Lacková-Zora: K 200. výročiu smrti D. Krmana. Nad hrobom mučeníckym). (Occasional poetry – an instrument of struggle against the Ľudák regime (A. Lacková-Zora: On the 200th anniversary of the death of D. Krman. Over the martyr’s grave).). In MIKULA, Valér – ROBERTSOVÁ, Dagmar (eds.). *Štyridsiate roky 20. storočia v slovenskej literatúre (Zborník z vedeckej konferencie)*. Bratislava : Univerzita Komenského, 2006, p. 94-106.

60 From this point of view, the literary texts presented on the occasion of the anniversary of Krman’s death also stand in contrast to Rázus’ message. In harmony with the traditional confessional historical memory, they give the reader a picture of a contemporary actual enemy, who had to be resisted, who had to be fought. However, the enemy is not identified with the Catholics in general, with the whole majority confessional group, but with a particular social sub-group in the framework of the Catholic community, who held and misused power at the given moment in history. The modern perpetrators of violence and suffering, the present-day Jesuits in this transposed image, do not function first of all as Catholics, but as re-Catholicizers. The aim of these literary texts is not to strengthen anti-Catholic, but anti-Ľudák attitudes among the Lutheran readers. For more details see: MACHO: Priležitostná poézia, ref. 59.

Under traditional reading in this context, I have in mind a method of reading a literary text, which was in harmony with the traditional configuration of the confessional – Lutheran or Catholic – historical memory. It was dominated by the image of the Jesuits as the *bad* or *good* re-Catholicizers. However, in the end, the division of the reading community was not only on the line Catholics versus Lutherans, but also within the two confessional communities. On the basis of traditional reading, typologically similar sub-groups were formed among the Catholic and the Lutheran readers. For these readers, the image of the *bad* or *good* Jesuits fulfilled a significant integrative function in relation to their own confessional group.⁶¹ We are justified in supposing that these readers categorized people on the basis of their membership in social groups, something not characteristic of Rázus, and they did not show much empathy towards people who did not belong to their own group.

Although we obviously should not overrate the influence of one literary work on resistance or anti-regime views, research into this problem opens to us an interesting chapter in the history of Rázus' novel and its reception, which still awaits further study.

The Protestant resistance formed an important component of the emerging civil struggle during the Slovak state, but it has often been overlooked by researchers. Research on collective historical memory may clarify the historical images and feelings associated with the idea of struggle against systemic evil, the source of the legitimacy of this component of the resistance and of the deep conviction of these people about the justice of their views and actions. However, the question of the relationship between confessional historical memory and the formation of resistance or conformist attitudes in the Catholic environment is equally interesting. I think that in contrast to the Lutheran environment, the members of the Catholic community were influenced only to a minimal degree by Message from the Dead as formulated by Martin Rázus in his historical novel.

61 In the case of traditionally oriented Catholic readers, it is possible to assume a strong identification with the *good* Jesuits as “our” forerunners, who defended our confessional group against disappearance (“*If it had not been for the Jesuits [...] the majority of the Slovak people would still be tied up in the darkness of the Lutheran heresy.*” KOHUTH, J.: Pomník zásluhám. Našski jezuiti. (Memorial to the deserving. Our Jesuits). In *Katolícke noviny*, 1888, year 19, no. 18, p. 139 and no. 19, p. 146). In the case of traditionally oriented Lutheran readers, identification with the image of the bad Jesuits was associated with the idea of a threat to “our” confessional community: The Jesuits are those, who want to liquidate “our” church. Thus, in both segments of the reading public, the image of the Jesuits as *good* or *bad* re-Catholicizers strengthened the definition of “our” group identity in relation to the other confessional community.

DAS VERMÄCHTNIS VON TOTEN (ODKAZ MŔTVYCH) VON RÁZUS
UND DIE WAHRNEHMUNG DER GEWALT IN DEN INTERKONFESSIONELLEN
BEZIEHUNGEN

PETER MACHO

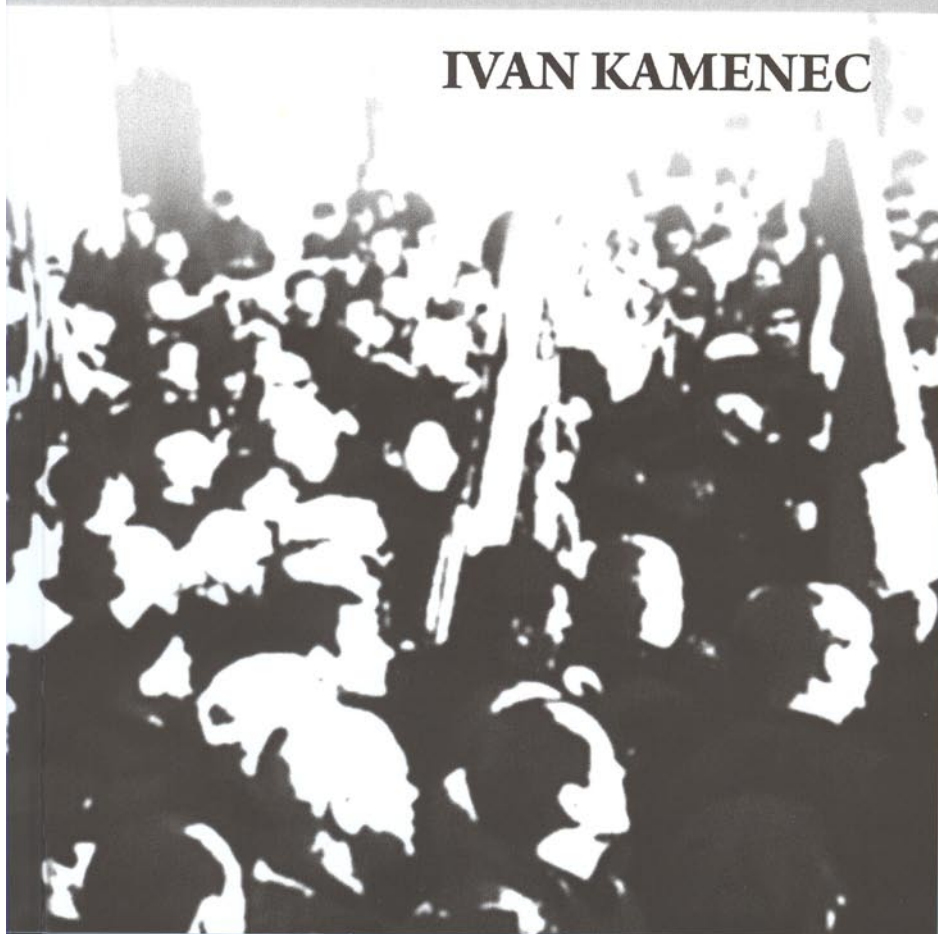
In seinem historischen Roman *Das Vermächtnis von Toten /Odkaz mrtvych/* hat Martin Rázus die konfessionellen Konflikte zwischen den Katholiken und den Protestanten in den 17. Jahrhundert dargestellt. Der Roman verurteilt die Gewalt und Intoleranz bei der Durchsetzung von jedweder Überzeugung. Ein Teil der Kritik hat das Werk paradoxerweise als tendenziös und schädlich für die Gesellschaft bezeichnet. P. Macho hat die Darstellung der durch die Rekatholisierung ausgelösten Gewalt und ihre Rezeption unter den Beurteilern und Kritikern, die aus verschiedenen konfessionellen Umgebungen stammten, ins Auge gefasst. Die Rezeption des Romans war durch das historische Gedächtnis der betroffenen konfessionellen Gruppe beeinflusst, in der fixierte Stereotyp der (ausschließlich) bösen, oder im Gegenteil, der (ausschließlich) guten Jesuiten vorherrschend war. Im historischen Gedächtnis der Lutheraner funktionierte das stereotypisierte Bild der bösen Jesuiten als einer Untergruppe innerhalb der breiteren katholischen Gemeinde, die im gegebenen historischen Augenblick die Macht inne hat, die sie missbraucht und dabei Gewalt verwendet und verursacht „unseren“ (evangelischen) Vorfahren Leid. Rázus hat sich mittels dieses Romans um eine Infragestellung der traditionellen Stereotypen bemüht, wobei er innerhalb seiner Strategie als Verfasser des Romans denjenigen Episoden eine bedeutende Rolle zuerkannt hat, in denen er die Überschreitung der Grenzen von „unseren“ konfessionellen Gruppe gegenüber dem traditionellen Gegner zum Thema gemacht hat, und zwar in Form von Hilfeleistung an die Hilfsbedürftigen und Leidenden.

Rázus hat sich also gegen die traditionelle Konfiguration des historischen Gedächtnisses der Lutheraner gestellt, in der der Stereotyp der bösen Jesuiten eine integrative Wirkung hatte und verstärkend auf die konfessionelle Identifizierung von „unseren“ Gemeinde gegenüber der Mehrheitsgemeinschaft der Katholiken ausgewirkt hat. Das negative Bild der Jesuiten als „Spezialisten“ auf Gewalt und Qual hat im kollektiven Gedächtnis der Gemeinschaft der Lutheraner auch während des nazi-freundlichen Regimes in der Slowakei funktioniert. Unter den neuen politischen und ideologischen Verhältnissen wurde dieser Stereotyp aktualisiert und politisch instrumentalisiert. P. Macho versucht zu erklären, auf welche Weise hat sich diese Instrumentalisierung die Rezeption des Romans von Rázus innerhalb der breiteren Lesergemeinde ausgewirkt, die ebenfalls konfessionell zerspalten war. Am Ende seines Beitrags weist er auf die Möglichkeiten einer Untersuchung der Beziehungen zwischen dem literarischen Text, dem historischen Gedächtnis und der Ausbildung von konformen, nicht konformen, oder ausgesprochen von Widerstand geprägten Einstellungen sowohl innerhalb der protestantischen, wie der katholischen Gemeinde während der Existenz des nazi-freundlichen Regimes.

SPOLOČNOSŤ POLITIKA HISTORIOGRAFIA

Pokrivené (?) zrkadlo dejín slovenskej spoločnosti
v dvadsiatom storočí

IVAN KAMENEC



SLAVONIC IDEAS AND POLITICAL VARIATIONS IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SLOVAKS TO MOSCOW (1934 – 1949)

DAGMAR ČIERNA - LANTAYOVÁ

ČIERNA-LANTAYOVÁ, Dagmar. Slavonic Ideas and Political Variations in the Relationship of the Slovaks to Moscow (1934 – 1949). *Historický časopis*, 2009, 57, Supplement, pp. 41-74, Bratislava.

In the period 1934 – 1949, not only the real international situation, but to a large extent also political illusions were reflected in the relationship of the Slovaks to Russia. The alliance between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in 1935 also had the support of Slovak members of the ruling circles in Prague. The orientation to Nazi Germany determined the foreign policy of the Slovak state from March 1939. The pact between Berlin and Moscow briefly opened the possibility of diplomatic relations between Slovakia and Russia. The entry of Slovakia to the anti-Soviet war on the side of Nazi Germany changed the political priorities. The anti-fascist elements in the illegal resistance took over the initiative in relations with Moscow. From the anti-fascist uprising in Slovakia, through the political developments in the first post-war years, the Slovak communists replaced spontaneous sympathy for Slavonic Russia with organized “love for the Soviet Union”.
General history. USSR. Czechoslovak Republic. Slovak state. Political ideas. Slovak – Russian relations.

Up to the first years of the twentieth century, an emotionally motivated relationship to Russia and a “revivalist” spirit of Pan-Slavism were preserved in the views of the leading personalities of the Slovak national cultural centre – the small town of Turčiansky Sv. Martin.¹ The romantic illusion of the saving mission of “Holy Russia” for the Slavonic nations of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy dissolved in the tragic events of the Russian Revolution. The establishment of Bolshevism provoked a re-evaluation of the classic theses of Martin Russophilia. The Slovak political scene in the First Czechoslovak Republic carried a deep internal contradiction in the perception of Russia as a mythical Slavonic phenomenon and, at the same time, a totalitarian communist state.

The contradictions, threats and conflicts in the international relations of the 1930s turned the political vision of Prague towards the east. The gloomy colossos of the dictator Stalin gradually came to be seen as a replacement for the old Russia. The Slovak diplomat Dr. Štefan Osuský, Czechoslovak ambassador to France, lectured in Bratislava at the beginning of December 1934 about the current problems in international development. He placed the “*participation of Russia in European politics*” among the positive

1 IVANTYŠYNOVÁ, Tatiana. Medzi mýtom a realitou: Rusofilstvo a národný vývin Slovákov. (Between myth and reality: Russophilia and the national development of the Slovaks). In *Národnostná otázka v strednej Európe v rokoch 1848 – 1938*. Eds. P. Švorc, L. Harbuřová, K. Schwarz. Prešov 2005, p. 99-107. IVANTYŠYNOVÁ, Tatiana. Metamorfózy martinského rusofilstva. (Metamorphoses of Martin Russophilia). In *Z dějin visegrádského prostoru*. Eds. V. Goněc, R. Vlček. Brno 2006, p. 109-122.

phenomena of the time. A favourable moment “*had come after the departure of Germany from the League of Nations*” to invite Moscow, stated Osuský, then, when the Russian government made concessions from their demands, bringing significantly stronger security guarantees for the Czechoslovak Republic. Osuský considered it a “*happy fact*” that Slovaks had played an important part in bringing Russia into political developments in Europe. “*A Russophil policy will no longer be harmful to us...*” he commented. “*We are becoming a connecting bridge between West and East, a needle on the scales, very important and decisive.*” According to Osuský, an entirely different Russia to that of the pre-war period was returning to Europe. It was returning “*as a great power and standing by the side of those, who defend Central Europe*”.²

However, recognition of the presence of the Soviet state in European politics did not mean willingness to approve its totalitarian internal political methods and practices. Information in the daily papers of the Slovak representatives of the ruling coalition and articles in the opposition press, apart from communist publications, offered enough material for the critical reader. A serious dilemma for the agrarians and social democrats was that while they were opposed to militant Bolshevik communism, they also demanded the acceptance of the Soviet state as an official ally, which was dictated by consciousness of a foreign threat. The editorials of pro-government journalists on Czechoslovak foreign policy testify to a significant effort to find more favourable features of the great Eastern power, even elements of democratization. However, the everyday running of Stalin’s empire constantly brought even the greatest optimists doubts about the real possibilities for internal political changes. Only the Slovak communists unreservedly admired Moscow and attempted to redirect the sympathy for Slavonic Russia towards a positive relationship with Soviet Union.

The treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union, conditioned by the line Prague – Paris – Moscow, was supported in 1935 by the Slovak political parties in the government. They welcomed the activation of Moscow as a renewal of the balance of power in Europe, which had been disturbed by Nazi Germany. In Slovakia, Slavonic Russia appeared in many public speeches by politicians instead of the Bolshevik Soviet Union. Political parties, journalists and writers expressed their views in the name of the Slovak nation. The unmediated view of the people of Slovakia can be found only rarely. In autumn 1935, a delegation of Soviet journalists and writers spent a few days in Bratislava and other Slovak towns, and this evoked overflowing emotions from the local media. The majority of the Bratislava dailies offered Slavonically inclined accounts with a nostalgic tinge of romantic Russophilia. The strongest opposition force, Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party rejected the “Sovietophil” line of Prague for ideological and religious reasons.³

The crisis year of 1938 brought the culmination of polarization in Slovak political thinking in relation to Moscow, as was most clearly shown by the extreme ideological positions. After the “Anschluss” of Austria in March, Hitler’s Reich came into immediate

2 Prednáška Š. Osuského v Bratislave 1. 12. 1934. (Lecture by Š. Osuský in Bratislava on 1 Dec. 1934). In *Robotnícke noviny* 2 Dec. 1934, p. 1; *Slovenský denník* 8 Dec. 1934, p. 2.

3 ČIERNA-LANTAYOVÁ, Dagmar. *Pohľady na východ: Postoje k Rusku v slovenskej politike 1934 – 1944*. (Views towards the East: Attitudes to Russia in Slovak politics 1934–1944). Bratislava 2002, p. 13–77.

proximity to Bratislava. The Munich agreement of the four great powers in September 1938 revised the Versailles peace system, and as a result subjected the whole of Central Europe to Nazi influence. The occupation of the frontier regions of Slovakia in 1938 to satisfy the territorial claims of the neighbouring states against the First Czechoslovak Republic, occurred in three stages, benefiting Nazi Germany, Beck's Poland, and according to the Vienna Arbitration also Horthy's Hungary.

The political meditations of the representatives of the Slovak members of the government parties, known since 1934, offered the image of the great Slavonic power Russia as a protective barrier against the revisionist claims of the neighbours. After the declaration of autonomy in October 1938, the Slovak branches of Czechoslovak societies oriented towards contacts with the Soviet Union were officially dissolved. In November, the centre in Prague sent to Slovak addresses a brochure containing considerations by Czech politicians and writers for the public about the value of alliance with the Soviet Union. The collection also included extracts from a speech by the Slovak social democrat Ivan Dérer. "Abandoned by those, who promised us help and relying only on Soviet Russia" said Dérer on Prague radio, "we would find ourselves in a war, which could have a very dangerous character for us. Czecho-Slovakia would be labelled as a supporter of Soviet Russia and our neighbours and our Western friends would regard this war as a war of communism against European civilization, and we would find ourselves in open hostility to the Western world."⁴

Dependence on Germany, confirmed in March 1939 by the "Treaty of Protection" with the Reich, limited the ambitions of the foreign policy of the newly established Slovak state to a narrowly defined field. The signing of the German – Soviet non-aggression pact on 23 August brought a surprising change in the official view of Moscow. The Bratislava media again began to notice the great Slavonic power of Russia, which was actively involved in European politics and was dividing spheres of influence with its Germanic partner. The chairman of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSĽS) Jozef Tiso pointed to the possibility of Slovakia forming a bridge between the Eastern Slavs and the West, by which he now meant the German Reich. In his first presidential message to the Slovak nation, Tiso expressed the political vision of becoming "a mediating and reconciling factor between East and West, between the Slavonic and Germanic worlds".⁵

Establishing diplomatic contacts with the great power to the East, accelerated by initiative from Bratislava, obviously increased the political self-confidence of Slovak figures. During almost two years of official relations, contacts between Bratislava and Moscow developed along two parallel lines. In foreign policy, there were attempts by the minister Ferdinand Ďurčanský to gain the support of the "Slavonic" great power for

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- 4 Slovak National Archives (hereinafter SNA), Bratislava, Fond (hereinafter f.) Krajinský úrad (Regional Office) – prez. K. 245. Vec: Spoločnosť pro kulturní a hospodářské styky s SSSR – akcia. (Subject: Society for Cultural and Economic Contacts with the USSR.). Bratislava 12 Nov. 1938). Supplement: Documents on the question of alliance with the USSR. Prague 1938. Extract from the speech by Dr. I. Dérer, p. 21.
 - 5 ČIERNA-LANTAYOVÁ, Dagmar. Slovenské záujmy v oficiálnych kontaktoch medzi Bratislavou a Moskvou (1940 – 1941). (Slovak interest in official contacts between Bratislava and Moscow (1940 – 1941). In *Historický časopis*, 1998, year 46, no. 1, p. 42-63; Short-hand report on the 13th session of the Parliament of the Slovak Republic 31 Oct. 1939, p. 2-7.

strengthening of the international position of the Slovak state, and to obtain diplomatic assistance in solving the territorial dispute with Horthy's Hungary.⁶ The second, and very conspicuous line was Slovak – Russian contacts in culture, especially by means of the activities of Bratislava University and exchange of delegations to ceremonial occasions in Bratislava and Moscow. The statements of academic speakers, politicians and journalists about Slavonic brotherhood and friendly Russia were published in the central political daily *Slovák*. The Bratislava press wrote about the great personalities of Russian science and art, the radio broadcast the works of Russian composers. The Slovak National Theatre staged famous Russian operas and ballets.

The first audience of the Soviet representative in Slovakia G.M. Puškin with the prime minister Vojtech Tuka documented the aim of the Bratislava politicians to widen direct contacts with Russian culture. In a report to Moscow, Puškin pointed out the basic difference between the societies of friends of the USSR “*in the former Czechoslovakia*” and the new societies, which were actually “*organized by the government*”.⁷

From the point of view of Budapest and Berlin, this line in Slovak – Russian relations, whether it involved international political ideas, contacts in the field of culture or the conclusion of trade and shipping agreements, represented an extremely provocative political course.

G. M. Puškin observed in the struggles of Slovak internal politics, tactics of the minister Ďurčanský – “*especially playing*” with the Soviet representative. At the same time, Puškin was clearly aware that “*this game is not invisible to Germany*”.⁸ The Soviet diplomat correctly guessed the interest of the Reich in Bratislava's flirtation with Moscow.

The Nazi adviser for questions of propaganda Eduard Frauenfeld, who was sent to Slovakia, expressed fears in a report to Berlin, about the “*peculiar situation in the Slovak government*”. In May 1940, he wrote about intrigue allegedly “*plotted*” by Ďurčanský and came to an improbably theory about a “*Jesuit – Pan-Slavist conspiracy*”, in which the prime minister Vojtech Tuka allegedly played only the “*role of an unconscious and unsuspecting supernumerary*”.⁹ The peculiar atmosphere of public expressions in Slovakia did not escape the attention of the Hungarian politicians. In the spirit of competition between the small vassals for the favour of the Führer of the Reich, the Hungarian premier Count Pál Teleki sent Adolf Hitler a letter in May, pointing to “*trustworthy information*” about the danger of Pan-Slavism. According to Teleki, communism had

6 ČIERNA-LANTAYOVÁ, Dagmar. Poznámky sovietskeho zástupcu v Bratislave k prejavom napätia medzi Slovenskom a Maďarskom (február 1940 – apríl 1941). (Notes of the Soviet representative in Bratislava on expressions of tension between Slovakia and Hungary (February 1940 – April 1941)). In *Historické štúdie*, 2004, year 43, p. 237-249.

7 Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (hereinafter AVP RF), Moscow, f. 0138b, 4-2-3, p. 16; Diary of the ambassador (27 Feb. 1940); Ibidem, 4-2-11, p. 6. Political information (28 March 1940). Georgij Maximovič Puškin (1909 – 1963).

8 AVP RF, f. 0138b, 2-1-1, p. 36-37. Report for the year 1940.

9 TÖNSMEYER, T. *Das Dritte Reich und die Slowakei 1939 – 1945*. Munich; Vienna; Zürich 2003, p. 278-279.

changed its position and now it was influencing the “*soul of the Slavonic nations*” and this influence “*reaches as far as Bratislava*”.¹⁰

The intelligence materials prepared for Moscow recorded a wide range of approaches to the Soviet diplomats by Slovaks. Clear signs of Russophil and Slavophil feelings and some tendency towards Pan-Slavist ideas could be found among the Slovak intelligentsia. Even government officials often expressed their views with words such as “*These are our Russian brothers*” to welcome people from the Russian mission. In towns and in the countryside, they observed the most varied emotional expressions of popular sympathy for Russia, as a degree of protest against the officially promoted German influence. These phenomena were extraordinarily disturbing to the Germans and the representatives of the German Embassy in Bratislava, who strove to learn from contacts with the Soviet mission, what was the real relationship of the “*mission to pan-Slavism*”.¹¹ From the records preserved in the Moscow archives, it is possible observe a basic mistake, when their writers unjustifiably saw some expressions of Russophilia as a special relationship of the Slovaks to the Soviet Union.

The information collected in Slovakia by the German diplomats and Nazi advisers presented a whole “catalogue of sins”. The numerous German reservations towards Slovak internal and foreign policy included inclination towards Russia in the spirit of Pan-Slavism. During the stay of the Slovak government delegation in Salzburg, President Jozef Tiso had to confront these concerns in a personal discussion with Hitler. Tiso reacted to the monologue of the Reich Kanzler with assurance that “*we declare allegiance to the Slavs, but first of all we are Christians, and so we cannot agree with Bolshevism*”.¹² The German politician did little to conceal the dictatorial character of the demand that the Slovak cabinet had to be reconstructed. The Nazi leader mainly emphasized the need for political stability. Slovakia was externally guaranteed by a treaty of German “protection”, but this had to be fulfilled by means of internal political loyalty.¹³

After returning from Salzburg, the premier and new foreign minister Vojtech Tuka warned against communist agitation at a manifestation of Slovak – German friendship in Bratislava on the evening of 30 July 1940. Whoever “*dares to proclaim that the Russians will come to allegedly liberate us*” emphasized Tuka, “*is an enemy of the nation and the government will proceed against him like against a criminal*”.¹⁴ Statements about the “friendly Russian country”, which had come from the prime minister himself at the end of April, quietly disappeared from the Slovak media. G. M. Puškin commented on the situation in Slovakia with the statement that since Salzburg, the German government “*had directly intervened in Slovak affairs*”. According to the Russian diplomat, the worsening

10 Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918 – 1945. Series D. Vol. IX. London 1949. Doc. 284, p. 394-395. Letter from P. Teleki (20 May 1940).

11 AVP RF, f. 0138b, 4-2-9, p. 113-115. Report for V.M. Molotov. Ibid. 2-1-1, p. 38, 53. Report for the year 1940.

12 SNA, f. NS, II-A, 926. Dr. J. Tiso (3rd part).

13 HOENSCH, J. K.: Základné črty rišskonemeckej politiky voči Slovensku pred „Salzburgom“ (marec 1939 – júl 1940). (The basic features of German policy towards Slovakia before “Salzburg” (March 1939 – July 1940)). In *Historik v čase a priestore...* Bratislava 2000, p. 225-252.

14 *Slovák* 1 August 1940, p.1.

of Slovak – Soviet relations did not happen because the Slovaks had changed, “*but on the initiative of the Germans*”.¹⁵

Contacts between Bratislava and Moscow continued in the first half of 1941 according to the official routine, with the Slovak officials and the German representatives maintaining a correct position towards the Soviet mission in Bratislava. The outwardly peaceful situation appeared to confirm the assumption that there would be no substantial change in German – Soviet relations in the immediate future. In May, the daily *Slovák* reported from Berlin sources, a strong polemic against “foreign inventions” about tension between Germany and the Soviet Union. German propaganda continued to spread political mystification, Europe nervously awaited further developments and the expected military conflict was mentioned ever more frequently behind the scenes in Bratislava. While Puškin reported to Moscow that in recent months rumours had spread in Bratislava “*about an approaching war between the USSR and Germany*”,¹⁶ the Soviet leadership still officially denied this possibility.

In mid June, G. M. Puškin travelled to Russia for regular consultations, and the first secretary of the embassy Sergej Afanasiev took over the duties of chargé d’affaires. The news of the German attack on the Soviet Union appeared in the official diary on Sunday 22 June 1941, and the mission learnt of it early in the morning. The final record from the following day only briefly states: “*Today Slovakia declared war on the Soviet Union*”.¹⁷

The anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the Slovak media gained ever sharper and coarser anti-Semitic elements from summer 1941. The daily *Gardista* described Russia as not only the political, but also as the “military exponent of world Jewry”. A meditation on the spiritual significance of the anti-Bolshevik campaign in an editorial in *Slovák* wove the “moral” basis from drastic descriptions of the “brutality of the Judaeo-Bolsheviks”.¹⁸

In the conditions of the Slovak state, considerations of Slavdom and Russophil statements acquired a clearly polarized political content after Slovakia’s active entry into the anti-Soviet war as an ally of the Nazi “protector”. State propaganda glorified the “Slovak contribution” to the national liberation of their Russian brothers from Bolshevism, while the illegal anti-Hitler resistance spoke of the “betrayal of Slavdom” and expressed support for the struggle of Slavonic Russia against German aggression. Significant dilemmas for both ideological starting points derived from the facts that fascist Germany declared that the anti-Bolshevik struggle was racially determined, while on the other side the struggle to defend the millions of people threatened by Hitler’s colonization plans, also meant the preservation of the totalitarian empire of J. V. Stalin.

The war aims of Hitler’s Reich provoked a strong counter-reaction in Russia: the idea of national destruction and humiliation acted as a deep moral impulse. The idea of the de-

15 AVP RF, f. 0138b, 2-1-1, p. 27, 53. Report for the year 1940.

16 AVP RF, f. 0138b, 2-1-2, p. 1-1-2. Annotation on the reports of G.M. Puškin from 23 April and 28 May 1941; *Slovák* 13 May 1941, p. 1.

17 AVF RF, f. 0138b, 2-1-4, p. 57. Diary of S. Afanasiev (22 and 23 June 1941).

18 ČIERNA-LANTAYOVÁ, Dagmar. Ruská otázka v politických názoroch na Slovensku (1941 – 1943). (The Russian question in political views in Slovakia (1941 – 1943)). In *Historické štúdie*, 2006, year 44, p. 69-86; *Gardista* 5 July 1941, p. 4; *Slovák* 13 July 1941, p. 1.

fence of national values and the spiritual heritage of the past, in the interpretation of the writer Alexej Nikolajevič Tolstoy, became more widespread. At the beginning of August 1941, this famous Soviet writer, who had briefly visited Slovakia with a delegation of journalists and writers in October 1935, prepared for Moscow radio an appeal addressed to the Czechs and Slovaks as members of Slavonic nations, threatened by the Nazi aim of world domination. An assembly of Slavonic delegates in Moscow on 10 and 11 August appointed the Pan-Slavonic Committee, entrusted with the propagation of “*Slavonic community in a modern progressive form*”.¹⁹

The nobly formulated name of the committee masked the fact that it was an artificial and meaningless institution. The later dissident Milovan Đilas, during the war, a political representative of the communist resistance in Yugoslavia, knew this from his own experience of a visit to Moscow. The committee was almost exclusively composed of communist exiles from the Slavonic countries, to whom, as Đilas stated “*the Pan-Slavonic idea was actually foreign, but they tacitly accepted that it was necessary to resurrect something long outdated, as a transitional form*”. According to Đilas, the aim of the undertaking was “*to win support for communist Russia, or at least to neutralize the anti-Soviet Pan-Slavist currents*”.²⁰

The removal of Pan-Slavonic ideas from the statements of leading figures in the Slovak state and from official propaganda had a mainly foreign policy function, as a preventive measure against the continually expected intrigues from the side of Horthy’s Hungary. In the days after 25 November 1941, reports on the “historic moment” in Berlin, when the Slovak state, represented by premier Vojtech Tuka, joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, attacked the reader from the title pages of the Slovak dailies. The act of the prime minister in Berlin was expected to lead “to the fall” of all attempts “*to blacken Slovakia, as if for alleged Pan-Slavist expressions it should be pushed aside*”. The daily *Gardista* actually published poetic outpourings about the special trust of the Führer Hitler towards the Slovak nation. It was necessary to prove “*that our effort will not be in vain*”.²¹

The premier and foreign minister gave a long account of the route of the Slovaks into Hitler’s “New Europe” and the “world situation” to the foreign affairs committee of parliament in March 1942. Tuka supplemented an optimistic prediction of the certain military success of the Reich with the strict statement: “*Hope in Russia is already groundless*”.²² The propagandist character of the rhetorical statement had its justification in Slovakia. The unpopularity of the Eastern Front was already a public secret, and anti-German feelings were leading not only to Slavonic illusions, but also to spontaneous expressions of popular Russophilia. From this point of view, the university students were

19 *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních 1939 – 1945. Dokumenty. Díl 1.* (Czechoslovak – Soviet relations in diplomatic discussions 1939 – 1945. Documents. Part 1.) Eds. J. Němeček, H. Nováčková, I. Šťoviček, M. Tejchman. Prague 1998, p. 231, 241.

20 ĐILAS, Milovan. *Találkozások Sztálinnal.* (Translation of the book: *Susreti sa Staljinom*). Budapest 1989, p. 25-26.

21 *Slovák* 26-29 Nov. 1941, always p. 1; *Gardista* 29 Nov. 1941, p. 1.

22 SNA, f. Snem SR. Zasadania snemových výborov, k. 62. Zasadnutie zahraničného výboru (Parliament of the SR. Sessions of parliamentary committees, c. 62. Session of the foreign affairs committee) 12 March 1942; *Slovák* 14 Maarch 1942, p. 2.

a “threatened” social group, and so it was no accident that Jozef Tiso made a “historic speech” to the Bratislava academics. The daily *Gardista* especially emphasized that the leading representative of the Slovak state rejected all “*fruitless criticism and talk*” and he emphatically declared: “*We have not betrayed either Christianity or Slavdom*”. As ideological justification of the military activity by the side of Hitler, the President only repeated the claim to be saving “the culture and freedom of the nations of Europe”. On the Slavonic question, he stated the basic thesis: “*The Bolshevik is not a Slav*”.²³ At the end of November 1942, the President’s private secretary Karol Murín wrote resignedly in his diary: “*The situation among the population is strained. Nobody believes in German victory. Opinions vary only about the length of time. However, hatred of Bolshevism forces us to act as we are acting. If only Russia was national!!!*”²⁴

Members of the circles of Nazi advisers noticed “increased internal political tension and difficulties” in Slovakia, and they worked out a detailed analysis of the situation for Berlin. Among many other problems, the secret document was concerned with the question of “military deployment”. It stated that the Slovak army and “*especially its officer corps is very inclined to Czechoslovak and Russophil feeling*”. As an officer in the Abwehr reported, anti-German feeling was significant among young Slovak members of the officer corps, “*who are mostly Pan-Slavists*”. They clearly demonstrate their orientation by “*having Russian songs played*” in pubs. At the celebrations of the anniversary of the creation of the Croatian state in Zagreb, the Slovak officers in contact with Bulgarian and Croatian colleagues “*constantly referred to their common origin and strongly expressed this feeling*”.²⁵ Obvious violation of the internal political loyalty to Germany, which Hitler had urgently demanded from the Slovaks already at the Salzburg talks, did not only make the German advisers in Bratislava nervous. The diplomats and staff of the German mission were always looking for the spectre of Pan-Slavism in the Slovak environment.

The updated variant of Pan-Slavism, which Russian Moscow addressed at the beginning of the anti-Soviet war, to the members of the other Slavonic nations, victims and unwilling vassals of Nazi tyranny, received a lively response from the London representatives of the Czechoslovak Republic. The internal diplomatic debates of the representatives of the exiled governments of Poland and Yugoslavia expressed more doubts about the Soviet version of the Slavonic idea.²⁶ In London, the communist intellectual Vladimír Clementis, a zealous propagator of Soviet Russia, known from the Slovak political scene in the 1930s, conceptually identified with the theses of the Moscow appeal. He had progressed from uncritical admiration to deep disenchantment after Stalin’s pact with Hitler, and his rejection of this Soviet step led to his temporary excommunication from the ranks of the communists. In the Czechoslovak exile committee for Slavonic solidarity, Clementis gave a series of lectures in autumn 1943 on the historical traditions

23 *Gardista* 3 June 1942, p. 1: Historický prejav prezidenta k akademikom. (Historic speech of the President to academics).

24 Dr. MURÍN, Karol. *Spomienky a svedectvo*. (Memories and Testimony). Trenčín 1991, p. 142. Diary entry from 28 Nov. 1942.

25 *Slovenské národné povstanie. Dokumenty*. (The Slovak National Uprising. Documents). Ed. Vilém Prečan. Bratislava 1965, p. 45-54. Report sent to Berlin on 16 Feb. 1943.

26 Ref. 19, p. 230-231, 241.

and various stages of development of the internal links of the Slovaks to the idea of Slavism. The content of the new Russophilia, in the specific conditions of the war, had to be recognition of the importance of the Soviet Union for the struggle “for a free, just and secure Czechoslovakia”.²⁷

Moscow’s propaganda spread the masking net of Slavonic solidarity over the extensive region of Soviet geopolitical interest between the Baltic, Adriatic and Black seas. Czechoslovakia had a special role in these conceptions and Moscow diplomatic circles considered it important to “popularize the Soviet – Czechoslovak treaty, which determines the character of relations between the USSR and small states.” They excluded the terms “Sovietization” and Bolshevization from the official vocabulary, because according to the Kremlin leaders, the time for open application of the Soviet model had still not come.²⁸

In the first months of 1944, the Slovak agrarian politician Milan Hodža, then seriously ill and tired by polemic with the centralist model for the post-war structure of Czechoslovakia, pursued open perspectives for Central Europe, from the seclusion of American exile. A memorandum formulated in this period as information material for US foreign policy, contains Hodža’s views on the entry “to the Soviet sphere” of the London government in exile of Czechoslovakia, which extended Soviet influence to Prague, “the traditional centre of the cultural and political efforts of the Slavs”. While the real Slavonic civilization was oriented “towards such ideals as humanist democracy, freedom of the individual and freedom of thought and belief”, wrote Hodža, “the Slavdom of Moscow is essentially different”. Precisely the history of the Slavonic nations offers “the most tragic arguments against the division of Europe into spheres of influence”.²⁹

Slovakia welcomed the year 1944 with awareness of the closeness of the vital turning point and the pub “Slavism” can be added to the contradictory public expressions. At the end of January, an indignant Hungarian tourist submitted a special complaint to the German Embassy in Budapest. While enjoying a visit to Starý Smokovec, he was part of the audience, which saw and heard Slovak officers as they allegedly “sang mostly Russian songs” including “about Stalin, who they acknowledged in song as their leader”. The Hungarian journalist Vince Görgey offered this report to the press attaché at the Slovak Embassy and asked whether it was possible that “such a spirit” really prevailed in the Slovak army. The report to Bratislava does not make clear what answer was given, but the information undoubtedly joined the collection of “accusations” accumulated in the

27 CLEMENTIS, Vladimír. *Slovanstvo kedysi a dnes*. (Slavdom yesterday and today). (First publication of individual chapters, London 1943). Prague : Orbis, 1946, Časť I. Slováci a Slovanstvo. (The Slovaks and Slavdom), p. 3-56, p. 49 is cited.

28 MARJINA, V. V. Sovietski a československi komunisti na prahu mieru: Vypracovanie spoločného politického algoritmu v rokoch 1944 – 1945. (The Soviet and Czechoslovak communists on the threshold of peace. Working out of a common political algorithm in 1944 – 1945). In *Historický časopis*, 1998/4, p. 607-625.

29 HODŽA, Milan. *Federácia v strednej Európe*. (Federation in Central Europe). Ed. P. Lukáč. Bratislava 1997, p. 296-305. Európa na križovatke ciest. Memorandum odoslané v zime 1944 Ministerstvu zahraničných vecí USA (Europe at the crossroads. Memorandum sent to the Foreign Ministry of the USA in winter 1944), cited on p. 300.

German records.³⁰ In March 1944, the legation adviser at the German Embassy in Bratislava Hans Gmelin stated that the Slovak armed forces have no tradition, they acquitted themselves well in times of victorious advance, but in retreat *“Pan-Slavist feelings entirely prevail”*. The cultural attaché Dr. Snyckers saw his main role as establishing closer contacts with the Slovak elite, which in his view was *“entirely clerical, Pan-Slavist or Czechoslovakist in orientation”*. Ideological reservations towards Bolshevism, either in its original form or under the mask of Slavism, as the official political creed of the Slovak state, still meant the same thing for the Bratislava government: alliance with Hitler’s Germany. However, the German diplomats assessed the positions of prominent personalities in Bratislava without any particular illusions. According to Hans Gmelin: *“the Slovak politicians already simply cannot ‘jump away’ from us. Therefore, they are pretending that they do not want to separate from us”*.³¹

The Slavonic euphoria of the exiled Czechoslovak politicians in London was reflected in the activities of the committee for Slavonic solidarity. At the London “Pan-Slavist Conference” in the second half of May 1944, the main theme was the beginning of the final phase of the war. Vladimír Clementis described partisan activity as the only way to defend *“against what the retreating Germans intend to do with the Slavonic nations”*. The Slovak communist saw a guarantee of immediate and effective assistance in the victorious advance of the Red Army. He regarded the possibility of *“securely relying on the help of our big brother”* not only as a support, but also as proof that *“the idea of Slavonic solidarity is becoming a reality”*. Clementis evaluated the determination of the Slavonic nations to destroy the source of the German *“Drang nach Osten”* as an interest identical *“with the interests of the whole democratic world”*.³²

In his last essay from May 1944, Milan Hodža returned to an updated form of an idea already formulated in the 1930s. The Slovak politician then spoke about the interest of Central Europe in finding *“the correct form of solution of the German – Slavonic problem”*. For the period after the Second World War, Hodža emphasized the need to avoid the *“theoretical possibility of Europe with a dominant Soviet influence”*. He started from the conviction that Soviet Russia *“is not prepared to undergo a miraculous change into a democratic country in an optimistically short time, if it is prepared for it at all”*, because it was and would remain a *“dictatorship of the proletariat”*, which means *“undoubtedly a totalitarian regime of the Communist Party. It is not reasonable to ignore this fact”*. According to Hodža, the task of the Western democracies was to help Russia progress along its own course, determined by its historical and psychological development, but, at the same time, to obtain *“institutional guarantees for the independent development of all the democratic states, large and small, neighbouring or more distant”*.³³ The consi-

30 SNA, MZV SŠ, ZÚ Budapest, c. 116. Správa tlačového ataše Dr. Matulaya (Report of the press attaché Dr. Matulay) (31 Jan. 1944).

31 *Slovenské národné povstanie Nemci a Slovensko 1944. Dokumenty*. (The Slovak National Uprising, the Germans and Slovakia 1944. Documents). Ed. Vilém Prečan. Bratislava 1971, p. 71-74.

32 CLEMENTIS, ref. 27. Speech in London on 25 May 1944, p. 131-136.

33 HODŽA, ref. 29, p.50, 330-334. The text was discovered by the editor P. Lukáč and given the title: Medzi Nemeckom a Ruskom (Between Germany and Russia.). Hodža wrote the essay shortly before he died on 27 June 1944 in Florida

derations of Milan Hodža, long hidden in the dust of archive collections, show the deep foresight of the Slovak politician, his justified fears of the moral and political confusion threatening at the end of the war, in a situation with a totalitarian great power present on the side of the victorious democracies.

The greatest paradox of the political statements in Slovakia in 1944 was the frequent use of the Slavonic motif in propaganda, declarations and conceptual considerations, as an argument or illustration of opposing positions, offered in various situations to different audiences. The main current of the anti-Hitler resistance appealed to the tradition of Slovak Russophilia, while the government circles drew from them an attempt to remove Slovakia from the war by the side of Germany, and considerations evoked by various circumstances published in the newspapers ideologized these traditions.

At the beginning of July, the illegal leadership of the Slovak communists prepared a situation report for the foreign committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Moscow. In connection with the mood of the population, the report emphasized the revival of the old Slavist traditions in Slovakia, both on the emotional and the political levels. The author of the report, Gustáv Husák, not only described sympathy or love for the Russian brothers, but also especially emphasized the expected liberation by the Russian armed forces. The document estimated the results of imaginary voting by the Slovaks on possible state membership as “at least 70% for joining the USSR, perhaps 20% for revival of Czechoslovakia and the rest confused by fear”.³⁴ The illegal Slovak National Council sent to President Edvard Beneš in London, its position on the problem of the relationship between the domestic and exile struggle conceived in the cooperation of the communists Husák and Novomeský with the representative of the civil groups Jozef Lettrich. The part about the relationship between the Czechs and Slovaks was almost entirely written by the poet Laco Novomeský, and he described inconsistency in the question of legal capacity of the Slovak nation as the reason, which led in Slovakia to an effort to “demand incorporation into the USSR as an autonomous unit at the decisive moment”. He concluded the idea with the statement: “It does not matter that in the given circumstances, such an effort has no prospects in international fora”.³⁵

The historian Michal Barnovský states that in spite of the growth of Russophil feelings in Slovakia and sympathy for a state, which was waging war against Hitler’s Germany, in reality “there were no mass expressions of a wish for Slovakia to become part of the USSR”. This idea appeared only among some of the communists and the “leadership of the Communist Party of Slovakia glorified it and elevated it into an almost universal phenomenon”. According to memoir sources from the pens of civil politicians, the Slovak communists were expressing support for a federal solution to the position of Slovakia at this time. The position conceived by Novomeský in the material from the Slovak National Council documents that the communists were aware of the international political unreality or small probability of Slovakia becoming part of the Soviet Union. In spite of this, writes Barnovský, they continually pointed to the existence of these efforts “to

34 *Dejiny Slovenského národného povstania 1944. Dokumenty 3* (History of the Slovak National Uprising 1944. Documents 3). Eds. M. Vartíková, V. Plevza. Bratislava 1984, s. 335-343, cit. s. 342.

35 Ref. 25, p. 258-261.

force E. Beneš to accept the Slovak demands".³⁶ The Czech historian Toman Brod came to the same conclusion. He evaluated the repeated slogan of the Slovak communists as a "warning signal" addressed to President Beneš.³⁷

In the spring and summer of 1944, the minister of national defence of the Slovak state Ferdinand Čatloš considered the possibility of finding for Slovakia an escape from the satellite system of Nazi Germany. A memorandum dated in July and sent to Moscow stated that it was unavoidable for small nations to adapt to powerful neighbours. For the Slovak nation, Čatloš saw a happy variant in the circumstances, "when it is also possible to express one's feelings. Today is a time, when the Slavonic character of our nation is finding a way for blood brothers and not foreigners to become the defenders of its freedom". A military dictatorship in Slovakia would annul the declaration of war on the "USSR and its allies", and at the same time would declare war on Hungary, "which would immediately make it very popular".³⁸ As a prominent prisoner of war in Moscow, Čatloš wrote in a statement for Soviet counter-intelligence: "I came to the USSR voluntarily, as a brother to a brother against whom I had been forced to fight!" The summary material of the military intelligence service brought many critical observations about the position of the minister of defence while the Slovak army was fighting on the Eastern Front, and the conclusion stated: "The statements of Čatloš influenced by Slavophil feelings show some degree of anti-Soviet character".³⁹ Well informed places in Moscow could not accept expressions of brotherhood from a person known to have regarded the military defeat of communism as an opportunity that would also lead to a "better future for the Russian nation".⁴⁰

The Slovaks joined the Allied nations with a manifesto on 29 August 1944: the first official document from the Slovak National Council of the uprising declared the revival of the Czechoslovak Republic in a spirit of democracy, progress and justice. The international political passages of the declaration decisively condemned the Ľudák regime allied with Hitler's Germany, and in accordance with national traditions indignantly rejected "Tiso and Tuka's betrayal of Slavdom, by which the Ľudák regime drove the Slovak nation into battle against the Russian brother nation and other Slavonic nations". The text speaks of allies and allied nations, but it does not specifically mention the Soviet Union or any other great power.⁴¹ The conceptual ideas of the representatives of the

36 BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. Kontinuita a diskontinuita štátoprávných predstáv povstaleckej reprezentácie po porážke povstania. (Continuity and discontinuity of constitutional ideas of the representatives of the uprising after the defeat of the uprising). In *Slovensko na konci druhej svetovej vojny*. Eds. V. Bystrický, Š. Fano. Bratislava 1994, p. 72-81, citation from p. 74.

37 BROD, Toman. *Československo a Sovětský svaz v letech 1939 – 1945. (Moskva: objetí a pouto)*. (Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, 1939 – 1945. (Moscow: embrace and fetter). Prague 1992, p. 264.

38 Ref. 25, p. 262-263.

39 MARJINA, V. V. Vážen butyrskej cely Ferdinand Čatloš. (Prisoner in the cell, Ferdinand Čatloš). In *Historický časopis*, 1996/4, p. 678-700.

40 *Slovák* 27 June 1941, p. 3: Armádný rozkaz ministra obrany. (Order to the army from the minister of defence).

41 *Deklarácia Slovenskej národnej rady* (Banská Bystrica 1 September 1944) (Declaration of the Slovak National Council). Published as a pamphlet. For the text see: HUSÁK Gustáv. *Zápas o zajtrajšok*. (The struggle for tomorrow). Bratislava 1948, p. 24-25.

uprising from the leftist current and the civil groups about the political contribution of Slovakia to the international orientation of Czechoslovakia were reflected in programme documents and in speeches, commentaries and articles. The leading civil politicians such as Jozef Lettrich and Ján Ursíny feared flirtation with the slogan of a Soviet Slovakia, and for some time they were not sure whether the communists had definitively given up this vision. The program principles of the Democratic Party, accepted at the beginning of October 1944, proclaimed the participation of the Czechoslovak Republic “*in international cooperation according to the principles of the post-war world order and according to the interests of the republic. In this respect, cooperation with the Slavonic nations, especially the USSR and with allied and friendly states, will have first place*”. The introductory conceptual document of the Slovak democrats reflects the trend of the time, but also indicates a wider foreign policy than a one-sided orientation to the Soviet Union.⁴²

The internal disintegration of the vassal system of Hitler’s Germany, accompanied by growing repression against all the resistance movements, continued in Central Europe with a tragic, bloody end.

From autumn 1944, the official media in Bratislava returned to sharp polemics with the view of the Slovak resistance about betrayal of the Russian brothers and Slavonic honour by the pro-German political orientation of the Slovak state. An editorial in the daily *Slovák* rejected the “misleading propaganda about Slavonic Russia”. It no longer existed, wrote the penetrating journalist. “*In the Soviet Union there are no Russians, no Slavs, but Judaeo-Bolsheviks*”, who rejected every nationalism. We were never “*against the Slavonic Russians*” as the commentator repeated a familiar idea. “*We regarded them and we still regard them as our Slavonic brothers. But we are decisively against the un-Slavonic, anti-Slavonic and anti-European Bolshevism! We do not recognize them as Slavs. But if we want to be good Slavs, we must be, first of all, good Slovaks, nationalists, who love our nation and our independent Slovak state.*”⁴³

An analysis from the German point of view of the internal stimuli and causes of the uprising against the Reich, thanks to which the country had achieved “its political independence”, was awaited in Slovakia. Dr. Hans Raschhofer, a professor at the German university in Prague and an expert on the “Slovak space”, took on this task. In his notes on the principles of the German political line, he observed that the deliberately cultivated “Pan-Slavist orientation” had to be traced in this region. He further explained in brackets that “*Kollar, the inventor of literary Pan-Slavism among the Western Slavs was a Slovak*”. In relation to this fact, the German professor emphasized how in Slovak conditions, propaganda was produced “*for an Eastern orientation, under the cover of Slavonic brotherhood, which the President of the Slovak state had also proclaimed in a speech*”. The Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin also sent an emergency group from the press department on a working visit to Bratislava. A special report devoted to current questions pointed, in its analysis of the general pre-conditions for the anti-German uprising movement, to the fact that “*in spite of all the former complaints against Prague, the Czechoslovak*

42 Ref. 25, p. 620-623.

43 *Slovák* 30 Nov. 1944, p. 1: Boľševický podvod so Slavianstvom (ra). (The Bolshevik deception with Slavism).

combination did not appear entirely unreasonable". It was always popular to rely on other Slavonic nations, and "*basically Pan-Slavist feelings always existed here as in Bulgaria*". The German authors did not forget to mention that Slovakia "*is actually the historical cradle of Pan-Slavist romanticism. In contrast to the Polish case, the broad masses of the Slovak nation do not show substantial antipathy towards Russia and Bolshevism*" (underlined in the document – author's note). The German press experts found the starting point for the strong feeling for social equality in another "*old Slovak outlaw romanticism, which sees the robbing of the rich to give to the poor as popular-ethical action*".⁴⁴

The view of Russia in the whole spectrum of Slovak political thinking acquired an updated content and new dimensions, when the coming of the Red Army to the territory of Slovakia ceased to be a possibility, positively or negatively assessed, and became a military and political fact. The democratic exile Štefán Osuský, an opponent of an exclusive connection of post-war Czechoslovakia to the totalitarian Soviet state, welcomed the uprising in Slovakia. In an article in the weekly *The Tablet*, he brought to the Western reader the Slovak "patriotic movement and its background". Osuský perceived the moral importance of open resistance in the wider context and emphasized that "*by organizing the uprising the Slovaks have shown their political maturity and loyalty to democracy*". Osuský judged that in international politics, the Slovak nation with its old Slavonic roots, could assist with creating understanding and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Western Europe.⁴⁵ This idea was not entirely new in the political considerations of the Slovak diplomat. We find it already in different historical circumstances, in a speech in Bratislava from the beginning of December 1934.

The Soviet armed forces penetrated into eastern Slovakia, north of Medzilaborce in the second half of September 1944. The idea of Slavonic solidarity, interpreted in the appropriate ideological way, became a welcome theme of communist writing in the uprising paper *Nové slovo*. "*The last weeks in Slovakia*" wrote Gustáv Husák in October "*have convinced everybody how enthusiastically the Slovak people welcome the Russo-ophile orientation, how passionately and fanatically they demand the closest connection, friendship and cooperation with Soviet Union. The help of the Red Army is daily increasing these sympathies.*"⁴⁶

The movement of the front to eastern and south-eastern Slovakia meant the concentration of great numbers of troops in villages and small towns. The reporter of the political leadership of the Second Ukrainian Front up to the beginning of February 1945 noticed the beginning of the renewal of normal life "without regard for the closeness of the front", the lively interest of the population in "foreign policy and military events and the generally positive evaluation of the conference of the Big Three in Crimea. "*Anti-German feelings, stronger than in Hungary*" and the growth of nationalism in the terri-

44 Ref. 31, p. 306-308; p. 461-467.

45 SNA MZV SŠ, c. 117. Tlačové oddelenie MZV. (Press Department of the Foreign Ministry). Dr. Š. Osuský „Povstanie Slovákov“ (The Uprising of the Slovaks). In *The Tablet* 27 Sept. 1944; MICHÁLEK, Slavomír. *Diplomat Štefan Osuský (1889 – 1973)*. Bratislava 1999, p. 173.

46 HUSÁK, Gustáv. *Politický úspech Slovenského povstania*. (The political success of the Slovak uprising). In *Nové slovo*, 15 October 1944, p. 4.

tories returned to Czechoslovakia from Hungarian administration, were characteristic of the overall atmosphere. According to this report: *“The organizations of the Communist Party are playing the leading role in the political life in the parts of Slovakia liberated by our troops”*.⁴⁷ At the beginning of March, a description of the situation in the Slovak towns *“taken by the troops of our front”* included a list of the measures implemented by the local administration under the leadership of the Soviet military command. The information states that the *“great majority of the population have a good relationship to the Red Army, which they see as their liberator”*. The inhabitants of the villages of Hnúšťa, Rimavská Baňa, Rimavica, Kokava, Látky and Hriňová *“on their own initiative cleared snow and forest materials from roads and rebuilt destroyed bridges”*. Small farmers armed with forks and axes assisted the Red Army in battles for the village of Dobroč, while more than 200 people from the town of Jelšava joined the partisans. The report stated that: *“Young Slovaks turned to Soviet commanders with the request to be included in units of the Red Army”*. Political work such as meetings about *“relations between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia and the struggle of the Slavonic nations against the Germans”* began among the local population after the passing of the front. Informative texts in the Slovak language and materials from the Pan-Slavonic Committee in Moscow were distributed everywhere.

The reports regularly sent to Moscow also naturally include phenomena deliberately omitted from the articles written by Slovak communists for the general reader. The rural population, exhausted by the passing of the front did not hide their emotions and a report from March 1945 evaluated this as *“rejection of cooperation with the Red Army”*. A small farmer from Čechynce protested: *“We have had enough of your buyers, they have taken everything from us, the Germans wanted less”*, while a desperate farmer’s wife from Detsianska Huta directly asked a Soviet intendant: *“When are you going to leave us? The Germans were not here so long. We will starve before long.”* The March report briefly stated that the units of the Red Army *“in the territory of Czechoslovakia are behaving well”* and this statement was supplemented by general phrases about *“brother nations”* and *“liberation from the German joke”*. However, the writer also carefully mentions *“the individual cases of looting and violence”*, which happened *“in some places”*. The report gives two examples: The action of lieutenant L., deprived of his rank, because he had stolen things from the home of local people, and the extraordinarily serious case of another young officer. When lieutenant K. attempted to rape a woman farmer, her 13 year old son came running in answer to her cry. The rapist shot the boy and escaped into hiding. The army arrested the offender and *“he was shot”*, as the report states.⁴⁸ Direct contact with the everyday tragedy of the front disturbed the euphoria of liberation and spoilt the illusions supported by many years of communist propaganda. The lapses of

47 Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj archiv social’opolitičeskoj istorii, Moscow (RGASPI). Fond 17. Propaganda section ÚV VKS(b). Inventory 125, document 320, p. 39-42. Report “On the situation in Slovakia and the political mood of the inhabitants” (24 Feb. 1945). To the head of the propaganda department G. F. Alexandrov.

48 Ref. 47, p. 48-51. Report “On the situation in Slovakia” (1 March 1945). The text gives full names. Sporadic reports are cited from the archive materials used for the study. Inventory unit 128 in the given archive collection contains important information and reports, but is not accessible to foreign researchers.

Red Army soldiers, passed on until today in the memory of the people, and the activity of members of the NKVD, who illegally deported thousands of people from the territory of Slovakia to the Soviet Gulag, became the source of further difficulties in a complex political situation. At the beginning of August 1945, Major Ján Stanek, known as the “iron captain” during the Slovak National Uprising, wrote in a letter to the chairman of the Communist Party of Slovakia Karol Šmidke, among other things that “*the behaviour of the Russian soldiers in Slovakia was very bad propaganda for Slavonic solidarity*”.⁴⁹

In the critical period of the end of the war and the threshold of peace during 1944 and 1945, the idea of Slavonic alliance was deliberately incorporated into the geopolitical considerations of J. V. Stalin. He included his ideas in discussions in Moscow with churchmen and politicians from Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The Soviet dictator saw the post-war security system with a sharp orientation against Germany, as a structure, which would include a community of Slavonic states. The Soviet leadership had a clear tendency to outline the contours of the future Eastern Bloc in Europe, especially in terms of the unification of the Slavs.⁵⁰

After a dinner in honour of President Beneš in the Kremlin on 28 March 1945, Stalin repeated to members of the Czechoslovak government and the leadership of the Slovak National Council, his view of a new conception of the Slavonic idea. A participant in the meeting, the Slovak communist Ladislav Novomeský wrote about the statements of the “*most glorious figure of the present epoch*” in an enthusiastic, visionary tone. The reader learnt that “*Stalin, who – as he emphasized – is not himself a Slav*” sees the powerful force and progressive character of the thinking of the popular masses of Slavdom, he follows with sympathy and supports the political, economic and cultural cooperation of the Slavonic nations.⁵¹ The author of the article deliberately omitted from his meditation on the new Slavdom, the comment of the Soviet leader that “*in its victorious offensive*” the Red Army had committed some “*excesses*”. Stalin asked his Czech and Slovak guests for understanding and forgiveness for these actions.⁵²

The introductory contact of the official representatives of the Czechoslovak Republic with the Soviet ambassador Valerián Alexandrovič Zorin is a fascinating example of the atmosphere of the time. The daily record of the Soviet diplomat of discussions with members of the first government of the post-war republic, during April 1945 in Košice,

49 BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *Na ceste k monopolu moci. Mocensko-politické zápasy na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1948*. (On the way to a monopoly of power. Power-political struggles in Slovakia in the period 1945 – 1948). Bratislava 1993, p. 38, 52-53. The official farewell to the units of the Red Army on their departure from Czechoslovakia, was held on Václavské náměstí in Prague on 15 November 1945.

50 *Moskva i vostočnaja Evropa. Stanovenije političeskich režimov sovet'skogo tipa 1949 – 1953. Očerki istorii*. (Moscow and Eastern Europe. The establishment of regimes of the Soviet type 1949 – 1953. Studies of history). Authors: T. V. Volokitina, G. P. Muraško, A. F. Noskova, T. A. Pokivajlova. Moscow 2002, p. 30-36.

51 NOVOMESKÝ, Ladislav. Slované poslanie. (Slavonic mission). In *Nové slovo* II, no. 1, 1 June 1945, p. 3-5.

52 *Sovetskij faktor v Vostočnoj Evrope. Dokumenty. (The Soviet factor in Eastern Europe. Documents.) Tom 1. (1944 – 1948). Tom 2 (1949 – 1953)*. Eds. T. V. Volokitina, G. P. Muraško, O. V. Naumov, A. F. Noskova, T. V. Carevskaja. Moscow 1999 – 2002. Citations from Tom 1, p. 192. Note with statement by J. V. Stalin.

are partially known from Russian collections of documents, but the first comprehensive collection was prepared by Vilém Prečan. In the introductory study, he points to an almost universal phenomenon among Zorin's Czech partners, regardless of party, namely their frustration *"with the powerlessness of the government in a Slovakia administered by the Slovak National Council"*. However, in the cases of the communist deputy prime ministers Klement Gottwald and Viliam Široký, *"it is very striking"* wrote Prečan, that they did not speak with the ambassador of a foreign state as representatives of the Czechoslovak Republic, but as comrades in arms. Moreover, they submitted to Zorin as if to a superior *"reports about the situation or operations on the common 'class front'"*.⁵³

The government program adopted in Košice shows *"the immense gratitude of the Czech and Slovak nation to the Soviet Union"* and proclaimed the unwavering main line of the foreign policy of the state to be *"the closest alliance with the victorious Slavonic great power to the East"*. The general position of the prime minister Zdeňek Fierlinger in a discussion with Zorin reflected fears of contradiction between fine words and harsh reality. The Soviet representative noted that Fierlinger *"again mentioned the question of incidents in Bratislava and other towns in western Slovakia, in connection with lack of discipline among some groups of our troops"*. The premier emphasized that this situation also troubled President Beneš, because *"the mood of the population in relation to the Red Army may not always be good"*. Although Zorin mentioned the apology of J. V. Stalin given in Moscow, the prime minister of Czechoslovakia expressed the view that it would be good to prevent events *"which provoke anger among the population, and which can be misused by hostile elements, as has already happened"*.⁵⁴

Zorin felt a waft of nostalgic memories of the organizational activities of leftist enthusiasts in Prague at the beginning of the 1930s, when he visited the minister of education Zdeňek Nejedlý in his temporary Košice home. The tired scientist was homesick for Moscow, from where he had travelled directly to eastern Slovakia, and according to Zorin, his tone *"showed a sceptical attitude towards everything the Slovaks did"*. Nejedlý reminded the Soviet diplomat of the first Society for Cultural Contacts with the USSR, which he had led in Prague, and he stated his intention to renew its activities. To the question of whether he intended to do this in Košice, the minister spoke of this being useless because the Slovak branch could be revived in Bratislava. Nejedlý added to this, that *"the Slovaks generally want to create independent organizations"*, including their own Slavonic Committee, and he described the approach of the Slovaks as the activity of small children, who *"are enthused by their independence"*.⁵⁵

In Košice, V. A. Zorin also encountered the Slovak version of classic Russophilia. In a discussion with Ivan Pietor, cofounder of the Democratic party and minister of

53 PREČAN, Vilém. Iz dnevníka V. A. Zorin. Záznamy o rozhovorech sovětského velvyslance s českými a slovenskými politiky v dubnu 1945 v Košicích. (From the diary of V. A. Zorin. Records of discussions of the Soviet ambassador with Czech and Slovak politicians in April 1945 in Košice). In *Česko-slovenská historická ročenka*, 2000, p. 247-297, citation from p. 247-248.

54 Ref. 53. Discussion with the prime minister Fierlinger, 24 April 1945, p. 296. Citation from Chapter IV The Košice Government Program. See: *Košický vládní program*, (The Košice Government Program). Prague 1974, p. 3-36.

55 PREČAN, ref. 53. Discussion with Zdeňek Nejedlý on 11 April 1945, p. 279.

internal commerce in the first government of post-war Czechoslovakia, told the Soviet diplomat something of his family history. The Slovak politician recalled that his father and grandfather “*knew the Russian language well and lived as businessmen in Russia in the old days. He himself had taught Russian at a grammar school and had a large library of Russian literature, which the Germans had unfortunately stolen.*” In the present conditions, stated Pietor, he would certainly like “*to visit the Soviet Union*”. According to Zorin, the close contacts between the USSR and Czechoslovakia undoubtedly made this possible.⁵⁶

The relationship of European intellectuals to the Soviet Union in the inter-war period was determined by the confrontation with the threat of Nazi Germany. In the West, few understood the extent and monstrosity of the Stalinist totalitarian system. The Slovak leftist intelligentsia, especially the communists, accepted the coarsest Soviet propaganda without any doubts. They were afraid to give up their illusions, they needed to believe, they wanted to admire. In 1945, history was repeated, but Stalin stood on the international scene with the halo of the victor.

The Bratislava branch of the society for rapprochement with the new Russia, under an updated name after the normalization of relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union revived its activity from June 1934. The writer Hana Gregorová was chairperson of the non-political grouping, which associated representatives of Slovak literary life, culture and science. Leftist literati including communists were also active here. Almost eight years had passed since the banning of the society, when its last chairperson, the communist Elo Šándor called a meeting of a preparatory committee on 28 April 1945 in liberated Bratislava. They decided to establish the Society for Cultural Contacts with the USSR, as an independent organization with its centre in Bratislava and branches in various Slovak towns. They planned to register the former members “*after screening of their activities in the period 1938 – 1945*”. The first ceremonial public assembly on 18 June 1945 heard a report on activities, approved statutes and elected a central committee. After three days, the statutes of the society were approved by the Commission for the Interior of the Slovak National Council. In comparison with the past, the conditions for membership were stricter: The applicant had to fill in a detailed form and provide two recommendations according to possibilities from members of the society. The aim, defined in the statutes – “*to inform about the cultural, economic, social, legal and scientific life of the Soviet Union, and about technology and art*” – had to be achieved bilaterally, with the same range of information about Slovakia going to the Soviet public. Elo Šándor remained chairman of the society with Milan Pišút, a lecturer at Bratislava university as the deputy chairman. Among the names of the members of the committee, we find well known personalities from Slovak culture, such as Štefan Bednár, Janko Blaho, Ján Červeňanský, Igor Hrušovský, Ján Jamnický, Ján Kostra, Igor Ruppeldt and others. From the summer of 1945, the society began to establish branches. The first were officially opened in Banská Bystrica, Malacky, Trnava and Piešťany, while another eleven awaited official ceremonies. The secretary of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Prague emphasized in a report to Moscow that the Slovak society, “*using the presence*

56 Ref. 53. Discussion with the minister of commerce Ivan Pietor on 25 April 1945, p. 295.

of the Red Army” was organizing various activities: lectures about the USSR, showing of Soviet films and publication of a small handbook. The ambitious aims of the society encountered great difficulties in 1945: lack of finance, premises, paper, Soviet literature and printing facilities. In spite of everything, the report states that the society “*had not started its activities badly*”.⁵⁷

The Slavonic idea, characterized in Slovakia from the first decades of the 20th century, by the heterogeneity of its external emotional and political expressions, gradually became the domain of the communists after 1945. The poet Novomeský expected that the age coming after the “*bloody and harsh war*” would be “*the glorious age of the Slavs*”, but the precondition for this age had to be the reviving intervention “*of the powerful revolutionary ferment in the Slavonic nations*”.⁵⁸ The politician Husák emphasized the combined strength of a Slavonic bloc in Europe, as a counter-weight to the “*future possibility of German expansionism*”. For small nations, wrote Husák, “*it also gives a guarantee of their peaceful existence and development. Relying on the greatest Slavonic state – the Soviet Union – the Slavonic nations can heal their war wounds and build a happier life without fear.*”⁵⁹

The political reality in Slovakia was very far from the propagated Slavonic idyll. It did not correspond even to the visions and expectations of the communists. There were the first signs of opposition from the Catholic Church, and there were several demonstration with anti-Semitic slogans. In this atmosphere, a great manifestation of “*Slavonic brotherhood*” was held at Devín on 5 July 1945 in the spirit of the Cyrilo-Methodian tradition. There were attempts at political protest at this event. The indefatigable Laco Novomeský would not give up the idea of establishing a separate Slavonic Committee in Bratislava, precisely on the occasion of the Devín celebrations. As the initiator of this idea, the communist writer was elected chairman of the committee.

In the summer of 1945, the Slovak communists began to be disturbed by the growing influence of the Democratic Party, its more critical attitude towards the Communist Party of Slovakia, and its promotion of its own conceptions of the solution of problems in the political and social development of Slovakia. Mutual relations between the democrats and communists starting from the Slovak National Uprising and continuing through the first post-war years, passed through several phases, from partnership, through struggle for a share in power, to hostility. Even at the beginning of July, when the conference of the Democratic Party elected Jozef Lettrich as its chairman, some leading Slovak communists welcomed this election as a positive factor.⁶⁰ During a visit to Bratislava, the adviser from the Embassy of the Soviet Union N. J. Demjanov recorded the view of

57 AVP RF, f. inv. 25a, fascicle 90, document 6, p. 1-6. Information about the Society for Cultural Contacts with the USSR in Bratislava (Prague 26 Sept. 1945). Author: Second secretary at the embassy of the USSR in Czechoslovakia, M. Sytenko. Addressed to: Fourth European Department of the NKID in Moscow.

58 NOVOMESKÝ, Ladislav. *Zväzky a zväzky. Výber zo statí a článkov 1945 – 1950*. (Volumes and commitments. A selection from essays and articles 1945 – 1950). Bratislava 1972, p. 22. The Slavonic Committee in Bratislava, p. 409.

59 HUSÁK, ref. 41, p. 114-115.

60 BARNOVSKÝ, ref. 49, p. 41-53.

Karol Šmidke that the new chairman of the Democratic party was a “*more progressive element*” and represents the victory of the “*democratic wing*” at the expense of the reactionaries within the party.⁶¹

The Democratic Party had inherited the views of the agrarians and to some extent of the Lutheran patriots in relation to the idea of Slavdom and nostalgic relics of Martin Russophilia, as expressed in Slovak politics in 1934. The democrats were initially rather cautious in their view of totalitarian Moscow, and they maintained a pragmatic approach to alliance with the Soviet Union. The Soviet diplomats in Prague carefully monitored the political press in the whole of Czechoslovakia in search of “*articles and statements of a clearly hostile character*”. The extensive report of V. A. Zorin contained not only a list of objectionable articles and the “*progressive*” replies of the communists, he also sent to Moscow exact translations into Russian. Only two examples, both published in September 1945 came from Slovakia. A commentary accused the daily *Čas*, central paper of the Democratic Party, of open expressions of “*anti-Soviet incitement*”. According to the report, the climax was reached in the issue from 6 September 1945. The author of one of the articles quoted the views of the *Sunday Times*, where it wrote that “*Tito and those like him are only puppets of the USSR*”. To the Soviet Embassy, this qualified as “*an attack on the Soviet Union and on all the Slavonic states*”. To balance the impression from Bratislava, the commentator quoted an article from the communist paper *Pravda* with statements such as “*we are following a Slavonic policy*” and “*the feelings of our people belong to the Red Army and the Soviet Union*”.⁶²

The introductory audience of the ambassador of the Czechoslovak Republic to the USSR Jiří Horák on 23 October 1945 followed the current political line of the “*solidarity of the Slavonic nations*”. A. J. Vyšinský emphasized the need to support these ties in every way. According to his words, the time and opportunity were most advantageous for giving “*relations between the Slavonic countries a firm basis*”. On the anniversary of the creation of the temporary Yugoslav government by J. Broz Tito at the beginning of September, the Pan-Slavonic Committee in Moscow organized a commemorative evening. Slavonic representatives sat at the top table, and the deputy of the people’s commissar for foreign affairs S. A. Lozovský emphasized in his speech “*the new democratic system in Poland, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria*”. The Soviet official strongly rejected the “*hostile criticism*” addressed to the Slavonic nations and he stated that many other nations could learn the “*correct democratic approach*” precisely from them.⁶³

61 *Vostočnaja Evropa v dokumentach rossijskich archivov 1944 – 1953*. (Eastern Europe in documents from the Russian Archives 1944 – 1953.). Tom 1-2. Eds. T. V. Volokitina, T. M. Islamov, G. P. Muraško, A. F. Noskova, L. A. Rogova. Moscow; Novosibirsk 1997 – 1998. Citation from Tom 1, Doc. 76, p. 226. Record by Demjanov of a meeting with Šmidke. According to the events mentioned in the discussion, such as the “*recent conference of the Democratic Party*” (held on 7-8 July 1945), the date of 25 June 1945 given in the collection, is incorrect.

62 AVP RF, f. 131, 26-44-22, p. 25-52. Report from V. Zorin to the deputy people’s commissar for foreign affairs A. J. Vyšinský (Prague 12 Oct. 1945). Text and 6 supplements. Translations on p. 50-52. *Čas* 6 Sept. 1945, *Pravda* (Bratislava), 7 Sept. 1945.

63 Archiv ministerstva zahraničních věcí ČR, (Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic), Prague (AMZV). ZÚ Moscow 1945. Political reports from the Czechoslovak ambassador Jiří Horák from 12 Nov. and 8 Dec. 1945. He presented his credentials on 23 Oct. 1945.

The communist press in Slovakia convinced the readers about the effectiveness and stability of the Slavonic bloc, in which “*the natural core is the powerful Slavonic foundations of the Soviet Union: socialist Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*”.⁶⁴ In July 1945 Karol Šmidke, pleased by the visit of an adviser from the Soviet mission N. J. Demjanov, reminded his guest of a request to open a general consulate in Bratislava, which would make it “*substantially easier*” for Soviet diplomats “*to investigate the internal political atmosphere in Slovakia*”.⁶⁵ In the next year, in the second half of February 1946, the legation adviser I. A. Čičajev came personally to verify the situation in the Communist Party of Slovakia, where Viliam Široký had been chairman since the previous summer. The Soviet observer talked to Šmidke, Husák and Novomeský. He noted the division of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia into two groups, and the fact that he had met representatives of the group “*inclined to oppose*” Široký. The representative of the USSR in Bratislava heard complaints about how “*little they notice Slovakia*”, they rarely visit and send hardly any books, newspapers, magazines and so on. The Slovak representatives were also dissatisfied with the Soviet film: *The liberation of Czechoslovakia*, because in their view it only showed the anti-German struggle of the Czechs, while “*such an event as the uprising in Banská Bystrica hardly appears*”.⁶⁶

The interest of Moscow in the political situation in Slovakia was clearly connected with the first post-war parliamentary elections in Czechoslovakia, declared for 26 May 1946. The Slovak political spectrum was significantly polarized. The Democratic Party represented the only more serious civil alternative, and all the ideological currents, which rejected communism, were concentrated in it. At the opposite extreme stood the Communist Party of Slovakia with its members and voters. Two new political groups: the Labour Party and the Freedom Party were not attracting support. The results of the elections in Slovakia surprised everybody and brought satisfaction only to the Democratic Party, which gained almost two-thirds of the votes. The Czech voters gave 40.17% of the votes to the communists, which meant electoral victory for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the whole state, and the position of prime minister for Klement Gottwald.⁶⁷

The Soviet Embassy in Czechoslovakia worked out an analysis of the causes of the election result in Slovakia, for Moscow. The critical reservations towards the Slovak communists included the view that they had not undertaken a sufficiently radical purge of political life, “*when there was the most advantageous situation for this, especially during the presence of units of the Red Army in the territory of Czechoslovakia*”. The report emphasized: “*The communists left at liberty thousands of people, who were inclined to oppose the government and join any current or party that consistently opposed the communists.*” According to the author of the analysis, the campaigners for the De-

64 NOVOMESKÝ, ref. 58, p. 19.

65 Ref. 61, doc. 76, citation from p. 229.

66 Ref. 61, doc. 136, p. 381-384. Record of discussions of I. A. Čičajev with Šmidke, Husák and Novomeský in Bratislava on 21-22 Feb. 1946.

67 HLAVOVÁ, Viera. Parlamentné voľby na Slovensku v roku 1946. (The parliamentary election in Slovakia in 1946). In *Prvé povojnové voľby v strednej a juhovýchodnej Európe*. Eds. M. Barnovský and E. Ivaničková. Bratislava 1998, p. 79-88. BARNOVSKÝ, ref. 49, p. 85-99.

mocratic Party were “*doubtful democrats*”. After the elections, they were already openly “*against the Communist Party, against the unity of the republic and in isolated cases against the Soviet Union*”. The second legation secretary at the Embassy of the USSR Ivan Lazarev carefully read the periodicals of the Democratic Party and in the June issue of *Nové prúdy* he noticed an article devoted “*to the new meaning of the peace treaties*”. The political considerations here included the idea of depriving the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations of the “*right of veto*”. If we realize, mediated the Soviet official, that the delegate of the USSR has used this right several times, we understand the aim of the Slovak author to label the Soviet approach as a “*violation of world democracy*”.⁶⁸

The concluding stage of preparation of the peace treaties with the former satellites of Hitler’s Germany in 1946 occupied the Soviet leadership on the level of the foreign ministers of the victorious powers, and, at the same time, in the field of the contradictory efforts of the individual countries in the Soviet sphere of interest. A government delegation from Czechoslovakia went to Moscow in the second half of July to discuss the approaching peace conference in Paris. At the beginning of July, the state secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Slovak communist Vladimír Clementis asked A. J. Vyšinský for a meeting, and they discussed the need for closer contact between the governments of Czechoslovakia and the USSR, especially as “*Gottwald had become prime minister of Czechoslovakia*”. According to Clementis, official state representatives often did not know what positions they had to adopt on this or that question. Therefore, they seek and “*want to have continual leadership from the side of the Soviet Union, so that they can implement foreign policy with more certainty*”. Vyšinský recommended consideration of this problem only during the expected visit by prime minister Gottwald.⁶⁹

The dynamic of events in the internal politics of Slovakia pushed into the background the visionary reverie of the Slovak communist intellectuals about the form of the new Slavonic idea. In the daily *Pravda*, Gustáv Husák wrote about putting the idea of cooperation “*into the practical life of every Slavonic nation*”, by which he pointed to the topical question of the coexistence of the Czechs and Slovaks in a common state. “*In our case*”, he emphasized, “*we must successfully apply our own everyday Slavonic policy*”. The communist politician saw a model of the coexistence of Slavonic nations in a common state in the example of the Soviet Union. In the case of Yugoslavia, he emphasized the “*just solution of old disputes*”.⁷⁰ The Slavonic day at Devín on 5 July 1946 was thematically oriented in this direction. The manifesto adopted there proclaimed the unity of the Czechs and Slovaks within the community of all the Slavs.

Summer 1946 brought the Bratislava politicians the possibility to establish direct contacts with Soviet diplomats after the opening of the General Consulate of the USSR,

68 AVPRF, f. 138, 26-43-13, p. 57-77. Information from the Embassy of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia about the political situation in Slovakia after the elections. (Prague 28 June 1946), citation from p. 49, 65. Ibid., 26-44-22, p. 18-19. Anotation of the journal *Nové prúdy* from 26 June 1946.

69 Ref. 52. Doc. 105. Record of a discussion between A. J. Vyšinský and V. Clementis. Moscow 1 July 1946, p. 313-315. The delegation of the Czechoslovak government had talks in Moscow from 20 to 26 July 1946.

70 HUSÁK, Gustáv. Slovenská prax. (Slovak practice). In *Pravda* 5 July 1946.

which was headed by N. J. Demjanov.⁷¹ The Prague correspondent of TASS Ivan Lavruchin travelled to Bratislava at the end of July, to directly observe the turbulent political life of Slovakia. The report of the Soviet journalist on the first conference of Slovak partisans in Bratislava on 2-4 August, is interesting for our study. He stated in his secret report to Moscow: “*They all expected that Soviet partisans would come to the conference: S. A. Kovpak or General V. Andrejev*”, but nobody was sent to the Bratislava event from the Soviet Union, although, writes Lavruchin, “*the Yugoslav, Polish, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Czech and even Greek partisans were represented at conference*”.⁷² The newly elected chairman of the partisans’ organization Karol Šmidke could confirm his recent complaint to the legation adviser Čičajev, that the Soviet authorities hardly noticed Slovakia.

The theme of the day for the staff of the Soviet general consulate in autumn 1946 was the coverage of the 29th anniversary of the October Revolution. The first of a long series of reports emphasizes exemplary articles in the Bratislava *Pravda*, and mentions statements in *Hlas ľudu*, *Práca*, *Bojovník* and *Národná obroda*. The position of the Democratic Party in Slovak politics after the May elections gave some degree of revival to the boring analysis of the press. The report points with surprise to the fact that “*the rightist oriented press, such as Čas, Democrat and others also report the celebrations of the 29th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution quite actively and in a friendly tone*”.⁷³

The Pan-Slavonic Congress in Belgrade, ceremonially opened on 8 December 1946, was expected to be an important milestone for the outwardly still compact Slavonic world. The solidarity of the Slavonic states was also represented by the portraits of the leaders, arranged on the front wall of the hall: the host J. Broz Tito, J.V. Stalin, E. Beneš, B. Bierut and G. Dimitrov. The overall orientation of the congress was celebration of the Soviet Union and expression of gratitude to the “*best friend of the Slavonic nations J. V. Stalin*”. The main speakers evaluated the Soviet Union’s relations with Yugoslavia, Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia as the fulfillment of ancient dreams of Slavonic community “*in the light of the ideas of Lenin and Stalin*”. The common struggle of the Slavs against fascism and the contribution of the nations of Czechoslovakia to the freedom of Europe were mentioned in the speech by the Slovak delegate Gustáv Husák. The final document adopted by the congress declared the view that the “*enormous successes*” which the Slavonic nations had achieved “*in the footsteps of the Soviet Union – the land of consistent democracy*”, could give “*an example of democratic rebirth to all the nations in the world*”.⁷⁴

71 AVP RF, f. 138, 26-44-22, p. 21. Information about the Slovak press. Bratislava 11 July 1946). Signature: General consul of the USSR in Bratislava N. J. Demjanov.

72 RGASPI, Moscow. Fond 17, 125-427, p. 46-49. To the secret department of TASS. Letter from the TASS correspondent in Prague I. Lavruchin (9 Aug. 1946). Copy sent to A. A. Ždanov.

73 AVP RF, f. 138, 26-43-13, p. 94. Letter from the General Consulate of the USSR in Bratislava to the head of the IV. EO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union A. Alexandrov. (In 1946 all the people’s commissariats including the NKID were renamed ministries.) Ibid, f. 0138, 27-137-32, p. 27-31. Report on a review of the Slovak press for the period 31 Oct. – 15 Nov. 1946.

74 AMZV ČR, ZU Belgrade / 1946. Political report no. 114. Slavonic Congress (13 Dec. 1946); HUSÁK, ref. 59, p. 200-205. Speech given on 9 Dec. 1946.

The joint committee formed at the congress called meetings of diplomatic representatives at its seat in Belgrade, and informed them about the latest line in Slavonic solidarity as seen by the Soviet Union. The atmosphere of the Cold War was reflected in the activity of the joint Slavonic committee by the decision from the Moscow session of its leadership in April 1947, which ordered “*increased vigilance*” against the most varied “*reactionary provocations*”. The Soviet ambassador in Yugoslavia declared that the enemies of “*Slavonic solidarity*” also had to be sought in the Slavonic states themselves, and “*intensified struggle*” was unavoidable, especially against them.⁷⁵

The definitive transformation of government cabinets in the countries of the Soviet sphere of influence into groups subordinate to Moscow began in 1947. Internal political life in the Eastern Bloc was characterized by huge campaigns, unleashed by the communists against progressively discovered “*anti-state conspiracies*”. The basic motive and aim of this phase of the establishment of the power of the communist parties was the liquidation of political competition. In the conditions of Slovakia, the concentrated attack “*against reaction*” meant propagandist and political attack on the position of the Democratic Party.⁷⁶

In an article about “*dangerous intrigues*”, the Moscow journal *Novoje vremje* mentioned the penetration of representatives of “*Slovak separatism*” into the leadership of the Democratic Party. In February 1947, at the end of a discussion with the Soviet general consul, the deputy chairman of the Board of Commissioners Rudolf Fraštacký rejected the accusation published by the Russian author as insulting and “*inaccurate information about Slovakia*”. The consul Demjanov wrote down the statement of the politician from the Slovak Democratic Party: “*We speak openly about what pleases us about the Soviet Union and what does not, but in the USSR they do not understand us correctly.*”⁷⁷

The head of the appropriate press department of the propagandist agency Sovinformbyro wrote to A. A. Ždanov in May 1947, that “*the reactionary parties in Czechoslovakia are acting cunningly and sharply, drawing ideological and material support from their Western friends*”. On the other side, the Soviet information bulletin in Prague “*is in danger of stopping because of lack of resources*”. Ambassador Zorin monitored the activity of the agency in Prague and he criticized the Bratislava branch of the Sovinformbyro, stating that it was not working in a way appropriate to the “*great tasks*” required in connection “*with the intensified political struggle now occurring in Slovakia*”.⁷⁸ The head of the foreign department of the Moscow centre of the Communist Party of the Soviet

75 AMZV ČR Zú Belgrade / 1947. Session of the Joint Slavonic Committee (25 May 1947). Political report no. 49.

76 ČIERNA-LANTAYOVÁ, Dagmar. Vývoj európskych krajín sovietskeho bloku v rokoch 1947 – 1949 pohľadom československých diplomatov. (The development of the European countries of the Soviet Bloc in the years 1947 – 1949 from the view of Czechoslovak diplomats). In *Historický časopis*, 1994, year 42, no. 3, p. 506-519; BARNOVSKÝ, ref. 49, p. 196-211.

77 Ref. 52. Doc. 149. Record of a discussion of N. J. Demjanov with R. Fraštacký (20 Feb. 1947), p. 413-415. *Novoje vremja* N. 23, 1946, p. 14. Article: „Opasnaja voznja“ (Dangerous intrigues).

78 RGASPI, Moscow, Fond 17, 125-509, p. 163-164. Letter from the head of the press department of the Sovinformbyro for Poland and Czechoslovakia to the secretary of the ÚV VKS(b) (Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party – Bolsheviks) A. A. Ždanov (14 May 1947). *Ibid.*, p. 277-278. Report from V. Zorin about the work of the Sovinformbyra in Czechoslovakia (22 June 1947).

Union prepared a political analysis in June 1947, after a working visit to Czechoslovakia, during which he had discussions with leading communists and functionaries on the regional and district levels. He justified the situation in Slovakia by the inadequate experience of the leading cadres of the Communist Party of Slovakia in Slovakia with managing “party work”. He repeated the familiar thesis about the penetration of people “hostile to the present regime” into the leadership of the Democratic party, where “they are playing a large part” in determining an “anti-democratic, anti-Soviet position”. According to the documentation, the secretaries of the Communist Party of Slovakia showed a clear “feeling of grievance” when they spoke of “Slovakia being ignored”, because Soviet scientists, actors and writers avoided it. The Slovak communists expected effective help from the party leadership in Moscow, in the task of “popularizing the USSR”.⁷⁹

The third Slavonic day at Devín on 5 July 1947 also became part of the communist political campaign. The main speaker, the prime minister of Czechoslovakia Klement Gottwald emphasized in foreign policy considerations the position of the Soviet Union, which exclusively “corresponds to the vital interests of the Slavonic nations”. However, he devoted the greater part of his speech to Slovakia, where, he stated, “attempts to undermine and subvert” could be seen. There were people here, said Gottwald, “who consider it their main task to spread incitement against the Czech nation, against the people’s democratic system, against the Soviet Union and against Slavonic cooperation”. The response of the Democratic Party was extraordinarily sensitive. An editorial in the daily *Čas* condemned the politicization of the commemorative day and even accused the premier of “coming to Slovakia only to insult, disturb and offend”. The deputy prime minister Ján Ursíny also published criticism of the Devín speech in *Čas*. A thorough point on the unfavourable “scribes” about the grand Slavonic day came from the communist Laco Novomeský: he called the first commentator a “rude anonymous” and he lectured Ursíny, claiming that a person with his position should not have “lowered” himself” with such a rejectionist position.⁸⁰

The different views of the main rivals on the Slovak political scene concerning the actual term “Slavonic solidarity” were also reflected in approaches to the topical question of the Marshall Plan. The journal of the Democratic Party *Nové prúdy* considered in this context the significance of the orientation of Czechoslovakia “in the struggle between East and West”. According to the ideas of the Democratic Party, the aim of economic policy had to be that “we should naturally and developmentally achieve the greatest possible extent of foreign trade with the Slavonic states, but on the other side, we should also maintain and widen economic contacts with the West”. Precisely this orientation was prevented on 10 July by a decision of the Czechoslovak government, inspired by an intervention from Moscow.⁸¹ The decision to reject the invitation to Paris was evaluated by the communist Novomeský as an interest of Czechoslovakia and an obvious duty “so that not only among our Slavonic allies, but also in the non-Slavonic world, there should

79 Ref. 61. Doc. 219, p. 649-655. Analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia (22 June 1947). Signature: P. V. Guljajev.

80 GOTTWALD, Klement. *1946 – 1948. Zv. I.* Bratislava 1949, p. 228-238.

81 PETRUF, Pavol. *Marshallov plán.* Bratislava 1993, p. 132-133; *Nové prúdy* (published every two weeks by the Democratic party), 2 July 1947.

never be any doubt that this republic of the Czechs and Slovaks proclaims its alliance with the Slavonic states”, and together with them, it will always and everywhere “*proceed in solidarity*”.⁸²

Internal material for the apparatus of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) was based on information from Soviet diplomats in Prague and Bratislava and other intelligence sources. The analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia up to autumn 1947 devoted enough space to Slovakia, which the Moscow experts perceived as “*economically and politically the weakest point in the republic*”. The essential criterion here was the quality of the relationship to the Soviet Union, and in it the communists gained the highest appreciation as the “*most faithful and consistent supporters of unwavering friendship*”. The continuing text assured the Moscow “apparachiks” that the Czechoslovak masses “*love the Soviet Union and are striving to learn as much as possible about the heroic work of the Soviet people, from whom they want to learn how to build new lives for themselves*”.⁸³ Such phrases appear in the function of model sentences in the terminology of the official propaganda of the countries of the Soviet Bloc.

The political crisis in Slovakia in autumn 1947 culminated in the discovery of an “anti-state conspiracy”. Through their positions in the State Security Service, the communists directed the investigation with the aim of proving connections between political exiles, scattered illegal domestic groups, the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party. The attempt of the Slovak communists to forcibly change the party-political structure did not end in “victory”: the Communist Party of Slovakia achieved only partial success.⁸⁴ The scenario of events in Slovakia belongs to a series of similar “general tests” for the final establishment of power in the “people’s democratic” states of Central and South-Eastern Europe.

At a meeting of nine European communist parties in September 1947, which culminated in the creation of the Informbyra, the official Soviet speaker A. A. Ždanov expressed the thesis of the conflict of two “opposing camps” in a divided world. In the political intentions of Moscow, this thesis was associated with the decision to definitively consolidate the Soviet Bloc in Europe. This meant not only completing the transformation of regimes and establishing the rule of the communists, but also strictly limiting all theoretical considerations of “specific routes” to socialism by individual communist parties.⁸⁵ The conception of a “Slavonic alliance”, updated during the war, had fulfilled its original purpose and had no further justification.

After ratification of the peace treaties, representatives of the Soviet Union left the command posts in the abolished Allied control commissions for Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary in autumn 1947. At a farewell event at the Czechoslovak Embassy in Budapest, the former deputy chairman of the control commission V. P. Sviridov made a final speech, in which he advised the Prague government to establish good relations with Hungary, so

82 NOVOMESKÝ, Ladislav. Prečo sme nešli do Paríža? (Why didn't we go to Paris?) In *Pravda*, 23 Aug. 1947.

83 Ref. 52. Document 177, p. 496-503. Absolutely secret! Internal material of the ÚV VKS(b) „On the present economic and political situation in Czechoslovakia“. (Moscow, September 1947).

84 BARNOVSKÝ, ref. 49, p. 183-225.

85 Ref. 50, p. 47-48.

that it “*would be a link in our region*”. The Soviet general did not consider it important that the “*Hungarians are not a Slavonic nation*”, the important thing was “*not to give Hungary ‘to the other side’*”.⁸⁶ In the first week of February 1948, the British daily *The Times* wrote about the completion of the Eastern European “*treaty network*”. The associated map showed clear arrows from Moscow to the original Slavonic allies: Prague, Belgrade and Warsaw. The latest tentacle reached from the centre of the system to Buckurest, but almost the whole of Central and South-Eastern Europe was interconnected by the concluding of bilateral treaties.⁸⁷ The author of the article could soon add data about new Soviet allies – Hungary and Bulgaria.

Admiration for the Soviet Union became the basic attribute of the only acceptable foreign policy orientation in the Eastern Bloc. The Soviet diplomats also monitored the discussions of the second conference of the Slovak Democratic Party in January 1948 from this point of view. They wrote to Moscow about the “*two-faced*” policy of the Democratic Party, because it “*remains the same also in relation to the Soviet Union*”. The solemn declaration of alliance with the USSR in the speech by Jozef Lettrich was judged by the attaché at the Soviet embassy in Prague “*to stand in clear opposition to the appeal for a similar alliance with America and the Western states, which are now openly preparing a military bloc directed against the Soviet Union and the countries of the new democracy, and so also against Czechoslovakia*”.⁸⁸

The polemical tone of the media discussion between the Slovak communists and democrats became much harsher in this period. The communists accused the democrats of talking “*about eternal Slavonic solidarity*”, but actually covering intrigue and espionage “*against our Slavonic allies*”. Laco Novomeský labelled as irresponsible all, who did not tell their adherents and followers “*that they think badly, follow crooked paths and calculate foolishly, when they think of positions for our nation and our republic other than the Slavonic system under the protection of the Soviet Union*”.⁸⁹

The internal political crisis at the end of February 1948 not only brought a change in the ruling cabinet in Prague, but also in the social system and power structures of the whole state. The radicalism of the communists in Slovakia grew from internal sources, but it was strengthened by an effort to prove to their Czech “comrades” their ability to deal independently with the “reactionaries”. In the framework of the central political elite, the person authorized by Prague to “administer” Slovak affairs as the representative of the Prague leadership gained the leading position. Viliam Široký held this position

86 AMZV ČR, Zú Budapest / 1947. Political report no. 27. General V. P. Sviridov on relations with Hungary (27 Sept. 1947).

87 *The Times*, 6 Feb. 1948: Eastern European Treaty Network.

88 AVP RF, f. 0138, 29-146-6, p. 2-14. Information about the second conference of the Democratic Party in Slovakia. Compiled by the attaché at the Embassy of the USSR in Prague N. I. Semjonov (9 March 1948). Ambassador V. A. Zorin returned to Moscow in December 1947 to become deputy foreign minister. M. A. Silin replaced him.

89 NOVOMESKÝ, ref. 58. Statement on Bratislava radio p. 257-260. Article in *Národná obroda* 7 March 1948, p. 260-265.

as the representative of the “correct line” from the Žilina conference of the Communist Party of Slovakia in August 1945.⁹⁰

The European Department of the Foreign Ministry of the USSR worked out a proposal for the basic orientation of Soviet policy in Czechoslovakia after the February crisis. The majority of tasks in the field of culture were addressed to various Soviet institutions in Prague. However, the general consulate in Bratislava also inevitably had to “*strengthen its cultural-political work*”, so that Russian and Ukrainian citizens would spread Soviet influence “*through the whole of Slovakia*”. In the sphere of politics, the activation of the Czech and Slovak communists was expected to achieve the aim of “*removing clear reactionary elements, especially from the rightist parties*”, and securing a total “*purge*”. This interesting document recommended special attention to purging “*the apparatus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, which was extraordinarily fouled up by reactionary elements*”. In Moscow, they also considered it especially urgent to “*greatly strengthen ideological work*” among ordinary communists and the population in general.⁹¹ In contrast to the “Slavonic line” of the communist press in Bratislava, the Moscow text made no mention of any “Slavonic alliance”.

The Joint Slavonic Committee, composed of university professors, academic functionaries, high ranking army officers and communist intellectuals from the interested countries continued to meet from inertia. At the end of February 1948, the chairman of the Slavonic Committee of Czechoslovakia Zdeněk Nejedlý welcomed the third plenary session of the joint committee to Prague. After the completion of the Prague sessions, the delegations moved to Bratislava, where the Bratislava Slavonic Committee in cooperation with all the local twinning societies organized a manifestation with the slogan: “*The Slavs in the struggle for peace*” on 5 March in front of the National Theatre. The Slovak “Slavophiles” welcomed almost three dozen delegates. Apart from the representatives of the Slavonic Committee of Czechoslovakia, there were the chairman of the Joint Slavonic Committee in Belgrade General Božidar Waslarič, accompanied by the chief secretary Igor Medvedev, together with representatives of the Slavonic committees from the Soviet Union, Poland, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. The chairman of the Union of Friends of the USSR, diplomat and journalist D. M. Krno met the delegations at the main station in Bratislava. As always, the visitors were accommodated in the Carlton Hotel. After the distribution of presents to the rooms, the commissioner Laco Novomeský, chairman of the Slavonic Committee in Bratislava was host for the official lunch. The manifestation started at two in the afternoon. There were speeches by the Slovak host and representatives of all the delegations, which went on for almost two hours. The delegates, as living monuments to an artificially maintained idea of Slavdom, quickly looked around Bratislava, were welcomed at selected enterprises, visited the townhall, met Bratislava journalists, watched a performance in the Slovak National Theatre, and

90 BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. Preberanie moci a pofebruárová očista 1948 (The seizure of power and the post-February purge of 1948). In *Od diktatúry k diktatúre. Slovensko v rokoch 1945 – 1953*. Ed. M. Barnovský. Bratislava 1995, p. 88-96, 97-104.

91 Ref. 52. Doc. 191. Proposal IV. EO (Moscow 2 March 1948), p. 552-555. Jan Masaryk, foreign minister of Czechoslovakia died tragically in Prague on 10 March 1948. Vladimír Clementis was appointed to replace him.

at the end of the evening were received by the chairman of the Board of Commissioners Gustáv Husák. On the morning of 6 March, the delegations of the Slavonic committees travelled to Turčiansky Sv. Martin.⁹²

When Bratislava celebrated the third anniversary of its liberation by the Red Army on 4 April 1948, a general assembly of the Union of Friends of the USSR in Slovakia was held with participants from the whole country. There were no substantial changes in its leadership. Viliam Široký, Gustáv Husák, Karol Šmidke and Laco Novomeský remained its honorary chairmen. By an irony of destiny, the men soon to be accused of “bourgeois nationalism” and the chief Slovak inquisitor met under the banner of friendship with the Soviet Union. The commissioner Novomeský then addressed the defeated democrats from the traditional location of Bratislava manifestations, in front of the National Theatre. He spoke of the “*fallen leaders*” of Slovakia, the imitators of the “*Nazi anti-Slavonic and anti-Soviet*” hysteria. Three years after the liberation they were commemorating, the communist writer enthused about the strengthening of the Slovak nation and the strengthening of the common state. They could “*continue to grow stronger peacefully, supported by the Slavonic nations headed by the Soviet Union*”.⁹³ The optimistic visions of the possibilities of Slavonic brotherhood would soon be replaced by the harsh ordinariness of the Soviet Bloc.

The picture of political development in Slovakia, created on the basis of information from the Soviet general consulate for the Moscow centre, acquired new contours from March 1948. It mentioned the “*politically bankrupted*” Democratic Party, which was “*deprived of the leadership*” (*obezglavlena*). With a sense for detail, the author mentioned the declaration of judicial processes “*against spies and traitors*”, politically motivated “*flight abroad*” and pointed to the opposition of the population to the “*anti-human character of the leadership of the former Democratic party*”. In the present situation, when the authority of the communists “*had grown to immense strength*”, the writer considered that the newly formed “*Party of Slovak Renewal did not have a social base or real conditions for growth*”.⁹⁴

The isolation of the Eastern European states into the “camp” directed by Moscow was symbolized by the conference of foreign ministers on 23 and 26 June in Warsaw. Representatives of Yugoslavia still participated in the discussions alongside delegations from Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and the Soviet Union. The arrival of the foreign ministers of eight states attracted the interest of all the diplomatic missions in Warsaw. The Western diplomats had thought that the Informbyro

92 AVP RF, f. 233, 3-15-22, p. 3-4. The following were invited to the manifestation on 5 March 1948: the Slavonic Committee in Bratislava, Union of Friends of the USSR in Slovakia, Union of Friends of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, Society for Cultural and Economic Ties with Bulgaria, Slovak-Polish Society, social organizations and the regional trade union council. The Bratislava societies had a simplified structure from 28 Feb 1947, when the Society for Cultural Ties with the USSR had merged with the Union of Friends of the USSR in Slovakia.

93 AVP RF, f. 233, 3-15-22, p. 6. Heading of the paper: Union of Friends of the USSR in Slovakia; NOVOMESKÝ, ref. 58. From the speech on the anniversary of the liberation of Bratislava 4 April 1948, p. 274-277.

94 AVP RF, f. 0138, 29a.-171-1, p. 37-55. The Party of Slovak Renewal (Information). Signature: general consul L. F. Teplov. (Bratislava 14 June 1948).

was having a session. At a press conference held by the Polish minister Z. Modzelewski, the correspondent of the Associated Press Larry Allen complained about the inaccessibility of sources of information. He was politely referred to the official communiqué, where he could learn that they had discussed the German question.⁹⁵

The Czechoslovak Embassy in Moscow noticed the change in the Soviet attitude to Yugoslavia in 1948 through its weekly reviews of the press: The interest of the Moscow dailies in reports from Belgrade was suddenly minimal. The silence of the central media only outwardly demonstrated the dissatisfaction of J.V. Stalin with the Yugoslav communist leadership. For several months, Moscow had been planning wide ranging repressive political action with the final aim of “purging” the leaderships of the individual communist parties of the Soviet Bloc from adherents of independent courses, based on the conception of “national roads” to socialism. A session of the Informbyro in Buckurest confirmed the seriousness and depth of the Soviet – Yugoslav conflict. According to the propaganda of the time, the resolution *On the situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia* published on 29 June 1948 had to instruct all the communist parties to “critically re-evaluate their activity”.⁹⁶

The fourth Slavonic day was held at Devín in July 1948, again with the presence of Klement Gottwald, already as new president of Czechoslovakia. The basic theme of the speech – the “February victory” was also reflected in obligatory phrases about Slavdom. An important element of the new line had to be the recent Warsaw conference of foreign ministers, because as the president declared: “*It documented before the whole world how unjustified and fallacious are the various statements about the exclusiveness of the alliance of the Slavonic nations, or even about Slavonic imperialism*”. In Warsaw, said Gottwald, the Slavonic states had discussed with non-Slavonic people’s democratic states “*and led by the Soviet Union, they showed themselves to the world as a powerful force for peace and European consolidation*”.⁹⁷

After the tried and tested circuit of great Soviet cities in January and February 1949, the initiators of the political tourism by the two associations of friends of the Soviet Union from Prague and Bratislava, expected a tangible propagandist effect. At the end of January in Moscow, the head of the delegation Zdeněk Nejedlý submitted to the head of the All-Union Society for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries, a detailed proposal for the activity of a future united organization. The aim of the planned friendship was “*to deepen the mass sympathy of the Czechs and Slovaks for the USSR more concretely and in harmony with the interests of individual components of the people*”. An interesting element of the proposal is the wish “*that the work should be coordinated with the Slavonic Committee*”. The author of the program admits that it is “*a non-existing question for Moscow*”, but more urgent for Czechoslovakia, where they perceive the Soviet Union “*as the most progressive and largest Slavonic state*”. Professor Nejedlý asked for a mee-

95 AMZV ČR, ZÚ Warsaw 1948. Politicl report no.2 (5 July 1948). The ministers present were: V. M. Molotov (USSR), E. Hodža (Albania), V. Kolarov (Bulgaria), V. Clementis (Czechoslovakia), E. Molnár (Hungary), Z. Modzelewski (Poland), A. Paukerová (Rumania) and S. Simić (Yugoslavia).

96 AMZV ČR Moscow / 1948. Soviet press and Yugoslavia (5 June 1948); Ref. 50, p. 53-55, p. 497-500.

97 *Pravda* 13 July 1948: IV. Slovanský deň na Devíne (Fourth Slavonic day at Devín), p. 1. GOTTWALD, K. 1946 – 1948. Zv. II. Ref. 80. Speech at Devín, 11 July 1948, p. 264-273.

ting with his old acquaintance, now deputy foreign minister V. A. Zorin. From the Soviet side, judged Zorin, the submitted proposal “*did not meet with any basic objections*”, but he also mentioned the need to determine the extent and date for the fulfillment of each measure.⁹⁸

At home in Slovakia, the Slovak members of the delegation: the commissioner for post and Catholic priest Alexander Horák, the head of the department of enlightenment at the commission for information Vladimír Húska, the secretary of the Slovak trade union council Ladislav Jašík and the editor of the *Nové slovo* Ladislav Saučín became the main actors in an unprecedented propagandist exhibition. The Soviet general consulate in Bratislava reported to Moscow in official jargon, that “*it had set the task*” of achieving “*the most productive use of the members of the delegation after their return*”, in the interest “*of promoting the truth about the Soviet Union among the broad masses of the population, with the help of the Slovaks themselves*”. The report was pleased to add: “*The task proved to be possible*”. On the second day after their return, 22 February, the commissioner Laco Novomeský received the delegates and spoke of their mission to spread their impressions from the congress among the widest possible circle of Slovaks. A press conference for Bratislava journalists followed, and an evening session of the leadership of the Slovak Union of Friends of the USSR. The first of the assemblies in Slovak towns was held on 3 March in the main hall of the Reduta in Bratislava, and the speakers expected an audience of about 1,500. The first round of the “enlightening” marathon occurred in Bratislava: The delegates wrote a series of articles for *Pravda*, *Práca* and *Nové slovo*. On 23 March the radio broadcast a live discussion and the publisher Tatran prepared a brochure: *Impressions from the USSR*. Delegates chosen according to profession visited Bratislava works and enterprises, university students, members of the Party of Slovak Renewal, soldiers and officers. From 24 March to 22 April, the pairs of lecturers Horák – Húska and Jašík – Saučín travelled to thirteen towns distributed across the whole of Slovakia. They had the largest audience – 1,200 – in Trnava and the smallest – 300 – in Turčiansky Sv. Martin. During the whole campaign, the consul L. F. Teplov recorded that the general consulate in Bratislava received telegrams from towns and villages, with requests from Slovak workers “*to send thanks and sincere greetings to the Soviet people and its leader Generalissimo Stalin*”. The feverish activity culminated on 22 May 1949 in the Bratislava Reduta, “*with the ceremonial merging*” of the Union of Friends of the USSR in Slovakia and the Union of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship. The general consul Teplov was personally present at the assembly.⁹⁹ Organized “love for the Soviet Union” had to definitively replace spontaneous sympathy for Slavonic Russia.

The commemorative days in 1949 in Slovakia became demonstrations of the power monopoly of the communists. An effort to convince Moscow of the achievement of “victory” also in the consciousness of various groups in the population is clear in

98 Ref. 52. Doc. 6, p. 31-32. Meeting of Z. Nejedlý and V. A. Zorin (Moscow 4 Feb. 1949). Text of the proposed activity of the Union for Czechoslovak – Soviet Friendship (ZČSSP) (dated 31 Jan. 1949).

99 AVP RF, f. 0138m 30a.-179a.-16d., p. 1-11. Report on the internal political situation (Bratislava 30 May 1949). Lectures in the towns of Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Košice, Prešov, Komárno, Nové Zámky, Trnava, Trenčín, Zvolen, Turčiansky Sv. Martin, Michalovce, Ružomberok. Ibid. f. 233, 4-18-19, p. 50. Invitation to celebration in the Reduta on 22 May 1949.

every discussion between Slovak representatives and Soviet diplomats. The chairman of the Board of Commissioners Gustáv Husák spoke to the general consul in Bratislava N. G. Novikov about “*solution of the Catholic question*” and assured him that the July “*celebrations at Devín and the national celebrations devoted to the fifth anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising will clearly show how the broad masses of believers are following the Communist Party*”.¹⁰⁰

From the pedestal of exclusive owners of truth, the communists usurped the historical memory of the uprising against fascist totalitarianism, and cast doubt on the political motives of their former partners from the Democratic Party. Laco Novomeský enthusiastically welcomed the coming of President Gottwald to Slovakia and wrote about his share in the conceptual program of the uprising, in organizing material and political assistance and then “*securing and implementing the aims for which our uprising fought*”. The official celebrations of the fifth anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising was held in Zvolen on 29 August 1949, in the presence of the president, a delegation from the Slavonic Committee in Moscow and other guests from various countries, mainly the European “*people’s democracies*”. At the end of the whole program of celebrations, a press conference for the foreign delegations was held in Bratislava. As the Soviet ambassador M.A. Silin reported, the head of the Bulgarian delegation “*criticized the Czechs and Slovaks*”. The Bulgarian participant accused the organizers of the celebrations of “*excessively emphasizing the role of President Gottwald in all political events in Slovakia, while giving very little attention to Comrade Stalin*”. At the foreign ministry in Prague, the Bulgarian ambassador Nenčo Nikolajev was told that the sharp formulations of the delegate from Sofia were tactless and unjustified. After the end of the celebrations, the Soviet delegations, led by the chairman of the Slavonic Committee General-lieutenant A. S. Gundorov, travelled from Slovakia to Prague. Here, Gundorov met ambassador M. A. Silin and seriously pointed out to him the “*unfavourable situation arising*” in relations between leading Slovak figures. Gundorov said that during the stay of the Soviet guests in Slovakia, the speaker of the Slovak National Council Karol Šmidke “*had expressed negative views on the chairman of the party Široký, calling him a careerist*”. Ambassador Silin wrote in his diary the impression of the Soviet general that Šmidke “*hinted that Široký undeservedly acts as the leader of the Slovak people*”.¹⁰¹

In 1949, the Stalinist “*cordon sanitaire*” around Yugoslavia was gradually formed in the neighbouring communist states. The September show trial in Budapest ended with harsh sentences. The main accused, the communist politician László Rajk was condemned to death as a “*Titoist agent*”. According to reports from Moscow, the Soviet press and radio devoted much attention to the trial, highly appreciated the Hungarian decisiveness and mentioned parallels with the “*great Moscow trials of 1936 and 1937*”.¹⁰² The communist parties of the Soviet Bloc began to “*solve*” internal conceptual disputes and ruling cliques strengthened their hold on power. Many decisions, with the exception of

100 Ref. 52. Diary of the general consul of the USSR in Bratislava N. G. Novikov (8 Sept 1949), p. 169.

101 AVP RF, f. 0138, 30-159-6, p. 105-107. From the diary of M. A. Silin. Meeting with minister V. Clementis (Prague 7 Sept. 1949). Ibid., p. 92-93. Record of a discussion with A. S. Gundorov (Prague 8 Sept. 1949). *Pravda* (Bratislava) 26 Aug. 1949; NOVOMESKÝ, L. *Prezident medzi nami* (The President among us).

102 AMZV ČR, ZÚ Moscow / 1949. Extraordinary political news (27 Sept. 1949).

the most radical, were not taken on the direct order of J. V. Stalin, but, as Z. Brzezinski wrote in his classic work, according to the principle of “*expected reaction*”, that is from an effort of leading communists to act as they thought the Soviet dictator would wish.¹⁰³ The Soviet ambassador Silin spoke with Viliam Široký during a reception at the foreign ministry in Prague on 24 September. Široký spoke appreciatively about the “*excellently conducted trial in Budapest*”, already on the first day of its proceedings. The way was open to the campaign against Slovak “bourgeois nationalism”.¹⁰⁴

Moscow used the fabricated “evidence” from the trial of Rajk as an excuse for the renunciation of the treaty of alliance with Yugoslavia, and all the states in the Soviet Bloc obediently followed this example. The Soviet Embassy in Sofia did not invite the Yugoslav diplomats to the special reception on 7 November. They had to be given the feeling that they were not only ordinary enemies, but belonged to the “*category of traitors*”. The Budapest resolution of the Informbyro at the end of November 1949, spoke in harsh and abusive terms about the government of “*killers and spies*” in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁵ Belgrade – from December 1946 seat of the Joint Slavonic Committee – was excommunicated from the “*fraternal bonds*”.

The Slavonic ideas, surrounded by illusions, also disappeared from the political consciousness of the Slovaks, and Russophiles of the Martin type retreated to the privacy of their libraries. The destiny of Eastern Europe was dominated by communist Moscow for the next four decades.

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DIE SLAWISCHEN VORSTELLUNGEN UND POLITISCHEN VARIATIONEN IN DEN BEZIEHUNGEN DER SLOWAKEN ZU MOSKAU (1934 – 1949)

DAGMAR ČIERNA - LANTAYOVÁ

Die politischen Kreise der ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik wandten sich Ende 1934, in einer konfliktgeladenen internationalen Lage, immer öfter Moskau zu und erwoگen die Vorteile einer vorbereiteten Zusammenarbeit mit Russland. Ein Bündnis zwischen der Tschechoslowakei und der Sowjetunion wurde 1935 auch von den in der Prager Regierung vertretenen slowakischen

103 BRZEZINSKI, Z. K. *Sovětský blok. Jednota a rozpor*. (The Soviet Bloc. Unity and contradiction). Prague 1970, p. 169.

104 AVP RF, f. 0138, 30-159-6, p. 129-130. Record by M. A. Silin of a conversation with Široký in Prague on 24 September 1949. UHER, Ján. *Kampaň proti tzv. buržoáznemu nacionalizmu*. (The campaign against so-called bourgeois nationalism). Ref. 90, p. 105-115.

105 *Pravda* (Moscow) 30 Sept. 1949; AMZV ČR ZÚ Sofia / 1949. The breaking of ties with Yugoslav diplomats (8 Nov. 1949). *Za trvalý mir za lidovou demokracii* (For permanent peace, for people's democracy). (Organ of Informbyro), 29 Nov. 1949, p. 2.

politischen Parteien unterstützt. Das Münchener Abkommen brachte jedoch eine Revision des Versailler Friedensvertrags, in der Slowakei wurde die Unabhängigkeit ausgerufen verkündet und im März 1939 ein unabhängiger Staat gegründet. Die Außenpolitik der ersten Slowakischen Republik war von der Orientierung an Hitlerdeutschland geprägt. Die Unterzeichnung des Deutsch-sowjetischen Nichtangriffspaktes ermöglichte es den slowakischen politischen Führern, diplomatische Beziehungen zwischen Bratislava und Moskau aufzunehmen: Die Presse des Slowakischen Staates berichtete von dem „befreundeten russischen Land“. Der Beitritt der Slowakei dem Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion im Juni 1941 aufseiten des Deutschen Reiches brachte illegale slowakische Widerstandsgruppen allmählich in Gang. Die slawische Hochstimmung der tschechoslowakischen Exilpolitik in London übertrug sich auf diverse Verträge mit Moskau und führte schließlich zur Wiederherstellung des Vorkriegsbündnisses. Das Russlandbild nahm während des Slowakischen Nationalaufstandes, seit August 1944, eine aktualisierte Gestalt an. Mit dem Einmarsch der Sowjetarmee in die Slowakei beginnt eine neue Etappe der slowakisch-russischen Beziehungen. Die Berührung mit dem Frontgebiet übte eine störende Wirkung im Bewusstsein der Bevölkerung aus und die Hochstimmung von der Befreiung verebbte.

Die Sowjetpolitik zog allmählich und zielbewusst die Konturen des Ostblocks, beginnend mit der „Vereinigung der Slawen“. Nach dem Abzug der Front wurde in Bratislava die Tätigkeit der Gesellschaft für Kulturkontakte mit der Sowjetunion wieder ins Leben gerufen. Der Alltag in der Slowakei war jedoch weit entfernt von dem angekündigten „slawischen Idyll“, die politischen Kämpfe wurden immer härter. Dies spiegelte sich auch in dem Wahlergebnis im Mai 1946 wider: In der Slowakei erhielt die Demokratische Partei die Mehrheit, landesweit jedoch feierten die Kommunisten den Wahlsieg. In der neuen Etappe der politischen Kämpfe spielte auch die Beziehung zu Moskau eine große Rolle. In der Slowakei nahm das neu eröffnete Generalkonsulat der Sowjetunion seine Tätigkeit auf. 1947 beginnt in den europäischen Ländern der Sowjetsphäre eine Umwandlung der Regierungen in Moskau unterordnete Gruppierungen. Bestandteil kommunistischer Kampagnen waren in der Slowakei die sog. Slawischen Tage unter der Burg Devín. Nach der kommunistischen Machtübernahme im Februar 1948 steigerten sich die Kommunisten in der Slowakei in einen „Kampf gegen die Reaktion“ hinein. Politischer Tourismus aus Prag und Bratislava in die Sowjetunion sollte eine gewaltige Propagandawirkung haben. Spontane Sympathien zum slawischen Russland, wie sie aus der Kriegs- und Zwischenkriegszeit bekannt waren, wurden durch organisierte „Liebe zur Sowjetunion“ ersetzt. Die Gedenkfeiern von 1949 arteten in der Slowakei in eine Demonstration des kommunistischen Machtmonopols aus. Slowakische Politiker waren bemüht, Moskau von dem endgültigen „Sieg“ im Bewusstsein der breiten Bevölkerungsmassen zu überzeugen. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt waren die kommunistischen Parteien des Sowjetblocks mit internen Konzeptstreitigkeiten beschäftigt und die regierenden Seilschaften stärkten ihre Machtpositionen. Die illusionsumwobenen slawischen Vorstellungen gingen allmählich auch im politischen Bewusstsein der Slowaken zugrunde.

THE FORMER CZAR OF BULGARIA FERDINAND AND SLOVAKIA (1939 – 1944)

ROMAN HOLEC

HOLEC, Roman. The Former Czar of Bulgaria Ferdinand and Slovakia (1939 – 1944). *Historický časopis*, 2009, 57, Supplement, pp.75-103, Bratislava. The former Czar Ferdinand of Bulgaria from the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha dynasty often lived in Slovakia during the Second World War. His contacts with the political elite of the regime, his views on the geopolitical situation and his ordinary human joys and sorrows are the subject of a study based on previously unused and partly unknown foreign archive collections. It provides information about many behind the scenes events in the relationship of Ferdinand to the Slovak regime and its representatives. The study is a micro-analysis of an aristocrat and monarch mentally rooted in the 19th century, who found himself mixed up in the Second World War and Slovak development. Ferdinand is remembered as a monarch, who loved the people and nature of Slovakia.

History of Slovakia during the Second World War. Czar Ferdinand of Bulgaria from the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha dynasty and Slovakia. Slovak – Bulgarian relations. Micro-analysis of the life and views of a former monarch.

Ferdinand of Coburg (1861 – 1948) spent a substantial part of his childhood in Slovakia. As Prince and later Czar of Bulgaria, he spent whole months there in his family's properties. He cultivated an extraordinarily warm relationship to the land and people of Slovakia. After abdicating from the throne of Bulgaria in 1918 he lived in exile at Coburg in Germany and was forbidden to enter the Czechoslovak Republic as well as Bulgaria. The family property in Slovakia was threatened by land reform and the Coburg heirs spent years in disputes with the state and with each other. The period of judicial proceedings associated with many scandals finally ended with agreement between the state and Ferdinand, perhaps also thanks to his neutral position. From 1934 he gained part of the immovable property from the Czechoslovak state under precisely defined conditions. From that time, he again regularly visited Slovakia.

In the summer of 1938, during the hot autumn and practically up to January 1939, Ferdinand was in Slovakia, and he carefully observed the development of events. In December, he congratulated Emil Hácha on his election as President of the so-called Second Republic. In January 1939, he also congratulated the new head of the Slovak autonomous government Jozef Tiso. In his reply, Hácha emphasized Ferdinand's appreciation of both nations in the days of the autumn crisis and wished that he would always feel at home in the republic. Tiso thanked Ferdinand for showing love and sympathy for the Slovak nation: *"I am pleased that Your Highness was eye witness of the culmination of the political struggle of the Slovaks, and I very much value Your positive assessment of the work*

and effort of the new Slovakia."¹ Since Ferdinand was away from Slovakia, Tiso wished him an early return.

In spite of similar kind words, the dramatic pre- and post-Munich days certainly did not bring Ferdinand any contentment. The threat of war in Central Europe was the last thing he could wish. At the end of 1938, he could also guess in the Slovak forests that extensive international changes were coming. The staff in the old mansion at Pusté Pole and other Coburg properties spent new year's eve 1938 in a gloomy mood. They were all worrying about what would happen to them.

What was the first contact of Ferdinand with the newly created Slovak Republic like? It happened in the Vatican, where personalities in the diplomacy of the time met at the ceremonial inauguration of the new Pope Pius XII. In the critical days of March 1939, Czecho-Slovakia sent a modest delegation composed of the diplomat Ladislav K. Feierabend and his wife. They travelled on the day following the night of the attempted coup d'état and arrest of Jozef Tiso's autonomous government, that is after the events, which got into the history textbooks under the inexact name of Homola's putsch. In Rome, Feierabend met Jozef Sivák, minister of education, who had been delegated by the Slovak autonomous government. This was actually the first official Slovak state visit to the Holy See. However, it happened in a very tense atmosphere, because Sivák learnt from the newspapers about the dismissal of Tiso's government and about his own appointment as prime minister.

Even greater changes occurred at the time the delegation left the "Eternal City". On 14 March immediately before leaving, the delegation had to attend a farewell audience. Everything was different from a few days before. There was a new Pope, a newly proclaimed Slovak Republic, and Sivák was the minister of education and public information in the new Slovak government. According to Feierabend, Sivák did not want to speak in German with the Pope in protest against the developments at home, but in Slovak and Feierabend had to translate into French. According to Sivák, the Holy Father received him in a private audience and Sivák asked him to "*bless the Slovak nation on the threshold of its new free life.*"²

However, both agree that immediately before the visit of the Czecho-Slovak or Slovak delegation, the former Czar of Bulgaria was with the Pope. When Ferdinand came out of the audience, where he was accompanied by his two daughters, he met them and cheerfully greeted those present in Slovak. According to Sivák, he would certainly have stayed with them, but it was necessary to go in. So at least he wished them good luck with a smile.³

1 Centralen deržaven archiv Sofia (hereinafter CDA), Monarchičeski institut, fond (hereinafter f.) 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 87, Folder No. 2. J. Tiso to Ferdinand from 8 Jan 1939 and E. Hácha to Ferdinand from 21 Dec 1938.

2 FEIERABEND, Ladislav K. *Politické vzpomínky I.* (Political Memoirs I.). Brno 1994, p. 131-132; SIVÁK, Jozef. *Z mojich pamätí* (From my memories). Martin 2003, p. 327.

3 Ref. 2. Memories of the coronation of the Pope and Sivák are supplemented by KAŠŠOVIC, Ján. *Spomienky na korunovanie Pia XII.* (Memories of the coronation of Pius XII). In BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián – LETZ, Robert – Podolec, Ondrej (eds.). *Vznik Slovenského štátu. 14. marec 1939. Spomienky aktérov historických udalostí I.* Bratislava 2007, p. 84-94.

Ferdinand was interested in other things at this time: He came to Rome from Lugano, and in the “Eternal City” he had to attend tiring ceremonies, in which he was far from being one of the leading celebrities (“*the whole trip to Rome will be terrible*”). He sent to Coburg numerous collections of flowers and plants. In addition “*I miss my Dunčo very much. We are already without even a halier in money and the situation is terrible*”.⁴ The plural number refers to Ferdinand’s female companion, who was named Julia. We do not know who she was, but from Ferdinand’s words addressed to another of the women in his life – his long-term secretary Maria Haberbosch – we know that “*she returned to Coburg entirely rejuvenated, but she never learns anything, she has no memory, she forgets everything. Her obstinacy and lack of taste are unbearable, I have suffered a lot with her [...]*”⁵

The origin of the Slovak Republic in 1939 and the new constitutional conditions were reflected in changes at the Coburg properties. The smallest was the Slovak seal *Správa zámku Jeho Veličenstva Cára Ferdinanda Bulharského* (Administration of the Castle of His Highness Czar Ferdinand of Bulgaria) on Ferdinand’s letters. A more outward expression of the new conditions was the confirmation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed by Jozef A. Mikuš, asking all Slovak offices at home and abroad to assist the owner of this recommendation Count Murányi (Ferdinand), if he got into difficulties during his journeys in Slovakia.⁶

A much more serious change was that in the course of 1939, many originally Coburg properties or their best parts got new masters – Germans, and mostly prominent people. They took over Coburg hunting grounds and various residences and lands, where they introduced a new order, which did not respect the Czar’s nostalgia. For example, hunters came from the former hunting grounds of Prince Hohenlohe at Javorina, and everything with Coburg associations was thrown out of the mansion at Pusté Pole. They replaced the cutlery, dishes and furniture, and brought entirely new things from Berlin. They liquidated the old avenues, removed rowan trees associated with Ferdinand’s childhood, and changed the park into an English lawn. When the Czar later saw this, he was appropriately unhappy and he cursed the culprits.

However, the Slovak government continued to observe the decision of the Czechoslovak government, according to which Ferdinand could use some of the rooms in the castle at Svätý Anton. Ferdinand was again in Slovakia in the summer of 1939. Only in the course of June, he stayed at Predná Hora, Svätý Anton, Pusté Pole and at Ebenthal in Lower Austria. The days at Predná Hora were allegedly terrible for him, because the “*Coburg air*” entirely poisoned his “*poor existence*”, by which he referred to information from Coburg and the presence of his long-term aide de camp and “*finance-master*” General Peter Gančev, with whom he “*struggled*” all day and finally learnt that everything would only get worse, and he would not get even a halier more for his spending. He was able to escape to an extraordinarily successful hunting trip to Pusté Pole and the

4 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschriften des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A11 – letter from March 1939.

5 Ref. 4.

6 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 108, Box 86, Folder No. 1. Accompanying letter for Count Murányi, Bratislava 24 April 1939.

fortieth birthday of his secretary Maria Haberbosch. However, the latter was not celebrated either together or quietly. He addressed her at least in writing: *“the greatest thanks for 22 years of sacrifices and anger!”* and the hope that they might meet in Ebenthal and *“sort out our sad futures, everything abandons me [...] and the situation is ever more miserable”*.⁷ At the end of July 1939, Ferdinand was already at the Sliač spa. Like every year, he and his staff were accommodated in the luxurious Palace Hotel and he could be seen every day on his way to procedures or walking in the surroundings.

Relations between Ferdinand and the chief representative of the new state, President Jozef Tiso were correct, but they remained exclusively on the official level. They met at various events. The same applied to Vojtech Tuka, who, as a native of the Banská Štiavnica district, sometimes came to Anton. For example, the castellan there Juraj Brezák expected him in connection with a church pilgrimage on 15 August 1939. Tuka also visited the castle at Svätý Anton at the end of June and beginning of July 1940, during a stay at the Sliač spa. Ferdinand was not in Slovakia at the time, but according to the words of the castellan Brezák, Tuka was *“very moved by the beauty of Antol and really interested in everything [...] He said that he would really like to visit Your Highness at Svätý Antol.”*⁸

Among the members of the government, Ferdinand achieved the best understanding with the minister of transport and public works Július Stano, who shared his interest in railways. They jointly opened the construction of track and the operation of restored, reconstructed or new track. In February 1941, high Bulgarian decorations were conferred on Ferdinand, Stano and the adviser at his ministry Prof. Rudolf Pavlík. The minister organized a lunch at the Carlton. Apart from Ferdinand’s representatives and the highest officials at the ministry, it was attended by the Bulgarian diplomat Konstantin Šišmanov, the honorary consul of Bulgaria František Michera, Bishop Michal Buzalka and the vice-governor of the Slovak National Bank Jozef Fundárek. In the evening, the consul Michera organized a Bulgarian dinner for the occasion of the birthday of Czar Boris III. The minister of education Jozef Sivák and high officials from other ministries were there.⁹

Ferdinand also got on very well with representatives of the Slovak Catholic episcopate, especially with the bishops Andrej Škrábik and Michal Buzalka. However, he also sometimes exchanged letters with Bishop Marian Blaha.

He had extraordinarily good relations with Buzalka (1885 – 1961) going back to the period of the First World War, when Buzalka was studying at seminary. They remained in contact for decades, practically until Ferdinand’s death. Buzalka was a native of Svätý Anton and had known Ferdinand since serving as an altar boy in the local church. After gaining a degree in theology in Vienna, he worked as a chaplain and catechist at nearby Banská Štiavnica. This brought them close, although in 1917, Buzalka refused to become parish priest at Svätý Anton, which would have brought him into immediate proximity

7 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A12 – letter from 12 June 1939.

8 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 108A, Box 86, Folder No. 2. J. Brezák to F. Göndör from 13 Aug 1939; Ibid., Folder No.4. F. Göndör to Ferdinand from 8 July 1940.

9 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 86, Folder No. 5. F. Göndör to Ferdinand from 2 Feb 1941.

to the Coburgs. His career progressed in the 1930s, when he was rector of the seminaries in Trnava and Bratislava. From 1935 he became a papal prelate, in 1937 a canon of Bratislava and a year later a titular bishop. At the time of his ordination in Rome, Ferdinand expressed the wish to attend with the explanation that he had already known Buzalka for many years. In the period 1940 – 1945, Buzalka served as the general field vicar of the Slovak army. As the only bishop continually resident in Bratislava, he regularly participated in various state occasions and celebrations, and so he constantly came into contact with the political elites of the regime. He developed almost friendly relations with Ferdinand, which was not a frequent occurrence with the old monarch.

In July 1939, Ferdinand was involved in a small affair, which could be considered a storm in a teacup. However, its context showed the connection of Bishop Buzalka with Ferdinand and contacts of the former Czar with the highest representatives of the state. It began with an article entitled *In Svätý Antol* in the *Slovák*, the newspaper of the ruling party HSEŠ, on 26 July 1939. The article reported impressions from visits to Banská Štiavnica and the castle at Svätý Anton. It described the preparations for the arrival of the monarch, when everything was tidied, heated and cleaned... However, Ferdinand was outraged mainly by the references to the transitoriness of existence and the text above the main entrance to the castle: *“Hours come and go, although they do not have legs or steps. But one thing comes once and tells you – Go!”*, which from the context could relate to Ferdinand. In the conclusion of the article, the departing visitors on the road to the castle, encounter a car, in which the monumental figure of the ex-Czar is sitting: *“We look at him, but the car quickly gets lost in the density of the forest, as if it wanted to escape the hour, which calls to you: Man go away!”*¹⁰ Ferdinand was sensitive to such allusions, and in spite of numerous illnesses, he certainly was not getting ready to die. The ex-Czar went to the spa at Sliač and left it to Buzalka to undertake the appropriate steps. The evening before Ferdinand left Anton, Buzalka conceived in his name a protest telegram on the subject of the *“illicit shoddy writing”*. They finally decided to send it in Buzalka’s name, with a brief statement of agreement and greetings from Ferdinand added to the telegram form. The essential part of the telegram read: *“After my honour as a person, monarch and guest of the Slovak people was attacked in the most cowardly way, I have decided to permanently abandon the Slovák newspaper [...]”*¹¹ The telegram was sent to Vojtech Tuka, then deputy prime minister and minister of the interior. It had an adequate impact. Tuka sent a Ferdinand a letter of apology and the *Slovák* newspaper also apologized on the same day. According to the editors, the offending article *“improperly and unjustly offended His Highness”*. It continues with the statement that *“the love of the Slovak people, which surrounds the noble Bulgarian monarch and which was already frequently expressed in the columns of our Slovák, is the best proof that this un-*

10 ALEXY, J. Vo Svätom Antole. (In Svätý Antol). In *Slovák*, 21, no. 169 from 26 July 1939.

11 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 103, Box 81, Folder No. 4. Ferdinand to V. Tuka, undated (29 July 1939). According to Ferdinand the essay was inspired by the Catholic parish priest of Svätý Anton Viliam Ries.

pleasant thing was done unintentionally and only as a result of technical carelessness".¹² The editors wished His Highness a pleasant stay in Slovakia as a highly honoured guest. The chief editor Vojtech Straka also apologized with a similar text in a personal letter. Allegedly, this regrettable, unkind and thoughtless mistake could only have happened in his absence. Vojtech Tuka was much sharper in his letter. Apart from a promise that such an article would not appear again, he wrote: "*I address to Your Highness as a sincere friend of the Slovak nation and an honoured guest of our state, the deepest regret. I am personally ashamed of the article, which appeared in the columns of our government newspaper the Slovák and coarsely offended Your Highness. Your Highness may be assured that the writer of the article offended Your highly honoured and valued person only as a result of his stupidity and short-sightedness.*"¹³ Tuka's sharp words about the author of the article were directed to somebody famous as a writer and painter – Janko Alexy.

An undated telegram from Ferdinand to Buzalka probably also dates from this period. It expresses "*deep and sincere thanks for the extraordinary historical memorial of long-past times*" and the Mass he had celebrated for the dead.¹⁴ Ferdinand rigidly observed rituals for the anniversaries of the deaths of his mother and other members of his family. Since Buzalka regularly spent holidays in his native Svätý Anton, he sometimes celebrated Mass in the parish church there. However, when Ferdinand was present, he also celebrated Mass in the chapel at the castle, and he was always a welcome guest of the ex-Czar. Ferdinand's message presumably related to such a Mass.

Buzalka's letter with very interesting content from the end of September 1939 is probably also a reaction to the above mentioned telegram. It included information about a meeting at the Ministry of Education concerned with the new act on people's schools, and that on 28 September, he had presented Ferdinand's "*sincere greetings*" to President Tiso and had also spoken to him about "*those financial difficulties*". Tiso allegedly "*warmly thanks Your Highness and is pleased that you can be among us. On the financial difficulties, he commented that he will tell the minister of the economy Medrický to submit the problem to the council of ministers and present proposals for assistance.*" Then there was only news from the political kitchen: the absence of Tuka, appointment of Fraňo Tiso as ambassador to Moscow, and the private views of members of the Slovak political elite: the offer of the Hungarian government by means of Esterházy on adjustment of the Slovak – Hungarian frontier and Ribbentrop's rejection of such negotiations because the Hungarians would allegedly have to return everything. There is interesting information brought by member of parliament Čarnogurský from the Vatican, according to whom the Holy See has "*very black and sad premonitions or fears for the future of Central Europe*" and they were very surprised "*by this part of the Führer's telegram*", which mentioned the "*fraternal cooperation of the Slovak army fighting against the*

12 Ospravedlnenie redakci. (Apology from the editors.). In *Slovák*, 21, no. 177 from 4 Aug 1939. A similar text is also found in: CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 108A, Box 86, Folder No. 2 (an apology from V. Straka is also found here).

13 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 108, Box 86, Folder No. 1. V. Tuka to Ferdinand from 4 Aug 1939.

14 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 103, Box 81, Folder No. 4. Ferdinand to M. Buzalka, s. d.

Catholic Poles". There is also information about a strike or hunger-strike by workers at Banská Belá, in whose favour Buzalka intervened with the officials. He did not know what was happening in the Banská Štiavnica area, perhaps it was already "*the revived communist flies*".¹⁵

In connection with the above mentioned "financial difficulties", we must also mention a passage in Alexy's unfortunate report from the mansion at Sv. Anton: "*When he [the parish priest of Anton: Viliam Ries – R. H.] took us to Ferdinand's residence, we found ourselves in the square courtyard of a huge building. It looked as if nobody had lived there for a long time, and the whole estate had passed into the hands of the state because of failure to pay tax. However, the aged former monarch and victim of rheumatism has settled here [...] He wants two million in expenses to cover the roof, now only protected by rotten shingles.*"¹⁶ The financially very demanding reconstruction of the mansion at Svätý Anton was carried out in 1941 – 1942 and placed a heavy burden on Ferdinand's budget.

In spite of his unfortunate experiences from the First World War and the period after it, Ferdinand still remained a devoted adherent of a pro-German policy for Bulgaria. In this area, he also had his people in the Sofia court. The step of the German government in 1931, when it granted him 500,000 marks on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, undoubtedly strengthened his pro-German orientation.¹⁷ Especially with the rise of Hitler, the "*sly old fox*", as Ferdinand was called, for example by Heinrich Himmler, again smelt a chance of political change. He had relatively good relations with the leaders of the Third Reich, although the chief of Nazi propaganda Josef Goebbels bravely ignored him, for example at a great concert in Vienna in 1941 to mark the 150th anniversary of Mozart's death.

From the beginning in the thirties, Hitler knew how to gain Ferdinand's support: "*When I first met him, he made a very good impression on me, especially with his freshness of spirit and openness [...]*"¹⁸ He also met Hitler several times later, but he was no longer interesting for the Führer. Understandably, Ferdinand did not think this.

As the years passed, he became increasingly disappointed with Hitler. He did not feel at home in fascist Germany and he became ever more critical of the Führer when speaking to his private circle. He expressed dissatisfaction with the "*growing totalitarianization of this usurper*", and Hitler's inability to establish cooperation with conservative forces. He could not forgive Hitler's ridiculing of the German President Marshal von Hindenburg after taking power in 1933.¹⁹ Ferdinand greatly respected Paul von Hindenburg and spoke several times with him entirely openly about the difficult situation in

15 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 108, Box 86, Folder No. 1. M. Buzalka to Ferdinand from 30 Sept 1939.

16 ALEXY, J. Vo Svätom Antole. In *Slovák*, 21, no. 169 from 26 July 1939.

17 MARKOV, Georgi. *Našumelite meždunarodni aferi na tretoto balgarsko carstvo*. (The sensational international scandals of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom). Sofia 1998, p. 146.

18 BROUCEK, Peter (ed.). *Ein General im Zweilicht. Die Erinnerungen Edmund Glaises von Horstenau*. Bd. 3. Wien; Köln; Graz 1988, p. 182.

19 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg. M-Biographische Entwürfe über das Leben des Zaren, M 2.2. – Biographisches. Slowakei. 1934 – 1948, p. 3; *Ein General im Zweilicht...* Bd. 3, 1988, p. 182.

Germany. Hindenburg was troubled by his own responsibility, and humiliated by Hitler's behaviour towards him and by the Führer's unrestrained explosions of anger.

Ferdinand met Hitler for the last time sometime in the course of 1938. At that time, Ferdinand still believed in the peaceful solution of problems. In July 1940, things were entirely different and weapons had already brought their first results. Ferdinand exchanged letters with Hitler, in which he expressed joy over the return of Dobruža to his home country, because Dobruža "was taken from Bulgaria in spite of the fact that it is exclusively populated by Bulgarians".²⁰ Later Ferdinand was frustrated with the aggressiveness of Hitler's foreign policy and by the fact that the Germans could not use conservative forces within individual states such as Russia, in their favour.

Problems with Ferdinand's pro-German policy grew with time and especially in Bulgaria, where his son Czar Boris accepted it with reservation, because initially he would have preferred to cultivate a pro-British policy, and later neutrality would also have suited him better. At the time of the Second World War there were not many alternatives, although Boris still kept his distance from Germany, which never forced its officials to send troops to the Eastern Front or to vigorously "solve" the Jewish question.

Among the leaders of the Third Reich, Ferdinand maintained the briskest contacts with Marshal Hermann Göring. They were brought together by interest in pilots, aviation and hunting. In 1937, Ferdinand received the marshal for hunting at Schorfheid. He succeeded in shooting a large deer with a birch branch intertwined in his antlers. The hunting was followed by a visit to Göring's Berlin apartment, full of rare carpets, unimaginable luxury and a bathroom with mosaics. Ferdinand was especially impressed with the porcelain and silver. "At the same time, it is all stolen", he added with unconcealed sharpness. However, he considered his hosts extraordinarily charming.²¹

We know from the memoirs of the wife of Ferdinand's aide-de-camp Gančev about the family birthday dinner with Göring in January 1938. The invitation to come with Ferdinand was accepted by his daughter Princess Eudoxia and by the Gančevs. In a neighbouring room, it was possible to admire gifts of incalculable value from the inventiveness of the world. A watercolour by Hitler was entirely lost among them. Göring had dusted down a dinner set recalling the times of the kings of Prussia, but his informal dress rather irritated Ferdinand. After dinner, Göring's legendary lion Mungo was brought in. With its paws on Göring's shoulders, it respectfully licked the fat Marshal's face. His wife then played with the lion on the carpet, until it slightly injured her, which evoked some disturbance. Ferdinand did not feel well as always, when he was not in the centre of attention and conversation with the Marshal did not have a very high intellectual level.²²

Ferdinand became very angry with the foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop for personal reasons. Without consulting Ferdinand, minister Ribbentrop occupied the new mansion at Pusté Pole, while Marshal Hermann Göring got Muránska Planina as well as the old mansion at Pusté Pole. In contrast to Göring, Ribbentrop made a series of visits

20 LEVERSON, Albert. *Ščriicht kum portreta na car Boris III.* (Some features to the portraite of Czar Boris III.). Kniga druga. Plovdiv 1992, p. 55.

21 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg. M-Biographische Entwürfe über das Leben des Zaren, M 2.4.- Einzelne Stories.

22 *Ein General im Zweilicht...*, Bd. 2, 1983, p. 592-593.

to his forests. His arrival was announced by a long saloon train, military alert, girls from Telgárt in traditional costume with bread and salt and uniformed trumpeters to give a ceremonial welcome on forest horns. However, Ferdinand talked about the anger evoked among the Slovak population by the luxury train with locomotives in front and behind the carriages, the huge “*gorging and guzzling*”, which was “*shamelessly*” unconcealed. The Germans had allegedly been loved and respected in the past, but now they were hated. At the end of September 1942, Ribbentrop invited Heinrich Himmler for hunting. Himmler stayed for two days, and after some not very successful hunting, he returned by plane from Spišská Nová Ves to Berlin.

For three years, Ferdinand did not go to Pusté Pole either for deer or for woodcocks. The Germans left him his hunting quota, instead of two deer, he could hunt only one a year, and only after their departure. The further limitations contributed to his quiet opposition to the new masters. As a result, Ferdinand preferred to avoid them when he could. His attitude to the Nazis was pragmatic. They were the decisive political factor and they brought changes, which he could use. Therefore, he did not avoid meetings with the leaders of the Third Reich, but in spirit he scorned them.

He had a similar perception of the Slovak political leaders. They stood at the head of a state in which Ferdinand had property. He had contacts with them, but did not seek personal meetings. He considered himself the heir of the best traditions of European high politics, while the Slovak representatives were only something like provincial amateurs, and Ferdinand was well aware that they were actually vassals of Germany. However, in his view the German political elite was not very skilful in relation to Slovakia. They abused the leading men, constantly calling “*wise Tiso*” a “*swinish little parish priest*”. Manfred von Killinger, the German ambassador in Slovakia expressed extraordinarily harsh views on the Slovaks. “*However, the Slovaks, for God’s sake, were able to stay afloat*”, added the ex-Czar.²³

At this time, Ferdinand often stayed in the hunting castle at Muráň, the centre of his extensive Muráň estate, or at Sv. Anton. People remembered his open car, in which he went on trips to Sitno and its surroundings, his charitable activities, his interest in nature and monuments, but also the fact that he visited the most inaccessible mountain settlements and villages, which could have the feeling that they lay at the end of the world. Suddenly, this great lord arrived with his high position and imposing appearance.

From the letters he sent from Slovakia, we know much about Ferdinand’s joys and sorrows. The first included beautiful nature, interesting monuments, animals and plants, social contacts. The second comprised especially his continual health problems, which increased his dependence on the people around him. Among them, he became angry especially with the unreliable Gančev, who sometimes systematically provoked Ferdinand’s anger, with his unperceptive methods, phlegmatic indifference, but also greater ability to act, which enabled him to disappear and appear according to his own needs. However, Ferdinand was dependent on Gančev, because all the financial flows of his “court” were in the general’s hands. They were also linked by common social and personal interests. These included women, although Ferdinand’s possibilities were limited as a result of his

23 *Ein General im Zweilicht...*, Bd. 2, 1983, p. 635 and Bd. 3, 1988, p. 182.

state of health. However, his bisexuality meant, in a way, a lack of limitation. His state of health gradually became the decisive factor, which further increased Ferdinand's anger: *"This lecher [“Wüstling” was the nickname for Gančev in Ferdinand's letters – R. H.] troubles me to the deepest possible degree. That is the worst thing he can do. For four days, he disappeared with his harem and left me entirely without addresses. What a shame for us [...] But this time it leads to complete evil."*²⁴ It did not happen of course. *"What drives this poor lecher, I don't know [...]"*²⁵ And he did not really want to know.

From Ferdinand's correspondence, we can put together the mosaic of his activities and reconstruct the course of his stays in Slovakia. Ferdinand was pleased to accept invitations to various social activities, but there were not many of these. In particular, he never missed those connected with railways. He never concealed or denied his passion and love for them.

In November 1940, he and minister Stano ceremonially opened the Revuca – Tisovec line. Immediately after this, the coming of winter caught Ferdinand in Slovakia. He left Slovakia relatively late after a three month stay, and there was not enough time for him to do anything in Vienna before Christmas. Even this city was no longer pleasant for him, great snowstorms and wind made every visit to the theatre extremely risky. On 18 December, Ferdinand had to return to Slovakia, and at the invitation of the minister of transport Július Stano he travelled to Banská Bystrica. On 19 December, he had to witness the ceremonial opening of the *"magnificent Fatra railway"* – the unique line from Banská Bystrica to Diviaky with 22 tunnels. Decorated stations, flags and singing awaited the guests everywhere. The whole of Špania Dolina was on its feet – it was on a railway timetable for the first time. President Jozef Tiso, ministers Július Stano, Gejza Medrický, Alexander Mach, the Reich minister of transport Julius Dorpmüller were welcomed, as well as the former Czar of Bulgaria in his ceremonial so-called "grand" uniform. *"He had a powerful, imposing figure with a nice snow-white beard. He looked like a monarch from a fairytale, but already a little bent by age"*, recalled minister Medrický, *"we discussed hunting, forests, Muráň, Sitno, Svätý Anton Castle (where I had once been his guest for lunch). He did not speak German, but a unique Slavonic Volapük [an artificial language created in 1880 from deformed root words of natural languages – R. H.] mixing Slovak, Bulgarian and Russia, but with the Slovak element prevailing. This was kind attention from him."*²⁶

Ferdinand became very cold at the celebrations, because everything happened at a temperature of – 25 °C. The result was bronchitis, from which he had still not fully recovered in January 1941. On Christmas Eve 1940, Ferdinand returned to Coburg after 4 months away. The express from Vienna had to follow a different route because of snow on the track. Ferdinand stayed at Coburg until mid February 1941, when he returned to Slovakia. He made winter visits to Slovakia several more times during the war years. This was something new, since he had come here previously mostly in summer and autumn. The excellent air, beautiful nature and nice people formed the main arguments,

24 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A13 – letter from Easter Tuesday 1940.

25 Ref. 24, A14 from 9 March 1941.

26 MEDRICKÝ, Gejza. *Minister spomína*. (A minister remembers.). Bratislava 1993, p. 87-88.

when he explained in letters to people in various parts of Europe, where he was spending long months and why.

However, in January 1941, he was still at Coburg, when General Edmund Glaises von Horstenuau came from Berlin to visit him. He was an old acquaintance from the time of the First World War, when the general had served in the Austrian general staff, but they had not met for a good 25 years. At the end of 1940, the general had already wanted to visit Ferdinand in Vienna, and for this purpose he brought a uniform and Bulgarian decorations. The old gentleman would have considered it an insult to visit Ferdinand in civilian dress. However, in Vienna Glaises von Horstenuau met only Gančev, who he described as a “*wise fellow*”.

The reunion after a quarter of a century finally came a month later, in Coburg in January 1941, and it was certainly something to remember. From then until 1945, they always met once a year. Ferdinand once called him “*my colleague in agony*”. The German general was responsible for special military tasks in Croatia and his work also involved meeting Czar Boris in Sofia.

The extensive memoirs of the German general describe in detail the January visit to Coburg in 1941, and another in February 1943 in Vienna, in Ferdinand’s traditional hotel Meißl&Schadn at Neuer Markt 2. Especially the first visit, which was the first after many years, had an unusual context, because snow had cut off the whole of Bavaria from the world. The general perceived Ferdinand’s residence, the Bürglass Palace, as an ordinary villa, comparable to a great many in Vienna. No Gauleiter from the time of the Second World War would have moved into such a “barrack”. On arrival, he was welcomed by General Gančev and led into the entrance hall, where the spirit of old Austria already functioned. Lithographs and pictures of Prince Felix Schwarzenberg, General Haynau and others alternated with Austrian and German landscapes. Ferdinand received him in a salon on the first floor, which reminded the general of a similar room of the Emperor Franz Joseph I at Ischl.

The conversation lasted two and a half hours and covered every possible subject. Ferdinand still felt that he was, above all, an old Austrian, although in recent times, he had spent a lot of time in Slovakia. He impressed everyone with his knowledge of the situation, and not surprisingly, he liked to mystify about his birth at Muráň Castle. He expressed his views – as always critically – on various Habsburg Archdukes. He considered that only two of his contemporaries among them were “brilliant” – Johann Orth, originally known as Archduke Johann Salvator – and Charles Stephan. He knew the first very well from his military “pre-Bulgarian” times. Johann had shown some interest in the Bulgarian crown for a time, and later when he left the Habsburg family in 1889, he had even asked Ferdinand for a place in the Bulgarian army. However, that would have threatened the then Prince of Bulgaria with a coup, because the Archduke was a great strategist and had a Machiavelian streak in his blood. Charles Stephan had pursued the possibility of becoming King of Poland during the First World War, and certainly not because he was one of the few active admirals. In a half joking, half serious manner, Ferdinand recalled his examination to become an officer and other stories.

He regretted the fate of the Habsburg Monarchy, the Empire had its purpose and an entirely different world began beyond Passau. As an “old Austrian” he had to take a

negative view of Hitler's Austrian solution. To add seriousness to what he said, he gave a theatrical performance of a strong Austrian accent. In connection with the future of the country, he warned against the ex-Empress Zita, and young Otto was allegedly completely spoiled by his mother.

In the course of the conversation, Ferdinand asked about almost everybody. He greatly respected King Leopold II of Belgium, whose dictatorial tendencies and firm heart were spoken of by the whole of Europe. He regarded the French General Maxim Weygand as his son, which was allegedly the source of his brilliance. In spite of his legendary debauchery, King Milan of Serbia was the best Serbian monarch, but according to Ferdinand he was the son of the first prince of united Rumania (!) He did not have a single good word for Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. Ferdinand's own son, Boris had enough intelligence, obviously inherited from his father, but, in contrast to his father, he suffered from indecisiveness. In contrast, Ferdinand had the highest opinion of the reigning Greek monarch George II. They had met at a wedding in Italy, amused themselves about culture in Greek, and he was at home on every subject. This pleased Ferdinand, since he rarely had such partners. In the course of the whole conversation with Glaises von Horstenau, Ferdinand showed an almost childish delight in presenting himself as a polyglot. He even asked the poor general "*Mluvíte česky?*" ("*Do you speak Czech?*"), and similarly also in Hungarian. According to the general, he still spoke Bulgarian with Gančev and some of his servants.

At a certain moment, Ferdinand moved the conversation to contemporary politics, and already he could not stop his comments. He never considered German policy fortunate, either in France or in Slovakia. Much more sympathy could be gained by different methods. The good spirit had slipped away from Poland after the death of Piłsudský. In January 1941, Ferdinand called for war with the Soviet Union, and he supported restoration of the Czarist regime. The ruling clique in Hungary had to be regarded with the greatest caution. Csáky was a free mason and his friendly attitude to Germany was only a pose. Ferdinand was angry with Great Britain, at least partly because of the confiscation of his property. He respected Pétain and regarded de Gaulle as only a traitor. It was necessary to distrust the Yugoslav politicians, the Prince-Regent Paul and his wife were Anglophiles. "*My poor, splendid Croats, who my uncle Joseph [Palatine of Hungary up to 1847 – R. H.] loved so much, although he also felt himself to be Hungarian. I also love them, its terrible what has happened to them.*" He regarded the Poglavnik (Leader) Ante Pavelič as a common criminal – "*you only have to look at his physiognomy*". It is impossible to follow a Balkan policy with such politicians. Ferdinand was already in his element here. Before the eyes of his guest he wove visions of the liquidation of Yugoslavia, and the creation of an autonomous Macedonia with the prospect of its union with Bulgaria. Czar Boris only had to be freed from the pro-Western politicians Bogdan Filov (!) and Ivan Popov and from any flirtation with Soviet Russia in the form of a defensive treaty. Germany would have to promote its will more consistently and put more pressure on the Bulgarians. Ferdinand's pro-German position was satisfied at the end of 1941, when Bulgarian officially declared war on the West.²⁷

27 *Ein General im Zweilicht...*, Bd. 2, 1983, p. 630-637 and Bd. 3, 1988, p. 183.

Soon after, Ferdinand again expressed a view on the escalation of the military conflict: *“The devastation, which war brings, leaves only deep hatred. Whole nations are coming to a catastrophic end and hundreds of thousands will have to sacrifice their lives. Everything is in God’s hands and we must only hope that humanity will come to its senses and extinguish the global conflagration before it is too late.”*²⁸

In January 1941, Ferdinand had to consider where he would celebrate his approaching eightieth birthday. František Göndör expressed his view of this in an insistent letter from Slovakia: *“Many gentlemen in Bratislava [he names Minister Stano, Bishop Buzalka and representatives of the Bulgarian community – R. H.] are asking me. They do not know where they have to write, or where to present their complements.”*²⁹ It was not really surprising that Ferdinand’s choice fell on Slovakia. As he often said, he wanted to spend his birthday quietly in a country he had known intimately since childhood. However, Ferdinand rejected Göndör’s proposal to celebrate in a hotel in the Vysoké Tatry Mountains. He wanted his privacy and preferred a place he knew intimately and where he felt at home.

The problem in February 1941 was windswept Predná Hora with impassable roads, temperatures of around – 15 to – 20 °C and the fact that the general repair and reconstruction of the mansion at Svätý Anton had been planned since 1939 and gradually carried out. As Alexy’s article showed, it had been clear to every visitor that the building needed extensive repairs. Let us recall that Buzalka had mentioned the matter to President Tiso in September 1939 and Tiso had recommended it to the ministry of the economy. The mansion was state property, but Ferdinand had the right to use it. However, he was far from having enough financial resources available. It was estimated that only repairs to the roof would cost about half a million crowns. It was planned to transfer the costs to the ministry, because Ferdinand had only 400,000 Slovak crowns for everything. According to the conclusions of the advisor František Sláma, the inspector Ján Čupka, official František Göndör and castelan Juraj Brezák from July 1940, installation of a water supply and of various bathrooms and toilets was also planned. One pair would serve Ferdinand and immediately adjoin his rooms, at the expense of the neighbouring, so-called silver room. A bathroom and toilet for guests would adjoin the rooms of Ferdinand’s parents, and a bathroom would be added to the existing toilet by the stairs. Apart from this, new double windows would be installed in all the rooms and corridors, to prevent loss of heat. It was necessary to repair all the doors, to provide new handles, and to paint some rooms. Space for a kitchen would be found under the large dining room.³⁰

After Ferdinand agreed to the plan, a commission, also including state officials was established to discuss the work and its cost. Then a proposal was worked out for the Directorate of State Forests in Bratislava, in cooperation with which everything had to be done. In this context, Göndör informed his master on the eve of his eightieth birthday in February 1941: *“I was at the Ministry of the Economy and at the central Directorate*

28 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 86, Folder No. 5. Ferdinand to Countess Victoria Solms, Princess of Leiningen from 10 Feb 1941.

29 Ref. 28. F. Göndör to Ferdinand from 2 Feb 1941.

30 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 108A, Box 86, Folder No. 4. F. Göndör to Ferdinand from 8 July 1940.

of State Forests with Ing. Biringer, with whom I discussed all the matters concerning Sv. Antol, timber, hunting and Predná Hora. They promised me that the repairs to Sv. Antol will begin in spring, as soon as it is a bit warmer, there is less snow and they have the appropriate materials, especially for the installation of the water supply and bathrooms, since this material must be obtained from the Protectorate."³¹

For these reasons, it was arranged that during the last part of the winter from February 1941 until spring or April, he would live in the building of the Directorate of Forests in Banská Bystrica. The air in Coburg had long been unsuited to his health, since it had a negative effect on his heart, while the mountain, but not high mountain air of central Slovakia was good for him. In the end, the reason that he would escape before the celebrations of his special birthday, and precisely to Slovakia, did not sound very sincere from Ferdinand's mouth, especially for those, who knew him well. His dislike of celebrations from the side of his "*Franconian fellow-citizens*" was obviously much more sincere.

Fortunately, Ferdinand did not succeed in escaping from the celebrations. It was not possible to avoid the celebrations, especially when many ignored the event and the Bulgarian press behaved "*shamefully*". It was similar with Gančev. He sent wine and opera singers, but this only exasperated Ferdinand, and he forbade the planned production on the grounds that it was only throwing away money. On his actual birthday, the "*lecher*" Gančev did not point it out, and entirely ignored his superior, giving no idea of where he was. "*I am entirely sick of insults*" roared Ferdinand, "*all my anger is directed towards the 'lecher' [...]*". In spite of this, the Slovaks honoured Ferdinand in an unprecedented way. They prepared for him an unparalleled homage of military and official character. On the morning of 25 February, a special government train set off from Bratislava to travel to Banská Bystrica. It carried various ministers from the Slovak government. "*It was magnificent*" enthused Ferdinand over his experiences in Banská Bystrica, "*I have not experienced such celebrations for 25 years. The guard of honour, minister, generals, crowds, the whole town full of flames, eighty on the church towers and houses, 26 great church services [...] a whole corps of offices, a great banquet on Saturday, gala performances, warm-hearted speeches, people having the greatest pleasure. This as a real escape after 25 years of humiliation.*"³² Things continued in a similar way on the next day, Ash Wednesday: reception of deputations, girls dressed in white and "*old-fashioned town hussars*". In the evening, Ferdinand finally withdrew to the mountains, from where a sudden severe attack of Ferdinand's rheumatism drove the honoured guests.³³

It was very much worse with the replies to congratulations, which Ferdinand, helped by Maria Haberbosch, produced over the months following the birthday. A letter has survived, in which Ferdinand replies from Slovakia to the congratulations of the well-known peace activist Jekaterina Karavelovová, a member of the International League

31 CDA, Monarchičeskí institút, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 86, Folder No. 5. F. Göndör to Ferdinand from 2 Feb 1941.

32 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A14 – letter from 9 March 1941. On this also: CDA, Monarchičeskí institút, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 87, Folder No. 1. Ferdinand to Count A. von Oberndorff from 1 April 1941.

33 CDA, Monarchičeskí institút, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 86, Folder No. 5. Ferdinand to E. Schacht from 31 March 1941.

of Women for Peace and Freedom and wife of the Bulgarian politician Petko Karavelov. Full of bitterness, he states that in spite of expectations that he would celebrate his eightieth birthday in Bulgaria, he had celebrated it in Slovakia, far from the country where he had done so much work, and with the modern history of which he was inseparably connected. He had prepared and sown the seed for all today's harvests. Although he did not expect a national holiday, neither did he expect such a harsh fate. He recapitulates individual milestones such as the Sarajevo assassination and harsh peace of Neuilly and professes his faith in divine justice.³⁴

Apart from several shorter stays at Predná Hora, where winter was still at its peak, Ferdinand remained surrounded by the "friendly people" in a "quiet little Slovak town" as he describes Banská Bystrica. He also celebrated Easter there in April. The town had various advantages. It had a beautiful location, which the ex-Czar often emphasized: "The nature here is magnificent, with its rich vegetation and birds, [...] and you do not have do without the 'blessings' of civilization. Foxes and bears are not uncommon [...]"³⁵ From here he could monitor the reconstruction work at Svätý Anton. The town also suited him because the collegiate church there was heated and Ferdinand praised the liturgical ceremonies as "extraordinarily correct and with the right approach".³⁶ Ferdinand was generally very satisfied with his cooperation with church representatives in Slovakia: "The clergy here are extremely likeable, including the bishops and the majority of the deans and parish priests, who I have known personally for years and who are linked to me by friendship." In this context, he was pleased to mention the pompous celebration of the anniversary of the accession of Pope Pius XII, held on 12 March 1941 in St. Martin's Cathedral, Bratislava, with the participation of the president, government, diplomatic corps and bishops. "It was a ceremony worthy of Rome itself. I was in my stall and I was delighted by the liturgical image."³⁷

Ferdinand's accusations against Gančev soon came onto the agenda again. This time, instead of endless grumbling, the new octogenarian commented at least with his famous humour: "Now I would like to be a flea and on a dog jump into the palace at Coburg. The 'lecher' is deliberately writing only political notes, without a word about Bürglasse or about what he does, where or with who he disappears at Easter."³⁸

After the Easter celebrations, Ferdinand jumped away to his hunting castle at Predná Hora. The mountain environment there promised him much. Although he also stopped at Sliač and found some beautiful plants there, one of his letters finally ends with the obligatory complaints about his health, and the new statement that things are already

34 Ferdinand to Jekaterina Karalevovova (February – March 1941). In MINČEV, D. – BILJARSKI, C. (eds.). *Iz tajnija archiv na balgarskija car Ferdinand I* (From the secret archive of Czar Ferdinand I of Bulgaria). Sofia 2001, p. 162-163.

35 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 110, Box 87, Folder No. 4. Ferdinand to O. Leege from 7 April 1941.

36 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A15 – letter from 6 April 1941.

37 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 87, Folder No. 1. Ferdinand to Baroness A. von Cramer-Klett from 26 March 1941.

38 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A15 – letter from 6 April 1941.

darkening and he does not know what is coming... It was interesting that with the complaints about his stomach, heart, eyes and rheumatism a few weeks later he mentioned Doorn, the small rural settlement in the Netherlands, where the last Kaiser of Germany Wilhelm II had found a place to live in exile and had died a short time before.³⁹

In spite of the complex economic situation, Bulgaria, meaning its political elite, had not forgotten Ferdinand, but continued to provide him with money and goods, understandably from state money. In March 1940, the Sofia court got Lufthansa to transport a package of goods for the ex-Czar worth 22,500 leva to Coburg via Berlin. In January 1942, the Bulgarian prime minister Bogdan Filov demanded the calculation of a specific sum in Swiss francs, which would enable Ferdinand to live a decent life in Slovakia. He literally wrote: “*since he was forced to live there*”, they obviously thought by circumstances. The surviving records of payments for post to Ferdinand’s address are evidence that the deliveries were continual.

Bulgaria was also not forgotten in Slovakia. On the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of the independence of Bulgaria, an academic evening was held on 3 March 1941 in the Bratislava Reduta concert hall, with the participation of the Slovak – Bulgarian Society, the Bulgarian academic society *Rakovski* and the Svorad Choir.

In March 1941, the Bulgarian monarch Boris III made another fateful decision – he joined the Pact of Three and enabled German troops to enter Bulgarian territory. Thus, Bulgaria again placed itself on the wrong side in a world war. However, nobody could guess this at the time. Ferdinand had called for this step for months. He accused his son of hesitation and claimed that the delay only reduced the credit of the country. A clear pro-German position from the beginning would have succeeded much better. According to Ferdinand, he had not spoken (about politics?) with Boris for two years.⁴⁰

Ferdinand sent a telegram to congratulate his son, clearly in connection with the long awaited step. On 24 April, Boris replied with a telegram to Banská Bystrica. He thanked his father for the congratulations on the favourably developing events for the Bulgarian nation, and believed that, with God’s help, they would achieve the culmination of the great national work, into which they had put their greatest strength.⁴¹ In connection with replies to congratulations, Ferdinand was certainly pleased to get a “*really nice reply*” from Hitler, or to be praised in a letter from Göring.

However, Ferdinand did not remain delighted with the new international situation for long. A few days later, he was already expressing himself as an old man, full of self-love and conviction about his historic role, when, with unconcealed jealousy and injured pride, he commented on the first results of the “new” Bulgarian policy: “*Today came the terrible news, that both brothers [his sons Boris and Cyril – R. H.] are promenading through Thrace and are celebrated. But he who achieved everything, sits alone feeling terrible, with legs full of water and in a miserable room [he was living temporarily in Banská Bystrica during the reconstruction of Svätý Anton – R. H.] as a poor exile. My bile is raised by anger and disgust. My magnificent work, newly created before the eyes*

39 Ref. 38.

40 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, B – Briefe und Mitteilungen des Zaren an verschiedene Empfänger, B06 – letter from 28 Jan 1941.

41 NEDEV, Nediu. *Car Boris III.* (Czar Boris III.). Sofia 1997, p. 483.

of the world, is now being implemented by people, who previously did everything to thwart it! They are praised [...], but the real author lies alone and abandoned as a beggar in a poor hole! Is there no justice?"⁴² In the father – son relationship, it is really an expression of the greatest egoism and vain thinking, as if Ferdinand did not know how to think dynastically. However, every monarchy is based on the principle of continuity.

In his correspondence, Ferdinand only rarely commented on international politics. In a letter to a former diplomat, he stated: "*I consider myself to be a spectator, who observes from here [Slovakia – R. H.] the huge events again shaking the world. I also hope that old Europe will soon be able to find its pre-ordained route to a newly shaped order and community.*" He asked about events in "*our former neighbour*" namely former Serbia or Yugoslavia, and added, not admitting his minimal influence: "*I never stopped warning the powerful in Berlin against their incomprehensible favour towards Serbia.*"⁴³

At the turn of May and June 1941, both sons – Czar Boris and Prince Cyril visited Ferdinand at Muráň on the occasion of his recent eightieth birthday and his nameday on 30 May. The minister Chandžiev accompanied them. "*Where the visits of His Highness the Czar and His Highness the Czar-Father are concerned, only a brief official announcement appeared in the newspapers. No commentary appeared. Italy showed the greatest interest, apparently in connection with an older announcement that His Highness wanted to travel to Germany*" as the Bulgarian Embassy informed the minister of foreign affairs and religion Ivan Popov.⁴⁴ We know details of the visit from the report of the District Office in Banská Bystrica to the Centre for State Security. According to this report, the Bulgarians travelled in two cars. On the evening of 29 May they met the President of the Slovak Republic Jozef Tiso and the prime minister Vojtech Tuka, who had also come to offer their congratulations. The discussions certainly did not revolve only around Ferdinand. The gendarmerie station at Muráň dealt with the security for Ferdinand and his guests, and its detailed reports are a valuable source of information for us.⁴⁵

Ferdinand's reflections are also interesting. The visit of "*both brothers*" (his sons) and "*both presidents*" (Tiso and Tuka) made him extremely exhausted. There were three days of difficult discussions and three days without a single woodcock.⁴⁶ When nobody noticed him, it was bad, but in the opposite case it was no better. What actually gave pleasure to this permanently discontented man? As a present, his two sons brought a slide projector with 500 colour slides of the whole of Bulgaria. Ferdinand again saw

42 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A19 – letter from 27 April 1941.

43 CDA, Monarchičeskí institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 87, Folder No. 1. Ferdinand to Count A. von Oberndorff from 1 April 1941.

44 Report of the Bulgarian Embassy in Slovakia from 31 May 1941. Cited according to: RYCHLÍK, Jan. Politický vývoj na Slovensku v rokoch 1940 – 1941 v správach bulharského diplomata Konstanina Šišmanova. (Political development in Slovakia in the years 1940 – 1941 in the reports of the Bulgarian diplomat Konstantin Šišmanov). In *Historický časopis*, 1995, year 43, no. 3, p. 559.

45 CHURÝ, Slavko. Dokumenty slovenskej proveniencie o stykoch s Bulharskom v rokoch 1919 – 1945. (Documents of Slovak origin about contacts with Bulgaria in the period 1919 – 1945). In *Slovanský prehľad*, 1990, year 76, no. 6, p. 498.

46 Ferdinand superstitiously believed that if they shot a woodcock, they would live to see the following year.

Vrana, Euxinograd, Kričim and many other interesting natural localities, “*something magnificent*”.⁴⁷

The discussions of the Bulgarian guests with Tiso and Tuka allegedly had only a private character. The newspapers wrote about Bulgarian – Slovak friendship and the Cyrilo-Methodian Christian tradition. The Czar and Tiso also visited the Papal nuncio. In Bratislava, intellectuals said jokingly over wine, that perhaps Tiso wanted Cyril Prince of Preslav as King of Slovakia or at least as prince as a balance to the Crown of St. Stephen. These ideas were not entirely new, and in private circles, they were already developed after 1921 by the new Bishop of Spiš Ján Vojtaššák. The Coburgs impressed him and he occasionally met Cyril, the person he could imagine on the Slovak throne. The Coburgs were patrons of various churches, and it was naively supposed that the great powers would not intervene against them, the way they would against the Habsburgs. It was clear that the idea of monarchism, the closeness of the Coburgs to the Slovaks and Slovakia, as well as the continual confrontation with the mentally foreign republicanism, could have evoked similar illusions in the ranks of part of the Catholic hierarchy. However, Bishop Marian Blaha of Banská Bystrica did not like the Coburgs and he rejected such ideas.⁴⁸

Almost twenty years later, the geopolitical and Slovak situation was entirely different. Something mentioned only marginally and more as a matter of interest in connection with the discussions between the Bulgarian and Slovak leaders, gained an entirely different dimension thanks to the observant diplomacy of Hungary. In June 1941, information about the possible accession of Cyril to the Slovak throne leaked from the environment of the Slovak Embassy in Berlin. The source was allegedly the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Boris was alleged to have discussed the whole matter with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini at the beginning of June. On 19 July, Boris III again stopped in Bratislava and had talks with Tiso and Tuka while returning from Berlin.

Since the possible change of constitutional form being quietly considered behind the scenes in 1941, could have consequences especially for Hungary, the Hungarian ambassador in Bratislava Lajos Kuhl began to hunt for the details. The Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially denied the rumours about the possible establishment of a monarchy. The head of the Propaganda Office Alexander Mach gave journalists his word of honour that nothing like that was being discussed. However, Tiso’s private secretary Karol Murín confirmed the discussions of a monarchy to Kuhl. He added that the Italians supported the plan, which corresponded to good Italian – Bulgarian relations, but the Germans were putting serious obstacles in the way of the whole plan. The Italian ambassador in Bratislava confirmed the reports about discussions. The German ambassador Hans Eluard Ludin also informed Kuhl that he had heard of the plan, but when he visited Tuka, the latter had denied everything.

Kuhl had to investigate further. It was clear that a sort of buzz existed and it had a real basis. According to the Hungarian diplomat, a king from a foreign dynasty could

47 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A20 – letter from 2 June 1941.

48 DIMITRIJEVIČ, Teodor. *Bič boží*. (The scourge of God). Brno 1924, p. 346-347.

strengthen the independence of Slovakia, and by being above party, he would have sufficient authority, certainly more than the existing president. The conclusion Kuhl sent to Budapest stated that on his second visit to Bratislava on 19 July, after returning from Berlin, Boris must have known that the Germans were opposed to this plan. The discussions behind the scenes clearly already had only the anti-Hungarian function of making Budapest uncertain. The Coburgs might really be concerned with the unsolved problem of their property in connection with this plan, but Kuhl did not exclude that Sofia had offered political support against the Hungarians, which would be a political game worthy of the Coburg family tree. The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked their diplomats in Sofia to make enquiries, but nobody there knew or confirmed anything. Therefore, the Hungarian ambassador in Bulgaria assumed that Ferdinand might stand behind the whole plan, that he was pursuing the success of himself and his whole family.⁴⁹ This conclusion may have corresponded to the truth more than the attribution of such a plan to the Slovak political elite. Such a fantastic sounding “experimental balloon” really corresponded to Ferdinand’s “sense” of reality and it is more than questionable whether the Slovaks would have agreed to accept a non-Catholic monarch, even with German support.

According to the memoirs of Aristid Jamnický, there were further behind the scenes discussions of a Coburg on the throne of a planned Kingdom of Slovakia at the end of 1941. The bearer of this idea was a group of alleged royalists headed by the advocate and businessman Štefan Ravasz. The entry of the USA into the war had changed the geopolitical situation, and it was necessary to consider that if the Allies won the war, the political map of Europe would also change. According to these fantastic considerations, Slovakia would allegedly have a greater chance of more advantageous survival as a kingdom. Especially Cyril was considered as the candidate for the throne. However, when the creators of these plans learnt about his Bohemian nature and expensive lifestyle, and that usurers in Sereď had already given him only half the money he asked for a bill of exchange, their enthusiasm for Cyril quickly left them.⁵⁰

In July 1941, in the framework of the echoes of Ferdinand’s celebrations, the community of Muráň proposed to grant him honorary citizenship. The reasons given were his general popularity among the population and the fact that his person had contributed to spreading the good name of the community. The community turned to the artist Štefan Bednár with a proposal that he should paint the diploma. He went to the University Library to study the family and heraldic connections. He produced a diploma with Ferdinand’s coat of arms and the coats of arms of all the related families. The personal secretary of His Highness personally brought the thanks of the Czar for this work to Bratislava. He invited him to the Hotel Carlton and over French cognac, alternately standing up, they exchanged polite sentences about thanks, recognition and pleasure. “*As we alternately stood up and sat down and made noble statements*”, recalls Bednár, “*it came into my*

49 According to JANEK, István. Alternatíva slovenského kráľovstvo v 20. storočí. (The alternative of a Slovak Kingdom in the 20th century). In *História*, 2006, year 6, no. 5, p. 11-12.

50 JAMNICKÝ, Aristid. *Oprášené histórie* (Dusted off History). Bratislava 2002, p. 197-198.

mind that it was like in a puppet theatre. I wanted to smile, but I coughed, quickly drank the cognac and looked moved."⁵¹

In July 1941, after overcoming his exhaustion from the celebrations, we find Ferdinand again active. As a result of constant storms and rain at Predná Hora, a social element appears in his letters for the first time: "*The heavy cereals lay flat on the ground and the people are lamenting the wet weather.*"⁵² From Predná Hora, where he enthuses over the nature and butterflies ("*such crowds of butterflies I have never seen in my life*"), and every two hours he experiences a terrible storm with lightning, which reminds him of the often mentioned storm in Rio de Janeiro, he plans his immediate programme. He travels to Muráň, from there to Anton for five days and he finally anchors himself in the Grand Hotel at Trenčianske Teplice, where he had to meet Maria Haberbosch, who travelled with Hertha Gruss, Ferdinand's mistress of the time, via Nuremberg, Vienna, Bratislava and Trenčianska Teplá the day after him. Although he was still ill, had problems with his stomach and was not eating, he was pleased to see Maria. At last, he would have somebody to complain to, he could forget his many difficulties and take an interest in the difficulties of others in little bits of gossip.

He immediately got better and the spa began to have an effect. He perceived the beauty of the Váh region, its numerous castles and nature. "*Charming countryside, excellent trips. The valley of the Váh is a kaleidoscope of history from the Middle Ages to the Thirty Years War; numerous fortresses and ruins offer excellent possibilities for trips [...]*"⁵³ And not to mention botany...

Exactly a month later, Ferdinand was still at a spa, this time Piešťany, and already without Maria, thanks to which we know from his letter that he had problems with a cardiogram, inflammation of the stomach wall ("*I cannot drink even the smallest amount of alcohol*"), a strict diet, and the doctors did not like his frequent arrhythmia of the heart. Ferdinand was also exasperated by property matters and the slow reconstruction work at Svätý Anton.

Ten days later, at the request of his secretary, he devoted special attention to the dog Dunčo: "*He is my only comfort, only he feels with me in these terrible pains [problems with teeth – R. H.]. We are both entirely alone, he knows very well that I am very ill. When I whine with pain at night, he comes to me and puts his head on me and looks at me comfortingly. During the day, he is always at my feet, following my every step, now he is sitting with me by the table and is with me [...]* especially when we two are alone, he shows his great satisfaction."⁵⁴ Ferdinand was about to go to Predná Hora, where his own "empire" and his friend Waldi awaited Dunčo. He hoped that peace would prevail between the two dogs. It is clear that this was an important part of Ferdinand's world and, certainly not by accident, Maria Haberbosch's wish was clearly welcome to him.

51 BEDNÁR, Štefan. *Bohém hľadá vlasť*. (A Bohemian in search of a homeland) II. Bratislava 1984, p. 28

52 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A21 – letter from 17 July 1941.

53 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 109, Box 87, Folder No. 1. Ferdinand to Amalia de Portugal from 4 Aug 1941.

54 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, A – Handschreiben des Zaren an M. Haberbosch, A23 – letter from 27 Aug 1941.

Even before departing for Poprad and cold Predná Hora, Ferdinand wanted to catch the premier of *Rusalka* in the Bratislava opera. The prepared performance stimulated him to remember the theatre at Coburg, the beautiful performances, warm-hearted personnel and his own box immediately by the stage “*like no person in the world has*”. Even Vienna and Bratislava did not compare to Coburg.

The reconstruction of the mansion at Svätý Anton devoured a large part of Ferdinand’s finances. Everything was adapted to raising the quality of life of the ageing Ferdinand, and in his letters he often mentioned the slow pace of the work, for which Ferdinand blamed Gančev and his long-term official František Göndör: “*Poor Göndör pulls with the general on one rope [...] the lecher only thinks of his cock and leaves me in the lurch.*”⁵⁵ In April 1941, Ferdinand had to leave the Directorate of Forests in Banská Bystrica, where he had his temporary seat, running water and more or less satisfactory conditions for life, and move to Predná Hora during a snow storm. Again, he was hard on Göndör, who had not secured other accommodation, and he threatened that “*I must speak with that idiot, because I may never see him. I have a lot of questions, also about Anton, where he has still done nothing! He is to blame for everything, and before I see Bürglass again, I want to bathe at Anton[...]*”⁵⁶ The large swimming pool at Anton was probably the largest investment in the reconstruction of the mansion and Ferdinand was very enthusiastic about it. Discussions and quarrels with Gančev followed, but instead of dealing with matters, Gančev travelled back to Berlin, where he had his “work”. In fact, we know what it is really, wrote Ferdinand sarcastically.

A few months later, Ferdinand travelled from the Piešťany spa to a special service celebrated by the Bishop of Nitra Karol Kmeťko in Nitra Cathedral. What followed is of interest to us: “*Then we all travelled sadly to Svätý Anton, to find there devastated halls and a freezing cold store of furniture. In the middle of the courtyard, under the laurel trees of the Brezák family [the castelan there – R. H.], we had lunch. At four in the afternoon, we ate an ice cold breakfast and in honour of the day, we drank two half bottles of Kupferberg Gold. The court adviser was the only person, who understood the mood of the day. Then we all sadly returned to the poor hotel, covered in clouds of dust, blessed by herds of cattle and clouds of geese. All our staff became ill with tonsillitis, which appeared to have an epidemic character in the hotel.*”⁵⁷ Thus Svätý Anton was still a very long way from being finished. “*A nice future*” commented old Ferdinand bitterly, in anticipation of a hard winter.

There was further pain from rheumatism and eyes, a terrible winter at Predná Hora, and problems with post, since it took up to five days for a letter to come from Coburg to one of Ferdinand’s mansions in Slovakia as a result of delays in Coburg or Vienna, not Bratislava. Problems with Gančev continued. He decorated and honoured without the knowledge of his superior (!) and was not able to travel from Coburg to Muráň even in 5 or 6 days (!). In addition, Dunčo again had worms (“*entirely fresh spaghetti*”). The year 1941 ended with depression.

55 Ref. 54, A17 – letter from 15 April 1941.

56 Ref. 54, A 18 – letter from 17 April 1941.

57 Ref. 54, A22 – letter from 17 April 1941 and A23 from 27 Aug 1941.

The following year 1942 brought some changes for the better. An important moment for Ferdinand was the day of the granting of an honorary doctorate by the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the University of Erlangen “*for great merit in the development of the natural sciences*”. He had founded five natural science institutions only in Bulgaria. Soon after this graduation ceremony, he received honorary citizenship of the town of Coburg as an appreciation of his services to the town and its representation. The old monarch loved such acts. In connection with the development of relations between Slovakia and Bulgaria, Czar Boris III awarded President Jozef Tiso the highest Bulgarian decoration: the Order of Cyril and Methodius, in 1942.

However, there were also painful experiences. When Ferdinand left Slovakia in 1942, he experienced on his return journey in Germany very strict checks on his car because of the escape of the French resistance General Henri Giraud from imprisonment near Dresden. Ferdinand always felt humiliated by official acts, which did not take into account his importance and position.

By the end of 1942, Svätý Anton was already well on the way to being habitable according to Ferdinand's demands: “*I am ready to abandon Predná. That means preparing everything for Anton and finally making order in Anton. I was already entirely alone there for a week, so that I could have the rooms decorated and test the stoves, which are still not really satisfactory. I am faced with difficult times, and I am ill and blind. I can hardly write [...]*”⁵⁸ A journey to Anton and Vienna awaited Ferdinand, but he wanted to avoid Ebenthal in Lower Austria because of strong fear of winter in a cold castle. With increasing age and rheumatic problems, winter became his main enemy, and the winter of 1942 was one of the coldest recorded in Slovakia with minimum temperatures never surpassed since. Gančev was a sort of second enemy. He added the obligatory complaint that he is “*hiding*” in Berlin, and he is robbing his master (“*what pains and afflictions for me*”). However, he switched to a pleasanter course. It was not the best time for hunting, but he still shot a deer, with damaged antlers but a giant! Dunčo had a great time in the “*wilderness*” at Predná Hora, accompanying his master everywhere and never wanting to be separated from him. He was cool and reserved towards Waldi. His greatest joy was the bitch Vonka from the nearby settlement, and then to be with his master in the car, but alone.

In January 1943, Waldi was shot near Šumiac by a forester from Červená Skala, because he was chasing a young deer. The dead dog was immediately buried on the orders of the forester. However, when Ferdinand learnt of the incident only in May, because Göndör had forgotten to inform him, he ordered that the remains of Waldi should be dug up and ceremonially reburied at Predná Hora in a place where he liked to sleep.⁵⁹

By the end of 1942, Ferdinand had decided to spend the winter in Slovakia at Svätý Anton, “*in this vast and scarcely habitable mansion [...]* alone in the old castle of my ancestors [...] *Here I inhabit two small rooms, I have bought two tile stoves in the village, to warm my rheumatic old bones. We live here without radio and without post [...] without telephone, so that news of world events comes to my ears only occasionally, when a*

58 Ref. 54, A27 – letter from 19 Nov 1942.

59 Ref. 54, A28 – letter from 20 May 1943.

courier comes from Coburg [...] through Bratislava and Banská Bystrica [...], to overburden me with letters and old newspapers. ⁶⁰ His daughter Eudoxia entertained him for a few days while travelling from Germany to Sofia. However, Ferdinand finally spent most of 1943 in Slovakia. His health problems accompanied him more faithfully than any of the people close to him. A grey cataract appeared on his left eye, but the doctors did not recommend an operation.

In February 1943, when Ferdinand was not “at home” in the mansion at Svätý Anton, the minister Július Stano unexpectedly appeared after making a speech at the Hlinka School in Banská Štiavnica. He looked round the rooms of the mansion, including the chapel, where he played the old organ, and was satisfied with what he saw: *“When he left, he said that he was very pleasantly surprised with everything he saw here. He had not expected it to be like this.”* ⁶¹ Svätý Anton had been cleaned, the childish mistakes in the heating had been successfully removed, the stoves from February already functioned and the rooms could at last be adequately heated.

In March 1943, Ferdinand personally inspected the state of the mansion. It is unknown where he was in April, but from the beginning of May 1943, we again find him in Slovakia, where he spent long months at Svätý Anton and Predná Hora. The obligatory woodcock for 1943 was, in his words *“a master piece”* and cost him much pain. For more than a week he was in the forest twice a day unsuccessfully. It is possible that hunters “helped” him, just to make sure.

On 16 May Ferdinand participated in the consecration of Bishop Eduard Nécsey in the Cathedral of St. Emerám in Nitra. The consecration was done by Bishop Karol Kmeľko with the assistance of bishops Andrej Škrábik and Michal Buzalka. President Jozef Tiso and the representative of the Holy See Giuseppe Burzio came as guests. A special lunch was then held in the episcopal castle of Nitra. The secretary to the president Karol Murín arranged the guests according to protocol with Tiso as head of state in the place of honour and Ferdinand to his right. However, Ferdinand stated with unconcealed anger: *“I have the only head in Europe anointed with chrism [consecrated oil – R. H.], so the first place belongs to me.”* ⁶² Thus, from May, Ferdinand was again among the Slovaks and he was certainly at last satisfied with Anton. Perhaps this was why he made his longest stay in Slovakia.

His son Czar Boris visited him at Anton in August 1943. Nobody even dreamt that this was the last time. Boris was in a difficult situation. Italy wanted to get out of the war, and after Stalingrad it was clear that Germany’s Eastern Front was in a critical state. There was a threat that the horrors of war would come to the Balkans. In answer to a question from one of Ferdinand’s officials, Boris compared his situation to that of the driver of a car. He does not know what is waiting around the next corner. He was in an even worse position because a driver knows the state of his vehicle, something about the

60 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 110, Box 87, Folder No. 3. Ferdinand to unknown from 14 Jan 1943 and to Prince Hohenlohe from 30 Jan 1943.

61 Ref. 60, Folder No. 4. A. Brežáková to Ferdinand from 22 Feb 1943.

62 MURÍN, Karol. *Spomienky a svedectvo*. (Memories and testimony.). S. I. 1991, p. 149

country and he can read signs warning of danger. A king does not have such signs on the road of ruling his state.⁶³

Ferdinand and Boris stayed in the mansion at Svätý Anton with a suite numbering about 30 people. In spite of the war and general problems with supply, their Supreme Supply Office provided inaccessible goods of all kinds, including coffee, tea, chocolate and cocoa. Ferdinand's permanent hunter Vojtech Kováč also remembered the short visit to Predná Hora with Boris, who thanked him personally for his loyalty and care for the Czar-Father. Afterwards, six luxury limousines – the first with Ferdinand, the second with Boris and the rest with German military dignitaries – drove away quickly.⁶⁴ Ferdinand then stayed at Muráň and in the small spa of Štubnianské Teplice.

Soon after visiting Slovakia and meeting his father, Boris III made an official visit to Germany. After meeting Hitler, it must have been clear to the Czar that he was leading the country to a catastrophic end. After returning to Sofia, the physically and psychologically seriously afflicted Bulgarian monarch died suddenly in mysterious circumstances on 23 August 1943. During the last critical days and nights, when Boris varied between consciousness and agony, Ferdinand was kept regularly informed about the state of health of his son through the Bulgarian Embassy in Bratislava.

According to one source, Ferdinand was in Štubnianské Teplice when he learnt of the death of his son, according to another, he learnt of it in Bratislava from the Bulgarian ambassador. The stoic calm with which he received the news stuck in the mind of the ambassador's wife. She attributed this to his egoism and vanity.⁶⁵

Ferdinand immediately travelled to Svätý Anton, from where he telegraphed to Sofia that as a result of his advanced age and impaired health, he must, with the deepest regret, give up a personal farewell to his son. I guess that this was also to pre-empt and not be humiliated by any prohibition from Bulgaria. However, he certainly was affected by health problems, the international situation and fears that he would complicate the internal development in Bulgaria.

On 24 August 1943, Ferdinand and leading state and Church representatives participated in the funeral of the Catholic Bishop Marian Blaha at Svätý Kríž nad Hronom. A week later, the deputy prime minister Alexander Mach was the main speaker at the harvest festival in Krupina. He mentioned the death of the Czar and the assembly piously honoured his memory. This was repeated at ceremonies in other towns. After the end of the Krupina celebrations, Mach, accompanied by the head of the county administration and other figures, went to nearby Svätý Anton to present their condolences to the ex-Czar in the name of the government. Among the condolences, we find messages from the chief of protocol of the German Foreign Office at Hitler's headquarters, and from Count Rudolf Pongrácz of the mansion at Krasňany near Žilina.

63 BEHRENS, Joachim. *Der Magier auf dem Throne*. Coburg 1953, p. 49.

64 According to BEVILAQUA, Ferdinand. *Osobný jäger cára Ferdinanda Coburga*. (The personal hunter of Czar Ferdinand of Coburg). Bratislava 1997.

65 Private archive of Maria Haberbosch Coburg, M-Biographische Entwürfe über das Leben des Zaren, M 2.1. – Biographisches ("Stories") ab 1918, p. 6; CONSTANT, Stephen. *Foxy Ferdinand 1861 – 1948. Tsar of Bulgaria*. London 1979, p. 329.

The death of his son was one of the final blows in Ferdinand's hard life. Few joys remained for a person at his age. They included especially railways and forests. He had very close and correct relations with the minister of transport and public works Július Stano, also in relation to his interests. In September 1943, when Ferdinand travelled to Vienna, it was enough for him to come by car to Hronská Dúbrava, and from there he continued to Bratislava in a saloon carriage provided by minister Stano. In the same year, they performed the ceremonial start of work on construction of the narrow-gauge railway from Hronská Dúbrava to Banská Štiavnica. In October 1943 Ferdinand visited eastern Slovakia. He travelled from Bratislava in a modern train and accompanied by the minister of transport, he stopped at Vernár for his personal hunter Vojtech Kováč. They initially forgot to stop and the train had to return to the station. The aim was to travel on the new railway line from Kapušany near Prešov to Strážske. Ferdinand was officially welcomed at Prešov station by minister Stano, and they travelled together along the whole track from Prešov to Humenné. As the press wrote: "*they recognized the work done and enjoyed the technical progress, which present-day Slovakia can be proud of*".⁶⁶ On the return journey from Strážske, Ferdinand met bishops Jozef Čárský and Pavol Gojdič. After a fine lunch, the train continued on its journey and Ferdinand officially parted from the minister Stano at the station of Červená Skala.

* * *

Apart from Ferdinand's old love – railways – his relationship to forests never left him. Late in the summer of 1943, Ferdinand, aged more than 80, again appeared in his favourite Slovak hunting grounds. He began to add the adjective "*last*" to all his activities: his last hunt, last roebuck, last Christmas in Slovakia. He spent them in the company of the two nearest and dearest women of his period in exile: his long-term secretary Maria Haberbosch and the young Slovak Alžbeta (Erzsi) Brezáková. The first took care of Coburg and the court there, the second filled the Slovak solitude for him. She was the daughter of the castelan at Svätý Anton, who had served at the court in Sofia before 1918, and been a member of Ferdinand's staff at Coburg up to 1924. Alžbeta helped the old monarch with small everyday activities, nursed him and accompanied him on trips. Her loyalty, admiration and respect undoubtedly impressed Ferdinand. His experience, wisdom and position undoubtedly impressed here. At this time, Alžbeta replaced at Ferdinand's side the already mentioned Hertha Gruss from Munich. She accompanied the old monarch not only on journeys in Slovakia, but also in Germany.

In spite of his health problems and loneliness, Ferdinand felt well in Slovakia. The mountains full of flowers and animals, nice people and the comfort of the restored Svätý Anton made it possible to partly forget his personal problems and the unfavourable international developments. Many places still reminded him of his youth, and many experiences from his carefree childhood.

66 Cár Ferdinand bol v Prešove. (Czar Ferdinand was in Prešov). In *Slovenská sloboda*, no. 6 from 23 Oct 1943. In the publication: BEVILAQUA, ref. 64, p. 52. The event is incorrectly dated to 1938.

Towards 1944 the sources dwindle away. Ferdinand came to Slovakia in March and stayed until the autumn. Maria Haberbosch probably remained at Ferdinand's side until the late summer, so we lack detailed information. The situation was becoming complicated and everybody looked towards the future with fear. Germany was ever more frequently the object of destructive air raids, but the situation in Slovakia was no longer simple either. Nervousness about the developments at the fronts was not very successfully hidden and the internal political situation was silence before the storm. "*Suspicious elements*" appeared in the mountains, and from March 1944 we already have information about securing protection for the former monarch from partisans in the surroundings of Svätý Anton.⁶⁷ This did not help for long and the partisans came into the immediate surroundings. However, they respected the inhabitants of the mansion and one evening, a group of armed men came to the mansion on horses with the aim of meeting Ferdinand. He had already gone to bed, but because of the insistent guests, he got dressed and met them.

Danger already lurked everywhere in the surroundings and difficult times came to Ferdinand. There was nowhere to hide from the horrors of war, and the news from Bulgaria was not encouraging. A ciphered telegram from 25 March 1944 has survived. It was sent to Ferdinand by his son Cyril, at this time member of the Regency Council, through ambassador Ilia Belinov in Bratislava. It describes shocking details of an Allied air attack on the royal palace at Vrana. As a result of incendiary bombs, the two upper floors of the new palace were burnt out and only pictures and furniture had been saved. The young Czar Simeon with his sister were protected in an air raid shelter.⁶⁸

In a general reply from Svätý Anton to various reports from Cyril, Ferdinand first of all expressed his indignation over the destruction of Sofia Zoo (!) It was his own pride and the pride of all Bulgaria. Therefore, it was necessary to do everything to restore it as the only one in the Balkans. Only after this, did Ferdinand come to the bombing of the royal palace, which "*exasperated and offended*" him. "*I read with immense horror that Czar Simeon with his mother and sister were in such danger during the bombing of Vrana*" writes Ferdinand, whose idea of the total character of war was not very convincing according to these words. Ferdinand entirely realistically concluded: "*All this is not leading to a good end*", "*I could say much more to you [...] but I believe in your ability to lead the Bulgarian ship to a safe shore.*"⁶⁹

A further threat awaited the head of the Coburg family and ex-Czar of Bulgaria and his court in July 1944. The unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler by the group around Colonel and Count von Stauffenberg provoked repression, which stimulated fears that Hitler's anger would turn against aristocrats as such. It did not happen, but this may have been the only "good" news in the flood of problems and threats, which rolled onto Ferdinand.

At first it looked as if nothing would happen in August 1944. The church at Hronský (Svätý) Beňadik asked for a financial contribution to restoration of the chapel of the

67 CHURÝ, ref. 45, p. 498.

68 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 14, II, arch. e. 91. Cyril to I. Belinov (Ferdinand) from 25 March 1944. Also: CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 110, Box 87, Folder No. 6.

69 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 15, IIa, arch. e. 1. Ferdinand to Cyril from 2 April 1944.

Sacred Blood of Christ, and recalled Ferdinand's Koháry ancestors, who were buried in that church. Marián Kováčik from Štubnianske Teplice urged the return of some valuable borrowed books. However, then came some more disturbing news. The parish priest from Muráň interrupted his spa treatment at Korytnica, because partisans were wandering in the district and he could not make trips in the surroundings or go fishing. Attacks on a chief of the gendarmerie and a notary only accelerated this decision. Ferdinand was informed by a subordinate that partisans from Brusno had appeared at Červená Skala and taken a car with a barrel of petrol. They still had not encountered such guests at Muráň.⁷⁰

It was necessary to act. In August 1944, two lorries brought from Vienna to Svätý Anton furniture, books in valuable bindings and other valuable objects removed from Coburg properties in Austria. It appeared that it was not a provident decision, because the Uprising soon broke out in Slovakia and military operations began. In reality, thanks to the fact that the mansion at Svätý Anton was spared direct fighting, this step had the result that we can still admire a remarkable collection of the most varied furniture and objects in the beautiful interiors there.

When Ferdinand parted from Bishop Michal Buzalka in August and from Bishop Andrej Škrábik in September, especially Buzalka believed that they were not parting for the last time. However, the reality surpassed even the blackest expectations of Ferdinand's pessimism about life.

After the outbreak of the Uprising at the end of August 1944, there was already bitter fighting in many parts of Slovakia. It was the same in Bulgaria. At the beginning of September, the Soviet Union declared war on Bulgaria as an ally of Germany, and the Red Army entered the territory of Bulgaria. A popular uprising broke out and installed the government of the Patriotic Front. Meanwhile, Soviet troops entered Sofia. In this situation, Ferdinand wrote one of his last letters from the mansion at Svätý Anton to the people close to him on 24 September 1944. He emphasized that he had decided to remain "*here!*", and he stated with irony that he was "*well protected*" against the "*new forces*", which, for example, also used his personal cars: "*Otherwise I am very sick and my strength is declining from day to day.*" He believed that his son (Cyril) and daughters were still alive, and he concluded with the hope that they would be protected from all the dangers surrounding them. He was living in the expectation of a terrible future. "*We will meet in the other world*" he added.⁷¹ On the next day, he wrote a similar letter saying goodbye to his court adviser Slámo. He hides nothing here, because he writes that he will soon no longer be seen. It was obvious that he had already decided to leave Slovakia.

Disturbing news from the surrounding mountains penetrated into the idyllic castle ever more frequently. Regular fighting everywhere in the surroundings and the approaching front contributed to the decision to abandon formerly safe Slovakia. Ferdinand

70 Correspondence from CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 110, Box 87, Folder No. 6.

71 CDA, Monarchičeski institut, f. 3k, op. 18. Reel 110, Box 87, Folder No. 6. Ferdinand to the people close to him from 24 Sept 1944 and to F. Sláma from 25 Sept 1944.

originally wanted to stay, but Mišo Petro, one of his long-term officials, who had a son in the resistance, persuaded him to leave for safety while it was still possible.⁷²

The departure in October 1944 happened in stages. Since the partisans had taken two cars, the most valuable things could be put in only two cars, and with a German escort provided by the supreme commander of the German forces in Slovakia, General Hermann Höffle, the convoy travelled through Vienna to reach the castle of Ebenthal in Lower Austria on 20 October. Who knows what went through Ferdinand's head as he left Slovakia? As when he left Bulgaria in 1918, did he not guess that he would never return to Slovakia?

In December 1944, General Gančev over dinner and drinks in Berlin-Dahlem, told his guests a clearly dramatized and fictionalized account of how he had led a battle group to liberate the old Czar from the partisan uprising in Slovakia. The Czar lost only four luxury cars. At the same time, the commander of the partisans was allegedly Ferdinand's administrator.⁷³ Had he got confused about Mišo Petro?

What has Ferdinand left in the Slovak historical memory? Above all, the fact that few crowned heads had such a close relationship to Slovakia, its inhabitants and its forests as Ferdinand of Coburg. He was also a much travelled and cultivated man. Even among the Habsburgs, who were at home here until 1918, nobody had a comparable emotional relationship to the country and people of the territory of Slovakia. Not surprisingly, Ferdinand became a firm part of the historical memory of the older inhabitants of the surroundings of Štiavnica, the upper Hron valley and Gemer. He retained this position, although the times were not favourable to such memories. Even today, the last witnesses still remember the wooden car, even with wooden wheels on the reserved pew in the church at Muránska Huta, the former Czar himself giving out money and sweets, and the precious chalices made in Munich with Ferdinand's insignia and given to individual churches. People remember being told how his little daughters Nadežda and Eudoxia and village children chased each other around the castle at Predná Hora, and how their father had them baptized in the Catholic church of a forgotten Slovak village. They remember that all the employees in the castle at Svätý Anton bought tickets for the performance of František Krištof Veselý. They recall how a guard protected him, how he moved freely among ordinary people, how he rewarded those who attracted him, how he refused to be photographed.

72 The son, Michal Petro, born in 1916 at Šumiac, was an officer in the Supply Division, who fled from his unit in the Soviet Union to the partisans. He became one of the commanders of the First Czechoslovak Partisan Unit. At his own request, he was transferred to the Czechoslovak Army in the USSR. He came to the territory of the Uprising as an adjutant of General R. Viest. After the retreat to the mountains, he participated in the anabasis of generals R. Viest and J. Golian. He was injured in fighting and captured by the Germans in the hospital at Banská Bystrica at the end of 1944. They took him to Germany, where he died in unknown circumstances.

73 *Ein General im Zweilicht...*, Bd. 3, 1988, p. 492. The statement from the telex of the head of the security service in Slovakia J. Witiska about the situation in the country from 15 October 1944 also does not correspond to the truth: "*The former Czar of Bulgaria Ferdinand, who was liberated by German forces at Svätý Anton, will be taken to Coburg on the order of the leader of the Reich SS.*" (SUŠKO, Ladislav (ed.). *Das Deutsche Reich und die Slowakische Republik 1938 – 1945. Dokumente*. Bd. 1. Vom München bis Salzburg 1938 – 1940. Dokumente und Essay. Buch 2. Slovensko v jesene 1944. (Slovakia in autumn 1944). Bratislava 2008, p. 275).

In spite of this, hundreds of photographs remain scattered through the territories of the former Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, the USA and elsewhere, as mute witnesses of the life, mysteries, victories and failures of the father and his sons, finally only of the father, because he outlived both his sons.

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DER BULGARISCHE EX-ZAR FERDINAND UND DIE SLOWAKEI (1939 – 1944)

ROMAN HOLEC

Nach 1934 gewährte die Tschechoslowakei dem ehemaligen bulgarischen Zaren Ferdinand Coburg die Nutzung von Teilen seines ursprünglich im Rahmen einer Bodenreform eingenommenen Familienbesitzes. Ferdinand fährt daher jedes Jahr regelmäßig aus seinem deutschen Exil in die Slowakei, um hier zu jagen, zu botanisieren sowie zur Kur. Er hält sich konsequent von der Politik fern, dies ändert sich jedoch zum Teil nach dem Entstehen der Slowakischen Republik. Einerseits stellt die slowakische Regierung Teile des von Ferdinand genutzten Besitzes deutschen politischen Eliten zur Verfügung, andererseits vertieft auch Ferdinand seine pro-deutsche Orientierung und damit auch den Kontakt mit den Vertretern des neuen Staates. Hierzu tragen auch das Bündnis und freundschaftliche Beziehungen zwischen der Slowakei und Bulgarien bei, wo seit 1918 Ferdinands Sohn Boris III. regiert.

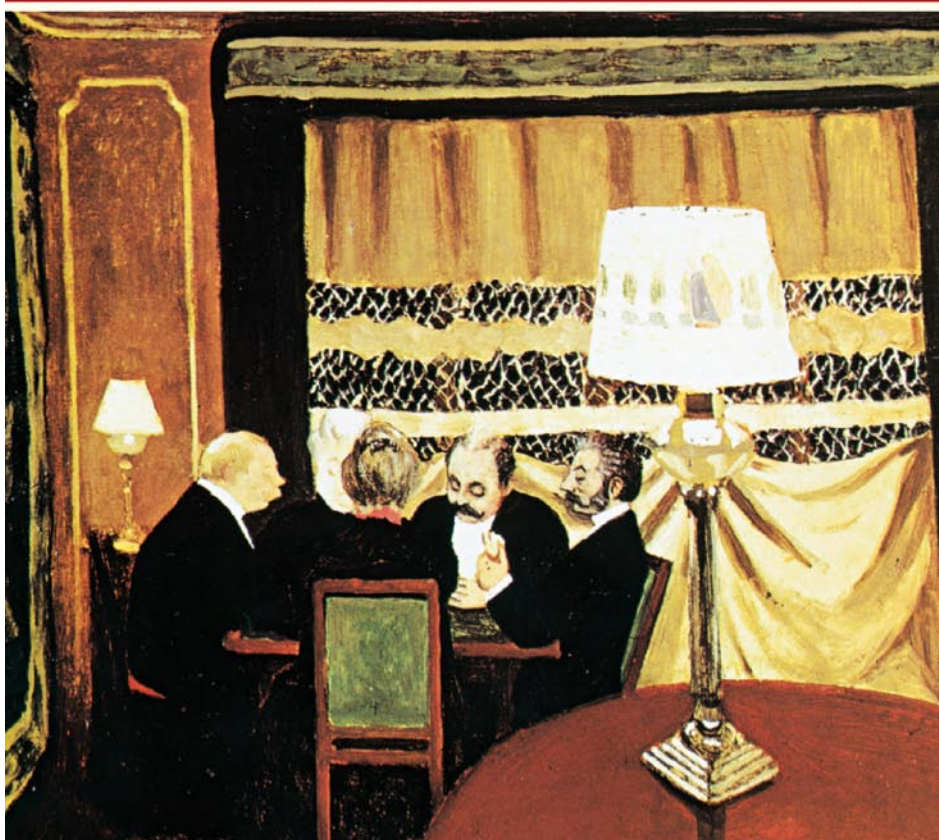
Die Studie befasst sich mit den längeren und kürzeren Aufenthalten Ferdinands in der Slowakei, mit seinen privaten Vorlieben, den aus seinem Gesundheitszustand und der Situation in seiner unmittelbaren Umgebung hervorgehenden Problemen sowie mit seiner politischen Haltung und seinen Kontakten mit den politischen Spitzen der damaligen Slowakei. Der Beitrag stellt eine Mikroanalyse eines im 19. Jahrhundert geistig verwurzelten Aristokraten und Herrschers in den Wirren des Zweiten Weltkrieges und der slowakischen Geschichte dar. Die Studie greift auf bis jetzt nicht verwendetes und zum Teil unbekanntes ausländisches Archivmaterial zurück und bringt viele interessante Hintergrundinformationen zu Ferdinands Beziehungen zu dem slowakischen Regime und dessen Vertretern zum Vorschein.

Ferdinand verlässt die Slowakei endgültig nach dem Ausbruch der Slowakischen Nationalaufstandes im Oktober 1944, um nie wieder zurückzukehren. Im Geschichtsgedächtnis bleibt er als ein das Volk und die Natur der Slowakei liebender Herrscher erhalten.

STOROČIE

ŠKANDÁLOV

Aféry v moderných dejinách Slovenska



THE END OF ECONOMIC REFORM IN 1960s CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND SLOVAKIA

MIROSLAV LONDÁK

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The aim of the study is to examine, on the basis of documents in the National Archives of the Czech Republic, the final part of the process of economic reform developed in Czechoslovakia almost from the beginning of the 1960s. After the invasion of the occupation armies in August 1968, its end was definitively decided, in spite of the fact that there was still some verbal support for the continued development of the economic reform and some space for the presentation of theoretical views that were not in harmony with the official policy. In this period during 1968, as well as during the so-called pre-spring, Slovak economists formulated some interesting views.

History. Czechoslovakia. Slovakia. Economic Reform.

The deep economic crisis of the beginning of the 1960s in socialist Czechoslovakia was a great surprise to the leadership of the state. It came at a time, when the state already officially bore the name “socialist”, and it was assumed that after the founding period and after overcoming the first crisis of the regime in the first half of the 1950s, no dramatic changes could be expected. However, precisely in the period of euphoria from the achievement of relatively good economic results in the second five year plan (1956 – 1960), and economic crisis came and the representatives of the regime could not explain it. As a result, they allowed discussions and enabled the economists to undertake a theoretical analysis of the functioning of the economy of the time. This eventually led to the recognition that only new economic reforms could secure economic growth in Czechoslovakia, raise the standard of living of the population, and prevent further deepening of backwardness in comparison with the developed capitalist countries. This was the origin of Šik’s economic reforms.

Analyses by economists in the period 1963 – 1965 outlined the existing form of the Czechoslovak economy. According to them, the negative features were connected with the so-called administrative-bureaucratic system of management. They saw a starting point in its replacement with the so-called economic system of management.¹ Although some authors already produced various “heretical” ideas in this period, it was still not a

1 O. Šik and other Czechoslovak theorists followed the views of the Polish economist W. Brus. For further details see BRUS, W. *Modely socialistického hospodářství* (Models of the socialist economy). Prague 1964. On contemporary analyses of the state of the Czechoslovak economy see: LONDÁK, M. – SIKORA, S. – LONDÁKOVÁ, E. *Predjarie. Politický, ekonomický a kultúrny vývoj na Slovensku v rokoch 1960 – 1967*. (The Pre-spring. Political, economic and cultural development in Slovakia in the period 1960 – 1967). Bratislava : Veda, 2002, p. 203 etc.

matter of radical criticism, according to which the socialist social system and the economic sub-systems corresponding to it, inevitably lay behind all economic problems.

As the chief theorist of economic reform, Oto Šik gradually outlined a route to change in his works² – understandably it had to be reform within the framework of the given, then existing social system. He theoretically justified the need for the existence of socialist market relationships, from which further relevant conclusions flowed.

Obviously in the existing political conditions, preparation of the reforms took a number of months and their basic premises were put into practice only with great difficulty. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ) approved the principles of the economic reforms at its session in mid January 1965. The system of a planned economy had to be supplemented with features of a market economy. In future, the plan would only determine the main outlines of the development of the hitherto directly managed economy. Independent socialist enterprises had to do business in the market and be exposed to its pressures, also in the international context. These principles began to be applied experimentally, and from January 1966, the number of obligatory tasks imposed on enterprises by the central plan was radically reduced – from 1,338 in 1964 and 1,122 in 1965 to 48 indicators, which were centrally monitored.³

In spring 1966, the group of reformists led by O. Šik proposed a plan for rapid introduction of the new system of management. They started from the idea that the way out of the economic problems had to be sought in revival of the enterprise sphere, because in the implementation of reforms, gradual steps had no importance, and the enterprises needed to be quickly exposed to the demanding conditions of the market. This programme began to be implemented on 1 January 1967 by measures, which included a general restructuring of wholesale prices. The price restructuring was intended as one of the most important steps in the implementation of the reforms. It involved an adjustment of prices of raw materials, basic materials, labour and services with the aim of moving towards more just relations between different groups of products, and between retail, wholesale and international prices. According to the authors of the reform, the aim was to, at least, partially overcome the distortion of economic relations generated by many years of application of the so-called administrative-directive system of management.⁴

However, the proportions of individual prices were not ideally set and so some enterprises made unjustified profits. When the first important reform measures were implemented and many enterprises began to get richer, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia became afraid and the “black day” of the reform process happened. The profits of enterprises were administratively confiscated, so that they would not

2 For example: ŠIK, O. *K problematice socialistických zbožních vztahů*. (On the problem of socialist commodity relations). Prague 1964.

3 Cited according to ŠULC, Z. *Stručné dějiny ekonomických reforem v Československu (České republice) 1945 – 1995*. (A brief history of economic reforms in Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic) 1945 – 1995). Studie národohospodářského ústavu Josefa Hlávky. Studie 3/1996, p. 48.

4 From 1 January 1967, three categories of prices were introduced: fixed prices paid for the basic necessities of the population, especially agricultural products and materials with a decisive influence on the creation of the final price to the consumer; free prices would be paid in the sectors, where competition would be given more influence, fashionable innovations and so on; and limited prices would be set by agreement between suppliers and customers within the limits of centrally determined limits.

become richer than the state. Thus, the economic reforms stopped in the spring of 1967, instead of accelerating. On the basis of this, the group of reformist economists around O. Šik came to the conclusion that economic reform would only succeed in the future if it was associated with real democratizing political reform in Czechoslovakia.⁵

In the first months of 1967, the reformist economists already prepared a further basic measure – the socialist enterprise act, but it struck against the barrier of the existing regime.⁶ A working group for the question of the position of the enterprise was established at the State Commission for Management and Organization under the leadership of Professor Jiří Řezníček. The first program positions were prepared in January 1967, and already in May, Josef Toman submitted to the Economic Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the first integrated report on the suggested place of the socialist enterprise in the economy.⁷ It was intended as the basis for the Socialist Enterprise Act.

However, this material was not concerned at all with the activity of the party and trade union structures in enterprises. The plenary session of the ÚV KSČ was expected to concern itself with them, and to decide about the given legislation. At first, this was expected to happen in autumn 1967, then in January 1968. However, the general wording of the proposed act suggests that the influence of the party structures on the management of individual enterprises would be much less decisive than in the preceding period.

These were all innovations and naturally incompatible with the existing method of running the economy, in which the Communist Party had the decisive word. A large number of bureaucrats from the middle level of management, general directorates, ministries and so on, who would lose their comfortable positions, began to fear the changes.⁸ There was no doubt that appropriate political conditions had to be prepared for putting these plans into practice.

At its session at the beginning of June 1967, the economic commission of the ÚV KSČ did not completely reject the proposed new position for the socialist enterprise, but passed a resolution that the proposals should be further considered on the basis of comments, and later submitted to a session of the ÚV KSČ. In the given political system, problematic questions were often delayed indefinitely by this method, or simply forgotten.

The September plenary session of the ÚV KSČ was supposed to discuss the problem of development of the economy and standard of living. A. Dubček used this opportunity to make a speech starting from various analyses by expert institutions and devoted to the

5 KURAL, V. – MORAVEC, J. – JANÁČEK, F. – NAVRÁTIL, J. – BENČÍK, A. *Československo roku 1968. I. díl: obrodný proces.* (Czechoslovakia 1968. Part I: the renewal process). Prague 1993, p. 19.

6 Národní archiv České republiky (National Archives of the Czech Republic) (hereinafter NA ČR), fond (fund) (hereinafter f.) 10/4, svazek (dossier) (hereinafter sv.) 8, archivní jednotka (archive unit) (hereinafter a. j.) 16.

7 NA ČR, f. 10/4, sv. 10, a. j. 19.

8 In 1964, during preparation of the reforms, it was expected that shifting the centre of gravity of the work of the ministries from operational to supervisory management would lead to a reduction of the bureaucratic apparatus by 20% – 25%, or in optimal conditions by up to 50%. NA ČR, f. Kancelář 1. tajemníka ÚV KSČ Antonína Novotného (Office of the First Secretary of ÚV KSČ Antonín Novotný), carton (hereinafter c.) 137.

impact of the economic reforms on the Slovak economy in the first half of 1967. He was especially concerned with the regional problem, if we use the terminology of the time, but his speech placed the evaluation of the influence of the economic instruments of reform on the Slovak economy in a wider context. He pointed to the contradiction between the sources of labour and their growth on one side, and the distribution of investment on the other. These contradictions had existed for a long time in the framework of the existence of the planned socialist economy, as I already pointed out in the preceding text. A. Dubček also emphasized that in the coming period, this contradiction would deepen, and that the central authorities expected mass migration for work from Slovakia to the Czech Lands, as the supporting materials showed.⁹

According to Dubček it was not logical that the adequate supply of labour in Slovakia appeared to be a problem in this period. If society could not productively use its population, it was not possible to speak of having an intensive economy. About 100,000 women could enter the work force in Slovakia at this time, but jobs for them were lacking, especially in processing industries. The situation for finding enough jobs for the 15 year old school leavers was also problematic.

Dubček also mentioned in his speech further factors, which could, in his view, become a basis for positive economic growth in Slovakia. A significant part of the raw materials and products traded with the USSR and other Eastern European states were transported through Slovakia. He also considered that the role of the Danube as a transport artery was important. The sources of energy in Slovakia were growing, the gas industry was developing, it was possible to make further use of water resources, and other sectors of the national economy were also promising. However, according to Dubček, it was still necessary to do much to ensure that this basis would be raised to a higher level, to create conditions for strengthening the processing industries and increasing production of finished products.¹⁰

When evaluating the effect of the instruments of economic reform, A. Dubček stated several times that their influence on promoting economic growth in backward regions of

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- 9 “71% of industrial investment in our economy is going to the Czech regions, but in terms of growth of the labour force, they represent only 30% of the growth in the whole state. 29% of industrial investment is going to Slovakia, but 70% of the growth in the labour force of the whole state is found here. These proportions are not temporary. In the period 1976 – 1980, Slovakia will provide as much as 80% of the growth in the labour force of the state. I think the way forward cannot be sought in migration for work from Slovakia to the Czech regions, as required by page 49 of today’s supporting materials. Although it is considered that something more than 100 thousand people could leave Slovakia to work in the Czech regions by 1980, the extent of migration will involve perhaps half a million people – when we do not include the obvious matter of 90 – 100 thousand people, who go to work in the Czech regions – I want to emphasize that this is mainly what I am talking about and what I want to say – and it is obviously necessary to see that the state of the national economy already needs this as a result of unused capacities – that regardless of anything else, the decisive balance of the growth of labour resources will continue to be in Slovakia, but the job opportunities for their productive use are being created to a relatively smaller extent.” Record of the plenary session of the ÚV KSČ (26 – 27 Sept. 1967). Archiv Ústavu pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR (Archive of the Institute for Recent History), p. 28-29.
- 10 H. Kočtúch wrote very similarly about the resources for further economic growth in Slovakia at the beginning of 1967 in an article in *Slovenské pohľady* and it is possible that Dubček started from him. Compare KOČTÚCH, H. Nová sústava riadenia v ekonomike Slovenska. (A new system of management in the Slovak economy). In *Slovenské pohľady*, 1967, no. 1.

the republic such as Slovakia was essentially minimal or even zero. He considered this fact especially important, because in the existing conditions of the so-called administrative-bureaucratic system of management, with most investment distributed from the centre, insufficient employment had been created in Slovakia in relation to the development of the population.

However, in practice, it appeared that after introduction of the first measures of economic reform, instead of the planned 28% of state investment in industry in the first half of 1967, Slovakia would only get 21.9%. Further negative tendencies also appeared – an even smaller share of investment would go to processing industries than before, and the share of finished products would further decline.

For example, according to the directives of the current five year plan, as presented by A. Dubček at this forum, the amount of investment in processing industry in Slovakia would fall by 1970, both in relative and in absolute figures.¹¹ The low level of production of finished products in Slovakia also caused lower effectiveness of industry in comparison with the Czech regions. Slovak economists systematically pointed to this fact and expected its correction.¹²

According to the parameters for economic reform set by the central authorities, development would happen mainly on the basis of enterprise resources. Therefore, if at the given time, Slovakia had only 21% of the whole state's industrial production, and the economic instruments to support backward regions had minimal positive impact, then positive changes could not be expected in the future.

This was also pointed out by A. Dubček, according to whom, in spite of insufficient use of the labour force in Slovakia, there was no real effort to continue the removal of economic differences, because if they were only going to transport raw materials through Slovakia and there would be no increase in production of finished products, significant economic growth could not be expected, and Slovakia would not reach the economic level achieved in the Czech regions. Dubček also emphasized in his speech that he was not thinking only of the situation in Slovakia, but of the inadequate achievement of the aims of the whole of society. If the economic preconditions for growth in Slovakia were not adequately used, it would have negative consequences for the whole state.

Presented in this spirit, Dubček's speech was understandably not only a message about the economic situation in Slovakia in a period, when the first steps towards economic reform were being put into practice. It also testified to the consequences of the

11 It is clear from the supporting materials prepared for this session, that the central authorities realized that the main problem for the development of Slovakia in the given period was the creation of jobs. This was true for the years 1968 – 1970 and looking ahead to 1973. In the period 1968 – 1970, 70.9% of the whole state's investment in industry would go to the Czech regions, although it was clear that in the period 1971 – 1975, Slovakia would produce 60 – 80% of the growth of the industrial labour force. Therefore, page 48 of the supporting material stated that the given level of unfinishedness in Slovakia up to 1973 could not secure employment opportunities for perhaps 40 – 50 thousand people. NA ČR, f. Kancelář 1. tajemníka ÚV KSČ Antonína Novotného, c. 81, p. 47-48, supporting material for discussions of the ÚV KSČ in September 1967.

12 Compare: ŠTEFANSKÝ, M. Niektoré aspekty ekonomicko-sociálneho vývoja na Slovensku. (Some aspects of economic and social development in Slovakia). In *Slovenská spoločnosť v krízových rokoch 1967 – 1970*. Zborník štúdií I. Bratislava 1992, p. 117-118.

political position of Slovakia, given to it by the so-called asymmetrical constitutional arrangement and, in the terminology of the time, by the effects of the administrative-directive method of management of the socialist economy.

At the same time, if A. Dubček's speech was devoted mainly to the problems of the Slovak economy, it was certainly not only because, L. Štrougal, at that time the secretary of the ÚV KSČ and the main speaker at the plenary session, did not mention specific Slovak problems at all. Dubček's speech had a deep political undertone, because the criticism of economic development in Slovakia at such a forum fell on the head of the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Immediately after the end of the September session of the ÚV KSČ, Antonín Novotný expressed to Dubček in a personal conversation, his disagreement with the speech and with the fact that it became the subject of a meeting of the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ.¹³

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No significant shift in the development of the economic reforms occurred up to the autumn or the end of 1967. This problem was not specially considered at the plenary sessions of ÚV KSČ, and the Socialist Enterprise Act was not discussed in December 1967, as had been originally planned. The conceptually worked out materials show that in this period, the authors of the economic reform considered that the most urgent task was to renew the functioning of the market in all decisive spheres of the economy, with the aim of securing the optimum combination of plan and market.¹⁴ Renewal of the functioning of the market and real value relations was thought to be essential for securing economic balance, but it also had to be the logical culmination of the introduction of the new system of management. From the long term point of view, the material content of the economic reform also had to include deliberate adaptation of external economic relations to the conditions of the international exchange of goods with the aim of its widening in the field of convertible currencies. It was considered logical that the basic route by which the influence of the world market would be applied to the external economic relations of

13 At the September plenary session, discussion returned to the problem of economic reform and to the "regional problem". L. Štrougal also reacted to Dubček's reservations. He confirmed the existence of certain problems in Slovakia, for example, in connection with the employment of women and young people. Their solution was allegedly being prepared. On movement of the labour force, he stated it would happen to an increased extent in the coming period, but it would not only involve movement between Slovakia and the Czech regions, but also between individual regions and so on. On regional problems, he stated that they were not only the problems of Slovakia, but problems concerning the whole state. It was also necessary to solve the problems of other regions, for example, of South Bohemia. According to Štrougal, some of the Bratislava economists were expressing simplified views, which could not be accepted by the central authorities, because allegedly "*they do not provide a real starting point for the solution of this problem in real time and within the real possibilities*". Cited according to the record of the plenary session of the ÚV KSČ (26-27 Sept 1967). Archiv Ústavu pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, p. 139.

14 In spring 1967, the Economics Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences devoted an extensive study to the problem of economic imbalance. This analysis confirmed the economic imbalance in Czechoslovakia at the time, and saw it as a result of the existing directive system of management. The new system of management could be successfully applied, only if the old system was overcome and the functioning of normal economic relations was established. NA ČR, f. 10/4, sv. 8, a. j. 17.

Czechoslovakia, would be the direct adaptation of internal prices to world prices. This would understandably influence the whole economy by means of exports and imports.¹⁵

Such a comprehensive conception of economic reform would understandably have far-reaching influence, and not only on the whole economic sphere. As a result, it was rejected not only by supporters of A. Novotný, but also by those party functionaries, who thought that Czechoslovakia had to implement without any reservations, the model of socialism applied after February 1948, not to mention the bureaucrats, for whom reform meant liquidation or, at least, a substantial reduction of the so-called middle level of management. After Dubček's leadership gained control of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the problem of economic reform was one of the important system questions, but on the other hand, social groups that rejected it were beginning to form. A negative attitude to economic reform in Czechoslovakia was also arising beyond the frontiers of the state.

The functionaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other "fraternal" parties were observantly watching the preparation of the reform, its aims and its gradual implementation. On 5 February 1968, the Soviet ambassador in Prague Stepan V. Chervonenko was already saying to the Hungarian ambassador, that one of the main problems facing Czechoslovakia is the question of reform of the management of the national economy, because in his view "*the basic question is whether they want to preserve and whether they will succeed in preserving the system of the centrally planned economy in Czechoslovakia*".

Chervonenko also said that the responsible functionaries would soon have to decide whether they would renew the system of a centrally planned economy, or whether they would apply the system of management based on the use of economic instruments, which would form a unified system from the highest level to the lowest. With reference to a conversation with A. Dubček, the Soviet ambassador expressed the view that the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had still not formulated a conception and did not know how to find a good solution.¹⁶

The attitude of functionaries of the German Democrat Republic was also very critical, especially where Šik's theories were concerned. During the celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the February events of 1948, Günther Mittag expressed the view that if such theories really became the practice of economic policy, it would be very dangerous for Czechoslovakia, and would actually mean a return to the market economy "*with all the consequences*".¹⁷ It was already clear to the top representatives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, that implementa-

15 NA ČR, f. Kancelář 1. tajemníka ÚV KSČ Antonín Novotného, c. 141. If critics of the economic reform often stated that its authors relied only on the automatic action of the market, this can easily be refuted. In the prepared materials, the authors of the reform started from the assumption that even if economic balance was already established, it would be impossible to rely on "*the market automatically securing the rational development of prices, wages, income of enterprises and so on, in the coming period*".

16 Cited according to VONDROVÁ, J. – NAVRÁTIL, J. et al. *Mezinárodní souvislosti československé krize 1967 – 1970. Prosinec 1967 – červenec 1968*. (The international connections of the Czechoslovak crisis 1967 – 1970. December 1967 – July 1968). Brno 1995, p. 45.

17 Ref. 16, p. 57.

tion of the intended economic reforms in Czechoslovakia could significantly damage the existing “*socialist system*” and lead to its collapse as a whole.

At this time, some of the efforts of the reformers, which became part of the Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia at the beginning of April 1968, were still not known. According to the programme, democratization in the economic field would especially bring independence to enterprises. They would be relatively independent from the state, which would enable them to be oriented towards fulfilling the interests of the consumers, and would allow various social groups the right to formulate and defend their economic interests.

According to the Action Program, economic reform in harmony with the effort to pass the Socialist Enterprise Act was supposed to aim at such a type of economic mechanism, which would be based on the market position of the enterprises as autonomous economic units. Ownership of socialist enterprises exclusively by the state had to be replaced by democratic enterprise bodies with specially defined legal powers in relation to the management. Workers’ collectives would unambiguously perceive the results of positive or inept management of enterprises. The management structures, namely directors and other responsible functionaries, would be responsible to the democratic bodies of enterprises, which would appoint them to the leading positions.¹⁸ The collective enterprise bodies in enterprises would significantly contribute to their everyday management, and to shaping conceptual plans for the more distant future. In this period, O. Šik also became a supporter of such a conception of enterprise management, although he had originally supported the so-called managerial type of management of enterprises. In May 1968, already as deputy prime minister responsible for the further development of economic reform, he called for the creation of workers’ councils, at the assembly of the Czechoslovak Economics Society. In his view, these councils had to be the enterprise authorities of these socialist enterprises, and so they did not have to be similar to such self-administering bodies, as were appearing at that time in socialist Yugoslavia.¹⁹

Šik’s call did not remain without response. Collective bodies, councils of workers began to appear quickly and spontaneously at individual works, with the aim of bringing the problems of enterprises closer to the people, removing the cumbersome, bureaucratic tradition of management of enterprises, bringing it closer to the ordinary workers and so breaking the alienation, which had prevailed for years in the socialist economy, in spite of the proclaimed social ownership of the means of production. With the aim of, at least, moderating this trend, on 28 May 1968 the leadership of the ÚV KSČ and its secretariat adopted temporary framework principles for the establishment of collective enterprise authorities in enterprises. The government would deal with the issue later and consider the comments of the party body.²⁰ According to these principles, workers’ councils were perceived as an important measure for implementing enterprise autonomy, removing bureaucratic and directive forms of management of the enterprise sphere and their intro-

18 *Rok šedesátý osmý v usneseních a dokumentech ÚV KSČ.* (The year 1968 in resolutions and documents of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia). Prague 1969, p. 126-127.

19 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 72, a. j. 90.

20 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 72, a. j. 90.

duction in practice was understood as a significant step on the way to democratization of the whole national economy.

Practical implementation of the prepared legislation on socialist enterprises and enterprise councils would undoubtedly have meant a radical breakthrough in the existing methods of managing economic organizations in Czechoslovakia. It would have opened the way to the independent activity of individual enterprises in the market and perhaps also internationally. It would also have forced them to carry on a harsh struggle for survival and for customers in a competitive environment. If enterprises had really gained the right to decide independently about production programmes, this would have been favourably reflected in the structural changes, the Czechoslovak economy urgently needed. In May 1968, the political leadership also expressed the need to further develop the economic reforms by making O. Šik deputy prime minister, responsible for implementing the reforms.

Various aspects of the economic reform were discussed at this time in many expert journals. The main obstacles to its further development, apart from time, was the absence of a competitive environment in the Czechoslovak economic space, the lack of a capital market, frequent changes of the rules governing the functioning of enterprises, the various exceptions to them, not to mention the international political conditions, which were unfavourable to its further development. Up to August 1968, its basic principles were not really put into practice. Legislation about socialist enterprises and workers' councils was not adopted.

In the period immediately after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact, the solution of conceptual economic questions was understandably not a priority of the political representatives. In spite of this, the view still prevailed that there were no reasons why important processes such as further development of the economic reforms could not continue. At first it was assumed that the foreign armies would only stay in Czechoslovak territory for a short time. Many people in Czechoslovakia still lived in the conviction that the atmosphere of the reforms could be preserved even in the new conditions after August 1968, and still did not admit the possibility of their end.

In spite of the emerging internal political struggle, which was manifested at the plenary session of the ÚV KSČ in December 1968, the speech of the prime minister Oldřich Černík indicated that in economic policy one of the next steps had to be implementation of legislation on the socialist enterprise. The legislation on the conditions for socialist enterprise had to be prepared. Also in the case of other tasks, which the government had allegedly prepared – tax reform and a new conception of price policy – it was clear that the view of the executive component of power on economic reform and its necessity if the economy of the country was to be revived, had not changed. Černík's speech also gained support in the form of a resolution of the ÚV KSČ, which stated that the federal government had to work out and submit for approval a proposal “*to define the position of the socialist enterprise*” and to evaluate the experiments in collective bodies of the enterprise council type.²¹

21 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 86, a. j. 137.

The Slovak economist and secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia V. Pavlenda also participated in this discussion. According to his contribution, he expected economic reform to continue, in spite of some critical comments. At this forum, Pavlenda repeatedly criticized especially the fact that when preparing the reforms, they had overlooked the Slovak reality and still identified the Czech situation with the whole state. In his view, some degree of spontaneity and lack of conception had appeared in the implementation of the reforms. This may have been a result of the fact that the developments in the country in 1968 had been excessively hectic.²²

However, it was an undeniable fact that the Socialist Enterprise Act, which was already being prepared early in 1967, had still not reached the stage at which it could be approved as legislation. If this did not happen up to August 1968, it was caused mainly by the fact that the enemies of Šik's reform were not only to be found in Kremlin, but also on the domestic political scene, where it was obstructed by significant groups of officials, because it threatened their existence. We already mentioned that a high percentage of bureaucrats in the so-called central component of management were faced with losing their "warm places", not to speak of the workers in the apparatus, who were concerned with the economic sphere. This meant tens of thousands of officials, working in the economic ministries, general directorates and the apparatus of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.²³

In this sense, the economic reforms had really reached the stage at which their further destiny was decided and for various reasons. In a short time it was necessary to show how occupied Czechoslovakia, in the new political situation, would be able to develop or implement reforms. Moreover, after adoption of the constitutional act on the Czechoslovak Federation on 27 October 1968, the question came into the foreground from the beginning of 1969: to what degree would the ideas of the Slovak political representatives and Slovak economists, who so enthusiastically entered the discussion about reform in spring 1968, be fulfilled.

The hopes and expectations of Slovak experts in the area of economic reform proved to be illusory. The majority of their proposals, which were summarized in Kočtůch's conception of an economic and political federation, were not put into the constitutional act, and some of them remained only in the form of general outlines. Only the actual reality after January 1969 would show how far the constitutional act would contribute to positive changes, either in connection with the constitutional position of Slovakia or in the area of its economic growth.

On the Slovak side, the supreme party body, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, concerned itself with the economic problem in mid December 1968. A working material with the title *Economic instruments in the new system of management*, which evaluated the existing state of the reforms especially in relation to

22 Slovenský národný archív (hereinafter SNA), f. ÚV KSS, c. 1 217. For more details on the development of the views of Slovak economists on the economic reforms and their impact on the Slovak economy see: LONDÁK – SIKORA – LONDÁKOVÁ, ref. 1, p. 199 etc.

23 NA ČR, f. Kancelář 1. tajemníka ÚV KSČ Antonína Novotného, k. 137. See also: BÁRTA, M. – FELDMAN, O. – BELDA, J. – MENCL V. *Československo roku 1968. 2. díl: Počátky normalizace*. (Czechoslovakia 1968. Part 2: The beginnings of Normalization). Prague 1993, p. 43.

Slovakia, was prepared for this forum, in connection with the economic reforms and their further implementation. According to the document, it was only a partial evaluation in the given period, because the complex social process was still unfinished. The reforms were bringing some positive results, but from the wider point of view of the whole society, they were not making enough contribution to the solution of economic imbalances and stimulating socialist enterprise. However, from the general point of view, the reforms are evaluated positively in the material. They are considered to concretize the relationship between the plan and the market. At this time, the reforms were still not seen as a violation of the principles of the planned economy. Insufficient implementation of the price restructuring from January 1967 was described as a serious problem. The original assumption that all enterprises would start with the same conditions was not fulfilled. Many of them undeservedly gained substantial financial resources, while others did not have enough resources for their most basic needs. As a result, various redistributions of financial resources from the centre followed.²⁴

According to the material, the situation in Slovakia was a specific problem, which had not been considered during the construction of the instruments of economic reform. *“The contradictory and negative aspects of the effects of the new system appear more strongly in the Slovak economy than in the whole state.”* Many of the problems of Slovak enterprises, in comparison with enterprises in the Czech regions, were caused by their low profitability, and clearly also by the restructuring of wholesale prices. According to the document, the decisions of the state authorities did not give enough attention to accelerating the development of Slovakia and its gradual equalization with the Czech regions.

However, this working material was not only critical, it also sought solutions to the given problems, for example, in connection with the deformations of prices or the problem of deductions. In the end, it came to the conclusion that it would be necessary *“to also investigate the appropriateness of applying a system of value added tax, which would remove some of the deficiencies in the taxation of products in the final stage of production, more fully and more justly tax the individual phases of processing and apply equal taxation of wages and profits in all enterprises”*. It also contained further concrete proposals, which would contribute to the optimal growth of the Slovak economy, for example, creation of a Fund for regional development in Slovakia, which would be a more effective instrument for supporting its development than the existing methods.²⁵

At the December session of the ÚV KSS, V. Pavlenda also mentioned in his speech the tasks, which needed to be the main part of the economic reform, especially the preparation of the Socialist Enterprise Act so that it could be submitted for approval in the first quarter of 1969. The position of enterprise workers' councils also had to be solved. According to Pavlenda, Slovakia also had to progress in this direction, with respect for its specific conditions.²⁶

24 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 1 216.

25 Ref. 24.

26 SNA, f. ÚV KSS, c. 1 217.

Reform was also discussed at an academic conference with the title *The structural problems of the development of the Slovak economy*, organized by the University of Economics in January 1969. According to Pavlenda, fears for the further course of the reforms prevailed after August 1968, but these had rapidly dispersed and since November, the party institutions “*had unambiguously formulated the need to continue the reforms in a more consistent, thought out and intensive way*”.²⁷ Therefore, the time had come when it was necessary to accelerate the theoretical working out of the principles of economic reform and establish a concrete timetable for their implementation, in spite of the complex political conditions. Pavlenda also proposed that Slovak and Czech experts should combine their efforts in pursuit of this aim. They should proceed in a similar way to that applied when preparing the constitutional act on the Czechoslovak federation, where, in his view, the concentration of the experts had proved successful.²⁸

Jozef Rosa, rector of the University of Economics, also supported the preparation of the program of economic reform for this conference. However, the program already had to suit the new conditions after the enactment of the federal constitution, so it was devoted to the problems of economic growth in Slovakia in the conditions of the new constitutional arrangement and the traditional theme of Slovakia’s equalization with the Czech regions. According to Rosa, in the preceding years Slovakia had received a level of productive investment “*lower than should correspond to the share of Slovakia in creating the national income*”.²⁹ If the strategic aim of bringing Slovakia up to the level of the Czech regions by 1980 was to be achieved, while also standing up to world competition, the national income of Slovakia would have to grow by about 10% each year. In his view, Slovakia should have developed consumer industries much more rapidly since the beginning of the 1960s, but this had not happened “*as a result of obstruction by political factors*”. Therefore, to fulfill the above mentioned aims in the coming period, the Slovak economy must quickly orient itself to growth in consumer industry, the tertiary sector and especially to building up a scientific research base. The rational use of the working age population also had to be a significant factor in the economic growth of Slovakia.³⁰

Jozef Rosa further stated that in the following years, the Slovak economy should intensively orient itself towards the most progressive use of its own resources for growth, but should also use international credit. According to him, this view derived from the economic program of the first Czech government from January 1969, which made it clear that the Czech economy would be oriented towards reconstruction of the produc-

27 PAVLENDÁ, V. K problému realizácie poznatkov ekonomických vied v praxi. (On the problem of the putting the findings of economic science into practice). In *Ekonomický časopis*, 1969, year 17, no. 5, p. 389.

28 Ref. 27.

29 ROSA, J. Zdroje rozvoja národného hospodárstva Slovenska. (Resources for the development of the national economy of Slovakia). In *Ekonomický časopis*, 1969, year 17, no. 5, p. 396. “*If from the share of 30% in the investment of the whole state, we deduct the relatively high share of investment in social consumption and activities associated with the whole state, but included in the share of Slovakia, we come to the conclusion that the proportion of productive investment is lower than should correspond to the share of Slovakia in the creation of the national income.*”

30 Ref. 29, p. 394.

tive technical base and an intensive type of investment policy. This meant that Slovakia would probably not be able to count on large surpluses of investment resources from the Czech regions.³¹

However, economic reform was not only discussed at such fora as the academic conference. At the beginning of 1969, the first government of the Slovak Socialist Republic (SSR) received an extensive working material with the title *Outline of the further progress of economic reform*, which was produced by the Commission of the Slovak National Council for management. Eighteen teams and about 200 economists – experts on both theoretical research and practice, cooperated to produce this document. Understandably its main aim was to work out theoretical starting points for further development of reform.³²

The aim of the study is not an exhaustive description of all parts of the document. However, it clearly shows that the Slovak economists still generally held the view that it was necessary to continue with the economic reforms. It stated that on the theoretical level, there had been positive movement in various areas, especially from the point of view of the place of Slovakia in this social process and in its management. According to the document, in the given stage, it was possible to speak only of the first steps towards the implementation of economic reform in Czechoslovakia, and in a certain sense also of the persistence of the directive system of management. Enterprises were fettered just as in the previous period, the strict directives were replaced by so-called economic instruments, but these did not bring enterprises real independence in their economic activities.

Centralization in their management still continued, only with different means. Therefore, according to the document, the priority for the next period was to solve the problem of the method by which the state would apply its influence in directing the economy. The situation in which the central administration decided about 100% of investment could not continue, and in the period of reform it was only reduced to 87%. They were heading for a situation in which both the state and the “*autonomous enterprise sphere*” would act in a real market, which would have special importance for Slovakia. Since it was assumed that in market conditions, differences in economic level between backward and developed regions would increase without special interventions, the material stated that the equalization of Slovakia to the level of the Czech regions would be “*unthinkable only on the basis of decisions by enterprises or with the help of state intervention*”. Therefore, it was considered essential to create a Fund for the Development of Slovakia, which would have the aim of achieving the above mentioned strategic aim.³³

A further problem of the existing economic situation was the price and deduction system. According to the document, such price deformations and the associated distribution processes prevailed in Slovakia, that the value relations were deformed to such a degree

31 Ref. 29, p. 396-397.

32 The document was published by the *Ekonomický časopis* under the title: Náčrt ďalšieho postupu ekonomickej reformy. (Outline of the further course of the economic reforms). In *Ekonomický časopis*, 1969, year 17, no. 3, p. 230-273.

33 Ref. 32, p. 230-233.

that an entirely non-transparent situation prevailed in the economy, and this was only getting deeper. The starting point was again found in the Fund for the Development of Slovakia. A new idea was the need to create a financial and foreign currency market. Moreover, since the spatial point of view was absent from the application of the economic reforms up to this point, the new economic policy of the state also had to bring change. The state finally had to realize that the policy of equalization of Slovakia with the Czech regions was also in its interests. If the centre had a real interest in equalization, it obviously could not continue the existing system of deductions, in which unified economic instruments of management “*may have an unfavourable impact on weaker regions*”.³⁴

The proposals of the Slovak economists are proof of their expert and personal position on the further development of the economic reforms in Czechoslovakia. The authors of the document were also convinced that its implementation would be a long-term process. Therefore, in this period, they considered it most important to take some operational decisions, by which they pointed out the degree of chaos in decision making. The implementation of reform should then enter a new stage. However, first it was necessary to solve the question of the position of the enterprise and the principles of socialist enterprise. Clarification of the position of supra-enterprise integration, enterprise workers' councils and the question of the role of the state in the economy, as well as the application of the economic reforms in the conditions of the federal constitutional organization, remained an integral part of this problem.³⁵

The material again pointed to the continuing problems of the Slovak economy, which had further multiplied in the recent period. The price policy had already reduced the profitability of industrial production to such a low level, as a result of the given structural reasons. This had an especially unfavourable impact on the production of basic industry. For example, the production of aluminium, nickel and so on was loss-making, while the manufacturing of finished products was given an advantaged position. However, it was still declining in Slovakia. According to the document, the problem of the equalization of Slovakia in these conditions could be secured by several routes:

1. By the creation of normal economic conditions for the sectors of the Slovak economy that are promising and have the pre-conditions for dynamic development, such as metal production, the chemical, engineering, electro-technical, consumer and food-processing industries. At the same time, price deformations in deduction and subsidy policy had to be eliminated.

2. With targeted support for dynamic sectors of production with emphasis on the processing and finalizing branches.

3. By securing an inflow of foreign capital, for example, in the form of long-term state loans, the creation of mixed joint stock companies, or buying machines and licences for passive credit.

4. By selling securities also outside the territory of Slovakia. This measure should be associated with the creation of a financial market, which would be able to secure the placing of securities with enterprises and the population.

34 Ref. 32, p. 234-235.

35 Ref. 32, p. 236.

5. By use of credit resources from the federal central bank or elsewhere.

6. By subsidies from the federal budget, for example, for the development of a scientific research base or to support investment in construction, which went beyond the interest of the national economy, or in acceleration of structural changes.³⁶

Apart from these possibilities, the document especially emphasized the importance of the Fund for the Development of Slovakia, which would be established by legislation. It had to be established by the state, which would grant it by law sufficient legal power for it to be capable of carrying out development projects in an enterprising way. It might also be able to issue obligations, by which the fund would have the right to obtain foreign loans and licences. The fund could be connected with other special funds, such as a Fund for the Development of Tourism.³⁷ In spite of the fact that the Slovak economists in this period also considered the introduction of some elements of a true market economy, they accepted the given principles of the economy and the so-called socialist state establishment. Especially after the occupation of Czechoslovakia, it was unthinkable to expect that they would present ideas about the inevitability of a complete return to a classic capitalist economy. The conviction still prevailed that the socialist economy could be reformed. This route was still not completely rejected.

Thus, the cited documents unambiguously show that even after the occupation of the country, the conviction still prevailed that it was necessary to continue with the economic reforms. However, according to Slovak experts, they had to be prepared and implemented in a way that would accelerate the economic growth of Slovakia and assist its equalization with the Czech regions in the given conditions. After the December 1968 session of the ÚV KSČ, the central institutions of the state also considered that the process of economic reform would continue. A commission headed by O. Černík was formed at the end of January 1969 with the purpose of preparing for a plenary session on economic questions for the spring. From the organizational point of view, it had to ensure that all the submitted materials were discussed by the middle of April, and the main positions of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on the development of the national economy and standard of living were prepared by the middle of May.³⁸

However, on 3 March 1969, the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic adopted resolution no. 38, which was supposed to be based on the December 1968 plenary session of the ÚV KSČ. Its aim was to establish the principles of the Socialist Enterprise Act. The act was expected to create the legal conditions for the activity of enterprises, which would act as relatively independent business entities. It would define two relatively independent spheres, namely the sphere of the state and administration and the sphere of enterprises. Enterprise councils would be introduced.³⁹ The intention was a real shift of the economic reforms to a new level. It was expected that after the proposal was approved by the party leadership, it would be submitted to the Federal Assembly

36 Ref. 32, p. 267-269.

37 Ref. 32, p. 271-273.

38 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 89 a. j. 147.

39 NA ČR, f. 02/6, sv. 4, a. j. 13.

for approval. It appears to have been the last attempt to pass legislation based on Šik's economic reforms and put them into practice.

However, on the next day, when the Executive Committee of the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ discussed the principles of the proposed act submitted by the government, it decided that the proposed act should again be discussed and revised with new suggestions and comments.⁴⁰ Essentially, this meant rejection of the proposed Socialist Enterprise Act by one of the highest party institutions. As a result the proposed act was not submitted to the Federal Assembly.

The highest leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had to discuss the economic problem at the beginning of April 1969. It happened at a session on 8 April, that is after the so-called hockey crisis, when the position of A. Dubček and the pro-reform forces in general was already severely shaken. Therefore, the discussion of economic questions was postponed without any time limit or more specific explanation,⁴¹ in spite of the fact that according to the originally approved government timetable, the proposed Socialist Enterprise Act had to be approved in the course of April and May. It was revised again after comments, and preparation of an act on small-scale personal business continued.⁴²

After Alexander Dubček was removed from the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and of the state, and after Gustáv Husák became first secretary of the party, Oldřich Černík as head of the federal government made one further attempt to pass the Socialist Enterprise Act. After some further comments, which had only to delay its preparation, the proposed act was finally completed in a new version on 29 April 1969. At the same time, the government had also prepared a proposal for the principles of an act on authorization of enterprise, on the conditions for enterprise activities and on protection of economic competition.

These proposals were discussed at a meeting of the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ on 13 May 1969, when a resolution was passed stating that in the framework of discussions, which either were not recorded or are not available in the archive materials, the proposed Socialist Enterprise Act would be revised in connection with the preparation of other legislation connected with the position of socialist enterprises. According to the valid resolution, discussion of the proposed act had to be delayed until the whole group of legislative measures was thoroughly prepared.⁴³ In this way, the Socialist Enterprise Act was actually definitively rejected and so was the economic reform process starting from Šik's theories, although this was not so clear at the time.

Although a resolution was prepared for the May session of the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ, stating that the Socialist Enterprise Act would be approved and it would start from the resolutions of the November and December plenary sessions of 1968, this alternative was not implemented. The Leadership of the ÚV KSČ also had available materials from the economic department of the ÚV KSČ, the department of party work in industry

40 Ref. 39.

41 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 91, a. j. 152.

42 Ref. 41.

43 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 94, a. j. 157.

and other institutions evaluating the proposed act. In these evaluations, criticisms of the proposed Socialist Enterprise Act or of its parts began to appear, and these criticisms gradually increased in importance. According to the critics, the proposed act did not sufficiently strengthen the function of the state in directing the economy (although this was not its aim) and in the case of enterprise councils, it allegedly went beyond the Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from April 1968, which testified to the deep undervaluing of expert management.⁴⁴ These and similar views were gradually developed and later became the basis for criticism of the whole economic reform or the social process, which had been developing in Czechoslovakia since 1963.

Husák's new party leadership attempted to consolidate its position at the session of the ÚV KSČ at the end of May 1969. Although the accepted documents show a clear trend towards the restoration of bureaucratic-directive socialism, there was still no fundamental rejection of the preceding development, which would have deprived the supporters of reform of the illusion that at least part of the reforms could be preserved in real politics.⁴⁵ However, in reality, the policy of the party leadership changed rapidly. This is also shown by the resolution of the government of Czechoslovakia from 6 June 1969, according to which the government considered it essential that all its activities should contribute to strengthening the function of the socialist state as the organ of the proletariat and the working people. Therefore, it had to actively apply the policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and socialist legality. In the complex economic situation, it was considered urgent to adopt a set of measures in the interest of strengthening the management of economic life.

Where the problem of economic reform was concerned, the resolution spoke of it in the sense that the government would formulate the principles of its further progress. It would start from analyses of the influence of reform so far and from the experience of the socialist countries with similar processes in their economies. This would lead to the gradual implementation of an integrated conception for management of the economy, based on the need to substantially strengthen the role and significance of national economic planning. This aim had to be fulfilled in a way that achieved a "*substantial increase in the economic-organizational function of the state*". In the international economic field, the need to renew mutual trust between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, as well as the other socialist countries, was emphasized.⁴⁶

The government timetable, prepared already at the beginning of June 1969, indicated that a plenary session of the ÚV KSČ devoted to economic questions would be held in the autumn. The further "development" of reform had to continue with accelerated evaluation of the experiences of the other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, East Germany and Hungary. By June 1969 they would prepare an evaluation of the Czechoslovak economic reform, and it was assumed that the Socialist Enterprise Act would be revised on the basis of the discussions of a special commission headed by Václav Valeš, established by the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ.

44 Ref. 43.

45 BÁRTA – FELCMAN – BELDA – MENCL, ref. 23, p. 70.

46 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 97, a. j. 162.

This government resolution also determined the way in which the proposed act would be revised: The parts concerned with the relationship between the state and the enterprise sphere, the party and enterprises, the influence of the state on enterprise councils and integration had to be supplemented. The position of responsible managers had to be strengthened and the principle of the choice of directors by the state confirmed.⁴⁷ This showed an unambiguous trend of retreat from the basic principles of the proposed enterprise act as originally conceived on the basis of the ideas of the original Czechoslovak economic reforms.

This new trend was unambiguously supported at the discussions of the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ on 20 June 1969, which decided that when preparing the plan for 1970, it should “include such new factors in economic management as strengthening the role of the plan, increasing the role of state direction and so on, to guarantee a change to the original state”. A new political – economic directive had to be prepared quickly and prime minister O. Černík had until the end of June to submit a proposal for new measures, which would be included in the plan for 1970.⁴⁸

The leadership of the Communist Party and the government further confirmed the direction of the “economic reforms” in Czechoslovakia with a newly formulated position on enterprise councils. Material from the government with the title *Co-ordination of the policies of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Czech Socialist Republic and Slovak Socialist Republic in the area of the origin and further activity of enterprise councils* was already submitted for discussion by the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ on 30 June 1969. According to this material, the actually existing enterprise councils had to be treated as only experimental if their activity was in conflict with the overall economic situation of the enterprise or for other serious reasons.

It also started from the view that in the field of central management, it was not possible to grant enterprise councils legal authority in such areas as the appointment and dismissal of directors, annual accounts and so on. The questions connected with the existence of councils had to be investigated during screening organized by the appropriate ministries. This mainly concerned whether the councils were acting in accordance with the model statute, which had already been reformulated by the government. For example, it included the statement that “*the enterprise council has the nature of an experiment, the results of which will be evaluated and used as a basis for the final decision on the form and content of the organs of democratic management and social control of enterprises. The activity of enterprise councils according to this statute will end when the experiment ends.*”

The model statute also stated that the activity of enterprise councils could not be in conflict with the valid legal norms, and some of these were specifically stated.⁴⁹ The essence of the document unambiguously shows that the further existence of enterprise councils was no longer planned and neither was the real development of economic re-

47 Ref. 46.

48 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 98, a. j. 163.

49 Ref. 48.

form. They were bodies with no place in the management structures of administrative bureaucratic socialism.

We already mentioned that the further conception of the development of economic reform in Czechoslovakia after August 1968 had to start from the experience of the other socialist countries. The leadership of the Czechoslovak government quickly prepared the required material and on 24 July 1969 submitted it to the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ. The material emphasized that in the analysed countries (USSR, Hungary, Poland, East Germany), the leading role of the Communist Party was consistently applied in the area of the preparation and implementation of economic reforms. Moreover, they started from the principles of socialist economics, especially the social ownership of the means of production and the resulting role of the state in the economy.

The national-economic plan was in the foreground in all the relevant countries except Yugoslavia, and none of them over-estimated the goods-money relationship, again with the exception of Yugoslavia. The most important finding in the material was considered to be the fact that *“the principles of the economic reforms of the socialist countries are generally known, and the available experiences, which the socialist countries offer, were not used when implementing economic reforms in Czechoslovakia”*. The material was personally signed by Jozef Lenárt. The resolution of the Leadership of the ÚV KSČ on this problem emphasized that the findings obtained in this way would be used in the further development of the economic system of management.⁵⁰

In spring 1969, when Husák's leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was established, it was still possible to retain the illusion that at least the spirit of the reforms could be preserved, but after the intervention of political forces against the citizens demonstrating on the first anniversary of August 1968, it was obvious that the dismantling of the reforms would soon follow. The above mentioned documents from the spring and summer of 1969 already indicated this trend. However, in spite of the ever more open criticism, the renewal process was still not condemned as a whole, and its further development was still considered, at least outwardly.

An analysis of the course of the economic reforms in Czechoslovakia from the beginning, was gradually prepared in the party structures. However, two analyses, prepared under the leadership of V. Valeš, were rejected by the National-Economic Commission of the ÚV KSČ *“for substantial conceptual-political and expert-economic inadequacies”*. In the end, the apparatus of the Economic Council of the government worked out a material *Principles for strengthening and perfecting the system of management of the national economy*.⁵¹ It was discussed on 24 October 1969.

The title already indicates the tendencies presented in the analysis. In spite of this, the National-Economic Commission did not consider its evaluation of the economic reform process to be sufficiently critical. However, the material stated that the group of theorists around O. Šik, starting from a critical view of the economic development of Czechoslovakia, gradually gained a leading position in the economic reform process and appropriated the right to monopolize interpretation of its content. The criticism consistently con-

50 NA ČR, f. 02/1, sv. 99, a. j. 165.

51 NA ČR, f. 10/8, sv. 2, a. j. 5.

tinued in this direction, with the claim that some individuals had allegedly appropriated the law and changed the original line of the party, which had been to perfect the planned management of the national economy. This was replaced with the aim of creating a “regulated socialist market economy”. According to the document, it was only a short step from there to the revision of the economic system of socialism, that is, to reviving the old conception of “democratic socialism”, which had allegedly been the platform of the opportunist and revisionist current in the workers’ movement for decades.

This gradually led to the formation of the platform of rightist opportunism in the Czechoslovak economy, with the aim of breaking up the whole of the existing system of management and disintegrating the productive base into small units, managed by the producers. According to the material, this development was not the work of only one person (O. Šik), but of various authors of the reform, who had drawn courage from each other, and gradually gained the support of the mass media. Allegedly, the ultimate aim was the view that “*it is useless to perfect something that already long ago belonged on the rubbish heap of history. The whole existing type of socialism needs to be dismantled.*”⁵²

A symptomatic feature of this criticism was an effort to preserve the so-called middle level of management – the various general directorates and managements of productive-economic units. If the principles of the economic reforms had been applied, these would have been an absolutely superfluous part of management, and they would naturally have been dissolved. If the analysis unambiguously stated that this article of management needed to be preserved, there was no doubt about what model of the socialist economy was to be preserved. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the title of one part of the criticism reads: *Renewal of the leading role of the party in the economic sector as a precondition for the further development of economic reform.*

Where the participation of the workers in management was concerned, the document set a clear principle: it was necessary to definitively end campaigns, which promised self-management and decision-making powers in areas, that required high levels of expertise or expert supervision. Changes were also needed in the area of the trade union movement, where an unhealthy tendency towards concern with protection of workers’ rights, wage demands and other interests had prevailed. The main role of the trade unions had to be political and cultural activity.⁵³

The context of this material already clearly showed that the era in which it was possible to consider the possibilities of developing the principles of economic reform, starting from the original ideas of O. Šik and other reformist economists, had ended. The criticisms of the principles of these reforms were made more precise in the course of 1970, until they finally became part of the notorious *Lessons from the crisis development in the party and society after the thirteenth congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.*

52 Ref. 51.

53 Ref. 51.

DAS ENDE DER WIRTSCHAFTSREFORM IN DER TSCHECHOSLOWAKEI
(60-ER JAHRE DES 20. JAHRHUNDERTS) UND DIE SLOWAKEI

MIROSLAV LONDÁK

Die vorliegende Studie schildert in erster Linie anhand von Quellen des Nationalen Archivs der Tschechischen Republik die Endphase der Wirtschaftsreform, die sich in der Tschechoslowakei etwa ab dem Beginn der 60-er Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts entwickelte. Im ersten Teil wird auf verhältnismäßig kleinem Raum die Vorbereitungsphase der Wirtschaftsreform lediglich kurz erläutert, da diese bereits in den früheren Arbeiten des Verfassers detailliert behandelt wurde. Aus dem gleichen Grund wird auch auf die Fragen der Umsetzung der Wirtschaftsreform in der Tschechoslowakei 1968 lediglich kurz eingegangen.

Zwar war nach dem Einmarsch der Besatzungsmächte im August 1968 das Ende der Reform endgültig besiegelt, trotzdem wurde, oftmals nur noch verbal, eine Fortsetzung der Wirtschaftsreform erwähnt, außerdem gab es einen bestimmten Freiraum für die Präsentation theoretischer Ansätze, die mit der offiziellen Politik nicht im Einklang standen. Obwohl A. Dubček seiner Führungsposition in der Kommunistischen Partei der Tschechoslowakei bereits enthoben worden war, kommen immer wieder Bestrebungen in Gang, das Gesetz über die sozialistischen Betriebe in die Praxis umzusetzen bzw. gesetzlich zu verabschieden. Anschließend wird entsprechend detailliert das Ende der Wirtschaftsreform im Lande geschildert. Die Abkehr von der Reform wird anfangs mit dem Argument getarnt, dass es erforderlich sei, die Erfahrung anderer sog. sozialistischen Länder auf dem Gebiet der Wirtschaftsreform zu übernehmen, allmählich wird die Reform jedoch vollständig abgelehnt.

In diesem Zeitraum, im Laufe des Jahres 1968, sowie im Zuge des sog. "Vorfrühlings" gewannen auch interessante Meinungen slowakischer Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Kontur, und zwar nicht nur hinsichtlich der Vorbereitung oder Umsetzung der Reform in der Tschechoslowakei. Dank einer gewissen politischen Auflockerung konnten nämlich slowakische Wirtschaftswissenschaftler auch solche kritischen Äußerungen zu der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung in der Slowakei während des sog. Aufbaus des Sozialismus präsentieren, die früher, insbesondere in den 50-er Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts völlig unvorstellbar waren.

SLOVENSKO NA CESTE K DEMOKRACII



Natália Krajčovičová

REVIEWS

KOWALSKÁ, Eva – KANTEK, Karol. *UHORSKÁ RAPSÓDIA ALEBO TRAGICKÝ PRÍBEH OSVIETENCA JOZEFA HAJNÓCZYHO. (A HUNGARIAN RAPSODY OR THE TRAGIC STORY OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT INTELLECTUAL JOZEF HAJNÓCZY)*. Bratislava : Veda, 2008, 255 pages.

An important monograph on a significant personality

The months, when sympathy for the French Revolution of 1789 – 1794 appeared and there were attempts to apply the results of this revolution in other countries, represent a very brief, unsuccessful and so also episodic but also impressive chapter in the history of the majority of European countries. The sympathizers with the French Revolution received various names including Jacobins, revolutionaries, patriots. In the Kingdom of Hungary they were called Hungarian Jacobins. What united this heterogeneous and weakly organized group of 200 – 300 people was opposition to the restoration of old practices in Hungary, and a desire to radically change political methods, the character of the state and its social structure, to introduce personal freedom and equality. These radicals had their supporters in various parts of Hungary, especially in Budapest and in western regions, Croatia and the territory of Slovakia.

The interest of historiography in the Jacobins of Hungary and their leading representatives, especially Ignác Martinović and Jozef Hajnóczy, has been very variable. Hungarian historiography has devoted most intensive attention to them. The first monograph about them appeared in 1880,¹ and a whole series of books have been published since then. Poór's edition of documents is the most recent.² These works vary in conceptual starting point and political interests, but apart from the factual subject matter, they are joined by some statements, which changed with repetition into stereotypes – as we will see, inaccurately. The theme of the Hungarian Jacobins and their ideologue Jozef Hajnóczy has also appeared relatively frequently in Croatian historiography. They appeared in Slovak historiography only in connection with anniversaries. The only exceptions are the monograph by J. Šimončič³ and several studies.⁴ Therefore, the new publication by Eva Kowalská and Karol Kantek deserves more attention, as the first Slovak work to deal with the origin, remarkable life and tragic death of the Enlightenment intellectual and Hungarian Jacobin Jozef Hajnóczy (the spellings in contemporary texts include: Hajnóczi, Hajnóczy, Hainoczy, Hainotzy, Hajnótzy, Hainotzi, Haynotzi, Haynotzy). It is already the third monograph by E. Kowalská, which deepens knowledge of the 18th century.⁵ The fact that the publication reviewed here is in a freer style and more metaphorical language shows that the author is becoming more at home in the problems of this century. Eva Kowalská is showing the ability to creatively continue the work of the

1 FRANKNÓI, Vilmos. *Martinovics és társainak összeesküvése*. Budapest 1880.

2 POÓR, János. *Hajnóczy József*. Budapest : Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 1988.

3 ŠIMONČIČ, Jozef. *Ohlasy francúzskej revolúcie na Slovensku* (Responses to the French Revolution in Slovakia). Košice : Východoslovenské nakladateľstvo, 1982, 210 s.

4 *Slovensko a veľká Francúzska revolúcia* (Slovakia and the Great French Revolution). Ed. Jozef Šimončič. Trnava 1989; ELIÁŠ, Štefan. *Právne myslenie Jozefa Hajnóczyho v kontinuite slovenských dejín* (The legal thinking of Jozef Hajnóczy in the continuity of Slovak history). In *Historica Carpatica*, 2001, p. 49-56.

5 *Štátne ľudové školstvo na Slovensku na prelome 18. a 19. storočia* (State education for the people in Slovakia around 1800); *Evanjelické a. v. spoločenstvo v 18. storočí* (The community of Evangelicals of the Augsburg Confession in the 18th century). Bratislava 2001.

relatively strong group from the preceding generation, including such historians as: Pavel Horváth, Ján Tibenský, Anton Špiesz, Jozef Šimončič and Ján Ďurovič. She has the courage to select unstudied themes, seek out and analyse unnoticed sources, and apply the methods and results of recent Western historiography to the problems of 18th century Central European history.

The monograph is the result of many years of consideration and extensive research. The two authors did long-term detective work, step by step collecting information from archives in Slovakia, Hungary, Austria and Croatia. They visited non-public archives in out of the way places, and made unexpected discoveries, especially at the Evangelical church of the small town of Rust in eastern Austria. Thanks to extensive research, the authors clarified the genealogy of the Hajnóczy family, the destiny of various members and its main hero Jozef.

Earlier work traced the ancestors of J. Hajnóczy only back to about 1700 and was satisfied with the statement that they were descendants of Czech exiles, who fled to Slovakia after the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620, and were raised to the nobility. E. Kowalská and K. Kantek refuted or revised all three stereotypes. They proved that this family has a domestic origin by identifying its previously unknown ancestors back to the beginning of the 17th century. They succeeded in doing this thanks to the finding that the name Hajnóczy was adopted by two members only about 1720. Before this, the family was named Hajný.

The family was of plebeian origin. They had been peasant farmers, but gradually became butchers, shopkeepers and drapers, mainly in the area of Považská Bystrica and Púchov. From the beginning of the 18th century, their status began to change as they climbed the social ladder. All the men in the family were literate, some of them married women from yeomen or Czech exile families, they worked as estate officials or in some cases as Evangelical clergy. The members of the family who achieved the highest social positions, Jozef's grandfather Ján, who became administrator of the property of the aristocratic Kališ family and his great uncle Daniel, who studied at Wittenberg University and served as headmaster of the Evangelical grammar school at Sopron, were the ones, who gradually stopped using the name Hajný and replaced it with the variously spelt Magyarized form of the name – Hajnóczy. The authors correctly stated that the change of surname did not mean a change of ethnic identity, and the Hajnóczys continued to write in Slovak, but it was a symbolic expression of a better social position, then quite frequent.

The authors have shown in their genealogical section, that this family showed considerable intellectual ability, which was reflected in their rising socio-economic position and in education. Daniel Hajnóczy already belonged to the intellectual elite of the Protestants in the Kingdom of Hungary. Jozef's father Samuel Hajnóczy and some other members of the family became Evangelical pastors. It is also not without importance that Jozef Hajnóczy and Samuel Tešedík, another of the leading Enlightenment intellectuals in Hungary, were second cousins, they respected each other, and Tešedík's mother played an important part in J. Hajnóczy's development, especially during his study in Bratislava. The work also traces the increased mobility of this family. Undoubtedly religious oppression, associated with the culmination of re-Catholicization in the first half of the 18th century, but also the wish to do business and to learn, led to some members of the Hajnóczy or Hajný family finding new homes in the royal boroughs of Hungary, which protected Evangelicals, especially in Sopron, Modra and Skalica.

The approach and findings of the authors in the case of the Hajnóczy or Hajný family provide inspiration for research into the wider social rise of unprivileged families from small towns under aristocratic control, the growth of education among them and their inter-regional migration. So we come to another positive feature of the monograph. It approaches the fates of individuals and turning point events in their lives, in the wider social context. As a result this is not only a work about Hajnóczy and his ancestors, but also about their social environment. It illustrates the behaviour of a suppressed society: the Evangelicals, in the book called Lutherans, expressions of solidarity, the

strength of personal contacts, life in several towns, ecclesiastical policy in the reigns of Charles III and Maria Theresa, the phenomenon of Czech exiles in the Váh valley and their importance for Slovak Evangelicals. By depicting the family background of the Hajnóczys, the monograph also deals with factors influencing the personality of Jozef Hajnóczy – respect for education, enterprise, ambition, creativity, faith in human freedom, solidarity, courage combined with modesty. When these characteristics overlapped with the ideals of the Enlightenment and Free Masonry, it is not surprising that Jozef Hajnóczy found himself in the most radical political current in Hungary.

The authors deal with the life of J. Hajnóczy in three phases.

In the first phase (1750 – 1780) they reconstruct his childhood in his native Modra, in the villages of Aszód and Dunaegyháza near Budapest, where Slovak Evangelicals lived, his family environment with a demanding but loving father, who applied a traditional education and up-bringing, and his secondary education in Sopron and Bratislava. Employment in aristocratic families played an important part in the life of the young and talented Hajnóczy. First he was secretary to Count Forgách at Halič near Lučenec, where the count established the first textile factory in Hungary, and then he was employed as a lawyer and librarian in Horpács (western Hungary) for Ferenc Széchényi, later founder of the Hungarian National Museum and state library. Here, Hajnóczy found rich libraries with many Enlightenment works, and he got to know his rich employers as enthusiastic supporters of the Enlightenment. In the 1770s, the Hungarian aristocracy selectively and fashionably adopted Enlightenment ideas. Hajnóczy's Enlightenment world view and social philosophy were shaped in this environment. The important thing is that Hajnóczy not only adopted Enlightenment ideas, but also began to shape his own concept of the modernization of society in Hungary, so that he became one of the leading Enlightenment thinkers in Hungary, especially in the social field, on the question of the political system and human rights. He was also one of the best experts on the history of Hungarian law.

The second phase (1780 – 1792) consisted of the social engagement of Hajnóczy during the reigns of the Enlightened monarchs Joseph II and Leopold II. After the accession of Joseph II to the throne, space opened for the practical application of Hajnóczy's views. The new monarch allowed non-Catholics and non-noblemen to hold state functions, and Hajnóczy saw the absolutist monarch as a reformer. However, he soon became involved with Free Masonry, which had great popularity among noblemen, the urban middle class and high officials in the Habsburg Monarchy in the 1780s. The authors accurately describe the rise of this movement, its structure, supporters, the aims of the lodges and the attitude of the Monarch to them, their connection with the Enlightenment. According to the authors, the Masonic lodges even “represented the institutional base of Josephinism.”⁶ Thanks to friendly relations with the Free Masons, Hajnóczy soon became a high state official. In 1786 Joseph II appointed him to the post of deputy head of the administration of the County of Srieim in southern Hungary. The post of head of the administration (*župan*) had been abolished. He became the first non-nobleman and the first Evangelical to hold such a high position in the Kingdom of Hungary. His career was correlated with the reforms of Joseph II, but also ended with their end.

At the beginning of the 1790s, Hajnóczy was excluded from direct participation in politics as a “plebeian”. The development was rather unclear and filled with conflict between various reformist and restorationist groups, but he did not remain passive. In particular, he supported the reformist circles with his writing. He was one of the authors of the anonymous pamphlets, which urged the Hungarian Parliament to continue the reforms. In the period 1790 – 1794, he anonymously published perhaps ten works, which expressed his political program and aims. On the basis of the

6 Reviewed work, p. 112.

analysis by E. Kowalská and K. Kantek, their content can be summarized as follows: abolition of the political monopoly of the nobility and other noble privileges, liquidation of serfdom, universal taxation, equality of people before the law, extension of civil rights to the urban middle class and small farmers, representation of the people, freedom of ownership. Up to 1791, Hajnóczy saw the American Revolution as his model, but then he began to watch the French Revolution more carefully. When the anti-Enlightenment course of absolutism strengthened after the unexpected death of Leopold II, Hajnóczy's views became more radical. Undoubtedly under the influence of the general mood in Europe spreading from revolutionary France, he also stopped believing in reforms and inclined to revolutionary radicalism or violence.

The authors dealt with the last phase of the life of J. Hajnóczy (1792 – 1795) in a different way to that applied in the earlier chapters. They devote only modest attention to the actual Jacobin movement, its organizational base, program and the participation of Hajnóczy in it. The reader learns about this more from documents, which the authors place in the text, and which contain the testimony of the imprisoned leaders of the Jacobin movement in Hungary or in Vienna. More details are given about the arrest of the revolutionaries, the investigation of the case, the psychological pressure on the prisoners, their trial and execution. Also in this case, the authors have let the authentic documents speak for themselves and reduced their own analysis and interpretation. The text compiled in this way is surprisingly dramatic, events progress towards a climax, which evokes strong emotions in the reader. These passages read almost like a story in a novel.

The monograph by Eva Kowalská and Karol Kantek reaches beyond the dimensions of Slovak historiography. It is based on extensive research, presents new findings from the life of J. Hajnóczy and the past of his family, and brings the reader a lot of other information, which has been only minimally reflected in Slovak culture up to now. However, it is a pity that the authors have not given more information on the personal profile of J. Hajnóczy – character, nature, interests, appearance. At the same time, it is a work, which is not devoted only to one important but still half unknown person. It also captures the penetration of new ideas and movements into Hungary, with the specific modifications and background in a feudal society. It was a period of vigorous reformist forces and efforts. This exciting period was symbolically closed by the execution of Jozef Hajnóczy and his six associates. The space had already opened for the return of anti-reform absolutism, turning back to the past. However, the ideas associated with the slogan: “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” were gradually taken up by new forces – the reformist and national movements. Some were already fulfilled in 1848, but many only after the First World War.

Dušan Škvarna

KOVÁČ, Dušan. et al. *PRVÁ SVETOVÁ VOJNA (THE FIRST WORLD WAR) 1914 – 1918*. Bratislava : Veda, 2008, 325 pages, 202 illustrations.

It was the first war to directly or indirectly affect all the continents in the world, and to be perceived as a global cataclysm, although the decisive battlefields were in Europe. It was also a war, which substantially changed the position and future direction of the Slovaks, the Czechs and other nations in Europe and its surroundings. However, until the publication of the book reviewed here, Slovak historiography did not include a monograph covering this dramatic historic event, lasting more than four years. A comprehensive account requires consideration of the international political situation leading to war and during it, the fronts and decisive battles of this “Great War”, the

situation developing in the armies, which included Slovaks, the political, economic, social and spiritual-cultural developments, especially in Austria-Hungary, where the Slovaks then lived, and particularly in Slovakia, as well as the Czecho-Slovak struggle abroad, which could not bring substantial change to the position of the Slovaks and Czechs by itself, but without which there would have been no future Czechoslovak Republic. Finally there are the dramatic final months of the war, starting in spring 1918, which led to the defeat of the Central Powers, the break up of Austria-Hungary and the formation of new states, including Czechoslovakia, and the expansion of existing states fighting on the side of the Entente.

Obviously, over the decades, an extensive series of studies of various partial questions of the war have appeared, as well as several monographs devoted to the struggle for Czechoslovakia abroad and at home, and the most important Slovak personality of the struggle abroad, M. R. Štefánik. If we wanted to find a comprehensive picture of the First World War in Slovak historiography from the last half-century, we would find it in two publications.

In 1986, the fourth volume of the academic work: *Dejiny Slovenska* (History of Slovakia) was published with subtitle *From the end of the 19th century to 1918*. The second, substantially shorter part of the book, divided into two chapters, is devoted to the war. In the spirit of the official Marxist historiography, the Great October Socialist Revolution and the origin of the “first state of workers and peasants” is regarded as a milestone in the history of the war, although historical research in the democratic states had shown that this revolution and the subsequent policy of the ruling Bolsheviks actually helped the Central Powers and so also threatened the plans of the Czecho-Slovak struggle abroad. Although the authors devoted attention to domestic political developments and Slovak national politics, they minimalized information about the struggle abroad and literally trivialized the contributions to the origin of the Czechoslovak Republic of such personalities as M. R. Štefánik (mentioned twice) and E. Beneš (mentioned once). However, there was no lack of phrases about the contribution of the revolutionary workers movement to the Czechoslovak state, although the revolutionary part of the working class had no interest in such a state, and the part, which contributed to its origin, was certainly not revolutionary in the sense of the Marxist-Leninist ideology.

In 1996, the fourth volume of another historical work – the *Vojenské dejiny Slovenska* (Military History of Slovakia) (1914 – 1939) – appeared. It contained three chapters devoted to the First World War, and two further chapters concerned with events in Slovakia during its occupation by the Czechoslovak army around the turn of the years 1918 – 1919, and in the spring of 1919 during the struggle with the Hungarian Bolshevik army. In this respect, Slovakia was at war for almost five years. The book speaks of the internal political and economic situation in the Monarchy and in Slovakia, but for understandable reasons, it is dominated by the theme of the war, the armies and other circumstances directly connected with military operations.

Only the publication reviewed here brings an attempt – and a successful one – to represent the First World War and its complex development, especially on the battlefield, but also with its domestic and international background, together with the struggle abroad and at home to create an entirely new European state – Czechoslovakia, with their real political weight in individual phases of the war. It was produced as the second volume of the project: *Slovakia in the 20th century*, being prepared by a group of seven historians, led by the editor D. Kováč. Apart from the introduction by D. Kováč, the book is divided into nine chapters, with a selected bibliography and index of names at the end. The whole project and so also this volume, includes illustration of personalities of the time, reproductions of pictures and caricatures, making a total of more than 200 illustrations in five blocks. The work is addressed to the interested general reader, as well as to professional historians and teachers of history, and it aims to attract the readers by publishing illustrations, which make events accessible to the wider public.

The centre of gravity of this comprehensive work lies in description of the political and military events (chapters 1 – 3 and 6 – 9). The author of the chapters on military events and armies is the military historian M. Hronský, the chapters on international politics, the Czecho-Slovak struggle abroad and some military operations were written by D. Kováč, and the sub-chapters devoted to Slovak politics during the war by M. Podrimavský. The political and military parts of the book not only represent the core of the work, they are written in a clear, accessible style, connecting the reader with the historical events. I consider it important that the description of events endeavours to approach them in the context of the developmental ambiguity of the time and lack of obviousness, without the bad popularizing habit of depicting them in retrospective view as the embodiment of “historical inevitability”.

Chapter 4 on the economy of the Kingdom of Hungary and Slovakia by R. Holec is more demanding for the less initiated reader because of the nature of the problem. The same author wrote the sub-chapter on the economic collapse of the Monarchy in chapter 7. The chapter very clearly shows the economic limits to the war effort of the Habsburg Monarchy, the severe impact of the war on all areas of economic life in Hungary and especially in the future territory of Slovakia. However, the war also had innovative and modernizing effects on economic and social life, especially in the industrial sphere.

The fifth chapter devoted to society, cultural and social life during the cataclysm of the war was written by three authors. The first of them, E. Jakešová also wrote the sub-chapter on Slovaks abroad in chapter 1. In the introduction to chapter 5, she gives a general picture of the situation and changes in the social structure in the Kingdom of Hungary, and within its framework also in Slovakia. The centre of gravity of the chapter lies in depiction of the changes to the everyday life of the country and its people during the war, beginning with the first effects of the war on everyday life, through its “regulation” by extraordinary legislation, the increasing, insurmountable supply problems with their impact on the health and on the socio-political “mood” of the population, proceeding from the original enthusiasm for the war, especially among the Hungarian or Magyar inhabitants, to anti-war feelings and a growing crisis of loyalty towards the Monarchy, the traditional authorities and among some of the non-Magyars towards the Hungarian state itself. E. Mannová and G. Dudeková, the authors of the greater part of this chapter, give relatively detailed attention to the situation in the sphere of culture, including education, science, all kinds of art and subdued society activity. The situation became ever more complex as a result of the continuing war. The government supported various forms of pro-war propaganda. The complexity of the socio-cultural sphere in the revolutionary period of the war and its connection with other areas of life have the result that some themes and statements are repeated in the chapter.

From the point of view of Slovak historians, the book about the First World War ends entirely naturally with the *Declaration of the Slovak Nation*, adopted on 30 October 1918 at Turčiansky Svätý Martin. In connection with this last part, I would like to point to some questions connected with the reviewed book. In particular, it would be worth doing more detailed research on whether the Slovak National Council was created at a meeting of “seven leading representatives of the Slovak National Party” in Budapest on 12 September 1918 (p. 299), or whether it was only a matter of a proposal to create it, together with a proposal of its 12 members. It remains an open question whether an informal meeting of seven leading representatives could establish such a national body, especially if some of the proposed members of the Slovak National Council could not express their view on their membership, because they did not even know about it. Similarly, it would be worth doing more detailed research on the traditional statement that the participants in the Martin assembly “did not know that the Czecho-Slovak state had already been officially declared” (p. 300). For example, the evening edition of the Bratislava German language newspaper, the *Pressburger Zeitung* from 29 October 1918, reported in an article *Serious events in Prague* that

according to Czech newspapers from Prague, the National Committee there had taken power, it was more than a matter of “disturbances”. It is difficult to suppose that, with the technical means existing at the time, none of the participants in the assembly at Martin had the possibility of obtaining more detailed information about events in the other part of the Habsburg dual state on the previous day.

In the introduction to the book, the editor states in connection with the origin of the Czecho-Slovak state, that “*the Slovaks were prepared for this solution*” (p. 12). The question is: which Slovaks? The leading Slovak political representatives were certainly prepared, but other active patriots, especially in the countryside, were less so. Otherwise, they would not have shown so much reluctance to accept political positions in the new state, as we know from the testimony of Šrobár or Janšák. The wider Slovak public was “prepared” for this solution especially by the fact that they did not actively oppose the new state, as could not have been excluded in relation to the familiar situation in Hungary, and they gradually, in places relatively quickly, accepted the new republic as their state. M. R. Štefánik is described in the introduction as the “*second man of the struggle abroad*” (p. 13) after T. G. Masaryk. Perhaps he was, but scarcely longer than up to autumn 1918, when he left for Japan and Siberia. From that time, Štefánik found himself outside the main political events in Europe and the USA. E. Beneš took the position of “number two” firmly in his hands, and in some political talks, he played the leading role. Otherwise, all the doubts about Štefánik’s future in the new state would not have begun to appear.

Finally, I would like to mention the terminological-methodological questions of the term “Slovakia” up to the declaration of the Czecho-Slovak state or up to the drawing of the frontier between Czechoslovakia and Hungary by the victorious Entente powers. This question emerges in practically every (Czecho-)Slovak historical text concerned with Slovakia before the origin of the Czechoslovak Republic, including the first volume of the project *Slovakia in the 20th century*, which appeared under the title *Na začiatku storočia* (At the Beginning of the Century). The territory of Slovakia is “traditionally” but anachronistically understood as the territory within the Trianon (1920) or Paris (1947) frontiers, when dealing with periods before October 1918, although in those times, not only non-Slovaks, but also Slovaks, even nationally oriented Slovak politicians, would have been amazed by towns such as Komárno, Fiľakovo or even Pressburg (Bratislava) being regarded as part of Slovakia. The maximum claim of the pre-war political representatives was the achievement of an autonomous position for the Slovaks in the framework of the so-called Slovak Region (Slovenské Okolie), which did not include present-day southern Slovakia, which was not considered “Slovak” even by the Slovaks themselves. I think that this question remains a live historical-methodological problem, which needs to be considered without casting doubt on the present Slovak frontiers guaranteed by two peace settlements and other international treaties.

As with every historical work, it is true of this comprehensive picture of the years 1914–1918, that there will be as many views as there are readers. There is no doubt that the book is not only a pioneering work in our historiography, but also one that will remain a source of knowledge and inspiration for historians and for the much larger number of people, who are interested in and love our history.

Milan Zemko

REVIEW OF MONOGRAPHS FROM THE HISTORY INSTITUTE OF THE SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES ON THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVENTS OF 1968 IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND SLOVAKIA

LONDÁK, Miroslav. *ROK 1968 A EKONOMICKÁ REALITA SLOVENSKA. (THE YEAR 1968 AND THE ECONOMIC REALITY OF SLOVAKIA)*. Bratislava : Prodama, 2007, 176 s.

SIKORA, Stanislav. *ROK 1968 A POLITICKÝ VÝVOJ NA SLOVENSKU. (THE YEAR 1968 AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN SLOVAKIA)*. Bratislava : Pro Historia, o. z. – Historický ústav SAV, 2008, 229 s.

MICHÁLEK, Slavomír. *ROK 1968 A ČESKOSLOVENSKO – POSTOJ USA, ZÁPADU A OSN. (THE YEAR 1968 AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA – THE ATTITUDE OF THE USA, THE WEST AND THE UNITED NATIONS)*. Bratislava : Prodama, 2008, 287 s.

LONDÁKOVÁ, Elena a kol. *ROK 1968 – NOVINÁRI NA SLOVENSKU. (THE YEAR 1968 – JOURNALISTS IN SLOVAKIA)*. Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV – Slovensku syndikát novinárov, 2008, 211 s.

LONDÁK, Miroslav a kol. *ROK 1968 – ETO VAŠE DELO. (THE YEAR 1968 – THAT IS YOUR BUSINESS)*. Bratislava : Prodama, 2008, 191 s.

BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián a kol. *ROK 1968 NA SLOVENSKU A V ČESKOSLOVENSKU. (THE YEAR 1968 IN SLOVAKIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA)*. Bratislava : Prodama, 2008, 308 s.

After a period of decreased interest, the emotional events of 1968 in former Czechoslovakia, which deeply affected the lives of both nations in the common state, again resounded in the wider historical community and among the public on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the reform process in Czechoslovakia, which was violently interrupted by the invasion of the armies of the Warsaw Pact. The researchers from the Department of the Most Recent History at the History Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences took advantage of the increased interest in this theme, to present the results of many years of research on the problem of the year 1968 in the form of numerous academic events as well as in form of monographs. In the short period from the end of 2007 to the end of 2008, six individual and collective monographs were published, mapping individual aspects of developments in Czechoslovakia in 1968 – 1969 with special regard for Slovakia. Monographs evaluating the economic, political, cultural-historical and international contexts of the origin of the renewal process in Czechoslovakia, as they were reflected in the specific conditions of life in Slovakia, successively appeared. The monographs are freely connected with the work of three researchers from the department from 2002, which analyses the pre-conditions for the coming of reform in 1968 in the spheres of politics, economics and culture in Slovakia in the preceding period, 1960 – 1967 (LONDÁK, Miroslav – SIKORA, Stanislav – LONDÁKOVÁ, Elena. *Predjarie – Politický, ekonomický a kultúrny vývoj na Slovensku v rokoch 1960 – 1967. (The Fore-Spring – Political, Economic and Cultural Development in Slovakia in the Period 1960 – 1967)*. Bratislava : Veda, 2002).

The first of the series of six monographs was the publication by Miroslav Londák from the end of 2007, directed towards the economic context of the reform process, that is towards the preparation of economic reforms and attempts to implement them in Czechoslovakia in 1968 – 1969, especially in relation to Slovakia. M. Londák traces the economic reforms of the period against the background of the overall economic and political development in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia from the end of the Second World War. I consider this approach to be correct and necessary for understanding the causes and main aims of the reforms, as well as for clarifying the position of Slovakia in the reform process. Explanation of the wider economic context is important especially for the present young generation, because the whole meaning of the attempts to reconstruct the model of the economy in the 1960s is already distant for them. The monograph by M. Londák begins with a relatively long introductory chapter, where the author analyses, on the basis of statistical material, the main developmental trends and results of the economic development of Slovakia in the framework of Czechoslovakia from the renewal of the common state and establishment of the totalitarian regime of the Communist Party in 1948, up to the end of 1967. The reader will learn of key causal connections of the economic reforms, lying in the search for a new model for running the nationalized economy, which would replace the bureaucratic-administrative system of a centrally directed economy from the 1950s. The author also deals with the specifics of Slovakia in the development of the socialist economy, resulting from the centralist constitutional organization of Czechoslovakia and the absence of national institutions for economic management. He points out the positive and negative features of the developmental tendencies in question. On one side, they increased the quantitative and especially the relative percentage indicators of economic growth, but on the other, they further deepened the differences between the Czech Lands and Slovakia. The monograph deals consistently with the efforts of Slovak economists and some political representatives to accurately analyse the economic problems of Slovakia and formulate possible ways forward. The second, key chapter of the monograph evaluates the actual genesis of the economic reforms of the period 1968 – 1969. It is oriented mainly towards the role of Slovak economists and Slovak political representatives in formulating the conception of the reforms and confronting the aims of reconstruction of the economy with the economic reality of Slovakia. It also analyses the parallels between the conception of the new federal organization of the state, the character of which stopped half way, and the economic interests of Slovakia. In the final chapter of the monograph, the author describes the retreat of the reform process in the economy and its final dissolution in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia under pressure from the international and domestic conservative forces in the communist system of power. Individual phases and characteristic features of the economic reform in relation to Slovakia are illustrated by documents in the appendix to the monograph.

Other monographs on the problems of the period 1968 – 1969 were published during the anniversary year 2008. The monograph by the historian Stanislav Sikora maps the genesis of the reforms on the political level. It is the largest of the three individual monographs. The author starts from systematic archive research and from rich literature. The methodological approach to shaping the structure of the work has various points of contact with the publication of M. Londák. S. Sikora offers a picture of the reforms of the political system against the background of the overall social development of Slovakia in the context of Czechoslovakia during the whole of the 1960s. In the first chapter, he evaluates the findings from the above mentioned monograph about the early phase of the reform process in Slovakia in the first half of the 1960s, also borrowing the name from the publication “Fore-Spring”. When evaluating the beginnings as well as the culmination of the reforms, S. Sikora compares the situation in individual sectors of the life of society, including politics, the economy, culture and the social sphere, to create an integrated picture of the basic questions of the problem. He especially analyses the nationality questions and the preparation of

the federation as a specific and key dimension of the reform process in the conditions of Slovakia. The core of the monograph is composed of three chapters about individual phases in the reform of the political system during the year 1968, and their expression in different spheres of the life of society on the level of the whole state and in Slovakia. Here, the author also progressed to the international context, shaping the further development of the reforms and their eventual fate. Apart from the roles of the leading representatives of the countries of the Soviet Bloc and especially the Soviet leadership, he also mentions parallels with the student and revolutionary movement in Western Europe. On the domestic scene, he presents a whole constellation of leading personalities and secondary figures from the main political camps and individual view orientations, which struggled with each other over the character and implementation of the reforms. He also underlines the importance of the polemics about the conception of the federal organization of the state for the development of the reforms in Slovakia. The concluding chapter deals with the rise of the conservative forces and the vain attempts to save the reforms in the whole state and in Slovakia after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact in August 1968.

The wider international context of the attempt to reconstruct the political and socio-economic system in Czechoslovakia in 1968 is the subject of the third and last of the individual monographs, that by Slavomír Michálek. This publication has certain specific features, lying especially in the fact that apart from the relatively rich literature, it uses especially sources from foreign archives and it is composed of several separate parts. The first part of the monograph is devoted to the events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia against the background of international developments. The second part gives a chronology of important events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia in relation to the rest of the world, and the fourth part contains documents on the this theme. The third part provides a review of the most important factors in Czechoslovak – American relations during the 20th century. The chapters oriented to the problems of the period 1968 – 1969 mostly deal with Czechoslovakia and its reform movement as a whole in the global context, and especially in the context of the international policy of the USA. The author indicates that the prevailing philosophy of the time of peaceful coexistence of the two world political and military systems, headed by the Soviet Union and the USA, was the primary political interest of the USA. Disturbance of the fragile stability of Soviet-American relations by revolutionary developments in Czechoslovakia was unwanted. In spite of the sympathy for the reform process on the American side, the political and socio-economic changes leading to the practical separation of Czechoslovakia from the Soviet Bloc were condemned to failure in advance. According to S. Michálek, the development in Czechoslovakia was an internal affair of the Soviet Bloc from the point of view of the government leaders in the USA. The author also traces further questions of American – Czechoslovak relations, which influenced the position of the USA, such as the problem of mutual property settlement, the development of commercial relations and so on. The theme of relations with the USA is further deepened in the third part of the monograph, which evaluates key factors in mutual, especially economic – political relations between Czechoslovakia and the USA in the first half of the 20th century on the basis of new archive sources. Attention is also directed mainly to the causes of the collapse of economic cooperation between the two states after the Second World War. The author adds to the period colour with a short chapter on the reflection of political events in Czechoslovakia in 1948 at the United Nations.

The collective monographs among the publications concerned with the events of 1968 evaluate individual aspects of the reformist ferment in the conditions of Slovakia and concentrate heterogeneous views on key questions of the developments of the time. The first of the three collective monographs, compiled by the historian Elena Londáková, consider the reform movement of the 1960s in the community of journalists. To some degree, it replaces an independent monograph on the reflection of the events of 1968 in the sphere of culture. Its conception falls into the new

current of historiographic works, which combine contributions with different formal characters or even different genres. It contains academic studies by leading historians and political scientists, as well as essays by journalists, written in a more popular style. The first part comprises historical studies by three authors. The first two (S. Sikora, S. Michálek) introduce the reader to the problem of the renewal process of 1968 – 1969. The third study (E. Londáková) is concerned directly with the problem of the development of writing for the general public in the 1960s. The second part contains four historical studies, which evaluate the contribution of the magazine *Kultúrny život* (Cultural Life) (Jozef Leikert), the significance of the abolition of censorship in 1968 (Eduard Chmelár), and the types and content of the main themes of Slovak (E. Londáková) and Czech (J. Kočelík) writing for the general public during the reform period. This is followed by a collection of seven shorter contributions by journalists, who directly participated in the reform process. Some are more emotionally coloured reflections of the period. Others attempt a deeper analysis of the development of a particular section of writing for the public. For example, the article by Jaroslav Charvát is concerned with journalistic science and that by Juraj Alner with non-communist journalism. The whole set of contributions by journalists can be understood as a form of oral history, inserted into the framework of exact historical study. The publication concludes and is partially summarized by a stimulating study from J. Žatkuliak about parallels between the causal connections and consequences of the events of 1968 and 1989. The introduction and conclusion evaluate the aims and results of the publication.

A second collective monograph, compiled by the historian M. Londák and distinctively entitled in Russian *Eto vaše delo* (That is your business) from a well-known statement by L. I. Brezhnev, summarizes in a smaller space various views on the developments of 1968, contained in earlier monographs, and gives some further points of view. The compilation of the monograph was stimulated by a series of lectures by Slovak historians on these problems at the Slovak Institute in Prague. The authors are researchers from the Department of the Most Recent History at the History Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The only exception is the author of the first article: the economist Ivan Luluha. His contribution is an authentic testimony about the atmosphere of the time and forms an introduction to the whole problem. The second contribution, that of S. Sikora, also has an introductory character, because it is concerned with ideas and other premises of the Prague, or rather the Bratislava Spring. The introductory section is followed by studies of individual aspects of the actual renewal process. The historian J. Žatkuliak traces the formation of the idea of the federation and the stages of preparation of the constitutional act on the federal organization of the state. Then the monograph comes to the international context of the reform process in Czechoslovakia according to the interpretation of S. Michálek. Reconstruction of the whole system of economic management was an essential part of the reform process. The two studies by M. Londák are especially directed towards this theme. They deal with the preparation and actual development of the economic reform from the point of view of Slovakia. The studies include a further contribution by S. Sikora on the genesis, meaning and possibilities for application of a democratic form of socialism. The attempts to renew the full life of the Church is a new theme in the publication. The historian Jan Pešek is an expert on this field. The compilers chose the reform movement in the sphere of culture as the concluding theme. The historian of culture E. Londáková has researched this theme.

The series of publications is concluded by a collective monograph with a special character: the chronology of the year 1968 in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia. It appropriately completes the research up to now and the publications connected with the fortieth anniversary of 1968. It also forms part of a more widely conceived project: *Chronology of Slovakia and the Slovaks* prepared by the researchers of the Department of the Most Recent History at the History Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the historians Valerián Bystrický and Pavol

Petruf. It is composed of two parts. The first is a larger study of the causal connections leading to the reforms of 1968 from S. Sikora, which evaluates the connections on the broad canvas of domestic and international developments. This is followed by a detailed chronology of a wide range of events during the individual days of the eventful year 1968 in the conditions of Slovakia and the whole of Czechoslovakia. The chronology as produced by the group of authors is basically a monograph on the key events of the year, divided into individual days.

The cycle of six monographs, created and compiled on the initiative of the researchers of the Department of the Most Recent History at the History Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, gives a well-rounded account of the origins and course of the reform process in Czechoslovakia and especially in Slovakia in 1968 – 1969. The suppression of the attempt to reform the totalitarian system of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia evoked a great response from the international community, and in reality meant the beginning of the end of the Soviet system and the communist movement in the world. Therefore, the cycle of monographs represent a welcome source of information about the overall development of the renewal process in Slovakia and in Czechoslovakia for experts and the general public in former Czechoslovakia and in the wider international context.

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