

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

SLOVAKIA

§ 1. GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

The territory attributed to Czechoslovakia under the Peace Treaty falls into two parts which, although their problems (especially economic) are usually analogous and often identical, must yet be treated separately. The larger of the two is the territory now known as Slovakia. It has an area of about 49,000 sq. km., *73-1) little less than that of Bohemia itself, but differs from that province widely in its natural features. Broadly speaking, it consists of the northern section of the Carpathian mountains with a strip, of varying width, of the plain at their foot. The western frontier, which coincides with the old boundary between Hungary and Moravia, begins at the junction of the Morava (March) and the Dyje, whence it runs north-east along or near the crest of a range of hills until the Polish frontier is reached. The line now runs east, following the crest of the Carpathians, though including the valley of the Poprad, which, although rising south of the High Tatra, empties its waters into the Dunajec, and thence into the Vistula. Thereafter the watershed is regained until reaching the present boundary with Ruthenia, west of the Uz (Ungh). This northern frontier is almost identical with the time-hallowed boundary between Hungary and Galicia; but two small areas went to Poland by the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors. The eastern boundary runs down the west side of the Uz, and thence southwards across the plain to Cop (Sop). The southern frontier runs westward across a section of plain (the basin of the Upper Tisza and the Bodrog), through some foot-hills, across the valley of the Hernad some miles south of Kosice (Kassa, Kaschau), thence through hills until the Ipel is reached south of Lucenec (Losonc). It follows that river down its narrow valley until it joins the Danube at Szob; and thence follows the Danube upward, past Komárno (Komárom) and Bratislava (Pozsóny, Pressburg), to the mouth of the Morava, leaving on its north a broad and fertile plain before the hills commence.

The open land between Szob and Bratislava, and south of Uzhorod (Ungvár), forms, geographically, an integral part of the

1) The Year-book of the Czechoslovak Republic gives 48,933. The figures there given neither agree entirely with others which I have consulted, including those given on p. 290 of the same volume, nor do they add up to the total given; but let others concern themselves with such niceties.

great Hungarian plain, belonging respectively to the valleys of the Danube and of the Upper Tisza. It presents all the characteristics of the Alföld: a flat and sandy soil, subject in summer to droughts less parching than those of the heart of Hungary -- since the adjacent mountains temper the rigours of the climate -- but often severe enough. At other seasons of the year floods may appear, rarely in the west, where the Danube is very carefully regulated, but much more frequently in the wilder eastern half of the country. When these disasters hold aloof, the soil bears rich harvests, and it is heavily cultivated with wheat, maize, and other cereals. The great Litny Ostrava, 'Csalloköz', or 'Schüttinsel', formed by two branches of the Danube which separate just below Bratislava to reunite only at Komárno, is, with the strip adjoining it on the left bank of the lesser arm, the granary of Slovakia. Above the plain is a line of foothills, which in the centre extend down to and across the frontier. Behind them rise the mountains, which occupy the rest of the country. Although nowhere of Alpine dimensions, these often rise to considerable heights, particularly in the imposing massif of the High Tatras, on the Polish frontier, the highest point of which reaches 2,700 metres above sea-level. The remaining mountains are less lofty, not exceeding 2,000 metres, and their lower slopes are often gentle and charming. The climate and soil, however, render them unsuitable for agriculture except of an elementary kind, and they are given over almost entirely to forests and pasture. As a rule, all the mountain flanks except the lowest slopes and the summits are clothed with forests, which cover one-third of the total area of Slovakia and a full half of its highlands, beech, conifers, and oak predominating in the order named. The lower clearings are meadow land, while the summits are used for summer pasture. The central bloc, the Rudohori (Ore Mountains), contains important deposits of various iron-ores and has for centuries supported a mining population.

The rivers which drain the mountains run, with the single exception of the Poprad, directly or indirectly into the Danube. Many of them (particularly the Váh) are of considerable size, but they are shallow and swift, and unsuitable for navigation, although timber can be, and is, floated down them. Most of the valleys are narrow and precipitous, but here and there they open into wider basins. It is easy to move up and down the valleys, but difficult and laborious to pass from one to the other; except in the south and again far to the north, there is an easy passage from the headwaters of the Váh to those of the Poprad, and thence to the valley of the Hernad. The country thus falls naturally into three main divisions: the west, including the plain between Bratislava and

Komárno, with the valleys of the Váh and the Nitra; the central Uplands, with the Lower Tatra and the Ore Mountains; and the east, where Kosice forms the natural capital of the basin of the Hernad.

The only considerable towns lie in the plains, or near the mouths of the valleys. Bratislava, an ancient and historic city, better known under its earlier names of Pressburg and Pozsóny, comes easily first, with a population of some 120,000. Kosice, in the east, has rather more than 50,000. The hill-towns, which are dotted about the various upland basins, are only small local centres of ten to fifteen thousand inhabitants apiece, although many are of great historic and artistic importance. The normal habitat is the village, varying from the rich farming centre with several hundred houses, in the plains, to the minute hamlet in some upper mountain valley.

The history of this area is very simple. To the earlier Illyrians, Celts, and Germans in the mountains, and Germanic, Sarmatian, and Turki peoples in the plain there succeeded a Slavonic people which were probably the direct ancestors of the Slovaks of to-day. References are found in medieval literature to two early Slavonic States: one founded by a certain Samo, who revolted against the Avars in the seventh century A.D.; the second, and more important, a kingdom of 'Great Moravia', which certainly existed as early as A.D. 830 and lasted until destroyed by the Magyars soon after their crossing the Carpathians at the end of the ninth century. 'Great Moravia', after many centuries of peaceful burial, was dug up for the benefit of the Peace Conference in 1918, to be paraded as the earliest Czechoslovak State. It may therefore be well to remark that although it was undoubtedly a Slavonic State, which extended over much of what afterwards became Northern Hungary, there is no certain evidence that it reached beyond the Morava in the west. As for Samo's empire, it is not even proved that it was situated in any part of Czechoslovak territory at all; many historians believe it to have lain in the present Carinthia and Styria.

The arrival of the Magyars ended the political vicissitudes of Slovakia; from the end of the ninth or at least of the tenth century *75-1) to the early twentieth, it formed part of Hungary, with the single exceptions that a robber chief named Csák established himself in a position of semi-independence in the fourteenth century, that in the fifteenth Hussite troops from Bohemia invaded it and their

1) Czech historians claim that Western Slovakia was attached to Bohemia in the tenth century (see K. Krofta, *Tchéques et Slovaques jusqu'à leur union politique*, reprinted from *Le Monde slave*, March-April 1933, pp. 6 ff.). There were also, of course, frontier warfare, invasions, and perhaps transitory conquests.

leader, Ziskra, ruled parts of it for some years, and that thirteen of the cities of the Spis (Zips) were pledged to Poland from 1412 until 1772. Apart from these episodes, Slovakia always formed a part of Hungary and, what is more, an integral part. Unlike Central Hungary, it was never under Turkish rule; and, unlike Transylvania or even the Serb districts of the south, it was never in a position of either *de jure* or *de facto* independence or semi-independence from the rest of the country. So long as there was a Hungary, Slovakia formed part of it -- and, during the Turkish period, the larger portion of what at that time could still entitle itself the Kingdom of Hungary.

The Magyars on their arrival destroyed, dispersed, or assimilated such Slavonic population as existed in the plains, but although they conquered and garrisoned the uplands they never themselves settled in them in large numbers. Consequently, the distribution of the population seems to have remained fairly stable in its broad outlines throughout the centuries. When altered by causes such as the Turkish invasion, it has tended to readjust itself as soon as those causes were removed.

In the mountains and the smaller valleys, the basic population is almost everywhere Slavonic: Slovak from the frontier of Moravia (and indeed beyond it: Eastern Moravia is largely Slovak) as far as the High Tatra, after which the Slovak linguistic frontier begins to run south-east, while the higher mountains are occupied by a wedge of Ruthene settlements. This wedge broadens gradually, until near Uzhorod it reaches the plains, and the Slovaks stop altogether. On the extreme north, on each side of the High Tatra, the Slovaks are replaced by Poles, the two nationalities shading into each other through a host of those intermediate dialectal gradations which are the politician's delight, but the statistician's despair.

In the uplands the Magyar element is small. In the country districts it is represented almost exclusively by the land-owning class, much of which was, indeed, originally of Slovak origin, but Magyarized in the course of centuries. The towns and some of the larger villages contain a Magyar population which is in some cases considerable, this having come about partly through immigration of officials, workers, &c., partly through the Magyarization of Slovak, German, and Jewish business and other middle-class elements.

As soon, however, as the valleys open out towards the wider plain, the country-side becomes overwhelmingly Magyar. It is true that these Magyars are not all lineal descendants of Árpád's warriors, for there has naturally been a steady tendency for the prolific and poverty-stricken population of the uplands to drift down into the more fertile plains. In particular, when the Turks

left Hungary at the end of the seventeenth century and a general southward shift of the population took place, Slovaks poured into the open, largely deserted spaces as far south as the Danube and beyond it. In the next two centuries, however, they became Magyarized by a process which was for the most part quite natural, and was already far advanced before any methodical Magyarization set in. Conversely, there are villages in the hills, formerly Magyar (relics of the earlier northward flight before the advance of the Turks), which are now purely Slovak.

Apart from Slavs and Magyars, the two main elements in the population are the Germans and the Jews. The Germans were at one time far more important and numerous than they are to-day. German settlers were invited into the country at an early date. They were the founders of all the principal towns in the country, including such centres as Bratislava and Kosice. The German cities of the Spis and Saros, founded, apparently, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries from Hungary and Poland, long occupied a special position, enjoying a wider degree of corporate autonomy than any other German community in Hungary, except only the Saxons in Transylvania. The important mining area of Central Slovakia, which, so far as is known, has been German since the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and may never have known an earlier Slavonic population, also played a great part in affairs in its day.

In the course of time, however, the German element gradually declined. The Spis cities were greatly weakened when thirteen of them were pledged to Poland, and although Maria Theresa, when she recovered them, united them with three others into a 'Corporation of the sixteen Cities', modelled on the League of the twenty-four Cities which had existed four hundred years earlier and endowed with a degree of self-government exceptional for their age, their spirit was broken. Unlike the Transylvanian Saxons, they showed little energy in defending either their charters or their 'Deutschtum'.

By 1918 most of the towns of Hungary had lost their German character. In some, almost all traces of their past, beyond the architectural, had vanished. In others, the process was half-complete: the inhabitants were conscious of their German origin, but spoke Magyar as fluently as German, and were strongly pro-Magyar in feeling: both in Bratislava and the Spis cities, attachment to Hungary and the Magyar cause was a deep-rooted tradition. In some of the upland towns, again, where the surrounding population was Slovak, the Germans had assimilated not to the Magyars but to the Slovaks. Only the miners and industrial workers of Central Slovakia, living in their remote valleys, had remained Germans, but without separate national ambitions.

The Jews have always been numerous in Northern Hungary *78-1) and more so than ever since the great immigration from Galicia set in in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This affected chiefly the eastern half of the country, where the Jews largely replace the Germans as the local middle class. Here they are still Orthodox in appearance and creed, and their habitual language is the Yiddish 'jargon'. As one moves from east to west, the type gradually changes, and in the towns of the western and the southern borders the Magyar-speaking, assimilated type prevails. In 1910 only a few thousands were entered as speaking Czech or Slovak.

Parallel with the Magyarization of the Germans and the Jews was proceeding (as will be explained in more detail hereafter) a similar Magyarization of the Slovaks and Ruthenes. This had hardly affected the peasantry of the mountains, but those of the more open country, and the upper and middle classes everywhere, had, with few exceptions, succumbed to it. Thus we get a social stratification, consisting, in the north, of a Magyar or Magyarized upper and middle class, more or less thinly dispersed among the great mass of Slovaks and Ruthenes, who were peasants or wood-cutters with a tiny intelligentsia; while, where the plains began, all classes of society were predominantly Magyar-speaking and -- feeling, even if the process of Magyarization was not yet complete in the towns. While the general position and distribution of the population is thus clear enough, it is extremely difficult to arrive at anything like an exact estimate of their numbers in 1918. The Hungarian system of taking calculations by maternal language, interpreted in a way approximating to habitual language, naturally allowed of large numbers of persons to be entered as Magyar-speaking who were of non-Magyar origin and not necessarily of Magyar political consciousness. The figures given by the Hungarian census of 1910, and the Czechoslovak of 1921, respectively, are as follows:

	1910 (language)	1921 (nationality)
Slovaks	1,686,696	1,941,942
Czechs	7,468	71,733
Ruthenes, &c.	97,051	85,628
Magyars	893,586	634,827
Germans	196,942	139,880
Jews	70,522
Poles	..	2,400
Gipsies	7,999
Others	43,508	968
'Foreign Subjects'		42,246
	2,925,251	2,998,244

1) In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, North Hungary was popularly known as 'Magyar Israel'.

Between 50,000 and 100,000 Magyars (mainly officials, but also some miners and workmen) emigrated to Hungary after the War. *79-1) On the other hand, the Czechs of 1921 are almost all immigrants. Thus the genuine movements of population balance roughly, while we may assume the War losses and the natural increase of population to be fairly well proportionate (in so short a space) to all nationalities. We must then fit in the Jews and Gipsies of 1921 under other headings in the 1910 figures, and shall not be far wrong if we take 90,000 of these as having been entered in 1910 as Magyars, and the remainder (Yiddish-speaking 'Ostjuden') as Germans. *79-2) The 'foreign subjects' are in fact most of them stateless persons -- citizens of no country, and many of them were in 1910 Hungarian citizens, who had failed to obtain Czechoslovak nationality by 1921. In 1930, when 75,604 'foreign subjects' were found, these consisted of 27,145 Czechs and Slovaks, 4,280 Russians, 20,344 Magyars, 7,293 Jews, and 7,320 Germans.

Further, the remarkable increase in the Slovak population must be due to a certain number of persons' describing themselves in 1921 as Slovaks who in 1910 were entered either as Magyars or Ruthenes.

One cannot really say more than that there were in 1918, on the territory of the present Slovakia, about three million persons. Of these, very roughly, perhaps 1,900,000 were Slovaks, 700,000 Magyars, 120,000 Germans, 140,000 Jews, 100,000 Ruthenes, 10,000 Gypsies, and the rest Czechs, Poles, &c. Fully half of the Germans and Jews and some 200,000 Slovaks must also have spoken Magyar, and many of these were in a fair way to becoming entirely Magyarized.

§ 2. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION UP TO 1910

As we have said, Slovakia is still largely an agricultural country. The Magyar farmers in the plains and the German wine-growers of the foot-hills have always been a prosperous class, favoured both by the natural wealth of the soil and the proximity of important markets.

In the mountains, on the other hand, communications are

- 1) I. Sasek, *Les Migrations de la population intéressant le territoire de la Tchécoslovaquie actuelle* (Geneva, 1932), p. 53, gives 56,000; the Hungarian Refugee Office, over 106,000.
- 2) In 1910 there were 140,467 persons of Jewish faith in Slovakia, of whom 76,553 were entered as speaking Magyar, 58,355 German (under which term the Hungarian census included Yiddish), 4,956 Czech or Slovak, 274 Ruthene, and 327 other languages. In 1921 the persons of Jewish faith numbered 130,762 (excluding foreign subjects) and their languages were as follows: 29,290 Czech or Slovak, 21,744 Magyar 9,012 German 164 Ruthene, 70,480 Yiddish, and 72 'other'. The 'non-Aryan Christians' (to borrow a modern term) numbered only a few thousands, or perhaps hundreds.

difficult, the climate inclement, the land stony, precipitous, and barren. The natural difficulties with which the peasant class has to contend were enhanced before the War by an unfavourable distribution of land. Some 3,000 proprietors owned between them nearly one-third of the whole cultivable land of Slovakia, and three-quarters of the forests were in the hands of a few very large owners. On the other hand, nearly three-quarters of the agriculturists owned only one-fifth of the cultivable land between them, and as many again were altogether landless. *80-1)

The poverty of most of the Slovak peasants is terrifying. Semi-starvation is almost common, actual starvation by no means rare. It was stated in the eighties that in many of the Slovak counties the population 'only ate bread on Sundays' and 'meat, practically never'; that 'there was no difference in the food between work-days and feast-days'. The staple food was the potato. *80-2) One result of this has been the great mobility of the Slovak population. There has for many centuries been a constant trend downwards into the plain, whenever conditions have been favourable; hence the large Slovak population (sometimes wholly, sometimes partially Magyarized to-day) of Central Hungary, including its towns. More recently came the emigration to the U.S.A. No statistics of this were kept before 1899, but it is known that the emigration from Hungary began on a large scale about 1870, precisely in the Slovak districts of North Hungary, while between 1899 and 1914 over 300,000 Slovaks migrated to the U.S.A. *80-3) A considerable

1) According to the Hungarian official statistics of 1895, the agricultural establishments, exclusive of properties consisting solely of forest and pastures, in the Slovak and Ruthene Counties (corresponding roughly to the present Slovakia and Ruthenia) were as follows:

	No. of holdings	Slovak Counties. Total area	No. of holdings	Ruthene Counties. Total area.
Less than 1 hold	93,754	38,028	19,140	7,982
1-5 hold	140,587	389,034	28,292	77,899
5-10 "	97,136	699,786	18,776	135,895
10-20 "	75,613	1,051,964	15,534	217,515
20-50 "	33,573	966,508	8,561	250,562
50-100 "	5,200	356,573	1,426	94,143
100-200 "	1,609	224,109	375	52,063
200-500 "	1,446	461,395	207	62,539
500-1,000 "	790	556,969	81	59,027
over 1,000 "	842	2,677,797	93	474,084
	450,649	7,422,163	98,485	1,431,709

Some 60 per cent of the properties in the last category (1,524,518 hold in Slovakia 334,751 hold in Ruthenia) were composed of forests.

*80-2) C. Keleti, *Magyarország népességének élelmezési statisztikája* (Food Statistics of the Population of Hungary), cit. G Schütz, *La Situation matérielle des classes laborieuses en Hongrie avant la guerre* (Menton, 1930), p. 64.

3) Sasek, op. cit., p. 48.

number of Slovaks, particularly from the western districts, also migrated to Austria, chiefly to the province of Lower Austria (including Vienna). *81-1) Many of these were not permanent emigrants; the wandering Slovak tinker, pedlar, or broom-binder was a familiar figure of the old Monarchy as early as the eighteenth century, *81-2) and in modern times achieved the distinction of becoming the central figure of a charming opera (*Der Rastelbinder*). Extremely important, also, was the seasonal migration of harvest labourers into the Hungarian plain. This was organized in Hungary under two Government Commissions: the Highland (for what is now Slovakia and Ruthenia) and the Transylvanian. The labourers were registered, found work, and given free, or very cheap transport; the Commission was also intended to assure the workers equitable contracts and decent standards of living. The Highland Commission alone arranged contracts for periods exceeding six months for 49,000 workers in 1909, 71,000 in 1913, and 65,000 in 1924. Most workers, however, arranged their own terms. It is estimated that the annual average from the Highlands was some 200,000. *81-3)

The question had two sides. The cheap and docile Slovak labourers were undoubtedly exploited in the interests of the great Hungarian landowners, and even used as strike-breakers in the time of the agrarian riots among the Magyars of the Alföld. Nevertheless, this harvest labour formed a traditional and very important part of the Slovak national economy -- and, indeed, of the Hungarian. The harvest labourers were paid largely in kind. The wheat and pulse which they took back with them kept the highlands in food through the winter, and helped to assure the plain of a market for its surplus. In addition, Slovakia, at various times in its history, has been an industrial area of some importance. The iron-workings are the subject of an obscure and laconic reference by Tacitus. *81-4) Under the Hungarian kings, the mines and ironworks of the Spis towns and of the district centring in Banská Bystrica (*Besztercze Banya, Neusohl*) were very important and flourishing. These conditions continued during the period of the Partition, when the Habsburgs gave considerable encouragement to the local industries. The textile industry, in particular, employed large numbers of persons, many of them artisans who had been rendered unemployed by the decay of mining. The prosperity of North-Western Hungary went down in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly in relation

1) Sasek, op. cit., p. 43.

2) Marczali, op. cit., pp. 24, 89.

3) *Hungarian Peace Negotiations*, vol. i, pp. 474-5.

4) *Germania*, 43. Cotini, quo magis pudeat, et ferrum eflodiunt.

to the central and southern districts, which were developing very rapidly after their liberation from Turkish rule. Austria had every interest in encouraging the production of raw materials in the latter districts, since they afforded welcome sources of supply for her own industries. The mining, textile, and wine industries of the north-west, on the other hand, competed with analogous Austrian products, and were therefore systematically subjected to disadvantages of various kinds. The position was reversed when, towards the close of the nineteenth century, Hungary initiated her own policy of economic self-sufficiency. Now it was precisely the industries which might compete with those of Austria which were chiefly encouraged. In any case, the presence of abundant resources in the shape of timber, ores of various kinds, and coal, combined with ease of communications and proximity to markets, automatically designated Slovakia as the chief centre for Hungary's primary industry, and as an important secondary centre of her finishing industries.

Of the State subsidies paid out to industry between 1881 and 1914, North Hungary (Slovakia and Ruthenia), with an area of 19.3 per cent. of Hungary and a population of 17.1 per cent., received 33.5 per cent of the total subsidies, and 40 per cent. of those granted to the textile industries. *82-1) The highest subsidies went, incidentally, to non-Magyar Counties, such as Liptó, Turóc, and Szepes. Of the 84,169 persons employed in 1910 in the Slovak Counties in enterprises employing 20 persons or more, 40,778 were of Slovak mother tongue, with 1,618 Czechs and 663 Ruthenes, against 11,627 Germans, 26,818 Magyars, and 6,265 'others'. *82-2)

The progress of industrial development was very rapid. In 1900 there existed in Slovakia 429 undertakings, employing 20 or more workers, with a total number of 46,041 workers. By 1910 these figures had risen to 586 and 75,066 respectively. The number of persons employed in smaller enterprises rose during the same decade from 112,312 to 126,139, and the number of enterprises from 77,220 to 82,965, the increase being the more rapid, the larger the enterprise. *82-3) The total number of industrial enterprises had risen by 72 per cent. between 1898 and 1906, by 104 per cent. between 1906 and 1910, and probably by another 25 per cent. between 1910 and 1914. *82-4) Although most of the enterprises, particularly those connected with the clothing industry, were still extremely small, some

- 1) A. Halász, *The Providing of Labour for the Population of Upper Hungary under Hungarian and Czech Rule* (Budapest 1929) p. 5.
- 2) *Manuel statistique de la République Tchecoslovaque* (Prague, 1920), p. 57. The figures quoted are Hungarian official figures of 1920.
- 3) B. Kardos and C. Arkner, *Ipar; A Felvidék ipari népességének alakulása a háború előtt és után*.
- 4) A. Fichelle in *L'Europe centrale*, p. 235.

were considerable. The Krompachy (Krumpach) ironworks, for example, were a very important industry, and the annual production of iron-ore averaged well over 1 million tons, of which about half was exported to Austria, the remainder being worked up on the spot. The average annual value of raw iron produced here was over 15 million gold crowns. The metallurgical industry employed nearly 25,000 persons; stone, clay, asbestos, and glass, another 15,000; timber, as many; textiles, rather fewer. This industry was important not only for itself but also for Hungary's economy. Slovakia with Ruthenia produced about half Hungary's timber (most of the rest coming from Transylvania), 23.6 per cent. of her iron, 58.3 per cent. of the iron-ore, all the zinc, 54.7 per cent. of the manganese-ore, 25 per cent. of the salt, and contained 26.9 per cent. of the iron and metallurgical industries. Twenty per cent. of the wood and bone, 33.7 per cent. of the textiles, 93.7 per cent. of the paper industry, 19 per cent. of the stone, pottery, and glass, 27.4 per cent. of the wine and beer, 18.6 per cent. of the total mines and factories employing more than 20 employees, 21.1 per cent. of those employing more than 100 workers, and 17.4 per cent. of the total industrial enterprises were in the same area. The primary materials were usually within easy reach of the finishing factories, many of which were situated in or round Budapest, while the deficiencies in food-stuffs could again be made up from sources near at hand. The economic link between Northern and Central Hungary was thus particularly close.

§ 3. THE SLOVAK QUESTION UP TO 1914

The case for including Northern Hungary in Czechoslovakia does not rest on historical rights, although the ghost of Sviatopluk, ruler of Great Moravia, was made to serve his turn. *83-1) But Sviatopluk's historic claims were obviously less valid than those of Hungary, with her thousand-odd years of uninterrupted possession. He was more important as supporting, by the evidence which he gave of an early connexion between Czechs and Slovaks, the real claim, which was that of self-determination.

Essentially, the case as regards the Slovak areas rests on the theory that the Czechs and Slovaks are so closely akin as to be one people, speaking a single 'Czechoslovak' language; and that the

1) Cf. *The Territorial Claims of the Czecho-Slovak Republic* (Memorandum presented to the Peace Conference - hereafter quoted as *Czech Claims*), p. 1. : 'Slovakia, violently torn away from the Czechs several centuries ago, and artificially separated from Bohemia'. So Dr. Benes, before the Council of Ten (Hunter Miller, *Diary* vol. xiv, p. 220): 'Slovakia had at one time formed part of the Czecho-Slovak State. It had been overrun by the Magyars at the beginning of the tenth century.'

Slovaks (or Slovak branch of the Czechoslovaks) thus had naturally to be included in the Czechoslovak State; furthermore, that they themselves desired this union, expressing their wish in 1918 by formal declaration of their representatives. *84-1)

The justification for including Bratislava and the strips of valley and plain south of the Slovak linguistic area was mainly economic and military. The Czech spokesmen at the Conference urged, indeed, that these territories had once belonged to the Kingdom of Great Moravia; also that the population consisted in large part of Magyarized Slovaks; and thirdly, that since a large number of Slovaks must be left in Hungary, it was reasonable to 'compensate' Czechoslovakia by allowing her, in return, an equivalent Magyar minority. It was even suggested that the principle of reparation ought to be applied in tracing the frontier. *84-2) The economic argument was, however, pressed with more conviction. The Danube frontier in the west, with the port of Bratislava, was declared to be 'of the most vital importance' and to 'admit of no concession, nor yet of being discussed by the Magyars'. Bratislava was traditionally 'the capital of Slovakia' and the Danube 'the only possible natural frontier between Magyaria and Slovakia in those two regions'. Further, it was absolutely necessary for Czechoslovakia to become 'a veritable Danubian State, access to the Danube at one or two points only being quite insufficient'. The frontier demanded in the south-east which would have run along the southern slopes of the Matra, Bukk, and Hegyalia Hills, was, again, 'the only natural frontier'.

Hungary replied, firstly, that it was contrary to all principles of self-determination to take away from Hungary the compact masses of Magyars which, even when the Czech claims had been reduced, remained beyond the frontier, and along large sections of it,

- 1) Benes, loc. cit.: 'The conquerors had attempted without success to Magyarize the country. The population still felt Czech, and wished to belong to the new State. There was never any suggestion of separation in Slovakia. The same language the same ideas and the same religion prevailed.'
- 2) All of these claims were put forward either by Dr. Benes verbally before the Council of Ten, or in *The Territorial Claims of the Czecho-Slovak Republic* subsequently laid before the Conference, or both. For the claim to 'reparation' see *Czech Claims* p. 21. In his verbal statement Dr. Benes said that if his claims were allowed, 650,000 Magyars would be included in Czechoslovakia (350,000 in the west and 250,000 in the east), while 450,000 'Czecho-Slovaks' would be left in Hungary. The *Czech Claims* give 393,692 Magyars in the west and 465 000 in the east, as against 123,702 Czecho-Slovaks on the west bank of the Danube and 486,014 plus 20,000 elsewhere in Hungary (supplement on Slovakia, pp. 22, 23). Considering that the line then claimed ran well to the south of that finally decided these claims seem to rest on a very narrow basis. Dr. Benes himself says that he wrote most of his 'memoirs without proper material and that they thus contained 'many errors of fact' but he denies that these were intentional and argues that they had, in any case, no effect on the final decisions (Benes, op. cit., p. 688). This last claim hardly seems to be borne out by the actual course of events.

immediately adjacent thereto. Naturally, moreover, she rejected the historical claim; and, as regards economics, argued that the very fact that Czechoslovakia thought it necessary to ask for so large a section of the plain showed that it was disastrous to divide the highlands at all from the lowlands, Northern and Central Hungary forming, according to her contention, a natural and indivisible geographical and economic unity.

But she also contested the correctness of Czechoslovakia's major premiss. She maintained that the Czechs and Slovaks were not one nation but two, closely akin, indeed, but racially and linguistically distinct, and, above all, severed by deep historical and cultural differences. Only a minority of the Slovaks, not truly representative of the people, desired the union, and the nation as a whole, if consulted (she denied the representative character of the meeting which had voted the union), would have desired to remain with Hungary.

The final decision of the Conference, while it rejected the more extravagant of the Czech claims, allowed them Bratislava, on the score that it was destined to play an 'important and indeed essential part as the Danubian Port of Czecho-Slovakia', attributing to it also a small district south of the Danube as a guarantee against hostile raids, and as being the property of the municipality (this area was not allowed to be fortified). Farther east, the main channel of the Danube was taken as 'the only possible frontier', it being considered that the whole economic life of the Magyar inhabitants was 'bound up with the left bank of the Danube'. The argument that the population really consisted of Magyarized Slovaks seems to have carried some weight, and with regard to the Zitny Ostrava it was also thought that 'without it Czech access to the Danube might have been seriously curtailed'. East of this again, the frontier was drawn on something approximating to the ethnographical line, although the railway station of Satoralja-Ujhely was given to Czechoslovakia to assure her communications with Roumania. *85-1)

It does not appear that the major contention was given any close consideration. In fact, by the time of the Peace Conference, the Allies were already committed to the broad principle of incorporating the Slovak districts in Czechoslovakia; but even before casting the die they seemed to have entertained no real doubts of the justice of the Czech thesis.

To pronounce finally on the exact relationship between the Czechs and the Slovaks would involve giving a verdict *ex cathedra* on many points of ethnography and philology so nice that the native experts have never been able to agree on them. Broadly speaking,

1) *H.P.C.*, vol. iv, pp. 271 ff.

it seems safe to say that the Czechs and Slovaks, in the homes which they occupied before crossing the Carpathians, must have been next-door neighbours, if not of identical ancestry, and differed absolutely, as such, from the Finno-Ugrians and Turks who formed the original 'Magyars'. If a single dynasty had united both peoples in a permanent, or at least an enduring, union a Czechoslovak nationality would assuredly have been formed, and with it, a Czechoslovak language; any minor dialectal differences which existed would have been smoothed out. This did not happen; and while the Slavs of Bohemia developed the Czech nationality and language, to which the intermediate dialects of Moravia gravitated, *86-1) the Slovaks, under Hungarian rule, not only developed along different lines from the Czech but were not even able to form a single literary language. As will be seen, as late as the nineteenth and even the twentieth century their language was still fluid; it consisted (and consists to-day, in popular usage) of at least three main dialects, one of which approximates more closely to Czech, another to Polish, while a third is more individual. An ordinary Czech and an ordinary Slovak (not being politicians) understand each other easily enough, but also recognize that they are speaking differently. Whether the differences are large enough to justify speaking of two 'languages' or small enough to allow the term 'dialects' is a matter of sentiment rather than science. The difference is certainly not so great as that between the average two languages which are ordinarily recognized as kindred but different, e.g. German and Dutch, or French and Provençal.

However close the original bonds may have been, the ten centuries during which the Slovaks formed part of the kingdom of Hungary, while the Czechs were subjected to German and Austrian influences, naturally brought about a marked differentiation between the two people. Even the physical stocks cannot be so closely related to-day as they were a thousand years ago, for the Czechs are to-day inextricably mingled with German elements, while the Slovak mountaineers have retained their racial purity to a larger degree; such admixture as they have received is largely Slavonic (Polish and Ruthene), although the present population must also have many German and Magyar ancestors. There is, however, a noticeable difference both in physical appearance and in character between the dour, efficient, but somewhat ungainly Czech, and the

1) The Hungarians still attempt at times to differentiate the Moravians from the Czechs. The day for this is past but as recently as 1848, in the debates in the Viennese Parliament, the Germans referred to the Moravians as a separate nationality, and the Czech leader Rieger himself said: 'I do not know whether the Moravians consider themselves a nationality of their own!' See Gumplovicz, *Das Recht der Nationalitäten und Sprachen in Oesterreich-Ungarn*, pp. 73, 76.

airy, talkative, happy-go-lucky Slovak. The religious cleft is deep. For the Czechs, Master John Hus was and is not only a religious but essentially a national figure; and, if the nation returned to Catholicism under the pressure of the Counter-Reformation, it is a truism that every Czech is a Hussite at heart -- a Hussite in the wider sense of the term, denoting a blend of somewhat self-assertive nationalism with a 'Protestant' attitude towards all authority, social, national, or religious, which is felt to be in any way alien. For the Slovaks, Hussitism was the alien doctrine, Catholicism the natural faith. The Slovak soul has an innate reverence for authority, a natural penchant for forms and hierarchies; so that, paradoxical as it may sound, a Hungarian Count is a far more objectionable animal to a Czech than to a Slovak.

It is an interesting and important fact that the Protestant Slovaks, who number about 16 per cent. of their total number, are among the most nationalist and the most Czechophil of their nation. Partly this is due to their having received the Bible in the Czech (not Slovak) translation made in Hussite times, while the Catholics continued to use the Latin version; partly, perhaps, to the admixture of Czech blood which must have entered their veins from Czech Hussites who settled among them in the Jiskra era.

How far the differences of habit and mentality between Czechs and Slovaks are outweighed by the similarities is one of the great points at issue to-day, the Czechs and Centralist Slovaks maintaining that the differences are trivial, while they are emphasized by the autonomist and Magyarone Slovaks.

One thing is indisputable: that in contrast to the stormy Czech history, which is one long story of political and spiritual rebellion, the life of the Slovaks passed for centuries with very few signs of ill feeling between them and the Magyars. In the one really unrestful century -- the fifteenth -- the leaven in the lump came from Bohemia. The Slovaks -- a naturally submissive race -- made no particular claims. The chief element of friction in past times was absent, since both Slovaks and Magyars (in Western Hungary) were Catholics. The aristocracy became Magyar. The peasants lived a life of their own, without either national ambitions or national martyrdom. The prevailing economic misery, strange as it may appear, rather reduced than increased national differences, since it gave rise to the habit of seasonal migration to the plains, in the course of which the Slovaks came into contact with Magyar speech and Magyar ways.

The national renaissance which began among the Slovaks towards the end of the eighteenth century thus had difficulties of its own to encounter. Its leaders had to decide, not only what the

Slovaks ought to become, but also what they were; and on these questions the philologists and littérateurs were no more unanimous than the politicians themselves. The first literary movement was, interestingly enough, directed primarily against the Czechs, its father, a Catholic priest named Bernolak, being chiefly concerned in championing the independence of the Slovak language against the 'Hussite tongue' of the Czech ecclesiastical literature used by the Slovak Protestants. Bernolak was supported for political reasons by the Hungarian Government and by the Hungarian Primate of the day, who was himself of Slovak origin. An energetic counter-party maintained the substantial identity of the Czech and Slovak languages. In 1803 this group founded a chair of Slavonic languages and literature in the Lutheran College at Bratislava, and its leader, Palkovic, who held the chair for many years, made of that town the centre of Slovak cultural life. Among his pupils were two of the great figures of Slavonic scholarship of the day, Kollar and Safarik, who held different views on the Slovak problem. Safarik recognized a difference between Slovak and Czech, but held that Slovak was the pure, original form, of which Czech was a mere corruption. Kollar recognized only four main branches of the Slavonic language; Russian, Czech, Serb, and Polish. Kollar, and many other Slovaks after him, were strongly influenced by Pan-Slav ideas. The very expression 'Pan-Slavism' was coined by a Slovak, and there has always been a party among the Slovaks tempted by the idea of submerging the whole Czecho-Slovak batrachomuomachy in the vast and comfortable ocean of universal Slavdom.

Meanwhile the Magyars, ably assisted by a very vigorous party of Magyarone Slovaks, were vehemently propagating the complete Magyarization of the country. In 1844 this party succeeded in expelling Palkovic's assistant, Stur, who had become the real leader of the 'Pressburg School'. The consequences were momentous, for Stur now became convinced that it was impossible to maintain Czech as the language of Slovak culture; if Slovak was to exist at all, it must stand on its own feet. Accordingly, with his two friends Hurban and Hodza (both Lutheran priests), he adopted as the language of his movement the purest of the Slovak dialects, that of Central Slovakia. In 1847 a formal agreement was reached with Bernolak's school to adopt this dialect as their common language. The Czechophils resisted vociferously for a while, but came into line in 1851, after the question had been submitted for arbitration to a professor in Prague. Thus Slovak established its right to exist as a separate language just in time, as it transpired, to consolidate its position; for the next ten or fifteen years were the period in which Hungary was ruled by officials from Austria who,

if not in principle friendly to the Slovak cause *89-1) as such (the absolutist era was the enemy of all national aspirations alike), was at least more hostile still to the Magyars. Thus the Slovaks were enabled to found gymnasia in Revoca, Turciansky Svätý Martin (Thuróc Szent-Martón), and Klastor (Kloster) respectively, *89-2) and also in Svätý Martin -- now established as the recognized national centre -- a promising national literary society (the Slovenska Matica) which was supported by Catholics and Protestants alike.

The political movement of the period was no less divided. In 1848 the national party, led by Stur, Hurban, Hodza, and others, attempted to secure from the Hungarian Government certain political and national rights, including equality for all nationalities in Hungary; the recognition of each as a 'nation' (i.e. a corporate body) with its own Diet; a national guard and flag; free use of their language and educational facilities, and social and political reform. But only a fraction of the nation was behind these demands. Just as some of the most prominent figures of the Magyar literary renaissance, e. g. the poet Petöfi, and some of the most enthusiastic champions of Magyarization, e. g. Count Zay, were themselves of Slovak origin, so were not a few of the most vehement supporters of a politically united and independent Hungary, including Kossuth himself. When, later, the exiled Slovak leaders and the Imperial Commissioners tried to raise the Slovak districts against the Magyars, their success was only very partial, and Slovakia witnessed nothing like the racial war which broke out in Transylvania and in the Serb district of South Hungary. Indeed, many Slovaks fought in the Honvéds for Hungary, although some places boycotted, and one refused, the levies, and two units were formed which fought against Hungary. The 'Czecho-Slovak' movement was far less in evidence in the political field than in the literary. Palacky, indeed, proposed to unite the Slovak districts of Hungary with the Czech parts of Austria in his famous plan for the reorganization of the Monarchy; but there was no corresponding movement of any importance among the Slovaks.

After Hungary had been conquered by Austria and Russia, the Slovak nationalists naturally turned to Austria with their request for autonomy; but after they had met with a refusal less brutal but no less decisive than that which they had received from Hungary the political movement 'gradually simmered out. *89-3)

- 1) A large proportion of the officials sent into the country were, however Czechs, and many of these were personally friendly to the Slovak movement. The High Commissioner for the north-east, himself a Slav from Galicia, openly encouraged the Slavs in every way, to such an extent that a contemporary historian writes that 'it was clear that he wanted to set up a Slovakia' (Rogge, *Oesterreich von Világos bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. i, p. 210).
- 2) The last-named was founded after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise.
- 3) Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p, 107.

Indeed, the era of Austrian absolutism, if it allowed the Slovak cultural and literary movement to put forth some modest shoots, threw the political movement back into the arms of Hungary, and the next request made by the Slovaks for national rights (in 1861, when the Bach régime was *in extremis*) was addressed to Hungary, and was considerably more modest than the programme of 1848. It again asked for freedom of national development and equality of rights for all nationalities of Hungary, for recognition of the Slovaks as a 'nation', and for the creation of an 'Upper Hungarian Slovak Territory', in which Slovak should be the language of administration, religion, and education; but recognized clearly, and even warmly, the unity of Hungary, and agreed that Magyar should be the language of communication with the central authorities.

Refused again by the Magyars, the Slovaks once more approached Austria, and succeeded in laying similar requests before Francis Joseph. Once again their political demands were rejected lock, stock, and barrel, but they received some cultural concessions. In 1867, however, Francis Joseph concluded the 'Compromise' with Hungary, and the Slovaks were left again without allies.

The period which followed marked an absolute retrogression of the Slovak national movement. The Magyars acted with their wonted vigour. All higher state education was already in Magyar; the three private gymnasia were shut down, and their funds confiscated, in 1874, all petitions made subsequently to reopen them being refused. A similar fate overtook the Matica in 1875. Primary education soon followed suit. The number of elementary schools with Slovak language of instruction, after remaining until about 1880 at a figure which ranged between 1,971 (the peak figure reached in 1874) and 1,800, sank steadily to an average of 1,300 in the eighties, 510 in 1900, 241 in 1905. In 1914 the figure was 365 (out of a total of 4,253 elementary schools in the country), but the Slovak character was already little more than nominal since the introduction of the Apponyi school laws. *90-1) Not only all higher education, even that given in burger schools, was in Magyar, but even all the 448 kindergartens in the country were Magyar. Of the elementary-school teachers in the Slovak districts, only 345 gave Slovak as their language, against 129 with German and 4,257 with Magyar; in the higher elementary schools, the respective figures were 1, 16, and 425; in higher education, 10, 12, and 638. *90-2)

Of the State functionaries in the Slovak districts, 1,433 were Magyar-speaking, 32 German, 2 Slovak; for the County functionaries

1) *Czech Claims*, Section on Slovakia, p. 6. The Hungarian statement to the Peace Conference (vol. ii, p. 264) puts the figure of Slovak-speaking elementary schools still lower: 327, of which 6 were State, 2 communal, 198 Roman Catholic, 2 Calvinist, and 159 Lutheran.

2) *Ibid.*, pp. 28-9.

the figures were 920, 11, and 18; for municipal employees 753, 59, and 11; for public and district notaries 1,080, 20, and 33; for magistrates and public prosecutors 461, 3, and 0; for subordinate officials of the courts 805, 13, and 10.

In assessing the real meaning of these figures it must be remembered that the Hungarian statistics, from which they are drawn, refer not to origin or to 'race' but to language. They are evidence, indeed, of the practical extinction of Slovak as a language of administration and justice; but not evidence of the exclusion from employment of persons of Slovak origin. An idea of their meaning would be gained by taking similar figures given for the English-speaking and Gaelic-speaking teachers and civil servants of Scotland.

That the Slovaks were systematically Magyarized, with every sort of pressure and by the help of every device which could suggest itself to a determined and resourceful people, is a fact so patent that the denials of it which a section of Hungarian writers still think fit to issue can only awaken wonder at the degree of credulity which they impute to the foreigner. Quite another question is whether the process really encountered any widespread resistance; for denial of national culture is only oppressive when it is felt to be oppressive. No less certain than the fact that the Magyarization was exercised, and no less fundamental to the present theme, is the fact that it was in no way resented by the great majority of the Slovaks. When a people is conscious of its nationality, and determined to preserve it, nothing short of physical extermination can wipe out that consciousness. The Slovaks were not such a nation. When the pressure was relaxed, as among the emigrants in the U.S.A. (who were to play such a part in 1918), they could remember their national identity; but in Hungary they required little persuasion to forget it. A Magyar writer, in a famous phrase, described the Magyar secondary school as a machine into which Slovaks were poured at one end to emerge as Magyars at the other. The simile was just. To the dwellers in the poverty-stricken uplands, the life of the smiling plains and the rich cities which dotted them, and above all Budapest, with its rapid growth and spacious opportunities, offered attractions which were both strong and natural. They were few who resisted when the chance offered. Since the road to a wider life lay through Magyarization, they let themselves be Magyarized, easily and even gladly. To be a Magyar was to be a gentleman, to be a Slovak was to be a chaw-bacon. The public services and free professions of Hungary were well stocked with Slovaks who had learnt the Magyar language and with it had fully accepted the Magyar outlook. The Church, in particular, was a favourite resort of the Slovaks, many of whom

rose to the highest ranks in it. The fact that most of the Slovaks and most of the Magyars shared a common faith was, indeed, one of the greatest aids to the Magyarization of the former; while, conversely, one of the chief barriers against Magyarization was removed by the fact that the Catholic Slovaks, unlike the Serbs and Roumanians, possessed no national educational system anchored in the autonomous rights of a non-Magyar church. The Lutheran Slovaks maintained themselves better precisely because the Lutheran Church in Hungary was mainly non-Magyar.

The Magyarization of the peasants had not proceeded nearly so far; it had, indeed, not seriously set in until the nineteenth century. The peasants were as a mass not nationally conscious. But they were glad enough to acquire the little accomplishment which allowed them an opportunity of augmenting their incomes.

For a long time there seems to have been no opposition at all to this policy. According to Czech writers themselves, the 'Czecho-Slovak' idea practically died out, in Hungary and in Bohemia alike, after about 1880, *92-1) Svätý Martin survived as a sort of national centre, but the leaders there contented themselves with literary work and with a sort of mild and misty Russophil Pan-Slavism. It was not until 1895 that certain of the Slovaks, Serbs, and Roumanians of Hungary met and decided on a programme of fulfilment of the Nationalities Law of 1868, delimitation of the Counties on national lines, and political and social reform-modest demands indeed, compared with those of a generation earlier. *92-2)

Just at the same time the 'Czecho-Slovak' idea was reborn. Its spiritual father was Professor Masaryk, a Slovak, but from Moravia ; and among the young men who became the disciples of his new 'realist' school were not only Czechs but also a few nationally-minded young Slovaks, who had come to Prague to study. In 1896 this group founded the 'Czechoslovak Society' (Ceskoslovenská jednota), a very active institution, the aims of which were to work for the national unification of Czechs and Slovaks, to assist Slovak students at the Universities and High Schools of Bohemia and Moravia, and to emancipate the life of Upper Hungary from Magyar influence. It is fair to record that the quarrel between the pro-Czech and anti-Czech Slovaks promptly broke out again, no less violently than before; at a discussion held at Svätý Martin in 1897, 'agreement was reached on hardly any point'. *92-3) Bad blood was also caused by the free-thinking tendencies of the *Hlas*, the organ founded by the Czechophiles. The latter had now definitely

1) Krofta, op cit., pp. 61, 62.

2) There had been a few earlier meetings among students and negotiations for co-operation, but the first decisive step was that of 1895.

3) *Prager Presse*, March 9th, 1930 (Masaryk Beilage), cit. Szana, op. cit., p. 124.

abandoned the attempt to supplant the Slovak language by Czech, although they maintained that the two peoples were but branches of one great nation. One member of the other group, on the contrary, set out to prove that Slovak was more closely akin to Southern Slav than to Czech, and called on the Hungarian Government for support against the Czech intruders.

The overt political movement, at least, was not 'Czecho-Slovak'. The programme of the Slovak National Party, which entered the field of active politics in 1901, did not even include a separate Slovak territory or national personality, but only recognition of, and equality for, the Slovak language, with various educational, political, and social desiderata. In their hearts, many of its adherents would doubtless have liked wider concessions; but many, again, would have been genuinely contented with fulfilment of their public programme.

The Magyars were at first inclined to look on the Slovak movement with comparative indifference, so convinced were they of the loyalty of the people. The sentences imposed on Slovak nationalists were notably milder than those inflicted, for similar offences, on Roumanians. After a while, however, this attitude changed, and the various resources at the disposal of the Hungarian Government were ruthlessly applied. Among the many scandalous instances was the particularly detestable 'massacre of Csernova' of October 27th, 1907, when the gendarmerie fired on a crowd outside a church (gathered to protest against what was itself a most oppressive action of the authorities), killing twelve persons and wounding sixteen. The immediate sequel was that severe penalties were imposed on a number, not of the gendarmes, but of the crowd. The ultimate result was an immeasurable strengthening of the Slovak movement.

In spite of all chicanery and terror, *93-1) the movement maintained itself. The party won 4 seats in 1901. It lost them again in 1905, but in the famous free elections of 1906 it increased the number to 8. It fell again to 9 in 1910; but by this time it had further been reinforced by a small Slovak Socialist party. In 1912 a Slovak National Club was founded, but by 1914 it had not proved possible to bring about any real reconciliation or close co-operation between the various groups.

Owing to the Hungarian electoral system and methods, the voting strength of the parties did not represent, even approximately, their real popularity in the country. Nevertheless, it remains a fact which is not only emphasized by Hungarian writers to-day, but freely admitted by the Slovaks themselves, that the active nationalist

1) Ample and convincing details of these methods will be found in Professor Seton-Watson's works, *Racial Problems in Hungary, &c.*

movement was confined to an almost infinitesimal fraction of the Slovak population and even of the Slovak intelligentsia. The Hungarian Ministry of the Interior itself, in a secret list kept by it for police purposes, had only marked down 526 names as dangerous *94-1) Estimates given to me in 1935 by Slovak leaders of all parties have not varied very greatly from this figure; indeed, they have usually been below it. *94-2) And of the 250, 500, 750, or even 1,000 Slovak nationalists, certainly not all desired union with the Czechs, or would even have preferred the Czechs to the Magyars, given equal political conditions.

It is, moreover, the general opinion among the Slovaks to-day, and among those foreign observers most competent to judge and most sympathetic to the Slovak cause, that the national movement was fighting a losing and not a winning battle. *94-3 Being myself deeply convinced of the extraordinary innate power of the national idea, I should have expected the evolution to be different, but there were still passive nationalities in Europe before the War, and the Slovak was, it appears, one of them. It is commonly stated by the Slovaks themselves that, had the War not intervened, Slovakia would have been completely Magyarized within a not very distant period: according to some, fifteen years; to others, twenty years; to others, a single generation -- it is rarely suggested that more would have been required. This can hardly mean more than the final linguistic Magyarization of the intelligentsia, and the attainment of complete political mastery over the masses, since linguistic assimilation of the mountain villages was clearly impossible in so short a time. It is certain, however, that for the nationally-conscious minority the War came in the nick of time.

§ 4. THE CREATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Even the outbreak of the War brought no immediate change. A certain wave of rather vague Pan-Slav feeling appears to have touched the people when news of the Russian advance filtered through; but nothing like so strongly as in Bohemia. M. Juriga, leader of the Slovak Deputies in the Budapest Parliament, made two declarations (April 26th and December 9th, 1915) in which he solemnly affirmed the entire devotion of the Slovak people to the Hungarian cause *94-4) Any utterance to the opposite effect was, of course, impossible in view of the extremely severe repression exercised by Hungary on any national movement; but there is no

1) Szana, op. cit. p. 146.

2) Professor Seton-Watson in *Slovakia Then and Now* (London, 1931) p. 30 gives an estimate of 750-1,000 'as apart from the uneducated and neglected masses' This is the highest which I have heard from any source.

3) So Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 25.

4) Szana, op. cit., pp. 161, 166.

evidence that the Slovaks in Hungary were anything more than passive in their attitude until well on in 1918, when every one except the governments of Austria and Hungary knew already that the War was lost.

The active work of preparation for separating the Slovak territories from Hungary and attaching them to Bohemia was done, up to the last moment, from outside. Among the men who took the leading parts in this work, there were some of the young generation of Slovaks which had sat at Masaryk's feet at Prague; but the moving spirits in the whole matter were unquestionably Masaryk himself and his right-hand man, the young Czech, Dr. Benes, who succeeded in imposing their will, not only on the Allies, but even upon M. Durych, the accredited representative of the Czech 'Maffia' itself. Masaryk tells us that from the first he 'kept the inclusion of Slovakia constantly in view', *95-1) and in fact the map which he presented to Sir Edward Grey in April 1915 traces a proposed frontier in Northern Hungary which (except that it does not include Ruthenia) does not differ greatly from that adopted four years later. The explanatory memorandum *95-2) states that

The Slovaks are Bohemians in spite of their using their dialect as their literary language. The Slovaks strive also for independence and accept the programme of union with Bohemia *95-3)

The really decisive diplomatic step by which the Allies found themselves committed to the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia was the work of Dr. Benes, who, with Professor Masaryk, had prepared the ground. *95-4) This gave international sanction to the

1) Masaryk, op. cit., p. 41.

2) Text in Nowak, op. cit., pp. 319 ff.

3) Nowak op, cit. p. 336. Similarly Benes begins his pamphlet *Bohemia's Case for Independence* (published in 1917), with the words: 'The term Czecho-Slovaks, or simply the Czechs, includes two branches of the same nation'. A little later (p. 2) he speaks of a 'separatist' movement of 'certain Slovak patriots' which was accentuated by the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian dualism of 1867, which made the Slovaks members of another State, and completely separated them from the Czechs. This division of the two branches of the Czecho-Slovak nation has therefore existed only since the second half of the nineteenth century and has produced quite insignificant differences.

4) In retrospect, there seems little doubt that Czechoslovakia was really created on that day of January 12th, 1917, when the Allies, in their answer to President Wilson's request for a statement of their peace terms, included therein 'the liberation of the Italians, as also of the Slavs, Roumanes, and Czecho-Slovaks from foreign rule'. For accounts of this, see Masaryk, op. cit., p. 127; Benes, op. cit., pp. 242 ff.; *H.P.C.*, vol. i, pp. 171-3 and vol. iv, p. 254. The Allies had not previously pledged themselves to the dismemberment of the Dual Monarchy. The original phrase had been 'Italians, Roumanes, and Southern Slavs', and probably referred to the promises made to Italy and Roumania under the secret treaties of Rome and Bucharest, and to Serbia. Italy insisted that the word 'Southern' should be omitted, and Benes then

ideas of the 'Czechoslovak Council' which Masaryk and his supporters had constituted in Paris a few weeks earlier. On May 30th, 1917, the Czech Deputies in the Austrian Reichsrat, convoked at last after years of silence, followed suit by demanding 'the union of all Czechs and Slovaks in a single Bohemian State *96-1)' -- a demand reiterated in the 'Twelfth Night Declaration' of January 6th, 1918; and thenceforward the destiny of the Slovaks was firmly linked to that of the Czechs. As the latter advanced towards independence, they carried the former with them.

Lacking touch with the Slovak leaders at home, the émigrés made what contact they could with the large Slovak colonies abroad who, as we have said, had preserved the spirit of Slovak nationalism in a way which the Slovaks of Hungary had failed to do. In Russia the Czechs and Slovaks appear to have agreed as early as August 28th, 1914, to work together for Slovak autonomy; *96-2) but whether 'Slovakia' was to be part of Hungary, of a federalized Austria, of a Czecho-Slovak State, of Poland, or even of Greater Russia, was uncertain. Later on the old division of opinion characteristic of Czecho-Slovak relations appeared here also. The extreme Slovak national individualists, led by Dr. Konicek, repudiated the tendency of the opposite party to identify the two nations. Another split was between the 'Westerners' (Masaryk's followers), who were strongest in Petrograd, and the centre in Kiev where the 'Eastern' tendency and Holy Russia were all the vogue. It was only in 1917 that Masaryk's ideas, expounded with eloquence and conviction by his young Slovak disciple Stefánik, carried the day, and the Slovaks of Russia, in the majority, accepted the programme of the Czecho-Slovak National Council in Paris.

In America the representatives of the Czechs and Slovaks met at Cleveland on October 25th, 1915, and agreed to co-operate. The Slovaks stipulated for a federal form of state, with full

prevailed on the French to allow his own kind of Slavs to be particularized; the French persuaded the other Allies. Even so, Professor Temperley (H.P.C., vol. iii, p. 172) takes the view that the phrase could be interpreted as meaning autonomy within Austria-Hungary and indicated 'no attempt or resolve to break up' the Monarchy. Lord Robert Cecil stated in the House of Commons on January 29th, 1917, that 'we were not pledged to the form of liberation. The event was, however, to prove that the Allies were henceforward committed in fact if not in intention to the dismemberment of the Monarchy.'

1) This was the first public statement to this effect made by the Czech leaders at home; but they seem to have entertained the same ambition much earlier, although they attached less weight than the émigrés to the Slovak question. The Archduke Frederick in arresting Kramar on May 24th 1915, said in his statement of reasons that 'The object of the above associations is the independence of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, including Hungarian Slovakia' (*Das Verhalten der Tchechen im Weltkrieg*, p. 39)

2) Szana, op. cit., p. 156.

national autonomy for Slovakia, including a separate Parliament and administration. An agreement to this effect was forwarded to Paris, and Masaryk is said to have confirmed it. *97-1) The famous and hotly debated 'Pittsburgh Convention' of May 30th, 1918, was along the same lines. The Slovaks of the U.S.A. thereby registered their approval of the programme of union of Czechs and Slovaks in a single state, but stipulated that Slovakia should have its own Parliament, administration, and Courts of Justice, and that Slovak should be the official language of education and public life in Slovakia. The formulation of detailed provisions regarding the constitutional laws was to be left to the accredited representatives of the liberated Czechs and Slovaks.

At the wish of the American Slovaks, this document was shown to Masaryk (who was then in the U.S.A.) and he signed it. Unluckily, the parties concerned failed to make quite clear to each other what they were doing. The American Slovaks imagined that Masaryk was acting as head of the Czecho-Slovak Government, with plenipotentiary powers, and that his signature to the document made of it an obligation binding on the Czecho-Slovak State; particularly as the first Czecho-Slovak Government in Prague, on November 11th, 1918, expressly recognized as valid and binding on the Czecho-Slovak State all Conventions and engagements concluded or undertaken by Masaryk during the revolutionary period. The Slovak autonomists have since adopted the same view regarding what they call the 'Pittsburgh Treaty'. Masaryk, on the other hand, writes that the Convention 'was concluded in order to appease a small Slovak faction which was dreaming of God knows what sort of independence for Slovakia'. He signed it as 'a local understanding between American Czechs and Slovaks upon the policy which they were prepared to advocate'. Further the document itself agreed that the constitution was to be determined later. *97-2) The Czechs appear also to have objected to the validity of the document on the ground that the Slovak League was not officially recognized by the American authorities until 1919, *97-3) although it was good enough for the advocacy of Czecho-Slovak claims in 1917. *97-4) A great deal of subsequent recrimination would certainly have been averted if all signatories to the document had at the time made it clear, in writing, exactly what their respective signatures meant.

The story of the gradual adoption by the Allies of the theses of

- 1) Szana, pp. 165 ff.
- 2) Masaryk, op. cit., pp. 208, 209.
- 3) Szana, op. cit., pp. 176-8.
- 4) Masaryk, op. cit., p. 211:

In May 1917 it [viz. the 'National Alliance and the 'Slovak League'] presented to President Wilson, through Colonel House, a memorandum setting forth our political aspirations.

Masaryk and his group cannot and need not be retold here, By patient and indefatigable propaganda they implanted their major postulates-the existence of a 'Czechoslovak nation' and the desire of the Slovak branch of it to form part of a Czechoslovak State -- so firmly in the minds of the Allies that they were never seriously questioned at the Peace Conference. The 'Czecho-Slovak' Government had been recognized by all the Principal Allied and Associated Powers even before the peace negotiations began -- an act which implied that the Slovak question was in principle already settled -- while when the moment arrived for settling all questions of detail, including the drafting of the frontier, it found the Czecho-Slovak Government firmly established as a negotiating party; indeed, in something like a privileged position.

Meanwhile, the Slovaks of Hungary had at last begun to move. Contact with the Czech 'Maffia' had been established at the end of 1917; and on May 1st, 1918, after a preliminary conference had been held in Vienna between Dr. Sámal and the active Slovak politicians, Dr. Srobár, leader of the Slovak Social Democrats, made an important declaration at Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš (Szent Miklós). After referring to the sufferings undergone in the War by all nations, including 'the Hungarian branch of the Slovak people', the declaration demands a just and speedy peace, with free right of self-determination for all nations 'not only outside the frontiers of the Monarchy but also for all nations of Austria-Hungary, and also, therefore, for the Hungarian branch of the Slovak people'. *98-1)

On May 24th a number of leaders of the Slovak National Party met to consider 'whether they should intervene in the course of political events or whether they should persist in their attitude of passivity'. *98-2) There appears to have been considerable disagreement. One party, including particularly some of the older leaders, expressed fears both for the fate of Slovak industry if it became subject to competition from Bohemia, and for the national individuality of the Slovaks, who had so nearly been effaced by the Magyars and might be in even greater danger from the Czechs. But even they, it appears, did not oppose the Czechoslovak union on principle, Their fears were soothed by the younger men, and Father Hlinka declared: It is the hour for action. We must decide now whether we will, in the future, stand with the Hungarians or with the Czechs. Let us not

1) Szana, op. cit., pp. 171-2. See also L. Steier, *Ungarns Vergewaltigung* (Wien, 1929), p. 553, which reproduces the original text in facsimile. This shows that the declaration at first referred to the Hungarian branch of the Slovak people' (*teda i uhorskej vetvi slovenského národa*); but another hand altered the word 'národa' (nation) to 'kmena' (stock) and inserted the addition 'cesko-' before 'slovenského'.

2) Jan Opocensky, *The Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Rise of the Czechoslovak State* (Prague, 1928), p. 194.

beat about the bush. Let us declare definitely that we are for the Czechoslovak orientation. Our thousand-year-old wedlock with the Hungarians has not succeeded; we must divorce them. *99-1)

The following statement was drawn up (May 29th):

The Slovak National Party adopts the point of view that the Slovak race has the absolute and unconditional right to self-determination, on the basis of which it claims for the Slovak nation a share in the creation of an independent State to consist of Slovakia, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia.

Matthew Dula is charged with informing the Czech delegates in Prague of this final decision.

No more of importance is recorded during the summer; but in October a Slovak National Council was formed. Austria was by now fast approaching dissolution, and on October 16th the Emperor issued his famous manifesto promising that Austria should become a federal State on national lines. The Hungarian Premier had, however, secured the insertion of a phrase that 'the integrity of the Lands of the Holy Hungarian Crown is in no way affected (threatening to cut off food supplies unless this was done). On October 19th Juriga declared in the Hungarian Parliament that the Slovaks demanded the right 'to form our own State as a nation in our own territory'; to be entirely free from any foreign influence; and to be represented at the Peace Conference by Slovaks appointed by the Slovak National Council or National Assembly. *99-2)

According to Count Károlyi, who had been negotiating privately with the Slovak leaders, the latter had never demanded more than autonomy within Hungary. He was convinced that they were sincere, and would have accepted such autonomy if it had been offered. But Károlyi was not at the time in power, and the Premier, Dr. Wekerle, refused to promise anything more than individual rights. *99-3) Moreover, the men with whom Károlyi was negotiating were not, as the event proved, those whose voices counted most.

On October 18th the patient work of Masaryk and Benes bore its fruits, The Emperor-King telegraphed to Washington his willingness to conclude peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points; and Wilson replied that he could no longer accept that basis. Since publishing the Fourteen Points, he had recognized the Czecho-Slovak National Council, and that Czecho-Slovaks must themselves 'be judges of what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations'. Thereafter,

1) Ibid., p. 157. 2

2) Szana op. cit pp. 188-9; Opocensky, op. cit., pp. 157 ff.

3) M. Károlyi, *Gegen eine ganze Welt*, pp. 308-9.

events in the west moved fast. The Czech State came nearer to fruition every day. Every day Austria grew more ramshackle. At last, on October 27th, Count Andrassy, the last Foreign Minister of the Dual Monarchy, telegraphed to Wilson that he accepted the President's conditions, including his conception of the rights of the Czecho-Slovaks and Yugoslavs; on the following day the Czech National Committee took over the power from the Austrian authorities in Prague. But these things seemed to pass Hungary by. As late as October 22nd Count Tisza spoke in the Budapest Parliament of the 'phantasmagoria of a Czecho-Slovak State' and insisted that the Slovaks -- with exceptions which could almost be counted on the fingers of the hand -- felt no sort of community with the Czechs. *100-1)

Neither Andrassy's message nor the events in Prague were known to the Slovak politicians when they assembled on October 29th at Turciansky Sväty Martin to consider their future course of action. The leaders of the chief national parties were present; but not the representatives of the Magyarone tendency, nor those of the national minorities.

On the next day *100-2) the assembly considered its programme. It had before it at least three drafts. One, by Bishop Zoch, which had been approved by various politicians, including Juriga, was based on the Imperial Manifesto. It insisted on the proclamation of one race, one nation, and one Czechoslovak culture, and proclaimed the desire of the Slovaks to be united with the Czechs in a single Czechoslovak State, in accordance with Wilson's principle of self-determination. An alternative motion by Dr. Stodola went nothing like so far. It enumerated the sacrifices made by the Slovaks and the injustices suffered by them, and declared that, 'considering that there is no hope of the Hungarian factions even duly considering the equitable rights of the Slovak nation, the Slovak National Party considers it necessary, in this historic time, to raise its voice, as that of the Slovak people, to the areopagus of the free nations of the world, claiming also the right of the Slovaks to settle their own affairs themselves'. Dr. Pantucek also brought a memorandum on the suggested political organization of the new State, including a section on its administrative autonomy.

The Declaration as adopted on October 9th appears to have been a compromise between Zoch's and Stodola's drafts. It began with a long preamble on the wrongs of Slovakia, and an insistence on the sole right of the Slovak National Council to speak for Slovakia; neither the Hungarian Government nor the

1) Szana, op cit., pp. 195-6.

2) For the following, see Szana, op. cit., pp. 148 ff.; Opocensky, op. cit., pp. 159 ff.

so-called 'Representative Committees', which had been elected on the narrow Hungarian franchise, were conceded any such right. It went on to make the three following points:

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

The same night, however, at 11 p.m., Dr. Hodza arrived from Budapest with the news, that revolution had broken out in that city, Count Tisza had been murdered; and that Andrassy had recognized Wilson's demands. On seeing the Declaration, which had already gone to the printers, he objected that it was already out of date.

It was agreed, therefore, that the Committee should meet again the next day. Many of its members had already gone home; but about fifty attended the second meeting. Here Hodza argued that there was no purpose in sending a Slovak delegation to Paris, when there already existed there a Czechoslovak Government, recognized by foreign Powers and by Andrassy himself. From the moment the Slovaks had accepted the Czechoslovak State, they had accepted also the Czechoslovak Government, and the way in which it was organized in Paris. The participation of Slovaks living outside the historic frontiers was, of course; absolutely necessary, but the Government, he pointed out, already contained a number of Slovaks; the National Committee in Prague should also be asked to send some Slovak experts to the Peace Conference. Further, he proposed that a sentence should be inserted taking note of the legal situation created by Andrassy's acceptance of Wilson's proclamation; and that the recriminations against Hungary might well be cut short.

All these proposals were accepted unanimously, and the draft altered accordingly. The final version, after the preliminaries claiming exclusive competence for the National Council to speak for the Slovaks, went on as follows:

1. The Slovak people is both linguistically and by virtue of its cultural history a part of the single Czechoslovak people. The Slovak branch has participated in all the cultural battles which the Czech people has waged, and which have made it famous.

2. We also claim for this, the Czechoslovak people, the absolute right to self-determination, on a basis of complete independence.

3. In virtue of this principle, we express our agreement with the new system of international law formulated on October 18th, 1918, by President Wilson, and recognized on October 28th by the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The important difference in the redrafting lay, then, in the substitution of the new third paragraph for the former paragraph demanding separate representation for the Slovaks at the Peace Conference. According to Dr. Jehlicka, a very vehement opponent of the present régime in Czechoslovakia, some further alterations were made: in the first paragraph, the reference to linguistic unity was, he says, inserted by Zoch and Hodza, who also suppressed the reference to Slovak self-determination. *102-1) These allegations are not supported by the *officieux* accounts of the events in question. Most unfortunately for all, the verbatim text of the draft as it stood before the changes seems never to have been printed. It is the singular misfortune of the Czechs that nearly all the major negotiations which went to the making of their state have about them an appearance of irregularity which provides fuel for malicious insinuations. In the present case, there is no reason to suppose that the full meeting would have refused its approval to the changes agreed by those of its number who saw them; the more so, as the Declaration was subsequently ratified by more than 100 local Councils.

The question of Slovakia's relations with Bohemia was certainly discussed, and according to Dr. Opocensky some of those present were not satisfied that the plans of the Prague 'Maffia' respected sufficiently the autonomy of Slovakia, while others wanted a dictatorship for ten years, after which the position was to be reconsidered. The real reason for this latter suggestion was the belief that the Slovaks might go back to Hungary unless they were given a period in which to 'demagyarize'. Dr. Hodza opposed the claims for autonomy, and said that Slovakia could obtain a certain degree of autonomy on the basis of the plans which he had discussed with Pantucek and Rasin. Opocensky states specifically that no resolution was taken on the point. On the other hand, some of the most extreme nationalist Slovaks have since maintained that an agreement was reached at Turciansky Svätý Martin whereby the Slovak nation should have the right to declare, after ten years, whether it wished to remain 'within the Czechoslovak union, or whether it desired autonomy or complete independence'. This part of the resolution was, it was alleged, turned into a 'secret clause' and its existence thereafter denied. This alleged 'secret clause' played a great part in the Tuka high-treason trial of 1929, *102-2) at which its existence was strenuously denied on what appeared to be overwhelming authority. Unluckily, the original of the Declaration had disappeared.

1) Dr. F. Jehlicka, *Une Étape du calvaire slovaque* (Paris, 1930), p. 61. Jehlicka has for some years been in the service of powers hostile to Czechoslovakia, and his statements must be accepted with particular caution.

2) See below, p.132.

The Turciánsky Svätý Martin Declaration proved to be another decisive step in the history of the formation of Czechoslovakia, although it might easily have been otherwise; for many declarations were made in those perturbed days of which little was ever heard again. The purport of the meeting seems to have been entirely misunderstood by Count Károlyi, who had now become Minister President in Hungary, and on October 31st telegraphed to the Slovak National Council a warm message of fraternal greetings. He must have got a rude shock when on November 4th he received an equally cordial reply intimating that Slovakia had separated from Hungary, and that in future 'the free Czechoslovak nation wishes to live in good neighbourly relations and friendship with the free Hungarian nation'. Károlyi obviously had no idea that he would be unable to save the territorial integrity of Hungary, and as recently as October 24th had issued a programme which declared that that integrity could be maintained precisely by granting self-determination to the minorities. *103-1) Jászi was clearly less optimistic, but even he thinks that he 'should have been able to come to an agreement with the Slovak leaders, at all events until the peace negotiations, if Milan Hodza had not been so definitely disavowed at the last moment by Prague'. *103-2)

What Jászi was now hoping to do was to postpone a *fait accompli* until he could secure permission to hold a plebiscite under neutral supervision; and he believed firmly that such a plebiscite would end in Hungary's keeping Slovakia. The Czechs, on the contrary, were bent on avoiding any such thing. That they appreciated how precarious their position might, after all, prove to be, is shown by the instructions which their representatives issued 'that no one was to negotiate with Károlyi, as this might endanger the Slovak interests with the Allies and help the Magyars to save the integrity of Hungary'. *103-3) In reviewing the events which followed, sympathy with the Magyars must blend with admiration for the skill of the Czechs in negotiating successfully so many finesses and finally making a contract which their cards never seemed to justify.

On November 1st Austro-Hungarian delegates met the Italian Military Command at Padua, to arrange an armistice. This was signed at 3 p.m. on November 3rd (to take effect 24 hours later) and laid down a line of demarcation on the south-west front. Elsewhere the line consisted of the old political frontier; but the Allies were entitled to occupy the interior of the monarchy if they desired. Nothing was said about North Hungary, which the Hungarian Government continued to consider as part of Hungary.

1) Károlyi, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 458-9.

2) Jászi, op. cit., p. 59.

3) Benes, op. cit., p. 605.

The Czechs, on the other hand, maintained that the recognition by the Allies of the 'Czecho-Slovak State' implied that Slovakia as a whole was already theirs; only the details of the frontier remained to be settled. They therefore sent in such troops and gendarmerie as they could command, who on November 4th and the succeeding days occupied certain districts of Western Slovakia.

Haste was, indeed, urgent, for already voices opposed to the Turciansky Sväty Martin policy were making themselves heard. The Magyar districts of the south were solid against it; and the Magyar, Magyarized, or Magyarone towns also repudiated the wish to sever their connexion with Hungary, an example followed by the County Assembly of Trencin and by other Counties. The franchise for these assemblies was, of course, such that they were entirely unrepresentative of the masses of the country-side; but it was not equally clear that the masses would fail to follow them. Bratislava, after considering and dropping the idea of forming an independent republic, asked Budapest for troops to defend them against the Czechs. *104-1) The Germans of the Spis, in a meeting held on November 4th at which all German towns and communes of the Spis were represented, declared unanimously against Czechoslovakia and, while emphasizing their Germanic character and feelings, announced their spontaneous adhesion to Hungary, whose new legislation would, they believed, safeguard their national rights. If separation from Hungary was inevitable, they voted for an independent republic. *104-2) Finally, Polish troops occupied Sentra Hora, Jablonka, and the Upper Spis district on November 6th.

The Magyars, meanwhile, were gradually recovering from the shock, and some of their troops were returning from the front. Károlyi and Jászi, having decided that their first aim must be to 'safeguard the principle of the plebiscite', sent an emissary to

- 1) The story of Bratislava was a mixture of comedy and tragedy. The troops sent up from Budapest proved to be 200 naval mutineers from Pola, of exceedingly disorderly character and conduct, who wrought little but havoc in the ancient city, which was glad enough to see their backs. The burghers, however, consistently protested their loyalty to Hungary in dignified terms, and if the only persons who attempted to oppose the advance of the Czechs by force were two unhappy workers who marched out alone to face the legionaries and by them were beaten to death, the special constabulary continued for weeks to express its protests by the sporting of red, white, and green cockades and, when these were forbidden, by the wearing of white-spotted red toadstools and green leaves. On March 15th, 1919 (a Hungarian national festival), 35,000 of these toadstools (which by that time had also been forbidden) were deposited before the memorial of Petöfi (*né* Petrovic, the Slovak's son and Magyar poet and patriot).
- 2) When the Poles occupied the Spis, they pressed the local leaders to go to Paris and petition for incorporation of the district into Poland. The leaders refused saying that of the two Slav nations, if they must have one, they preferred the Czechs; but their hearts were still with Hungary.

Prague to demand that Slovakia should be occupied by Slovak regiments, while the administration should be shared between the Slovak National Council and the Hungarian Government, acting through the newly appointed Hungarian Minister of Nationalities. On the Czechs' refusing this suggestion (Nov. 11), Hungary mobilized three divisions of repatriated prisoners of war, with one division returned from the front, and opened a counter-offensive which speedily drove the Czechs out of Slovakia.

The Belgrade Armistice of November 13th made no mention of Northern Hungary. Hungary therefore maintained that any occupation by foreigners of territory beyond the Belgrade line constituted a violation of the armistice. On November 17th she protested to Prague to that effect, maintaining that Czechoslovakia had no right to anticipate the decisions of the Peace Conference; preparing, meanwhile, to occupy Slovakia with stronger forces.

Kramár, from Prague, replied on November 19th that the Czecho-Slovak State, including the territory inhabited by the Slovaks, had been recognized by the Allies, and that Hungary could not conclude an armistice for Slovakia, as a part of the Czecho-Slovak State. The Conference would only occupy itself with details of the frontier, not with the question of principle. At the same time, he appealed most urgently to Benes for his intervention.

Benes, with his usual energy, approached Berthelot, Pichon, Clemenceau, and Marshal Foch. He also tells us that he saw the British and Americans; but he concentrated chiefly on the French, pressing them both for a 'clear interpretation' of the Belgrade Armistice and for determination of the frontier with Hungary. To Foch, he sketched a line of demarcation of the areas which he declared it to be most important for the Czechs to occupy, whatever the later decisions of the Conference. This line ran: the Carpathians, the Morava, the Danube as far as the Ipel (Ipoly); the Ipel to Rimavská Sobota (Rima Szombat); thence as the crow flies to the junction of the Uz and the Bereg; the line of the Uz up to the Carpathians. He asked 'that this territory should be attributed to us without prejudice to the Peace negotiations'. *105-1) Finally, he had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from M. Pichon on November 27th, agreeing with his point of view and informing him confidentially that the Magyar troops were being ordered to withdraw from 'the areas illegally occupied by them'.

Meanwhile, the Czechoslovak Government had sent Dr. Hodza

1) Benes, op. cit. p 678. This line resembled closely that proposed by Masaryk in his memorandum to Grey of April 1915; although the wording of that document is not altogether unambiguous (text in Nowak, op. cit., pp. 319 ff.).

to Budapest, as minister plenipotentiary, to 'liquidate the conflict with Hungary'. Hodza arrived in Budapest on November 23rd. *106-1) The French Colonel Vyx, who arrived in Budapest on November 27th as representative of the Allies to supervise the execution of the armistice, at first took the Hungarian view. He told Hodza that he thought the Czech occupation of Slovakia had been a mistake and a violation of the armistice, and he recommended them to withdraw. On Hodza's maintaining the Czech thesis, Vyx promised to refer the question to his chiefs. This he did by sending the Czechs' request to the Commandant of the Army of the Orient, whence it could be forwarded to the Inter-Allied Council at Versailles. Meanwhile, Hodza opened negotiations with Jászi. According to the Hungarians, they had every hope of reaching an acceptable agreement. Hodza himself represents Jászi as saying that 'he had to respect our standpoint, but it was difficult for the Hungarian Government openly to renounce the integrity of Hungary'. *106-2)

Jászi repeated his earlier proposals that Slovakia (viz. all territory inhabited by more than 50 per cent. Slovaks) should be occupied by Slovak troops, under Hungarian (or perhaps Allied) officers, and should be governed by the Slovak National Council, under the Hungarian Minister of Nationalities. Hungarian enclaves should be accorded autonomy, the Slovak National Council nominating a Government Commissioner, while Hungarian Commissioners should be admitted to the Slovak Council to defend Hungarian interests. The administration was to remain in Hungarian hands, and the railways and finance to be under Hungarian command, the National Council only exercising 'control'. *106-3)

Hodza could not accept these proposals, but to gain time set aside his main contention, and opened negotiations on November 29th for a provisional modus vivendi pending the decision of the Peace Conference. No agreement could be reached, as the Slovaks demanded the surrender to themselves of the administration, which the Hungarians insisted on maintaining.

Meanwhile, Benes had been suggesting that Hodza should be recalled, on the ground that as the Hungarian Government had not been recognized by the Allies, the Czechoslovak Government could not send a Minister Plenipotentiary to Budapest, and the decision on the new situation in Slovakia would be made in Paris, not in Prague or Budapest. He also urged Kramár confidentially 'to occupy Slovakia via facti and create a fait accompli; we must command the situation'. *106-4) On December 1st the Government in

1) Dr. Stodola had held the post for a few days previously.

2) Szana, op. cit., p. 244.

3) Opocensky, op. cit., pp. 203-4.

Prague published a communiqué, that no one had been authorized by them to treat on questions of a political, economic, or military nature, and that Hodza had been sent to Hungary solely to discuss the liquidation of the Hungarian administration in Slovakia. *107-1) On the night of December 3rd Benes's activities were crowned with success; Vyx informed the Hungarians that Czecho-Slovakia had been recognized by the Allies and was entitled to occupy the Slovak territories. He therefore called on the Hungarians to withdraw their troops immediately from the 'Slovak Territories'. *107-2)

The Czechs had now won their main battle; but the 'Vyx Note' laid down no line of demarcation. Hodza urged Benes to ask for immediate authority to occupy the line Bratislava-the railway through Galanta and Nové Zámky (Ersek Ujvár)--Komárno-the Danube to the Ipola-Ipolské Sahy (Ipoly-Sagh)--Balasské Darmoty (Balassa Gyarmat)--Lucenec--Salgotarján- Rimavská Sobota-Revuca-Roznava-Kosice-Cop and Uzhorod. This line was rather more favourable to Slovakia in the east than that proposed by Benes, although less advantageous in the west (it excluded the Zitny Ostrava Island), but Benes asked the Allies in Paris to accept it. At the same time, Hodza on December 6th agreed with the Hungarian Government on a provisional line of demarcation (to be effective only until fresh instructions arrived from Paris) which left Bratislava, the Island and Kosice also with the Hungarians.

The Hungarian troops immediately began to retire. The Czechs advanced, and within the next fortnight had reached the line laid down in the provisional agreement in most places except the far east.

The Hodza-Bartha agreement was so far advantageous to the Czechs that, as their own publicists claim, it 'prevented the Hungarians' organizing a plebiscite in Slovakia and allowed the Czechoslovak Republic to start to organize it'. *107-3) At the same time, it gave the Hungarians an opportunity of which they were quick to take advantage. They argued that the Hodza-Bartha line was that duly agreed between the accredited representatives of the two nations, that it answered the real needs of the situation, and that the Czech demands in Paris were far too exigent. The resultant confusion took all M. Benes's diplomacy to straighten out. He got the Government in Prague to declare officially

that the occupation of Slovakia had not been the subject of negotiations between the Czechoslovak and the Hungarian Governments, that the

1) Opocensky, op. cit., p. 206.

2) Text in *Documents concernant l'exécution de l'armistice en Hongrie* (subsequently referred to as *Documents*), p. 95.

3) Opocensky, op. cit., p. 211.

Czechoslovak Government had never empowered any one to conduct such negotiations and that our representatives Tusar and Hodza had been sent to Vienna and Budapest exclusively to deal with questions of liquidation. *108-1)

The Allies accepted this declaration, and did not inquire for what reason the Hungarian troops had retired. Benes returned to the assault in favour of his own original line, as agreed in November, and 'after wearisome and nerve-racking negotiations at the Quai d'Orsay, received an assurance in the middle of December that his line would be respected'. *108-2) Colonel Vyx was instructed accordingly. On previous occasions when he had referred to the historic frontiers of Slovakia, the Hungarians had made the embarrassingly truthful reply that no such things existed. Colonel Vyx, in his new Note on December 23rd, said firmly that:

The limits claimed by the Czecho-Slovak State as the historic limits of the Slovak country are as follows:

[There followed the line demanded by Benes.]

The Colonel added that the definitive boundaries would only be fixed at the Peace Treaty, by agreement between the Allies; and requested the Hungarian Government to withdraw its troops south of the line. *108-3)

Hungary protested vehemently, *108-4) but obeyed. The Czechs continued their advance, and by the middle of January had occupied the territory subsequently allotted to them, incidentally establishing therein a civil government, and as early as December 10th ordering such State, ecclesiastical, and municipal officials as were not dismissed to take the oath to the new State (the decree was published December 24th). The Government was established first in Zilina (Zsolna, Sillein), and moved to Bratislava at the beginning of February. *108-5) To Hungary's protests, Colonel Vyx on January 10th, 1919, returned the remarkable answer that the Belgrade Armistice did not prejudice decisions taken subsequently by the Allies on other fronts and that

consequently, the Czecho-Slovak State, recognized by the Allies, has the right of absolute sovereignty on the territories which it has re-occupied within the limits of the provisional frontiers fixed for it *108-6)

With the Czech advance in the east there disappeared yet another of the short-lived independent republics of Central European 'East Slovak Republic' which had been founded at Presov in December by a journalist named Dvorcsák, and seems to have maintained itself for a fortnight or so. *108-7)

1) Benes, op. cit., p. 68. 2) Ibid. 3) *Documents*, pp. 95-6.

4) Ibid., pp. 96-8. 5) Szana, op. cit., p. 250. 6) *Documents*, p. 98.

7) Szana, op. cit., p. 246.

Meanwhile the Peace Conference had assembled. On February 5th, Dr. Benes put his case to the Council of Ten, which immediately consented to the general principle of including the Slovak territories in Czechoslovakia, while referring the tracing of the southern frontier to a Committee. There appears to have been some disagreement in this body, the Americans wishing to trace a frontier as near as possible to the ethnographical line, while the French and, in the main, the British, were prepared to disregard the ethnographical principle in so far as was thought necessary for Czechoslovakia's lateral communications. The south-eastern frontier was a compromise between these two points of view. *109-1) In the west, all parties agreed to give Czechoslovakia the port of Bratislava, but there was much divergence of opinion over the Island. The French wished to give it to Czechoslovakia, the Americans to Hungary. The British member of the committee, Mr. Nicolson, although not sympathetic to the Magyars as a nation, *109-2) sided on this question with the Americans. He was overruled, but remained unhappy about it, *109-2) and when in March he accompanied General Smuts to Prague, Smuts, at his request, asked Masaryk to abandon his claim to the island in return for a bridge-head at Bratislava. Masaryk hesitated, and Nicolson believed that he had agreed; but when the point was raised at the Conference the Czechs maintained their claim, saying Nicolson had 'completely misunderstood' Masaryk; and in the end they got both island and bridge-head. *109-4) Mr. Lansing cross-questioned the rapporteur of the Committee, M. Laroche, who informed him that the island was 'partly German and partly Hungarian', *109-5) but that it was closely connected economically with the Czecho-Slovak hinterland, and that the population desired to maintain this connexion on economic grounds. In any case, the frontier as proposed gave only 855,000 Magyars to Czechoslovakia, while leaving no less than 638,000 Slovaks in Hungary. *109-6)

The Council adopted the Committee's report on May 8th. This was really the end of the battle for the Czechoslovak negotiators. They had won their case in broad outline and in detail. There were, however, one or two more alarms and excursions before the Treaty was signed. While the negotiations described above were proceeding, the Czech troops in Slovakia had occupied some territory beyond the demarcation-line. On coming into power, the energetic Bela Kun reorganized the Red Army, opened an offensive, and within a few days' fighting in early June had cleared a considerable portion of South-Eastern Slovakia. This success,

1) Nicolson, op. cit., p. 275.

2) Ibid., p. 34.

3) Ibid. p.279.

4) Ibid. p. 324.

5) According to the 1910 statistics, the population consisted of 108,000 Magyars, 3,030 Germans, and 1,170 Slovaks.

6) Hunter Miller, *Diary*, vol. xvi, p. 230.

according to Dr. Benes, 'affected our prestige and position in Paris for a while very considerably', *110-1) and he must have appealed for help. On June 10th, Clemenceau sent Kun a remarkable telegram *110-2) saying that the Allies were 'just about to call the representatives of the Hungarian Government to the Peace Conference to inform them of the Allies' views on the just frontiers for Hungary. At that precise moment the Hungarians directed violent, unjustified attacks against the Czechoslovaks and overran Slovakia.' He called on Kun to stop his attack immediately, failing which, 'extreme measures' would be taken. Kun replied that he was prepared to stop hostilities and to negotiate a just peace; he did not insist on the territorial integrity of Hungary. He suggested negotiations in Vienna. Clemenceau answered on June 13th, communicating the frontier which had been settled in Paris and stating that this would be definitive. The Hungarian troops were to withdraw behind this line immediately. Kun protested vehemently, but the overwhelming majority of the Communist Party Executive, whom he consulted, advised acceptance (among the few dissidents was the extremely able Chief of Staff, Stromfeld), *110-3) and Kun obeyed, at the same time informing his country that the evacuation was not to be regarded as definitive. By the beginning of July, Slovakia had been cleared; the Czechs re-entered it, and soon liquidated the Soviet Republic of Slovakia which had reigned for a fortnight in Kosice. The accession to power of the Archduke Josef in August 1919 caused another crisis, described by Benes as being 'as severe or more severe' than the above; *110-4) but it passed over.

§ 5. THE SLOVAK QUESTION SINCE THE WAR (I)

Slovakian history since 1918 had had its full share of complexities and difficulties, many of which must have appeared inexplicable to those who took at their full face value all the optimistic statements made at the Peace Conference. It all seemed so simple then. A nation, united in itself, and identical in race and language with the Czechs, was only awaiting the hour to cast off the yoke of Magyar oppression and join hands with its fellow Czecho-slovaks in the Historic Lands. Nothing was simpler than to fulfil this ambition; and such a nation could face with equanimity the inclusion within its frontiers of nearly a million Magyars and Germans, even though 95 per cent. of the minorities in normal times and 70 per cent. during either the Red or the White Terror would probably have remained loyal to Hungary.

1) Benes, op. cit., p. 213.

2) Text of these notes in Szana, op. cit., pp. 299 ff.

3) W. Böhm, *Im Kreuzfeuer zweier Revolutionen* (Munich, 1924), p. 472.

4) Benes, op. cit., p. 684.

But, as the event proved, the minority question was not the only political problem in Slovakia. That of the Slovaks themselves was perhaps less intractable but even more delicate, besides being absolutely fundamental to the existence of the State. The key to the problem lay in the position, not of the Magyars, but of the Magyarones. The Magyar elements in the administrative, judicial, and educational systems could have been removed without too much difficulty, or, where retained, could have been rendered harmless, had nationally conscious Slovaks been there to take their places. But even apart from the fact that the mass of the Slovak peasantry, although harbouring deep and justified grievances against the former ruling caste, was conservative and docile, and showed small inclination to revolt actively – far more important – the great majority of the middle-class elements which might have led the country, and for whose sake the whole change had largely been made, were in the enemy camp. The active Slovak nationalists, even when reinforced by the inevitable band of turn-coats, remained a mere handful, consisting only of a few hundreds of men, totally insufficient in numbers and sometimes in training or even capacity to undertake the complex task of ruling the country. The remainder of the intelligentsia, who might have given a lead to the masses, had become Magyarized both in language and mentality.

The central task was thus to build up a national sentiment favourable to the new régime round what was only a tiny nucleus in the sea of apathy blended with much actual hostility. And while this was being done – and it was clearly to be a long and not an easy task – the administration and business of the country had to be carried on.

It is from this initial weakness in the position – which could never be openly avowed, since to admit it would have been to acknowledge a large part of Hungary's case for keeping Slovakia – that much of the subsequent friction between Czechs and Slovaks arose. To a large extent, the Czechs have been unfairly blamed. The accusation so frequently levelled at them, once the first rapture was over, of having intended from the first to treat Slovakia as a conquered country or as a 'colony' for exploitation, is probably untrue. If we except the motives of business interests, which are notoriously superior to national prejudices (and were in any case as much German or Jewish as Czech), the Czechs were undoubtedly most sincerely anxious to give the Slovaks their full due in every respect. The weakness of their friends in Slovakia, when it became apparent, must have been not only a source of great embarrassment but also a dismal surprise. Given the original position, however, and given also the natural determination to keep what had been won, what followed was inevitable. It was possible, indeed, to

watch the Czechs being forced, step by step, along the unpopular path which they took.

In the first days of the Republic, the Czechs apparently hoped and believed it possible to govern the country through the Czechophil Slovaks, without themselves intervening directly. They did not, indeed, leave the National Assembly of Turčiansky Svätý Martin, nor the numerous local Slovak Councils which had sprung up. They organized, as has been described, a 'Government Office', which had its seat first at Zilina and then in Bratislava. The head of this office was nominated from Prague, the choice falling on Dr. Srobár, one of the leaders of the Centralist wing. Thus, from the first, care was taken that the particularist wing – still more the Magyarophiles – should not exercise undue influence. On the other hand, Dr. Srobár was invested with practically plenipotentiary powers. The very largest issues of policy were decided from Prague, but in all else the Government Office enjoyed practical autonomy.

An analogous arrangement was made as regards political representation. Immediately on the constitution of the Republic, a National Assembly was convoked in Prague. For the Historic Lands, the various Czech parties were represented in as accurate a proportion to their known strengths as could be estimated, the results of the latest Austrian election being taken as the key for making the calculations. For Slovakia, on the other hand, the results of the Hungarian elections (which would, of course, have given an almost purely Magyar list) were set aside as unrepresentative – as indeed they were – and at first 40, afterwards 54, Slovak Deputies were nominated from among the more active members of the local Councils, with the addition of 4 Czech champions of the Slovak cause and of Dr. Alice Masaryk. As in the Historic Lands, the national minorities were entirely unrepresented, and among the Slovaks, although the main leaders of the various tendencies were included, the representation was undeniably weighted in favour of the Centralist wing.

The Government Office rapidly expanded into an elaborate organization, with thirteen departments, each under a 'Referent' and concerned respectively with the interior, agriculture, trade, railways and posts, justice, militia, education, Catholic affairs, Protestant affairs, social welfare, and public works. All thirteen 'Referents' were Slovaks. Once these departments got to work, the Czech legionaries who had first occupied the country were withdrawn.

The Government Office undertook with energy the task of reorganizing the administration of the country. Under an emergency law, all municipal and commercial assemblies were dissolved,

as having been elected on an undemocratic and anti-social basis, and replaced by commissions nominated by the Government. Slovak was proclaimed the official language of the State. The law authorized former officials to be retained if properly qualified, and if they took the oath of allegiance. The two highest officials in each county – the 'Főispán' (Lord Lieutenant) and 'Alispán' (Deputy Lieutenant), who were the chief props of the Hungarian system – were, however, immediately replaced by Slovak 'Zupáns', and many other higher officials either left voluntarily or were dismissed as unqualified, or as refusing to take the oath. In this connexion, it is frequently claimed as a grievance that the new régime often exacted the oath before it was entitled to do so, and in fact, as our earlier narrative has shown, the position in the early days rested rather on *faits accomplis* than on *droits acquis*. It would appear that no very scrupulous consideration was observed towards officials who were at once influential and notoriously Magyarophil. The smaller fry, who might otherwise have been left undisturbed, played into the hands of the new régime when, in December, a general strike broke out among the post office and railway employees, notoriously organized from Budapest with the object of cutting communications between Slovakia and Bohemia and preventing their ultimate union. In consequence of this strike a large number of lower State employees were dismissed, and their places filled very largely by Czech volunteers who had come in, in response to appeals from Bratislava, to maintain an emergency service.

The treatment of the teachers in the State schools was perhaps even more drastic than that of the administrative employees. The 'Referent' for education, Dr. Stefánek, reorganized the whole system on national lines, leaving to the minorities a quota of schools proportionate to their numbers, but taking over the rest for the use of the Slovaks. In a question of such importance, he did not think it safe – nor, indeed, would it have been safe – to give the former Magyar teachers a chance to learn the new language of instruction, but dismissed the lot with gratuities, at a considerable cost both in human suffering and in hard cash. He even went farther, and placed under State control the Catholic 'gymnasia', thus violating, in the interests of de-Magyarization, a principle which Hungary had always strictly observed. *113-1) Similarly, the University in Bratislava

- 1) No legal right was disregarded by this action since the Catholic Church alone among the more important religious denominations in Hungary, did not (and still does not) enjoy internal autonomy; the reason lying in the peculiar relationship of the State and the Apostolic Crown to the Holy See. The Catholic Church is therefore actually less well protected in law against a hostile Government than the Lutheran, Orthodox, or even the Jewish faith. The principle of freedom of denominational education was however, always observed, Dr. Stefánek writes of his own action that 'the only alternatives would have been to close them [the gymnasia] altogether or to leave them in Magyar hands' (Seton-Watson, ed., *Slovakia Then and Now*, p. 121). The action was, as it proved deeply resented not only by Magyars but also by Slovaks.

was taken over, in the face of very vehement protests from the Hungarian Government, which finally withdrew the staff bodily to Inner Hungary.

Even the Church was affected by the reorganization, if less immediately than other branches of public life. The change-over was not too difficult for the Lutheran Church, where a Slovak, even a Czecho-Slovak, national spirit had always managed to survive. The seats of all three Bishops lay in Inner Hungary, and it was thought impossible 'alike for political and practical reasons' to maintain their authority over the Slovak parishes, *114-1) while several of the next senior Church officials – Seniors and Inspectors – also retired, for 'purely political reasons'. Following an appeal by the remainder, the Government established a provisional Church authority, which obtained from the Government recognition of all obligations of the former Hungarian State towards the Church, with certain additional subsidies. In 1922 a new Church constitution was approved under which the Lutheran Church was guaranteed internal autonomy and liberal financial endowments from the State. Almost all the Bishops, Seniors, and Inspectors provisionally appointed in 1919 were confirmed in their offices; these being, for the most part, Slovaks by origin and sympathies.

The question of the Catholic Church was far more difficult. Here, most of the episcopal seats lay within Slovakia itself, but some of the bishops and other higher dignitaries withdrew to Hungary, while others, owing to the strength of Slovak sentiment, 'had to yield to the unanimous pressure of public opinion and hurriedly abandon their positions in Slovakia'. *114-1) The substitutes left behind by the bishops were, however, themselves usually Magyars or Magyarophil, as were the great majorities of the chapters. Owing to the difficult relations between Prague and the Vatican, little could be done for several years towards Slovakizing the Catholic Church, and even after fifteen years the process was far from complete.

With this exception, the liquidation of the old régime proceeded with unexpected rapidity; but a gap was left which the nationalist Slovaks themselves were frankly unable to fill. The difficulties were, of course, tremendous, especially in Eastern Slovakia, where under the Hungarian régime a Slovak intelligentsia had simply not been tolerated. Here it was difficult even to find candidates for office. But neither for the upper ranks of the administration nor (after the strike) for the lower ranks, nor for education, was it

1) The Rev. F Ruppeldt in *Slovakia Then and Now*, p. 193.

2) The Rev. K. Medvecký in *Slovakia Then and Now*, p. 177.