

ANSWER TO DR. SETON-WATSON'S PAMPHLET

by

Father Jehlička



In his pamphlet entitled "*Treaty Revision and the Hungarian Frontiers*" Dr. Seton-Watson devotes two chapters to me. In order to undermine the authority of the „Slovak National Council in Geneva” of which I am chairman, and to call in question its Slovak character, he goes so far as to allege that the Council is „controlled from Budapest”. However, whereas Dr. Seton-Watson has failed to produce proofs of the correctness of his statement, we are in a position to prove that Dr. Seton-Watson's "Masaryk Chair" in London University is really "controlled from Prague"; for the said Chair was created for Dr. Seton-Watson by the Czecho-Slovak Government, which has ever since financed the same.

It is characteristic of the method employed by Dr. Seton-Watson that he should confine himself to extracting a few incoherent sentences from the address delivered by me in London, before the Catholic Council for International Relations, while suppressing the essential points.

The principal theme of my address was the methods of the Czechs in balkanising Slovakia, where they have laid destructive hands on every branch of culture. They have ruined the material culture of this region, crushed its industry, cut down its forests, and beggared its people. Is it conceivable that there should be any higher intellectual culture where there is no material basis? And how can an intellectual culture be fostered by the schools of Slovakia which have been transformed by the Czechs into hotbeds of czechisation?

The social culture of Slovakia has been ruined by some half million Slovak men being compelled to emigrate, this procedure destroying the happiness of innumerable family homes. In the public life of the country the Czechs have made corruption the ruling factor; while they have put an end to personal security and the sanctity of property and to liberty of speech.

The crowning and most important manifestation of culture is that comprised in religion and ethics. This form of culture is being systematically extirpated in Slovakia by the Czechs, who plead in excuse for their action that so long as the Slovaks cling to their religion they will defend their tongue too; therefore they must be deprived of the religion of their forefathers. According to the latest reports of the papers, the Czechs have demolished the Holy Trinity Monument in Levoča, a town in Slovakia, and have not been punished at all for doing

so (the demolition was carried out on April 26th., 1934).

These matters are ignored by Dr. Seton-Watson, for it would be a difficult task to defend his protégés in this connection.

Another essential section of my address dealt with an important statement made by Dr. Seton-Watson. For in another publication of his ("*Slovakia Then and Now*", p. 6) he admitted that there would be every ground and reason for the partition of Czecho-Slovakia, if it could be proved that that country was not a natural formation but an artificial structure. In my address I proved beyond a doubt that Czecho-Slovakia was an "artificial structure". I referred to its absurd shape, on account of which French, German and Czech military authorities declare that this State cannot strategically be defended. This State is not a historical unit, seeing that for a thousand years one half of the same belonged to Hungary, and the other half to Austria. Nor is it a geographical or economic unit, — as may be seen by a mere glance at the map. And ethnographically the Czecho-Slovak State is a conglomeration of multifarious races; and its name should not be Czecho-Slovakia at all, but Czecho-Germano-Slovak-Polish-Magyar-Ruthenia. The Czechs are a minority in this State; and I ask whether it is natural that the Czech minority should not only rule but actually tyrannise the non-Czech majority? The foundation upon which this State was based was a lie, — viz. the statement that "the Slovaks are also Czechs". This State was established by cajoling the Peace Conference and by breaking treaties (Pittsburgh); and it is being maintained by terror.

I therefore proved that Czecho-Slovakia is really an „artificial structure” and is thus ripe for partition. Dr. Seton-Watson is profoundly silent on this point too. All he has done is to take a few sentences out of my address as reported to him by his Czech friends and declare them to be untrue statements, though without attempting to prove his assertion.

Let us take these statements in succession and examine them:

I stated that "there are no Slovak schools in Slovakia". Dr. Seton-Watson declares this statement to be untrue, — though he must know that the schools of Slovakia are Czecho-Slovak (and not Slovak) not only in name but also in fact. For in these schools the language of instruction is partly

Czech, partly "Czecho-Slovak" — viz. that hybrid language manufactured by the Czech Academy by order of the Prague Government for the purpose of czechising the Slovak tongue which the Prague Government has made obligatory in all the schools and offices of Slovakia (the specious title of the same being "new orthography").

Dr. Seton-Watson is taken aback also by my statement that „the Czecho-Slovak Parliament passed a resolution in 1919 to the effect that there was no God”, the question having been treated in open session and resulting in the expression of an opinion of disbelief in the existence of a God. This statement Dr. Seton-Watson regards as absurd and impossible; yet what really happens is never impossible: and that what I stated really happened Dr. Seton-Watson may see for himself by referring to the May 30, 1934 issue of Deputy Rázus's paper, "Národné Noviny".

Nor does Dr. Seton-Watson want to believe that „Czech professors in Slovakia make Slovak girls dance naked before them”. Yet that is quite a frequent and familiar occurrence in Slovakia. In confirmation of my statement I adduced among others the scandalous case occurring in Bãňska Stiavnica, where in the building of the grammar-school (gymnasium) the Czech Director, Jan Schucker, and a Czech teacher, Milada Pospíšilová, made young Slovak girls dance naked in public (see "Slovák", issue for April 29, 1932).

Dr. Seton-Watson also denies the truth of my statement that „the Prague Government distributes pornographic literature”; though in confirmation of my statement I produced the October 8, 1932 issue of "Národné Noviny", the paper run by the Slovak Deputy Rázus, a Protestant minister, where we find the following sentence: — „our people are being flooded — even in the smallest and remotest villages — with deliberately pornographic papers subsidised out of public money by the Prague Government”.

Nor is Dr. Seton-Watson inclined to believe that "the Slovak peasantry are reduced to eating rats and dogs". At first hearing this statement seemed incredible also to Dr. Seton-Watson's friend, Milan Hodža, Czecho-Slovak Minister, for poverty and misery of the kind had been unknown among our people in the days of Hungarian rule; but it having been officially ascertained that such a case had occurred in the Capital of Slovakia itself (in Bratislava), on March 8th, 1933, Hodža's paper, the "Slovenská Politika", published a long article on the question. And the fact was confirmed also by the principal organ of Minister Beneš, the "České Slovo" (March 10th. and 11th., 1933), which was quoted also in the March 11, 1933, issue of the "Slovenszky Dennik".

The difference between Dr. Seton-Watson and me is that, whereas my statements are all supported by documentary evidence, Dr. Seton Watson is content with simple statements or denials.

This was Dr. Seton-Watson's method in dealing with the article written by me which appeared — under the title "My Country Claims Justice" — on the leading page of the December 16, 1933 issue of the „Daily Mail”. Dr. Seton-Watson says that this article is "a demonstrably false picture of the situation in Slovakia". If the falseness of the picture is so easily "demonstrable", why did Dr. Seton-

Watson not demonstrate? Yet he did not even attempt to do so.

In the chapter dealing with "Slovakia's' Protest" Dr. Seton-Watson goes so far as to assert that the Slovak Council established in Geneva of which I am chairman "is without any adherents whatsoever in Slovakia".

This statement is a direct refutation of the words of the Czech Minister Beneš, whose principal organ, the "České Slovo", — in a leading article entitled "What is Going On in Slovakia?" in the issue for September 13, 1933 — proved at length that both the Slovak political parties — the People's Party of Monsignor Hlinka and the National Party of Rázus — were in full agreement with the programme set up by Jehlička, had supported Jehlička's action in Geneva the year before by a mass demonstration at Nyitra, and would not rest until their real programme was realised — viz. separation from Bohemia and reunion with Hungary.

But Dr. Seton-Watson's statement is diametrically opposed to those also of his friends Kálal, Šrobár and Ivánka.

Kálal, an eminent Czech politician, declares ("Examination of the Slovak Mind", p. 16) that "the Slovaks are all separatists".

L. Šrobár, former Minister, writes ("Prudy", 1927, p. 205) that "the Slovak people hates the Czechs with its whole soul".

The same statement was made in public by Ivánka, Czecho-Slovak politician, during the famous Tuka trial.

But Dr. Seton-Watson goes even farther and would have the British people believe that "all Slovakia protested" against me and against the Geneva Slovak Council for having declared in favour of the necessity of separation from Bohemia.

In support of this assertion Dr. Seton-Watson refers to a memorandum which he says was drafted and signed by „all the Slovak Deputies and Senators in the Czecho-Slovak Parliament". But, historian as he is, Dr. Seton-Watson should have inquired into the genesis of this memorandum. For then he would have learned that this memorandum was not prepared in Slovakia, but in Prague, — that it was drafted by Czechs, not by Slovaks, — and that the signatures of the Slovak Deputies and Senators were forged in Prague. But he forgot to inquire into the origin and character of this document and describes the same as being „genuine” and "of a weighty nature".

And I would add that Dr. Seton-Watson is still in my debt, owing me an answer to my booklet „Reply to Dr. R. M. Seton-Watson's Book, „Slovakia Then and Now” published in Vienna in 1932.

In history and in politics, as in nature, there is no stagnation. Stabilisation is an unknown quantity; for moods cannot be hardened into an aggregation. In public life and in the political basin in which that life moves everything is in everlasting movement and everlasting ferment; what was true yesterday may today become a lie. This should not be forgotten by those who still continue to swear by the Peace Treaties and the status quo.