

SLOVAKIA'S POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

BY

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Twenty years ago the peace edict of Trianon tore *Slovakia* away from the thousand-year-old *Hungarian State* and attached it to Bohemia. This was how, in the poisoned post-war atmosphere of the Peace Conference, the Great Powers were bamboozled into creating the most artificial State in the world, *Czecho-Slovakia*, which for twenty years was a festering sore on the body of *Europe* that made appeasement among the various States an impossibility. The liquidation of this artificially botched up State was set in motion at the Munich Conference in September 1ast. First of all the Sudeten German areas, then the Polish and Hungarian territories were lopped off, and afterwards, in the March of this year, what remained of *Czecho-Slovakia* fell to pieces: Bohemia came under the sovereignty of the German Reich, Ruthenia was restored to Hungary, and Slovakia became an independent State under the protection of Germany. The fate of the other parts of the *Czecho-Slovak Republic* has been definitely settled, but Slovakia's position is still quite uncertain. At a meeting of the House of *Commons* on 15th May (*in answer to a question put by Mr. Pander*) the *Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Butler*, said that in order to facilitate the administration of ordinary affairs the *British Consul* at Pozsony had asked the Slovak Government to recognize him as Britain's Consul to Slovakia and that this request had been granted. The Slovak Government had been informed that the British Government considered this step a *de facto* recognition. On 26th May, in answer to a question put by Mr. Sandys, Mr. Butler stated that so far as Lord Halifax was aware the French Government had not yet recognized the Slovak Government. This in effect means that France has not recognized the present Slovak Government either *de facto* or *de jure*, and in consequence

she does not recognize Slovakia's international legal status. Slovakia's position therefore is as follows: she is dependent on Germany, *Great Britain* has *de facto* recognized the present *Slovak Government*, but France utterly refuses to recognize her present status as a state. The only Government that recognizes Slovakia as an independent State at present is the *Hungarian Government*. It is natural that Hungary should do so, for the two nations lived in symbiosis for many centuries; they fought together and co-operated with complete harmony in the sphere of economy. It is therefore no wonder that now they are seeking to establish close co-operation again. That this is the case is proved by a statement made to the Slovak Press by Dr. *John Spisiák*, *Slovak Minister in Budapest*. In that statement Dr. Spisiák said:

"It was with keen interest I read the Premier, Count Paul Teleki's Szeged speech and I was very pleased to establish the fact that the Premier spoke with much common sense about Slovakia. Neither have M. Francis Herczeg's articles escaped my attention, in which with calm objectiveness he deals with the fate of this racial group which once belonged to Hungary. It is my firm conviction that if the Hungarian journalists would examine the Slovak question with the same detachment, neighbourly relations might soon be established."

Dr. Spisiák presented his Letters of Credence to the Regent on 24th May whereupon Admiral Horthy addressed the following words to the *Slovak Minister*:

"I am very pleased to receive your Letters of Credence wherewith the head of the Slovak State appoints you Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to represent that State in Budapest as its first Minister to Hungary. I recognize the significance of this step, which is calculated to foster friendly relations between the two States, which friendly relations must find expression in co-operation between the two nations in the territories where Providence has placed them. Your speech fills me with pleasure and satisfaction. I am sure that the goodwill manifest on both sides will make it possible for the two nations to settle the difficult problems dividing them. Be assured that you will have my

support in the execution of your mission and that the Hungarian Government will gladly co-operate with you."

From these speeches, or statements, respectively, it may be gathered that there is a sincere desire for reciprocal understanding. The Hungarian nation had always entertained feelings of brotherly love for the Slovak people, and even twenty years of intrigues were not able to root those feelings out of its heart. It is possible that some of the Slovaks were misled by Benes's politics, but from the outset the majority of them felt they had been cheated. For this reason they rallied round Father Hlinka, who fought tooth and nail for the self-government and independence of the Slovak people. Those twenty years of struggle are proof that the Slovaks refuse to surrender their independence, and for twenty years the Hungarian nation has watched their struggles with the greatest sympathy.

Despite the fact that on paper Slovakia has achieved independence, her legal status in international law is far from assured. This uncertainty finds its explanation in her geographical situation. Namely, just as Hungary's *Lebensraum* extends over the whole Basin of the Carpathians, so is Slovakia's bound up with that Basin, and therefore the two mingle and intertwine. In another article in this issue we have shown that Slovakia, as she stands today, is on the brink of economic ruin. Nothing but close contact with Hungary will save that country economically. In Ruthenia the Hungarian Government immediately overcame the economic difficulties, and the development of that province will be assured by means of an extensive autonomy. Slovakia will immediately be set on her feet again as soon as co-operation is established between the two nations. Slovakia's return to, that is to say close co-operation with, Hungary will create a new state of affairs in the Danube Valley and will signify a complete liquidation of the Czecho-Slovak ideology which for twenty years kept that region in a state of unrest and uncertainty. Co-operation between the Hungarian and Slovak nations, the re-establishment of friendly relations, will serve the interests not only of those two peoples, but also of the whole of Europe.