

## THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE SLOVAKIANS

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The author takes as premise the cultural and social independence of the Slovakian people since the middle ages, thereby differing with the popular Czech and Hungarian view that the Slovaks did not produce indigenous political leaders, and, being a primitive peasant people, were political raw material and a passive object for the current centralistic and nationalistic conceptions of the Hungarians and the Czechs.

Against this traditional "Herrenvolk" view of the Hungarians and Czechs (typified by the Czechs V. Chalupecký and A. Pražák) the author presents an independent view of the line of development of the Slovaks. This can be traced back to the 13th century, when the Slovakian landed-gentry of Northern Hungary played a decisive part in the development of the Slovakian nation. With the inclusion of Slovakia in the Hungarian System of Counties (Komitat), under the last of the Arpad Kings and the Anjous, this Slovakian aristocracy was Hungarianized. However, Baron Valentin Balassa, the noble Humanist and man of the Renaissance, of Slovakian origin, one of the greatest figures of Hungarian literature of his time, shows distinct features of Slovakian nationality and at the same time the close connection between the North Hungarian class-system and the Slovakian heritage. Before the forming of the Slovakian nation the Slovaks were eclipsed by the Hungarian State, but remained ethnologically pure.

Since the 12/13 Century, German Culture was significant, and the author even calls Slovakia a German „Kulturlandschaft“, pointing out the prominent position of the German cities, the influence of which started the Lutheran Reformation of Northern Hungary. In this connection it is remarkable that the so-called “Tatra-Idea” the symbol of later national Slovakian literature comes originally from the world of ideas of the Carpathian Germans, and through their education system it found its way to the Slovakian educated classes. Socially these were modelled on the North Hungarian System, but culturally and confessionally influenced by Wittenberg. They gave the “Tatra-Idea” Slovakian shape, and the 19th Century charged it with Slovakian nationalism. Further the author illustrates the importance of the Slovakian leading-classes in the Hungarian State by the examples of Count Georg Thurzo, who founded the Slovakian Protestant Church in 1611, Prince Franz Rákóczi II, Count Nicolaus Berčényi, Superintendent Daniel Krman a man of Old-Wittenberg conformance, Daniel Horčíčka-Sinapius, Mathias Bél and Count Peter Révay. The development of the Slovakian nation has very old roots and is no phenomenon of the 19th century Romantic Panslavism. Until 1790 the Czechs knew very little of the Slovaks, and Josef Dobrovský, their greatest Slavist, was the first to show any interest in them.

The author shows the progress of the Slovakian nation in the 18th and 19th century, and the special political conditions of its awakening (Conservatism), which differentiates it from the Czech national revival; and he criticises the attitude of T. G. Masaryk towards the Slovaks. For Masaryk, with western and democratic ideas, himself of Slovakian stock from East Moravia, the Slovaks were „just raw material“; he saw as the only way a re-education along the lines of Czech western-radical, antireligious nationalism. Milan Hodža was of the same opinion. As a counter-movement, a national and tradition - minded group of intellectuals grew out of this situation in the First Republic, and already in 1920 Andrej Hlinka was their leader.