

ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE SLOVAK DEPUTIES IN THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(1918—1920)

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After the declaration of independence of the Czechoslovak Republic, the National Council exercised the functions of supreme legislative and governmental organ. The 254-member-strong enlarged National Council constituted itself as a Revolutionary National Assembly on 14 November 1918. Slovakia was originally assigned 40 deputies, the number later being raised to 53.

The Slovak parliamentary representatives, irrespective of party affiliation, joined together in a parliamentary group called the "Club of Slovak Deputies". The official justification for this unusual move was that the resulting concentration of political forces would enable a more effective assertion of Slovak interests, all the more since a fully articulated system of political parties did not exist in Slovakia.

Throughout its existence the Club was a firm link in the different coalitions, which meant that it could take active part in the work of the govern-

ment. The circumstance that the Club played the most important role in the political life of Slovakia at the time distinguished the framework of its activity from that of other similar institutions. In addition to its principal field of work — taking the legislative initiative and voting on draft laws — the Club also assumed a major role in the solution of questions which were not directly related to its normal sphere of activity. Thus its meetings discussed the crucial problems of the structure and organization of the administrative apparatus in Slovakia.

This joint public posture on the part of the Slovak deputies by no means signified any uniformity of political conviction, but only that they upheld the common position adopted in the Club. The development of party pluralism in Slovakia, heightened by the penetration of political currents from the Bohemian lands, advanced rapidly. With the dissolution of the First National Assembly, the Club formally ceased its own activity as well.