

THE COLLABORATION OF ŠTEFÁNEK AND HODŽA: PATRIOTISM FULFILLED

By Suzana Mikula

The history of a nation is forged from the experiences, both collective and individual, of its people. Among the individuals who dot the pages of Slovak history were two men, friends and collaborators: Anton Štefánek and Milan Hodža. They were among the handful of Slovak leaders who were decisive in shaping and determining the future of the Slovaks in the early twentieth century.

The Slovak people, through much of their history, experienced subjugation and frustration. Their one thousand year domination by the Magyar class denied them the opportunity for full national, social, and political development. The prime task of the Slovak national movement as it developed in the nineteenth century was to try and ensure the survival of their very identity as a people in the face of intensive efforts at Magyarization by the Hungarian state. Thus, Slovak nationalism was more existential in nature, as compared to the dynamic political nationalism of the Magyar ruling class, which was determined to exercise and retain power. The Slovak future seemed bleak indeed on the eve of the twentieth century. The Slovaks were predominantly peasant and poor. They controlled less than one percent of the industrial capital in the Slovak territories, and a Slovak middle class did not, for all practical purposes, exist. The intellectual and social conditions were nearly as depressing as the economic. The Slovaks did not have national educational opportunities, for they had only minimal elementary schools, and higher education was usually available only at the price of Magyarization. There was only an infinitesimal percentage of Slovaks in positions of civil and political authority, and the number of nationally active Slovaks, who could be considered the Slovak intelligentsia, was very small, no more than one thousand families. It was Anton Štefánek, in his later sociological studies, especially his valuable work *Základy sociografie Slovenska* (Basic Sociography of Slovakia) who brought out the facts about the bleak situation of the Slovaks at that time. Yet in spite of the problems and hardships, the new century did give rise to a new generation of national leaders, a generation which recognized the broader requirements of the national movement: namely that consideration had to be given not only to the rights of the Slovak nation, but to the needs of the Slovak people. This generation had greater diversity and sought wider activities, as can be seen from the goals and activities of Štefánek and Hodža.

Milan Hodža (1878—1944) was an important, and often controversial, figure in both the Slovak national movement within the Hungarian Kingdom and the first Czechoslovak Republic. Born in Sučany, Turec county, his family had a tradition of participation in the Slovak national movement. His uncle, Michal

M. Hodža, was one of the great triumverate, the other two being Štúr and Hurban, which led the Slovaks in 1848. His father, Ondrej, was a regular contributor to Slovak journals and a participant in the Memorandum movement of 1861. His maternal grandfather, Jan Plech, was a minor Slovak poet, and all three were Lutheran ministers. Environment, family traditions and personal temperament brought Hodža into the Slovak national movement. During the last decades of the nationalist period, 1898—1919, Hodža was a journalist and publisher, a member of the Hungarian Parliament (1905—1910), a political activist, and agrarian organizer. He was a pragmatic politician who utilized every opportunity to advance first the needs and later the power of the Slovaks. To this day, the only useful, albeit commemorative, published account of Hodža's activities during this period is that written by Štefánek in 1938: *Milan Hodža: životopisný nástin* (Milan Hodža: A Biographical Sketch). After the creation of the first Czechoslovak Republic, Hodža became one of its leading political figures. He organized the National Republican and Peasant Party in September 1919. He sought, unsuccessfully, to forge a unified party structure for Slovakia; his failure led him to merge the Slovak agrarians with the Czechs, forming the Czechoslovak Republican Party of Farmers and Small-holders in 1922. This party was to be the largest throughout the history of the first republic and Hodža's position in it, as leader of the Slovak sector, gave him an important power base. He continued to be active in and promote the development of agrarian organizations, including international ones as president of the Central European Agrarian Bureau, and active in the Green International. He was prominent in the various governments of the republic, serving as Minister for the Unification of Czechoslovak laws, 1919—1920; Minister of Agriculture 1922—25; Minister of Education 1926—29; Minister of Agriculture once again in 1932—35; and as Prime Minister 1935—38 during the crucial period which witnessed the rise of aggressive German Nazism and which culminated in the Munich Agreement and marked the end of the first republic. Though an important and powerful figure, Hodža also aroused some antagonism. He and Eduard Beneš had a bitter rivalry and mutual dislike dating back to the 1920's. After his resignation as prime minister, Hodža went into exile. During the war years a final rupture came between Hodža and Beneš, with Hodža urging a revision of the Slovak position in a future Czechoslovakia though not supporting the Slovak Republic. Hodža died in the United States in 1944.

While Hodža and Štefánek remained close friends throughout the whole interwar period, and had many common interests and projects, it was during the nationalist period that they had the most active and closest collaboration. Their joint activities were especially prominent in the areas of journalism and agrarian organization. Though pursuing their education in different parts of the empire, Štefánek in Vienna and Hodža in Budapest, they met through their common interest in the newspaper *Hlas* (voice) published from 1898 to 1904. *Hlas* was the brainchild of the more progressive Slovak students who had studied at the universities of Prague and Vienna, in particular Pavel Blaho (1867—1927) and Vavro Šrobár (1867—1950). Removed from the stultifying atmosphere of Hungary, studying in the relatively freer air of Vienna and Prague, these students became

increasingly concerned about the passivity of the Slovaks and impressed with the far more active Czech efforts, particularly of T. G. Masaryk. These Hlasists (so-called after their newspaper) became the most articulate and consistent exponents of Czech-Slovak cooperation and unity. Even after the demise of Hlas in 1904, due to lack of funds, they remained committed to the principles first expressed therein, and continued to be a distinct faction of the Slovak national movement. Hodža was a supporter of, and contributor to, Hlas during its entire existence, but he cannot be considered a true Hlasist. Štefánek recognized that Hodža was never a proponent of orthodox Czech realism, as he himself was, but rather pursued diverse policies, interested primarily in practical politics and organization. Yet both realized that it was absolutely crucial to arouse and educate the Slovak people, to bring new ideas and efforts to the Slovak movement, to challenge the conservatism and traditional passivity of the older generation of Slovak leaders and their organ the *Národné Noviny*. A national movement, whether cultural or political, cannot achieve its goals if it is limited to a small elite. Without the people, their consciousness, participation, and activism nationalism has no meaning. Yet since the 1860's, the Slovak leaders had maintained an official political passivity and a cultural elitism. Their newspaper, *Národné Noviny*, the only newspaper of any significance among the Slovaks until the efforts of Hodža and Štefánek, was in Štefánek's own words written in a style above the comprehension of the masses and provincial in outlook. He criticized it for its literary and poetic orientation and its disregard for the propagation and organization of economic and democratic programs. Both Hodža and Štefánek criticized the Russophile tendencies of the older generation, especially Vajanský, and their inclination to expect external help. Hodža wrote: „those who waited for the heavenly gates to open and for baked pigeons to fall did not accomplish anything for the Slovaks.“ *Národné Noviny*, in turn, bitterly criticized the younger generation for their radical ideas and tactics and remained adamantly opposed to change. The need, then, was clear and imperative; Hodža and Štefánek responded with determination and enthusiasm.

It may well be that the journalist activities of Hodža and Štefánek, particularly *Slovenský Týždenník* and *Slovenský Denník*, served as one of the most significant accomplishments of the nationalist movement prior to World War I. These papers became a medium for the arousing and politicization of the Slovak masses. They were deliberately designed, in terms of both style and content and in contrast to *Národné Noviny* and even Hlas, to appeal to the widest possible public, perhaps the first established specifically with the agrarian masses in mind.

Týždenník appeared weekly, usually eight pages in length and priced so that the masses could afford it. The articles were short and to the point, containing key phrases that caught the eye and took on the nature of political slogans. A variety of stylistic devices were used, including broad sarcasm, to capture interest. Space was allocated to agrarian concerns, especially to an examination of the feudalistic nature of Hungarian agriculture and to the question of land reform. To educate the people and broaden their horizons, international, imperial, and Magyar

politics were analyzed. Attention was given to the activities of the other non-Magyar nationalities, to serve as an example, and to highlight the potential of cooperative activity, considering the numerical composition of the Hungarian Kingdom. Týždenník was journalistic, popular, and political; therein lay its great merit. Directed toward the people, it fulfilled a critical void and need in the Slovak movement.

Hodža was the founder of Týždenník and the material, tone, and style reflected his ideas and values throughout its existence. However, after his move into the political arena, with his successful parliamentary campaigns of 1905/06, and his shift to the more rarefied atmosphere of Belvedere Palace in 1908, much of the burden and responsibility fell on a small group of associates, particularly Štefánek. And burdens there were: problems of material, personnel, and finances. Yet neither these, nor other problems described by Štefánek: operating in a strange environment, Magyar laws and courts, the opposition of the older generation, diminished their energy and dedication.

The young Slovak journalists did not have the benefit of journalism schools, nor of the training gained through a variety of experiences acquired during a steady progression in the numerous aspects of journalism. Recognizing the desperate situation of the Slovaks, they learned as they went along, coping with problems, the diversity of which ranged from getting paper to facing fines and imprisonment under Magyar Press Laws. Štefánek, like Hodža and more than most due to his activities in Vienna and with the *L'udové Noviny and Slovenský Obzor*, had the requisite experience and talent. His association with Hodža in the editorial offices of Týždenník and his subsequent general editorship of Denník contributed greatly to the success of these endeavors. His role was at times crucial, for in some areas he was more practical and capable than Hodža.

Štefánek succinctly described the conditions under which he, Hodža, and other like Dušan Porubský, František Votruba and Bohdan Pavlů had to work. „The news releases were Magyar, but of little worth (given their chauvinist orientation), so everything published by the Magyar press had to be rewritten. Our library for all practical purposes did not exist. The underpaid editors had to be virtual universal scholars, each had to know everything. Our contributors were unreliable, which resulted in many unnecessary press actions by the Magyars. We had neither a telegraph nor even a telephone.“

Articles were hard to come by. Given the small number of younger political activists, there was a constant demand for their services. Involved as they were in agrarian organization, in political agitation and in journalistic contributions, they also had to find means of support. The more active they were, the more was demanded of them. For instance, Fedor Houdek, a close friend of both Hodža and Štefánek, was among the prime movers in agrarian organization among the Slovaks, working with cooperatives and banks. He was also a regular contributor to several journals and newspapers, and was constantly bombarded with pleas from Hodža and Štefánek for more articles. Hodža and Štefánek not only had to deal with the administrative responsibilities of their newspapers, but had to write a large percentage of the articles themselves. In 1907, for example, in addi-

tion to his parliamentary duties and other commitments, Hodža wrote 122 articles for *Týždenník* alone. Additional personnel in the offices to mitigate the burden was difficult to find, for a maximum amount of work could be rewarded by only a minimum amount of pay. Many of the journalistic enterprises were underfinanced to begin with; Hodža was able to begin publication of *Týždenník* only because of a fortuitous legacy. A Slovak upper and middle class virtually did not exist and Slovak controlled capital was minimal, so the sources of finance were limited to those who were already overburdened. Those publications which were established in spite of these handicaps found it almost impossible to become self-supporting. A significant percentage of the Slovak population was politically apathetic and illiterate. In the villages, the local sources of authority, the notary, the teacher, and the priest, were either Magyar or conservative and opposed to the more progressive ideas of the younger generation. In any case, they exerted pressure to prevent local subscription to newspapers like *Týždenník* and *Denník*, even to the point of forcing the local post office to return the papers. Worse still, and beyond the normal expenses of publication, the Magyar press laws imposed severe financial problems. According to the law, a paper with any political content had to have deposited with the Magyar officials a sum of ten thousand crowns. Any fines imposed by the courts against the newspaper for „political agitation, incitement of nationalities, Panslav tendencies“, or violation of other censorship laws, either had to be paid outright or was deducted from the deposit money. However, if the security money fell under ten thousand crowns at any point it had to be either replenished or political articles could not be published. The Magyar censors defined incitement in very broad terms; in 1907 for instance, *Týždenník* was fined in excess of ten thousand crowns, and its various editors sentenced to a total of three and one-half years imprisonment. Under these circumstances, the accomplishments of these journalists assume an even greater significance.

Such problems were not without personal impact on the Slovak activists. The normally close relationship of Hodža and Štefánek suffered one of its few serious disharmonies over the question of finances. Hodža had a rather cavalier attitude toward money, and that plagued him throughout his career. Štefánek, when he was still struggling to keep his *Slovenský Obzor* alive, was exasperated by Hodža's attitude and demands for aid. He wrote to Houdek: „*Týždenník* has to be taken from Hodža. As long as he continues to manipulate money, things will be bad. He only pursues high politics and is losing his ability for real work.“ After Štefánek came to Budapest, upon Hodža urgent pleas, to take over responsibility for *Denník*, he saw at close hand some of the problems and was occasionally appalled. He had moments of real anger at the financial irresponsibility he saw in Budapest, and in his suggestions for reform and reorganization indicated he had a much better grasp of practical administration than Hodža. Such feelings of frustration, in trying times, were not surprising. Štefánek had moments when he contemplated emigration to America, Hodža threatened to abandon politics and go on a long journey. Such moods passed under the exigencies of the Slovak cause and they continued their work.

The association of Štefánek and Hodža was not limited to their journalistic

activities. They also shared an interest in the agrarian development of Slovakia. Agrarian democracy was a potent force in Eastern Europe during the interwar period, particularly in Czechoslovakia where the agrarian party dominated the political structure. The Slovaks did not develop an agrarian party *per se* in this national period, since all political activity was conducted under the loose umbrella of the traditional Slovak National Party, but they did lay the foundation for the subsequent establishment of such a party in the new republic. Hodža outlined in his articles the main tenets of agrarian democracy: universal manhood suffrage, class equality, the inalienable right of the people to the land. He coined a slogan: „The peasant is the base and foundation of our politics.“ He sought land reform that would favor the small holder, which would create a stable and conservative, but not reactionary, society. Before anything could be accomplished, however, the peasants had to be aroused and organized. Particularly active in this area was Pavel Blaho in Skalica, who organized peasant conferences in his district in the early 1900's. Both Hodža and Štefánek participated in these, particularly Štefánek who became close to Blaho while editing L'udové Noviny in Skalica. The agrarian organization of western Slovakia was quite successful, but efforts to broaden the scope had limited success because of the lack of a sufficient number of people who could devote their time and energy to such efforts. Hodža was interested, but he had not the patience to work slowly on a local level. Instead, he sought to agrarianize the National Party, with limited success, and to organize mass meetings of peasants, most of which were forbidden by Magyar officials. Shifting tactics, Hodža moved into the political world of Francis Ferdinand, leaving the practical work to Blaho, Štefánek, Houdek, and a few others. At the start of the second decade of the 20th century, counting on political success from his relationship with the Archduke, Hodža did resume his activities in agrarian development. Together with Blaho and Štefánek, he called for the formation of a central cooperative, which was in fact established in 1912. They all established a Slovak Central Bank in Budapest. Efforts such as these brought the Czechs and Slovaks closer together, for the Czechs supported the organizational work with both men and money.

Štefánek and Hodža, then, worked closely together in a variety of activities. They were united in their commitment to the development and advancement of the Slovak nation, and their recognition that this could not be limited to cultural activity and political passivity. The stranglehold of Magyar feudal overlordship and of clericalism had to be broken if the Slovaks were to survive. Hodža and Štefánek often differed, however, on strategy and tactics. Štefánek remained consistent in the approach he took to Slovak development. His was not of the consistency of the close-minded, but rather that of a person who has examined all the options, decided on the best one, and then worked to achieve that end. Štefánek believed that the Slovak future lay with the Czechs; he felt the two were united through kinship. The Czechs, more progressive than the Slovaks, offered the best avenue of aid and alliance. The Slovak people had to become aware of this, cooperation between the two peoples had to be developed and extended, the two had to stand together. In the pages of Denník, Štefánek expounded and exhorted

on this theme as openly as Magyar censorship would allow. He kept in contact with the Czechs, and with like-minded Slovaks such as Blaho and Šrobár. He had some impact, planted strong seeds, so much so that when war broke out in 1914, *Denník* was suspended for a month, and then suppressed altogether in September 1915 with the connivance of the older, and fearful, generation of leaders.

Hodža was a pragmatist. Self-confident and ambitious, he pursued opportunity as it developed. He would be plagued all his life by charges of opportunism, especially because of his tendency to act on his own, giving such actions a secretive air. Štefáněk remembered of him: „I readily admit, that Hodža's tactical moves were sometimes unclear, hard to understand for even his closest circle. But this was precisely the source of his effectiveness.“ Hodža brought valuable talents to the Slovak cause. He had a facility for clear and rational thought and was an excellent public speaker. His linguistic ability enabled him to work easily with Rumanians, Serbians, and Germans, thus enabling him to extend the boundaries of the Slovak movement. Hodža had an almost intuitive grasp of politics, an understanding of the nature and source of power. During the first ten years of his participation in the Slovak national movement, Hodža sought to put the traditional cultural nationalism into a political framework, for to him political activity determined national existence rather than the reverse. The end to which his nationalized politics was directed was the democratic liberation of the Slovak and other minority people within the Hungarian Kingdom because the past history of the Slovak seemed to show this was the realistic avenue to pursue. Hodža began with the fact of Slovak subjugation to a Magyar feudal oligarchy. Democracy and agrarianism would inevitably destroy such a state. His perspective was as much functional as it was philosophical. His efforts in the national movement made it more and more apparent to Hodža that the configuration of power at any given point in time determined the outcome of his and Slovak activities. Thus he moved into the arenas of power.

Hodža was elected to the Hungarian Parliament from the Novosad district in southern Hungary (essentially Serbian with a solid Slovak population) in both the elections of 1905 and 1906. His basic platform was universal manhood suffrage and nationality rights. During his first years in Parliament, Hodža was extremely active. He raised questions presented the nationalities' concerns, and pressed the government. He was instrumental in the organization of a Nationalities Party, comprising the Rumanian, Serbian, and Slovak members of Parliament, which he expected would function as a base for their joint political activities. Štefáněk strongly supported his activities during this time, believing that „Hodža is one of the best speakers in Parliament and the cleverest politician. The Magyars rile against him, but have respect for him. In Hodža we have a powerful asset.“ The Hungarian Parliament, however, was a difficult forum in which to achieve visible results. It was representative only in the sense that it represented the interests of the ruling feudal oligarchy. After three years of participation in chauvinistic, gentry dominated, at times undisciplined, Parliament, Hodža shifted his tactics and his base to an even narrower political center, that of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and Belvedere Palace. It was a logical move, for the heir-apparent was determined

to break Magyar power because of the threat it posed to the Habsburg authority: to achieve that, he would need the non-Magyar nationalities. The initiation came from the Archduke; Hodža, having learned the lessons of power, gladly responded. Hodža was interested in getting results, in the attainable present. He had little patience for the necessarily slow, often tedious, and certainly not glamorous task of laying the foundation, step by step, toward a desired future. Hodža did not pursue his Belvedere orientation totally independently of the other Slovak leaders. His associates were aware of, and involved in, that policy. Štefánek wrote a number of the reports prepared for Francis Ferdinand. He was first on the scene after the Černová Massacre of 1907 and his observations were transmitted to the Archduke. Hodža also tried to make the Slovaks aware of the advantages of his imperial policy in the pages of *Týždenník*, delineating the potential benefits which could occur. Hodža believed that Francis Ferdinand could achieve his purpose only through universal suffrage, and that once that was achieved, democratic reform would follow; history has demonstrated that this was not necessarily a valid assumption. The Archduke was by no means a democrat and was vehemently opposed to social and economic reform. Yet the goals of the Belvedere group gave to the Slovaks an illusion of power, and Hodža was pragmatic enough to seize it.

By its very nature, however, the Belvedere policy had to be closed and secret, limited to the select few. Instead of broadening Slovak political involvement, it contracted it. As Hodža wrote to Houdek, „I hold all the strings in my hand“. He lost interest in Parliament, for he felt nothing could be achieved under the existing conditions. Hodža negotiated an electoral pact with the Magyar government in 1910 which produced very little for the Slovaks, and advised against „extravagant political agitation“. This attitude generated strong criticism from Štefánek and other Slovak leaders. Štefánek rejected Hodža's dealings, feeling they discredited the Slovaks and undermined the efforts at developing a mass political base. He wrote thus to Houdek and Šrobár, resolving that they all continue their work, pursuing a straight and honorable path and not be led astray from the real needs and goals of the movement. In spite of such criticism, Hodža remained convinced that power politics was the answer. He justified himself:

„Because we do not have any outlook for a separate Czecho-Slovak state (at this time), we need the monarchy, which can establish, within its framework, equality for the nationalities if it is strengthened at the center. That is why self-interest drives us toward an Imperial policy . . . I admit that another concept exists: a deliberate struggle for full national independence. I consider that absurd but admit the theoretical possibility. In that case, the tendency learned from Czech radicalism of becoming enthusiastic about things which are against our own best interests makes sense. However, that our concept can only be this Empire was always my credo and still is today.

To me, politics is neither a sport nor a temporary interest. Maybe I could pursue my politics with others — this I don't want. I would have liked to cooperate with all of you, but this is not possible.“

Hodža alone made Belvedere the cornerstone of his politics. The assassination

of Francis Ferdinand and the onset of World War I, while it left all of the Slovak leaders at a loss, affected him even more profoundly. Štefánek continued to pursue, as long and as openly as he could, the cornerstone of his politics: Czech-Slovak cooperation. When that was no longer possible in Budapest, he found his way to Prague. By 1916 he was already working for the Prague paper *Národní listy* and stressing Czech and Slovak union. Štefánek was tireless in his efforts to achieve this goal; he wrote, he spoke, he met with various Czech leaders, he did all he could to include the Slovaks into Czech plans. But during the first three years of the war, Czech activity, though not nearly as passive as that of the Slovaks, was restricted. Štefánek had periods of frustration but his work was eventually rewarded. On the domestic level, the Czech inclusion of the Slovaks by mid-1917 was due as much to Štefánek as anyone else.

Hodža, after an initial period of internment, spent most of the war years in Vienna. For a time, Hodža's activities were relatively limited, as he analyzed the situation and viewed the options open to the Slovaks. By the end of 1916 Hodža too decided that the only viable opportunity was union with the Czechs. Štefánek's communications from Prague were a factor in that decision. Hodža established close contact with the Czechs in Vienna, as Štefánek continued to do in Prague gaining the support particularly of the Czech agrarian leader Antonín Švehla. Their efforts resulted in the historic speech made by František Staněk in the Austrian Parliament on May 30, 1917, announcing the right of self-determination for all nations and calling for the union of the Czechs and Slovaks. Meetings continued throughout the year, concerned not only with strategy and tactics for the present but also looking to the future structure of the new state. Štefánek, visiting Hodža in September, reported enthusiastically about the Czech commitment to the Slovaks. Of concern to both, and to the Czechs, was „the deathly silence that prevailed over Slovakia“. To remedy that, Štefánek and Hodža made plans to revive *Denník* and revitalize *Týždenník*. They corresponded back and forth, plagued with the perpetual problems of finances, personnel, and supplies. By 1918, however, *Týždenník* once more served as a forum for their ideas, and as the educator and inspirator of the Slovak people.

The year 1918 proved to be a crucial one for the Slovaks. Yet the year began tranquilly enough, with the Slovaks maintaining their official passivity, divided into factions and still without a clear conception of what the future held. In the face of this, there was an abortive attempt on the part of Šrobár, Štefánek, and Hodža to try and replace the leadership of the National Party. There was a brief spurt of activity in the spring, with the Mikulaš resolution and the closed meeting of the National Party which resolved in favor of union with the Czechs. The Slovaks then retreated into the silence of summer. Štefánek and Hodža continued their activities but had little success in generating any official Slovak action. With the advent of fall, events began to move with unforeseen rapidity. As it became apparant that the end of the monarchy was imminent, Hodža was approached by agents of Michal Karolyi, the emerging leader of the Magyars, exploring ways of keeping the Slovaks in the Hungarian state. Hodža sent details of these efforts to Štefánek so that he could pass it on to the Czechs. Worried

about the fluidity of the situation, Hodža and Štefánek made plans to form, independently of the National Party, an executive council with powers to speak for the Slovaks. Before these plans could be carried out, the Party did finally appoint a Slovak National Council. At its first meeting on October 30, 1918 the Council proclaimed the creation of Czechoslovak state, two days after the Czechs, unbeknown to the Slovaks, had done the same in Prague.

In the first months of the new republic the situation made heavy demands on Štefánek, Hodža, and the other leaders. Hodža was sent to Budapest, to deal with the new Hungarian government. There he got involved in some controversial negotiations with the Magyars which were repudiated by Prague. Hodža was apparently trying to secure the Slovak position and possibly build up Slovak power and incidentally his own. Štefánek was appointed by Prague to the four man „temporary government“ of Slovakia, headed by Šrobár and including Blaho and Dérer. It was the yeoman work done by these men in western Slovakia which did much to stabilize the situation and ensure the transition to the new state. It must have been particularly rewarding work for Štefánek, for it was the realization of the nationalist goal to which he had remained consistently committed. A new era was beginning for the Slovaks, due largely to the efforts of dedicated leaders like Štefánek and Hodža who dared not just to dream, but to act in an environment where the less resolute, the less daring thought action was only tilting at windmills.

The mutual dedication and cooperation of the nationalist period was not lost even though the subsequent careers of Štefánek and Hodža developed along somewhat divergent paths. Both continued to be committed to and active in the agrarian democratic movement, its politics and institutions. But Štefánek's interests became more oriented to the areas of education and sociology, and he became the foremost Slovak sociologist. Hodža's interests as always lay in the area of politics, and he emerged as the consummate Slovak politician. He never forgot the lessons of power politics he had learned; Štefánek aptly summerized Hodža's perspective: „the ominous words: if something were to happen... were to him an almost dogmatic maxim of political wisdom.“ Hodža's frame of reference remained consistent in its fluidity whereas Štefánek's retained a philosophical consistency. In spite of such differences, their mutual respect never diminished and the bonds of friendship never dissolved. A letter Štefánek wrote to Hodža in March of 1937 best sums up their relationship:

„Under the impact of the fulsome praises of my humble work, my heart compells me to thank you, first for your congratulations, but more for your long good will and friendship. I realized last night that two friends have penetrated deeply into my life. One is already dead, Pavel Blaho; the other — you — is alive, thank God. If you had not pulled me out of Vienna, God knows if I would not have succumbed to family misfortunes and the burdens of existence.

And so I feel the need to ask your forgiveness, if I sometimes, under the fears of misunderstanding, intrigues, jealousy and the hatred surrounding us, wavered in my faith in your integrity and the goodness of your heart, your wise political tactics, and your unselfish work for the nation and people. Today I can reveal to you,

with gladness, that many opponents and people envious of you (although I never wished for ministerial positions and a purely political career) have changed their opinions of you and you too, in a few months, will see old friends congratulate you honestly and with feeling on your 60th birthday. Your heartfelt words yesterday gave me strength because I believe that only with your help and friendship, as in the past and so in the future, will I be able to accomplish anything."

Ultimately, historians judge, and may differ with, the respective talents and contributions of men like Štefánek and Hodža. But the human factor cannot be ignored: the emotions and perspectives of those who participated in the joint endeavor to assure their nation's survival.

DIE ZUSAMMENARBEIT VON ŠTEFÁNEK UND HODŽA

Am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts mußten die Slowaken, die so gut wie keine politische oder ökonomische Macht besaßen, ernsthaft mit der Möglichkeit ihres nationalen Unterganges rechnen. Dennoch konnten sie binnen zwanzig Jahren die Herrschaft des ungarischen Königreiches abschütteln und ihre Beteiligung am neuen tschechoslowakischen Staate sicherstellen. Zumindest teilweise war dieses Ergebnis auf die Bemühungen einer kleinen Gruppe engagierter Führer zurückzuführen. Als politisch besonders tatkräftige und schöpferische Persönlichkeiten haben sich dabei Milan Hodža (1878—1944) und Anton Štefánek (1877—1964) hervorgetan. Ihre Zusammenarbeit war auf dem Gebiet des Journalismus und der allseitigen Emanzipation der slowakischen bäuerlichen Bevölkerung besonders ausgeprägt. Als Angehörige einer neuen politischen Generation waren sie von den Ideen des politischen „Realismus“ beeinflusst und wollten die politische Bewegung in der Slowakei auf eine breite gesellschaftliche Basis stellen, um das Volk für die Politik zu interessieren. Ihre journalistische Tätigkeit, besonders bei der Herausgabe des Wochenblatts *Slovenský týždenník* und der Zeitung *Slovenský denník*, war bewußt auf die bäuerlichen Massen ausgerichtet. Bei der Gewinnung des Volkes für die aktive Politik war ihre persönliche Hingabe für dieses Ziel — oft mit großen materiellen Opfern und Arbeit verbunden — besonders wichtig. Mit ähnlichem Idealismus widmeten Anton Štefánek und Milan Hodža ihre Kräfte dem rein wirtschaftlichen Fortschritt der ländlichen Bevölkerung und legten die Fundamente für eine demokratische Agrarbewegung, die später, in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik, große politische Bedeutung gewann. Durch ihre gemeinsamen Ziele, Tätigkeiten und Probleme wurden sie zu engen Freunden — dennoch waren sie durch eine gewisse philosophische Eigenständigkeit und durch persönliche Eigenschaften getrennt. Milan Hodža war ein Pragmatiker, der immer einen Sinn für die Macht, für die Änderung der politischen Taktik und der politischen Mittel gemäß den konkreten Erfordernissen, besaß. Anton Štefánek war philosophisch und strategisch beständiger. Am Anfang des Ersten Weltkrieges mußte Milan Hodža z. B. seine Politik, die auf der Zusammenarbeit mit dem ermordeten Thronfolger Franz Ferdinand baute, durch die Politik der Tschecho-Slowakischen Bewegung, die Štefánek verfolgte, ersetzen. Im Jahre 1917 haben sie sich politisch wieder voll geeinigt und halfen gemeinsam bei der Eingliederung der Slowakei in die Tschechoslowakische Republik mit.