

ANTON ŠTEFÁNEK AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA

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Descriptions of the exact degree of the educational poverty of the Slovak people prior to and during World War I may vary, but the situation clearly was miserable. Since 1875 there had been no Slovak high schools. By 1918, there were only 276 Slovak primary (ľudové) schools remaining with 390 teachers, and even in them, only 4—6 hours per week (in religion, reading and writing) was in Slovak. The rest of the instruction was in Hungarian¹. Predictions that the Slovak nation would perish within fifty years, if circumstances did not change, were probably exaggerated. A small number of people was provided with opportunities for secondary and/or higher education in the Czech Lands². Further, some areas of Slovakia remained strongly Slovak for various economic, social and historical reasons, providing a sort of reservoir for the time when circumstances would arise permitting further education in Slovak. The birth and existence of the Hlasist movement, fostered by the efforts of T. G. Masaryk, provides evidence to support this more favorable analysis of the Slovak condition³. It could also be argued that the rapidly increasing pace of industrialization would bring Slovaks into the cities faster than they could be Magyarized⁴.

None of this should be taken as discrediting the need for a broad, rapid expansion of the educational system in Slovakia with its incorporation into the new Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. In fact, it is the response by Anton Štefánek to that need which merits attention here. This article will chronicle the establishment of the system of secondary education in Slovakia during the early years of the

¹ Rouček, Joseph S. / Lottich, Kenneth V.: Behind the Iron Curtain: The Soviet Satellite States — East European Nationalism and Education. Caldwell/Idaho 1964, pp. 210—211. — Štefánek, Anton: Základy sociografie Slovenska. Bratislava 1944, p. 299.

² Bokes, František: Slovenské školstvo a česko-slovenská vzájomnosť v rokoch 1848—1918. In: Holotík, Ľudovít (ed.): O vzájomných vzťahoch Čechov a Slovákov. Sborník materiálov z konferencie Historického ústavu SAV. Bratislava 1956, p. 210.

³ This opinion is shared by F. Gregory Campbell in the introductory chapter of his book: Confrontation in Central Europe: The Diplomatic Relations of Weimar Germany and the Czechoslovak Republic. Chicago 1976, especially pp. 13—18 for his excellent synthesis of Slovakia in the century before the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic.

⁴ Hapák, Pavol: Priemyselná revolúcia a vývin miest za kapitalizmu. HČ 21 (1973) 170—171. — For theoretical discussion of this development, see Deutsch, Karl: Nationalism and Social Communication. An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality. Cambridge/Massachusetts 1966, 2nd ed.; Štefánek, Anton: Školský Referát. LAMS 42 VIII 31, p. 2.

first Republic, and describe and evaluate Štefánek's role in that work. His contribution in developing secondary education deserves special attention, both because it is here he was able to put best into practice his theories about society, and because it is from these schools, with a course of studies always ending with a matura or graduation exam, that the intelligentsia, or, according to the Marxist definition, „educated specialists“, emerged. The existence of this intelligentsia is crucial to the continued existence of a nation, whether in its own state, or within a multi-national construction. Štefánek himself would have considered this definition of the intelligentsia too general. The data for the interwar period, however, are insufficient to satisfy the more functional understanding of intelligentsia which Štefánek put forth ⁵.

The person of Anton Štefánek offers a unique opportunity to venture such a study. He was as much, if not more, a sociologist as a politician. Having also been a journalist, he was capable of, and accustomed to, frequently expressing his thoughts. The establishment of the educational system in Slovakia has already been evaluated favorably by historians of almost every stripe, from the first praise by Robert W. Seton-Watson in *The New Slovakia* to recent Marxist writers ⁶. Štefánek's skepticism about, and criticism of, political programs from left to right has prevented his being labelled into any one category. His accomplishments were reevaluated positively in Czechoslovakia in 1957, a rather early concession to one who had been involved in bourgeois politics ⁷. After his death in 1964 his papers were deposited partially in the Literary Archive of Matica Slovenská, and partially in the Slovak State Central Archives in Bratislava. One Slovak student made partial use of the papers several years ago for a useful summary of Štefánek's accomplishments ⁸. Few other political figures of the bourgeois Republic have been awarded this treatment.

As the end of World War I approached and the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic seemed more certain, the Slovak section of Antonín Švehla's National Committee began to gather statistics in order to analyze basic questions concerning the administration of Slovak schools. Three days after the declaration of independence, a textbook commission was set up consisting of Jaroslav Vlček, František Drtina, Karel Kálal, Stanislav Klíma, Josef Sedláček, and Bohumír Vav-

⁵ Štefánek: *Základy* 99—149. See Also Branislav Štefánek's evaluation of his father's analysis of the intelligentsia which appears elsewhere in this volume.

⁶ Seton-Watson, Robert W.: *The New Slovakia*. Prague 1924, p. 51. — Vnuk, František: *Slovakia in Pre-Munich Czechoslovakia (1918—38)*. In: Kirschbaum, Joseph (ed.): *Slovakia in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Toronto 1973, p. 105. — Beneš, Václav: *Czechoslovak Democracy and Its Problems*. In: Mamatey, Victor / Luža, Radomír (eds.): *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic 1918—1948*. Princeton 1973, p. 78. — Mátej, Jozef: *Vývin slovenského školstva v buržoáznej ČSR (1918—1938)*. In: Vajcík, Peter et al: *Vybrané kapitoly z dejín školstva a pedagogiky na Slovensku*. Bratislava 1971, p. 135. — Macartney, C. A.: *Hungary and Her Successors*. London 1937, p. 120.

⁷ Prof. dr. Anton Štefánek osemdesiatročný. *Naša veda*, IV, č. 5 (1957), pp. 226—7.

⁸ Viera Macháčková, now an editor at the Slovak Pedagogical Publishing House, kindly made a copy of her diploma work: *Dr. Anton Štefánek a Slovenské školstvo*. Bratislava 1972, available for my examination.

roušek. It took the first tentative steps toward Slovakizing the schools in Slovakia⁹.

The National Committee in Prague, on November 4, appointed a four-man committee led by Vavro Šrobár, and sent it, with a small band of less than one hundred soldiers, to administer Slovakia. Charged with responsibility for establishing the educational system was Anton Štefánek, a 41-year old college-educated journalist, who had worked with Milan Hodža on *Slovenský denník* in Budapest, and, now in Prague, was a member of the Maffie, and was writing for *Národné Listy*.

Skalica, a town of some 5000 inhabitants, was selected as the seat for the first government. It was a logical place to begin. With the nearby Moravian towns of Hodonín and Uherské Hradiště, it had been a center of the developing Czech/Slovak relations. It had produced a large number of consciously Slovak priests, both Lutheran and Catholic. Slovakia was primarily a country of small villages and towns like Skalica, many too small to provide a sufficient number of students to justify the establishment of a high school. Only two cities — Bratislava and Košice — had more than 50,000 inhabitants and both had large non-Slovak populations. Thirteen other towns had populations of between 10,000 and 20,000. Everything else was smaller¹⁰. Barely twenty percent of the population in Slovakia lived in towns of 5000 or more people¹¹.

Slovakia, with a population of just under three million at the time it was incorporated into Czechoslovakia, had 59 high schools, of which 44 were gymnázia and 15 were teacher-training institutions. All were Hungarian¹². It was from these institutions that Štefánek had to fashion a Slovak system of secondary education. Like so many others of the small band of Slovaks active in public life before 1918, Štefánek knew politics, but little about administration within a government. He was not concerned.

„My job as Referent, or commissar, for Education, was not easy. Above all, except for theoretical awareness, I didn't have any experience with school administration. To study laws and regulations — for that there was no time, and really, it wasn't even necessary, because my main job was not to pedagogically and administratively reorganize the educational system; rather my main job consisted of the liberation of the schools from Hungarian elements¹³.“

One of his first steps, after being assigned responsibility for education, was to

⁹ Literárny archív of Matica slovenská (LAMS), 42 XIV 200, p. 1. The Slovak section of the National Committee was composed entirely of Czechs.

¹⁰ Statistická ročenka československé republiky 1957, p. 36.

¹¹ Štefánek: Základy 375.

¹² Ibidem 300. — 1919 census showed population in Slovakia of 2, 948,307, of whom 1, 962,766 were Czechoslovak — Czechoslovak Republic, Ministerstvo s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska: Soznam miest na Slovensku dl'a popisu ľudu z roku 1919. Bratislava 1920, Table 10. — 1921 census showed population of 2, 997,048, of whom 2, 012,538 were Czechoslovak: Statistický lexikon obcí v Republice Československé (1921), Vol. III, Dodatok 1. — The number of Czechs in Slovakia in 1921 is given as 71, 733: Boháč, Antonín: Češi na Slovensku. Statistický obzor 16 (1935) 184.

¹³ Macháčková: Dr. Anton Štefánek 31.

direct that „teaching in all schools be in the Slovak language and spirit“¹⁴. He commissioned trustworthy and reliable Slovak teachers in the most clearly Slovak towns, such as Senica, Skalica and Myjava, to carry this out. The first inspector he appointed was a teacher at the Lutheran school in Skalica, L'udovít Bunčák. As was the case in many other areas of the newly-formed Slovak administration, Lutherans, particularly members of the clergy, were the most politically reliable and qualified persons available. Štefánek depended heavily upon them. Skalica was the site of a gymnázium which became the first such school to be put under Czechoslovak administration. Czechoslovak classes — based on the Hungarian curriculum — began December 16¹⁵.

On December 12, 1918, the Skalica government was formally dissolved, although only Pavel Blaho, one of the four members, had stayed to continue operations beyond the first week. Šrobár had only remained a day before being called to Prague to help choose the Slovak representation in the Revolutionary National Assembly. Even Štefánek and Ivan Dérer, the fourth member of the government, returned to Prague after only a week in Skalica, to join the Assembly, the continued social and political unrest in Slovakia having made constructive work particularly difficult¹⁶.

The Revolutionary National Assembly approved a bill December 10 establishing a Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakia, to be assisted by 14 referents, whose positions generally corresponded with the ministries in Prague. Two days later, this new Slovak government debarked from a train at Žilina, and trooped through the mud to temporary offices in the local branch of the Slovak Bank.

With the move to Žilina, the government of Slovakia really began to function. For Štefánek, it meant the beginning of the transition from a small one-man operation to a busy office thronged by people seeking to improve their place in the service of the infant Republic. The near social and political chaos which reverberated through Slovakia at the end of the war had already brought much of the educational activity to a halt. Further hindrances to the normal functioning of the schools originated from a lack of coal, as well as the Spanish flu epidemic which raged across Europe. Freed from their educational responsibilities, teachers streamed into the government building in Žilina, seeking new and better jobs, or to have problems of one sort or another resolved. Since there had been no Slovak high schools for more than four decades, many now came hoping they would be appointed to teach in a gymnázium, a teacher training institute, or at worst, a middle school (meštianka). Štefánek again found many clergy among them, most likely nationally-imbued people who at last saw the possibility of contributing to the nation in a wider sphere than before¹⁷.

An omen of the troubles which would come later manifested itself in the complaints made by petitioners about the bureaucracy of the office of the Referent

¹⁴ LAMS 42 XIV 200.

¹⁵ Medvecký, Karol A.: Slovenský prevrat. Bratislava 1930—1, II, p. 333.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, II, 319—338; The Skalica government did submit its resignation November 14, the day the Revolutionary National Assembly was constituted.

¹⁷ LAMS 42 XIV 200.

for Education, when they were asked for proof of their qualifications. In part, this was a function of the Hungarian milieu which existed in Slovakia. Regulations in the Hungarian half of the Habsburg Empire were not as exacting nor as precisely followed as they had been in Austria.

While Štefánek's office dealt with these supplicants, as well as parents and students who came to ask about studies, he set out on his first extensive tour to organize schools. He primarily visited cities in the Slovak heartland in the north-west and central regions, setting up schools in Žilina, Trenčín, Ružomberok, and Liptovský Mikuláš, and sandwiching in trips to Prague to consult with officials in the Ministry of Education. In mid-January he began seriously to appoint school inspectors to whom he first assigned the duty of compiling accurate lists of elementary schools and teachers. It was clear that the number of teachers would be inadequate and a call went out to the Czech Lands for teachers to come to Slovakia. Few came, however, until a special allowance and other benefits were instituted. Eventually, legislation was passed permitting the government to order teachers to go to Slovakia.

The Ministry of Education, apprised by Štefánek of his activities in organizing schools, diligently publicized the information. By March 1, 1919, he had set up eight schools. New openings followed at the rate of about one a week until the Hungarian Bolshevik invasion¹⁸. To facilitate his work, he ordered all Hungarian schools to end the school year May 3. Between his first visit to the high school in Skalica in November 1918 and the middle of 1919, he visited the large majority of secondary schools in Slovakia.

Štefánek followed the same pattern of operation at each high school which he visited. Armed with a letter signed by the župan, or county chief executive (the text of which Štefánek provided), he arrived at the school and called a faculty meeting¹⁹. Announcing he had come to put the school under the administration of the Czechoslovak government, he declared that any professor wishing to stay would be permitted to do so, providing he would swear allegiance to the new government, and would and could teach in Slovak. He rarely found any person who could meet all three requirements. After taking inventory of the school and its equipment, and sealing supply cabinets, Štefánek would commission the highest ranking individual choosing to remain with responsibility for the property, and announce plans to begin enrollment and Czechoslovak instruction as soon as possible, usually within a fortnight. Of the teachers who were fired for not complying with the requirements of the new country, few received pensions. Many chose, or were ordered, to return to Hungary²⁰.

As the major criterion for deciding the fate of each institution, Štefánek follo-

¹⁸ For a detailed listing see: *Věstník Ministerstva školství a národní osvěty* (Věstník Mšano). I (1919), Nos. 1—4, 6, 8.

¹⁹ A typical letter is the one from the Župan of Šariš, č. 297/1919 of 6 March 1919. Fond EK—P, Státní archiv (ŠA) — Prešov, Carton 171.

²⁰ *Medvecký: Slovenský prevrat II*, 359. Individual case histories are available for most of the schools, usually in the tenth anniversary annual reports, published in the summer of 1928.

wed the „democratic principle of religious and racial equality before the law“²¹. In purely Slovak districts, the area Štefánek considered most important²², the schools were de-Magyarized. In the southern districts, he „on the whole“ left the status quo. The opposition to the conversion to Slovak language instruction which developed in the marginal areas between the predominantly Slovak and predominantly Magyar areas, sought to convince the authorities that the districts were not strongly Slovak and it would be unfair to force the children to go to essentially foreign language schools²³. Štefánek recognized, however, that to retreat in these areas would only permit renewed Magyarization²⁴. Thus, the immediate de-Magyarization of the high schools was exceptionally important in helping integrate the whole of Slovakia into the Czechoslovak Republic²⁵. The new Slovak schools which were opened in essentially Hungarian towns near the frontier, such as Nové Zámky, Levice, Rožňava, or Lučenec, took root rapidly, even though a Hungarian gymnasium was usually also authorized in such locations. While these cities had been Hungarian for several decades, the countryside in nearly all cases remained ethnically Slovak. The extra assistance provided by the central authorities was frequently²⁶ the deciding factor in reclaiming the cities, and thus the gathering places of the intelligentsia, for the Slovaks²⁷. It should be noted that in spite of the expeditious establishment of these institutions, they did not flourish overnight. Hungarian agitation, and the lack of national consciousness, particularly in the east, were among the retarding factors²⁸.

In the first organizational pattern set up by the Ministry of Education, one of

²¹ Štefánek, Anton: Education in Pre-War Hungary and in Slovakia Today. In: Slovakia Then and Now: A Political Survey. Ed. Robert W. Seton-Watson. London 1931, p. 121. — A decade later Štefánek described his approach as „clearly ethnic and humanitarian. In the ethnic Slovak lands, we Slovakized [the schools] and insofar as we didn't have enough teachers and professors, we Czechoslovakized the schools . . .“ LAMS 42 VIII 37. — This describes in particular Štefánek's work after the Referent moved to Bratislava. In LAMS 42 VIII 31, Štefánek describes how he had to brief himself on all the issues involved, many of which he had been ignorant of. See especially p. 4 of this „mini-memoir“.

²² LAMS 42 XIV 84, p. II.

²³ For example, see letter of 30 April 1919 to Župan of Spiš from 100 Levoča mothers — Spišská župa 509/1919 prez, or from students in same gymnasium — Spišská župa 2678/1919 adm., written 7 May 1919, both in ŠA — Levoča.

²⁴ Letter to Šrobár, 8 July 1920, State Slovak Central Archive (ŠSÚA), Fond 39.

²⁵ Gogolák, Ludwig v.: Beiträge zur Geschichte des slowakischen Volkes. München 1972, III, p. 160, discusses this integration.

²⁶ Not always e. g. establishment in Lučenec by local authorities of a reálka in the spring of 1919. See letter of Referent for Education to Jaroslav Vlček in Literární archiv památníku národního písemnictví (LAPNP) — Prague.

²⁷ Štefánek insisted that the state take control of the schools because he felt that otherwise it would not be possible to introduce a Czechoslovak and progressive spirit into them — LAMS 42 VIII 31, pp. 12—13. Banská Štiavnica, for instance, reported a weak national consciousness among the students, even a passive resistance, a problem compounded by the lack of training in Slovak or Czechoslovak language — LAMS 42 VIII 27, p. 13. After two years, Hungarian pressure threatened the Czechoslovak advance — Štefánek letter of 8 July 1920 to Šrobár — LAMS 42 O 21.

²⁸ Annual Report (Výročná zpráva) of Košice Real Gymnasium, I (1919/20) 8.

the eight departments was specifically assigned responsibility for all educational matters relating to Slovakia²⁹. Jaroslav Vlček, a literary historian born to a Czech father and a Slovak mother, and long active in the promotion of Czechoslovak causes, was assigned to head the department. This department was probably of great benefit, because it was one area where special knowledge of Hungarian/Slovak conditions and Hungarian laws was particularly needed, and actions could be taken without having them run through a Czech prism, manned primarily by bureaucrats accustomed to the Austrian system³⁰. Vlček's background offered something special: his father had taught at a Slovak high school and young Vlček had attended both Czech and Hungarian high schools. From all appearances, Vlček and Štefánek enjoyed a good working relationship.

Meanwhile, after considerable debate, Bratislava was chosen as the capital of Slovakia, and on February 4, 1919, a train loaded with the members of the Slovak administration and their papers inched its way nervously into that tense city. Slovakia finally had a permanent center. Once the Slovak government was firmly ensconced there, Vlček came to Slovakia to make his own tour to personally examine conditions. As Štefánek had done, Vlček paid special attention to the problems associated with high school education. The first person who would specifically be assigned responsibility for secondary education in Slovakia was Antonín Prchlík. He took up his post August 1, 1919.

The first legal act of the National Committee in Prague had been to adopt as Czechoslovakia's own, all laws in force in territories included in the new Republic. This meant that Hungarian laws were the original basis for organizing the school system in Slovakia. In May 1919, however, the Revolutionary National Assembly voted to apply to Slovakia the high school administrative regulations valid in the Czech Lands³¹.

Thus, there were four types of gymnázia in Slovakia:

-8-year classical gymnasium with required Latin (from the first year) and Greek (from the fifth year)³². Graduates could directly enter the university, as well as some faculties in the technical university.

²⁹ Věstník Mšano, I, no. 1 (1 March 1919), pp. 24—6 includes complete outline of the structure of the Ministry.

³⁰ „Before the Revolution, Czech scholars and educational experts had not paid sufficient attention to Hungarian conditions, and owing to their ignorance of the Magyar language they could only study Hungarian laws and institutions with the help of Slovak experts . . .“ Štefánek: Education in Slovakia Today 123.

³¹ Zákon č. 293 Sbírka zákonů a nařízení (Sbzan) of 27 May 1919. Věstník Mšano, I, no. 8 (16 June 1919), p. 133. Note that this regulation applied to administrative and not legal issues. Štefánek described education in Slovakia as being organized on the basis of „a somewhat complicated compromise between the existing Hungarian and Austrian Education laws supplemented by new provisions passed by the Czechoslovak Parliament“. Štefánek: Education in Slovakia Today 120.

³² Prior to the war, the Hungarians had cut back on Greek and Latin instruction in favor of more intensive work in Hungarian. Štefánek, Anton: Education in Slovakia. Slavonic Review II, No. 5 (December 1923) 312.

-8-year real gymnázium with required Latin (from the first year) and French or English (from the fifth year). Graduates could directly enter the university or the technical university and study any subject except theology or classical philology.

-8-year real reformed gymnázium with Latin a requirement beginning only in the fifth year. Graduates had the same qualifications for higher education as did graduates of the real gymnázium.

-7-year reálka, which stressed natural science. No classical languages were required, and French or English instruction began in the second year. Graduates could enter only the technical universities.

Under Hungarian rule, the gymnázium was the most favored type. Of 33 such institutions, thirteen were essentially state-operated (Royal Catholic), eight were Lutheran and twelve were Catholic. In addition, there were six realkas, which in the Hungarian system were eight-year institutions, and five lycea, 8-year girl's high schools, formally abolished October 31, 1922, but which already disappeared in Slovakia in 1919^{32a}.

Nine Hungarian schools were closed (Bardejov, Sabinov, Podolíneč, Svätý Jur, Rožňava (Catholic), Banská Bystrica (Lutheran), Banská Štiavnica (Lutheran), Trenčín (girl's), and Levoča (girl's). New schools were opened in Dolný Kubín, Revúca, Martin, Zvolen, and Žilina (Reformed real gymnázium), and Slovak language sections were set up in formerly all-Hungarian schools in Rimavská Sobota, Lučenec, and Nové Zámky. A new Catholic school was established in Kláštor pod Znievom. Seven gymnázia remained Hungarian, and the rest were all converted into Slovak and German institutions³³.

By the summer of 1919, seventeen Slovak gymnázia were operating, enrolling 3808 students. By September, the number of schools had reached 30 with 5894 students, 1693 of which were in beginning classes. The total enrollment accounted for a respectable 13.5 percent of the students in Czechoslovak gymnázia in the whole republic. The three largest schools were the reálka in Žilina (515), and the real gymnázia in Trenčín (475) and Ružomberok (397)³⁴.

By comparison, in the 1913/14 school year (the last in peacetime), there were 1620 Slovaks in the gymnázia, and another 4577 students who were said to know Slovak³⁵. In that same year, however, only 44 Slovaks were graduated, sugges-

^{32a} Činnost ministerstva školství a národní osvěty za první desítiletí. Prague 1928), pp. 34—35. — Graduates of the lycea had trouble finding positions after graduation and could not go to the University. The change from the 8-year course of study in Hungary to six years under the Czechoslovak system was also a step backward. Letter to Principal of Girls' Reformed Real Gymnázium in Bratislava to Slovak Section of Ministry of Education, 20 May 1919 — Mšano 25025/1919 of 31 May 1919, State Central Archive (SÚA). Prague, Carton 1301.

³³ Činnost, pp. 35—36 with minor adjustments to account for fact that this study relates only to Štefánek's work as Referent for Education.

³⁴ Věstník Mšano, I, č. 20 (15 December 1919), p. 418.

³⁵ Overall the enrollment in all high schools in Slovakia declined slightly, mostly owing to the departure to Hungary of many former Hungarian school students. The total

TABLE I

Czechoslovak Gymnazia in Slovakia

Year	Schools	Students in Grade I	Students in Last Grade	Total	(Girls)
End 1918/19	17	1005	101	4005	525
Begin 1919/20	34	1890	259	6227	1162
Begin 1920/21	36	2013	309	6693	1319
End 1921/22	37	2490	339	8161	1689

Sources: Zprávy školského referátu, Vol. I, No. 2 (15 January 1920), p. 22; Věstník Ministerstva školství a národní osvěty, Vol. II, No. 12 (15 June 1920), Appendix; Věstník Ministerstva školství a národní osvěty, Vol. II, No. 24 (15 December 1920), pp. 13–16; Československá statistika, Vol. 17, Školy střední, Table II: Rudolf Neuhöfer, „Středné školy“, in Slovenské školy v prítomnosti (Prague: Štátne nakladateľstvo, 1932), p. 33.

ting a certain denationalization. The number of those who did so with conviction is, of course, unascertainable³⁶.

The German population in Slovakia also benefited in the area of secondary education following the establishment of Czechoslovakia. Štefánek decided to convert Hungarian institutions into German ones in the two German enclaves of Spiš and Bratislava. He noted wryly that this was done to some degree „against the will of the Magyarized German intelligentsia“³⁷. Thus the state established real gymnazia in Bratislava and Kežmarok and a reálka in Levoča³⁸. Parallel classes were set up in the reálka in Bratislava, but shortly after the end of Štefánek's tenure as referent, these were combined with the German real gymnasium. A Lutheran real gymnasium in Spišská Nová Ves became embroiled in a debate over local church autonomy. It was converted from a joint Slovak-German to a solely Slovak school in accordance with the eventual state takeover of its operations^{38a}.

The percentage of Hungarian students graduating from secondary schools in Slovakia remained high in the early years, primarily because many who had originally enrolled in Hungarian schools chose to remain there through graduation. These schools were converted from Hungarian to Slovak one grade per year, with

(non-technical) secondary enrollment in 1920/21 was 13, 503 compared to 14, 197 in 1913/14. Štefánek: Základy 296; and Věstník Mšano, II, č. 24 (15 December 1920), příloha. — Československá statistika, VII, Tab. 5.

³⁶ Slovensko proti revízií Trianonskej smluvy. (Bratislava 1929), p. 15 which cites Hungarian data from Magyar statisztikai évkönyv. Ujfolyan 22 (1922).

³⁷ Štefánek: Education in Slovakia Today 122. — Štefánek devoted special attention to the question of German education in the Broschüre: Das Schulwesen in der Slowakei: Eine pädagogisch-statistische Studie. Bratislava 1921.

³⁸ Ironically the Slovak institution in Levoča opened in December 1919 with German as the language of instruction because too few teachers knew Slovak. Of the 259 students initially enrolled, 103 were listed as German, and another 125 as Hungarian: LAMS 42 VIII 27, pp. 41–2.

^{38a} See its annual report 6 (1927/8) 6–9.

the process completed by 1927. Thus, 42 percent of those graduating in 1921 were Hungarian, and 53 percent Slovak ³⁹.

School officials, including Štefánek, accorded particular importance to the teacher training institutes. All four grades were normally established simultaneously because of the overweaning need to eliminate the shortage of Slovak primary and middle school teachers ⁴⁰. This effort was facilitated by three conditions. First, this type of school required far less equipment, such as for science experiments, etc., than did other types of schools. Secondly, the Hungarians had invested heavily in school buildings and dormitories for teacher training institutes precisely in an attempt to place more and more Magyar teachers in elementary schools. Štefánek described how those schools at Levice and Štubníanske Teplice were perhaps the best equipped in the country ⁴¹. Now these facilities were readily at hand. Third, the general nature of the instruction made it possible to more readily attract the necessary teachers from Bohemia and Moravia. Teachers in these schools did not require the broad range of specialized qualifications, as was the case in the gymnazia. Perhaps still another factor was that these were primarily vocational schools, whose goal was well-established: to produce teachers capable of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. Hence, they were less likely to be caught up in a political tug-of-war. The vocational nature of the institutions is indicated by the fact that their graduates, unlike those of other secondary schools discussed here, were not eligible to attend the university. This made them more attractive to the poorer families, because they guaranteed their sons and daughters a job as a member of the intelligentsia without having to finance study at the university.

One of the first such schools was established at Modra, March 17, 1919. In its early years it drew students from all over Slovakia because of the high quality of its faculty. Modra was one of five schools in operation during the 1918/19 school year. 511 students were enrolled, of which 122 were successfully graduated. By the next year, there were 879 students, of which 236 were engaged in first year studies ⁴². By 1920/1, these schools were operating one hundred percent.

The percentage of female enrollment, as required by law, hovered around fifty percent.

Štefánek shut down three teacher training institutions (two in Košice and one in Prešov) and opened two others, one in Košice (after the others had been closed) and one in Banská Bystrica. The Catholic Church established one new institution at Levoča.

Denominational institutions which existed in the early years of the Republic tended to be small. The percentage of Czechoslovak students in the total number

³⁹ Information cited by Otakar Srdinko before National Assembly Budget Committee, 7 November 1921. See *Věstník Mšano, Část informační*, III, č. 24 (15 December 1921), p. 169.

⁴⁰ Štefánek, Anton: *Education in Slovakia Today* 129. — Štefánek estimated there were only 300 nationally-conscious Slovak elementary school teachers in 1918. *Medvecký: Slovenský prevrat* II, 360.

⁴¹ Štefánek: *Education in Slovakia* 319.

⁴² *Věstník Mšano*, I, č. 20 (15 December 1919), p. 418. — *Zprávy školského referátu*, I, č. 8 (15 April 1920), p. 61.

TABLE II

Czechoslovak Teacher Training Institutes in Slovakia

Year	1918/19	1919/20	1920/21	1921/22
Students	511	879	1266	1379

Sources: *Věstník Ministerstva školství a Národní Osvěty*, Vol. I, No. 20 (15 December 1919), p. 418; *Československý statistický věstník*, Vol. III, No. 2—4 (December 1921), pp. 212—4; *Věstník Ministerstva školství a národní osvěty*, Vol. III, No. 24 (15 December 1921), p. 14; *Československá statistika*, Vol. 17, *Školy střední*, Tab. II.

of students in all such institutions of that kind in Slovakia, was much smaller than it was in state schools. Thus, in 1921/2, the Catholic Church ran four Slovak schools—the gymnasium at Kláštor pod Znievom and three teacher training institutes, as well as three Hungarian schools. Together, these schools contained 17 Slovak and 19 Hungarian classes with a combined total of 1395 students, of whom not even a sixth (228) were Slovak⁴³. The situation in the seven mostly multi-lingual Lutheran schools was only slightly better. Here, there were 19 Slovak, 16 German and 21 Hungarian classes with 2307 students, of whom almost a third (780) were Slovak⁴⁴.

Štefánek, for state political reasons, i. e. de-Magyarization, extended government control over almost all the former Catholic schools which remained open (Five were closed). He denied any anti-religious or anti-Catholic intent⁴⁵. The bishops, who were responsible for these schools, all had withdrawn to Budapest, and the lower clergy, who would have had charge of the schools, were considered politically unreliable. Most Lutheran schools remained in church hands because an independent Slovak church was established, and the Lutherans, who used biblical Czech in the worship service, had been generally more responsive to Slovak national efforts⁴⁶. The Catholic situation changed with the installation of the first Slovak bishops in 1921. Because the National Assembly was unable to write a new comprehensive law for secondary education, Hungarian Law XXX/1883 remained in force in Slovakia with special provision for the legal rights of churches in the establishment of educational institutions⁴⁷.

The Church, through the Slovak People's Party, began in 1921 a vigorous campaign aimed at restoring to the Church the gymnasia which it controlled before

⁴³ *Věstník MŠano*, IV, č. 1 (15 January 1922), Příloha.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ See his letter (43710/II) to Ministry of Education in Ministry of Education (MŠano) 71140/1920, Odbor II, Oddělení 8, 30 October 1920, Carton 1295, SÚA. Štefánek himself was a Catholic; Štefánek: *Education in Slovakia Today* 121.

⁴⁶ For example, the gymnasium at Prešov. Žilka, Julius: *Dve desaťročia: Dejiny ústavu v rokoch 1919—1939*. In: Trnovský, Mirko (ed.): *Sborník prác profesorov evanj. kolegiálneho slovenského v Prešove*. Prešov 1940, pp. 15—16.

⁴⁷ In fact, much of the policy relating to education was determined by administrative procedure, rather than through parliamentary action.

1918. The campaign seemed to be bearing fruit during Jan Černý's cabinet of officials when the SPP offered support for passage of the budget in exchange for restoration of some of the schools. Josef Šusta, the Minister of Education, agreed in writing to restore three of the schools. The agreement was vetoed by the new government of Prime Minister Edvard Beneš, in which the more centralist Šrobár held the education portfolio. Serious financial questions were raised, particularly because the Lutheran schools were struggling at that time to secure sufficient monetary resources to remain open. If the Catholic Church could not raise enough money, there would be severe objection by the Agrarian and Social Democratic Parties to underwriting the Catholic schools, unless the government had administrative control equal to its financial contribution. It is doubtful the church could have provided the funds legally required by XXX/1883⁴⁸. A possibly decisive factor could have been Masaryk's apparent opposition to giving any gymnasium back to the Catholic Church⁴⁹.

Some of the agitation surrounding the church schools can be ascribed to the normal course of modernization. The Catholic Church in Slovakia looked askance at the changing social and cultural ideas introduced in the state schools. The clergy had held a monopoly on Slovak national and political life through much of the nineteenth century; this control was already slipping away in 1918. Both the Catholic and the conservative Lutheran clergy clung desperately to the influence they still had, and they considered the schools to be part of that.

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In the statistical sources relating to education in Czechoslovakia, there is a clear delineation between, on the one hand, gymnasia and teacher training institutes, and on the other, industrial, commercial, and agricultural institutions. This reflects a traditional division between those who work primarily with their heads, and those who work with their hands. In addition, the former offered nothing less than a complete secondary education, while the latter usually also included a number of shorter term vocational schools attached to the parent institution. The statistical services, in reporting on the vocational schools, typically lumped together

⁴⁸ Štefánek: Education in Slovakia 323. This was one of the issues which led to the Slovak People's Party split from the Czech People's Party. — Peroutka, Ferdinand: Budování státu: Československá politika v letech popřevratových. Vol. 4. Prague 1934, 1936, IV, pp. 2386, 2440—4. — For Catholic interpretation, see Sidor, Karol: Slovenská politika na pôde pražského snemu. Bratislava 1943, pp. 180—182. — R. W. Seton-Watson considers decisive the threat by 31 „progressive“ Slovak deputies, including Štefánek and Šrobár, to go into opposition if the three schools were returned to the Church. Seton-Watson: The New Slovakia 71.

⁴⁹ When the question was again under discussion in 1924, Milan Hodža, the Slovak agrarian leader, seemed disposed to act favorably on the Church's request. In a strategy session at the Hotel Carlton in Bratislava, Štefánek reminded Hodža that such an action likely would stir up „progressive Czechs“ in Prague, as well as irritate Masaryk. Hodža didn't respond, giving Štefánek the impression that Hodža hadn't given the matter much thought. Several days later Štefánek was informed by an intermediary that Masaryk indeed did not wish any Catholic gymnasia. See Štefánek's diary of October 1924 in Štefánek collection, Carton 2, SSUA.

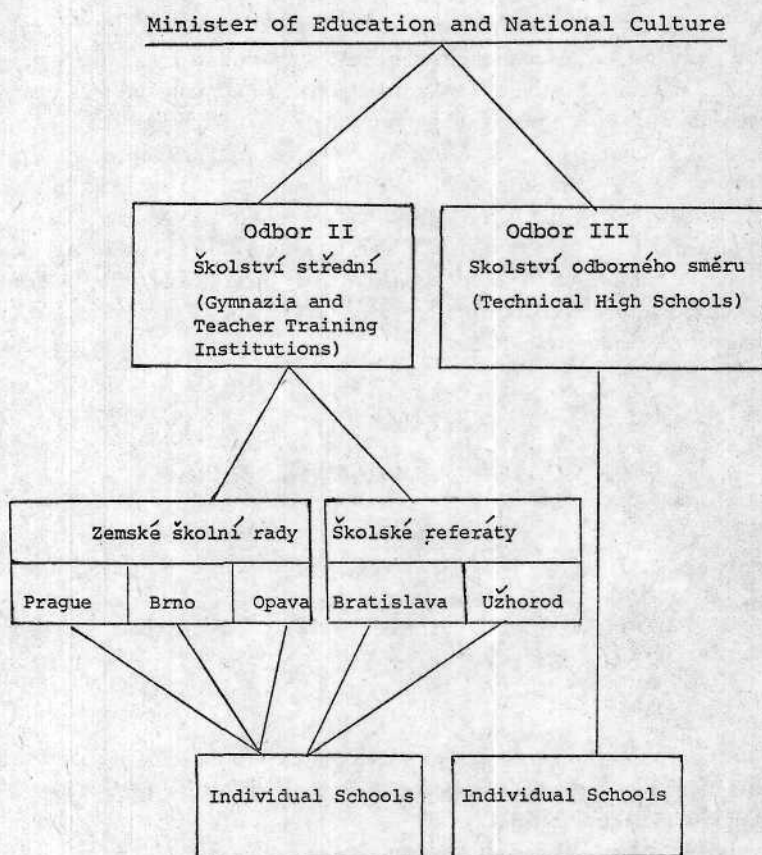


Chart I: The Administration of Education in the Czechoslovak Republic

all data for a particular institution, even if made up of several schools. Since these „vocational“ schools were also partially responsive or responsible to other ministries, there existed considerable differences concerning the categories in which information was recorded. Nominally, most were initially the responsibility of the referent, but Štefánek terminated that arrangement in November 1919⁵⁰. (See Chart I).

Štefánek professed a realization of the need for the four-year technical schools, but he recognized that the public had little appreciation for them: „It is necessary that Slovaks understand the value of technical, industrial and commercial schools. Yes, secondary schools there must be, gymnázia and real schools, but all people cannot be gentlemen with tender hands⁵¹.“

⁵⁰ Štefánek, Anton: Administrativní zřízení a činnost školského referátu, probably written in June 1920, LAMS 42 VIII 37.

⁵¹ LAMS 42 VIII 23, p. 10.

This absence of public enthusiasm, in large part because of traditional Hungarian disdain for such educational establishments, combined with the lack of personnel and facilities, and the limited career potential, contributed to the restricted development of these institutions. The two major industrial high schools, in Bratislava and Košice, were not established until the fall of 1919, and even then only the first year classes were in operation, with a total of 126 students in three sections of the two schools⁵². Of the 80 teachers (they also served in the lower vocational schools attached to the high schools), less than half (36) were from Slovakia⁵³. Even a number of the students came from the Czech Lands⁵⁴. More than likely, many of those teachers from Slovakia served not as professors, but as assistant instructors, demonstrators, etc.

TABLE III

Czechoslovak Industrial High Schools in Slovakia

Year	1918/19	1919/20	1920/21	1921/22
Students	0	126	235	296

Sources: 42 VIII 23 Literárny archív Matice slovenskej (LAMS), Martin; Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického, 1921, No. 17—18; Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického, 1922, No. 20—22.

The mission of these schools was to provide the education needed for owners or operators of small factories, or to be a technical official, although graduates could also attend technical universities.

The commercial academies also mirrored specifically Slovak conditions. In the historic lands, these were primarily private institutions with an established clientele of erstwhile small businessmen and bureaucrats. In Slovakia, instruction was shorter—three years, as opposed to four in Bohemia and Moravia. Though these schools experienced rapid growth in the last years before World War I when Hungary belatedly sought to industrialize, a large part of the growing student body was Jewish. The deindustrialization of Slovakia after the war, coupled with an essentially rural population, provided plenty of disincentive to parents who might otherwise have thought of enrolling their children⁵⁵. The first Slovak institutions

⁵² *Ibidem* 12, 17.

⁵³ *Ibidem* 28.

⁵⁴ Benda, Anton: Štátna čl. priemyselná škola s maďarskými pobočkami v Košiciach. In: Žitavský, A. S. (ed.): Pamätník slovenského školstva za účinkovania Prezidenta T. G. Masaryka. Bratislava 1936, 1937, I, p. 170.

⁵⁵ The župan of Spiš doubted his population's „understanding for the practical education of [its] youth“. His comments cited by Ministerstvo s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska (M/pm) as one of reasons to deny commercial high school to Kežmarok — M/pm 14634/21. Adm. III of 20 October 1921 in Spišská župa 691/1921 in ŠA — Levoča. The principal in Košice had no doubts the population in that city did not value a commercial education: Annual Report, I—II (1919/20—20/21), p. 36.

opened in the fall of 1919 in Bratislava, Košice and Martin. Together they enrolled 222 students, two-thirds of whom were in the first year of study. The Slovak total accounted for only 4.6 percent of the total enrolled in Czechoslovak schools in the entire country⁵⁶. Two years later, there were still only three schools, with 346 students, still only 6.4 % of the total in Czechoslovak schools in Czechoslovakia, although almost all grades were now in operation⁵⁷. By 1936/37, there were 1024 students in 6 Czechoslovak schools⁵⁸.

TABLE IV

Czechoslovak Commercial High Schools in Slovakia

Year	1918/19	1919/20	1920/21	1921/22
Students	0	222	312	346

Sources: Věstník Ministerstva školství a národní osvěty, Vol. I, No. 18 (15 November 1919); Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického, 1921, No. 11; Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického, 1922, No. 6.

Graduates could attend the technical university or the Law Faculty of the Czechoslovak University at Brno.

There were also two agricultural high schools in Slovakia set up through the Ministry of Agriculture. Originally three-year institutions, they were extended to four years in 1920/21. Both, the farming high school in Košice and the forestry high school in Banská Štiavnica, were slightly downgraded from Hungarian schools which had held a somewhat nebulous position between secondary and higher education. These schools provided both theoretical and practical instruction. Graduates could attend their respective faculties in the technical university.

TABLE V

Czechoslovak Agricultural High Schools in Slovakia

Year	1918/19	1919/20	1920/21	1921/22
Students	0	25*	94	155

* Enrollment at Banská Štavnica unknown.

Sources: Annual Report (Výroční zpráva) of Košice Agricultural High School, 1919—29 and 1929/30, p. 73; Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického, 1921, No. 20; 1922, No. 7—8.

⁵⁶ Věstník Mšano, I, č. 18 (15 November 1919), pp. 362—370.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem* III, č. 22 (15 November 1921), Příloha.

⁵⁸ Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického (ZSÚS), 1938, č. 21—22.

The school in Košice had particular trouble attracting Slovak students. In 1920/21, only 7 of 23 first years students were Slovak ⁵⁹.

The number of secondary school students who passed the maturita, or graduation, exam during Štefánek's tenure as Referent for Education was rather low, a reflection on the Hungarian legacy rather than a judgment on Štefánek's work. The fruits of his labor are evident in the 1086 gymnasium and teacher training institute grades in 1928/29, a total which increased to 1873 in 1936/7 ⁶⁰.

TABLE VI

Czechoslovak High School Graduates in Slovakia

Type of School	1918/19	1919/20	1920/21	1921/22
Gymnazia	112	261	336	353
Teacher training				
Institutes	122	258	253	243
Commercial academies	0	0	10	5
Total	234	519	599	601

There were no graduates as yet in either the agricultural or industrial high schools.

Sources: Ján M. Novacký, ed., *Desať rokov slovenských stredných škôl*. (Bratislava: Slovenská knihtlačiareň, 1929), pp. 68—71; Annual reports of Bratislava Commercial High School, II (1920/21), p. 8; and III (1921/22), p. 8.

Unsettled conditions, the chance availability of teachers, and the varied preparation of students during the 1918/19 school year insured that the subjects taught and the division of hours was dependent upon local conditions, if, in fact, there was anything at all approaching normality. During the summer of 1919, the Ministry of Education drew up a unified system for each of the types of high schools, which approached those in use in the Czech Lands, but still made provision for historically-determined Slovak conditions. The most important special provisions for Slovakia were, firstly, greater instruction in the mother tongue, which many of the students spoke haltingly, if at all. Secondly, time devoted to the classical languages was reduced on the assumption that certain aspects of grammatical theory learned in more intensive Slovak language classes would simplify classical language learning. Thirdly, subjects which had not been taught in Hungarian schools the previous year were to be taught from the beginning. In addition, modern foreign languages were to be taught on a school by school basis, and religious instruction was required for all classes ⁶¹.

⁵⁹ Referent for Education to principals of all secondary schools in Slovakia, č. 30.927/II of 8 June 1921 — copy in Prievdza G, Spisy, Carton 1, Okresný archív (OA) — Prievdza.

⁶⁰ Novacký, Ján M. (ed.): *Desať rokov slovenských stredných škôl*. Bratislava 1929, pp. 68—71. — ZSÚS, 1938, č. 46—7, Table 5.

⁶¹ Mšano č. 38.985 of 29 August 1919. — *Věstník Mšano*, I, č. 13 (1 September 1919), pp. 216—219.

Several measures were taken to encourage Slovak enrollment in the newly organized schools. For several years, there was a nearly complete suspension of entrance exams, a step justified by the abysmal preparation accorded students not only under the Hungarian regime, but in the early years after World War I as well ⁶². Bedřich Pokorný, a principal in Bratislava, remarked that he could not refuse these poorly prepared pupils entrance, because „it's not their fault“ ⁶³. When entrance requirements were later tightened in an effort to assure the quality of students, there was considerable protest from the public ⁶⁴. The lack of textbooks also hindered instruction in the early years. In addition, the Ministry of Education directed that a particularly benevolent attitude be taken regarding the payment of school fees because of the poor economic status of much of the population ⁶⁵. The matura exams given in the summer of 1919 were simplified by dropping the requirement for a test in a second foreign language ⁶⁶.

One resource sorely lacking in the early years was scholarship support for outstanding students. Many of the schools had been well-endowed under Hungarian rule, but during World War I, the funds had been invested in Hungarian war bonds in Budapest, and now were lost. In 1920, the Ministry of Education made 55 grants of 300, 400, or 500 crowns to qualified students in Slovakia, and announced plans to give 60 more in 1921. Priority was given to those in greatest financial need with excellent scholastic qualification, and from the upper grades ⁶⁷. Šrobár converted the Palfy Fund, originally designed exclusively for use in denationalizing Slovak youth, to the exclusive use of Slovak students. Administered by the Referent beginning with the 1919/20 school years, the amount distributed each year fluctuated because the money was derived from the sale of lumber from state forests ⁶⁸. Thus, 39,706 Kč was awarded in 1919/20; 78,840 Kč in 1920/21; and 89,100 Kč in 1921/22 ⁶⁹. There were various actions taken to provide shoes, clothing, hot soup, etc., in various schools, but no centralized records were kept to register such support.

⁶² Kovanda, St.: Priebeh z ľudovej do strednej školy. Zprávy školského referátu, III, č. 7 (1 April 1922), pp. 646. Kovanda mentions one example of an early lenient exam was students needing only to passably copy an article in Slovak.

⁶³ Annual Report, Bratislava Real Gymnazium 5 (1923/24) 5.

⁶⁴ To some degree the arguments parallel those heard in recent years in the United States regarding black students, e. g. to what extent are blacks done a service or a disservice by specially admitting to universities those who would not otherwise qualify?

⁶⁵ Výnos Mšano č. 9137 of 28 February 1919, according to Referent for Education Vynesení č. 569 of 14 February 1919, based on č. 64 Sbzan 1918 (the law on special conditions in Slovakia). Věstník Mšano, I, č. 2 (15 March 1919), p. 42.

⁶⁶ Ibidem I, č. 7 (1 June 1919).

⁶⁷ Ibidem II, č. 1 (1 January 1921), p. 7 and III, č. 6 (15 March 1921), pp. 111—113. The importance of financial help, for example is reflected in the plaint of the Principal of the Bratislava Commercial High School that a „considerable“ number of his students would not be able to attend without material support — in letter to Turčiansky župan, Turčianská župa 5035/1919 adm II B 1, ŠA — Bytča.

⁶⁸ Dérier, Ivan: Spáchala první republika téměř genocidu Slováků? Literární listy, I, č. 15 (6 June 1968), p. 4.

⁶⁹ Štefánek, Anton: Školstvo na Slovensku. Kutná Hora 1926, p. 21. The amount available would drastically shrink during the Depression.

Student housing was a particular concern for several reasons. The Hungarian presence in the cities had been strong under the old regime, and remained a notable characteristic of urban life in many areas even after 1918. It was particularly a problem because the Hungarian portion of the population tended to be more educated and of a higher social class, and thus attractive to the frequently almost anational immigrant or student from the countryside. In addition to this threatening national environment of the cities, housing was in very short supply. The establishment of a new political administration run by Czechs and Slovaks meant that new people were moving into the cities and competing for scarce housing, and driving up rents. The larger cities of Bratislava and Košice felt this most severely, but it was a problem elsewhere, too. Thus, the acting principal of the real gymnasium at Banská Štiavnica petitioned the Referent for Education to set up an internat (dormitory) in the old school building for economic/social reasons (the high cost of living) and for educational/national ones: „In this way at least some of the students will be definitely moved away from the influence of local families, who don't always maintain friendly attitudes toward our state⁷⁰“. As a side-effect, the creation of internats made it possible for young people from poor districts, for whom insufficient transportation connections would have prevented daily commuting, to acquire a secondary education⁷¹. The teacher-training institutes were best endowed with such internats, 63 percent of their students living there—many for free—in 1919/20⁷².

Staffing for the new secondary schools in Slovakia proved a serious hurdle. In spite of frequent appeals, Štefánek could attract no more than twenty qualified Slovak high school teachers⁷³ who were capable of giving instruction in Slovak, and even some of those had doubtful language skills. This situation is not surprising in view of the lack of opportunity for such careers during the previous four decades. Štefánek rejected the idea that he keep the old Hungarian teachers on and give them a chance to learn Slovak⁷⁴. A complicating factor was the difficulty in judging the abilities of those persons essentially nationally neutral, those who had gone through the Hungarian educational system without becoming fervent Hungarian patriots, and who, for perhaps quite justified reasons of economic self-interest, had not participated in any Slovak national activities⁷⁵. These people,

⁷⁰ Letter from Ján Schück to Ministry of Social Welfare č. 798/1920, 15 July 1920, in ŠSÚA, Inštruktorát Ministerstva sociálnej starostlivosti (IMSS), Carton 5, item 276.

⁷¹ See Mšano 52143/1920, Odbor V, Oddělení 19, of 15 August 1920, Carton 1297, SÚA.

⁷² Zprávy školského referátu, I, č. 8 (15 April 1920), pp. 62—63.

⁷³ They were referred to as professors. — See Medvecký: Slovenský prevrat II, 360, who appears to attribute his information to Štefánek.

⁷⁴ Štefánek pointed out that schools most „cleansed“ of teachers with Hungarian experience, i.e. middle schools, high schools, and technical schools, produced far fewer administrative and educational problems than those not so cleansed. Štefánek considered that Rumania and Yugoslavia had far more difficulty in this area, because there was little outside help to be called on. Štefánek: Školstvo na Slovensku 4.

⁷⁵ An interesting example of the misunderstandings which frequently developed is that of a geography teacher, Jozef Martinka. From his post in Yugoslavia, he applied in December 1918 for a teaching job, but he received no reply. When he finally came to

the so-called „New Slovaks“, particularly began to come forward after the defeat of the Hungarian invasion, which made the future of the Czechoslovak Republic more secure⁷⁶. Štefánek and his travels around Slovakia, and Vlček and his scouting and promotional efforts in Prague, combined to solve most of the serious staffing problems within a relatively short time⁷⁷. It was Štefánek's impression that without Czech help, he could not have set up more than three gymnázia and not a single reálka or technical school⁷⁸. Discussion of the political friction which slowly developed around the Czech teachers will not be treated here.

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Štefánek's effectiveness as Referent for Education was more or less terminated early in 1922, when the Cabinet added to that office responsibilities formerly held by the Church Referent, and assigned a Czech, Josef Folprecht, as administrator of this new Referent of the Ministry of Education and National Culture⁷⁹. By this time, only six referents continued to operate. They were all abolished in 1928, save for the Education Referent, which alone continued operations throughout the life of the Republic, and legally still existed in the early days of the Slovak state in 1939⁸⁰.

Štefánek turned his attention to earning a doctorate in philosophy at Komen-ský University (1924) and then joined the Ministry of Education as a Ministerial advisor. He was named Minister February 20, 1929, replacing Milan Hodža, whose conflict with Beneš on foreign policy questions had reached the breaking point. After elections in the fall of 1929, which resulted in a shift to the left and

Slovakia on his own he was assigned to a struggling girls high school in Košice, but for more than eight months was not paid. In a conversation with the author in 1973, he still manifested the hurt this had inflicted on him. See his letter to Vlček of 6 April 1921, in Vlček: Spisy, LAPNP.

⁷⁶ Štefánek: Education in Slovakia 313.

⁷⁷ Medvecký: Slovenský prevrat II, 341. By the end of the 1919/20 school year, there were 69 Slovak teachers in the gymnázia; two years later there were already 114. — Hudec, Jozef: Naše stredné školstvo od prevratu. In: Florek, Pavol (ed.): Pamätnica Spolku Profesorov Slovákov 1921—1931. Turčianský Svätý Martin 1932, p. 27; and Novacký (ed.): Desat' rokov 59.

⁷⁸ Štefánek: Education in Slovakia 313.

⁷⁹ Mšano č. 1203 presidium of 8 February 1922 in Věstník Mšano, IV, č. 2 (15 February 1922), p. 62.

⁸⁰ František Bielik and Július Sopko, Štátny slovenský ústredný archív v Bratislave. Sprievodca po archívnych fondoch-II-Oddelenie kapitalizmu. Bratislava 1964, pp. 22—23, 38—39. Nearly all the records of the Referent have been lost. They were either carried to Prague in 1938/39 or in the late 1950s, dumped in the Danube River prior to the arrival of Soviet forces in April 1945, or destroyed in the bombing of some government buildings at that time. The few papers that remain are concerned with religious matters which were the responsibility of the Referent. These are in the ŠSUA. However, copies of many of the letters and records can be found in the Ministry of Education archives in Prague or in the various school and county archives in Slovakia. R. W. Seton-Watson argues that a shortage of qualified Slovaks was the prime reason for the decline of the Slovak administration: A History of the Czechs and Slovaks. Hamden/Conn. 1965, p. 323.

the restoration of the Red-Green coalition, Štefánek was replaced at the Ministry by another Slovak, Ivan Dérer, a Social Democrat. Štefánek remained quite concerned about Slovak secondary education during his brief tenure as Minister. In what appears to have been his declared program, he promised even greater support for Slovak high schools than heretofore, both organizationally and in the matter of buildings⁸¹. At the same time, he was conscious of the necessity of paying attention to quality as well as quantity⁸².

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The Slovak National Council, organized September 12, 1918, which declared Slovakia's adherence to the Czechoslovak Republic, October 30, seems never to have given any consideration to establishing an educational system; in fact, it hardly established any administration at all⁸³. It was formally dissolved by Šrobár, January 20, 1919. Even the župans which were appointed in each country by Šrobár's Slovak government were described as dilettantes, and relatively incapable of establishing a functioning government⁸⁴. While the Slovak Soviet Republic existed only a short time, it did appoint two education commissars, but they were most concerned with providing basic mass education.

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Although the rapid expansion of secondary education was necessary, and in some ways beneficial, there were disadvantages, as Štefánek himself recognized. The establishment of the Czechoslovak educational system was both a pedagogical and administrative improvement as was the giving of instruction in the Slovak tongue, but these developments, plus a recognition by the public that a secondary education was the gateway to success, eventually drew such a crowd of students that schools were overtaxed, and there were neither enough teachers nor buildings.

„It was not possible to build Slovak schools gradually and with the help of native talent. We wanted to have everything quickly. Beginning with the primary school, all the way through the university and the art academy. Much unpleasantness and anger developed when the government, whether it wanted to or not, could not take over the mining and forestry college at Banská Štiavnica. It was

⁸¹ Štefánek, Anton: Organizácia nár. škôl. LAMS 42 VIII 13, p. 23. The title here is misleading.

⁸² Anketa o školské reforme konaná ve dnech 8 až 12 dubna 1929. Praha 1929, p. 26.

⁸³ Medvecký: Slovenský prevrat II, 319. — Peroutka: Budování státu I, 175. — Mamaty, Victor S.: The Establishment of the Republic. In: Mamaty / Luža: History 30. — It should be pointed out that even if the Slovak National Council had been disposed to act, the strongly entrenched Hungarian bureaucracy would have made this difficult. Falt'an, Samo: Slovenská otázka v Československu. Bratislava 1968, p. 42.

⁸⁴ Peroutka: Budování státu II, part 2, p. 1222. — One župan, L'udovít Bazovský went ahead and established a reálka without Štefánek's prior approval. Though perturbed, Štefánek sought to assist because if the school were forced to close, it would reflect badly on Czechoslovak state interests. The Hungarian invasion put an end to the problem. Most of the correspondence relating to this interesting case of local initiative is in the Collection L—G, Carton 57, OA — Lučenec.

considered natural that the state must in the shortest time not only convert all schools to teaching in the Slovak language, but also reorganize them intellectually in the old Slovak national spirit⁸⁵.

Štefánek was neither completely a politician nor an academic. Although he shared the political goals of the Hlasists, he maintained his own independent sense of judgment, recognizing a value in much of things specifically Slovak. His academic teaching and research, on the other hand, were clearly not of the ivory tower or strictly theoretical variety, and he constantly sought to connect them with the real world of rural and urban Slovakia. This almost peculiar combination has made it difficult to categorize him. Both the Slovak nationalists and communists have found something to value. For example, in 1957, the staff of the Institute of Philosophy at the Slovak Academy of Sciences wrote, in honor of his 80th birthday, „Czechoslovak national unity was for Štefánek an ideal; he justified it on the basis of sociographical, historical, geographical, and other such evidence, even political needs; even so, however, he did not undervalue the historical process of the development of the Slovak nation⁸⁶“.

This perhaps best explains his single-minded devotion to the development of Slovak education within the Czechoslovak framework. No matter whether Štefánek has been charged with being a representative of Czechoslovakism, it is important that during the delicate formative years, a Slovak in Slovakia was in charge of instituting educational change. According to Štefánek's own reflections on the mission of the Slovak school, „[It] must educate the youth of the Czechoslovak state, but . . . in that process, it must not mechanically imitate and copy the Czech school; our school must be a reflection of the Slovak individuality, not only in a formal language sense, but also in every esthetic and ethical way, reflect the culture of the Slovaks⁸⁷“.

He later remarked that he, Šrobár, and all the other referents „ . . . felt instinctively that we must set briskly to work before the jurists and bureaucrats could come along with their paragraphs and instructions and schedules and clip our wings and put an end to our power⁸⁸“. The fact that the law (c. 64/1918 *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení* of 10 December 1918) creating Šrobár's office invested him with special powers, greatly facilitated any actions Štefánek took⁸⁹. As long as Štefánek was in charge of the office of the Referent for Education, it was an appendage of the Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakia. After Folprecht took over, it became an arm of the Ministry of Education in Prague. The majority of those later responsible for Slovak education were Czechs⁹⁰.

⁸⁵ Štefánek: *Základy* 296—297.

⁸⁶ Prof. dr. Anton Štefánek osemdesiatročný. *Naša veda*, Roč. IV, č. 5 (1957) 227.

⁸⁷ Štefánek, Anton: *Päťročná retrospektiva*. In: Bezdek, Bohuslav / Janota, Milan (eds.): *Päť rokov školskej práce na Slovensku*. Bratislava 1924, p. 9.

⁸⁸ Štefánek: *Education in Slovakia* 308. Contrast Referent's suggestion to the Minister Plenipotentiary, Carton 225, item 3040 (this is draft of letter to M/pm, č. 3040 prez of 9 August 1926) in ŠSÚA, in which recommendation is made that Ministry's attitude on further high school expansion in Slovakia be ascertained before the Referent proceeds on request by local officials for new school.

⁸⁹ Zápis o 8 schůzi Národního shromáždění československého 10 December 1918, pp. 5—6.

⁹⁰ Faltaň: *Slovenská otázka* 59, 88.

Štefánek valued highly Masaryk's contribution toward the development of Slovak education, not so much in action Masaryk took as President (that aspect has not adequately been studied), but in laying the groundwork. „If it were not for the powerful voice of this modern John the Baptist“, Štefánek observed, „Slovakia would today have perhaps two or three gymnázia, possibly even some kind of autonomy within the framework of Hungary . . . ⁹¹“. Štefánek stressed Masaryk's contribution as more valuable from the standpoint of destroying the old system than in building a new one. „Today . . . we ask God to give us a similarly great statesman who is a ‚builder‘ ⁹².“ It is in this connection that Štefánek's work in establishing Slovak education in Slovakia must be praised. In a short period of three years, and without losing a year of instruction during the conversion ⁹³, he fashioned a new system of Slovak secondary education where none had existed. Masaryk's evolutionary conception of social development neither took into account Slovak yearnings for a more developed society, nor the possibilities for rapid social change in the disordered times following rapid or sudden political developments. Masaryk had, after all, matured in an evolutionary world.

Štefánek was closer to the situation in Slovakia than Masaryk was — in fact he credits Masaryk with keeping his proper distance. Štefánek recognized that this was an apt time to initiate new institutions. He was particularly so convinced because of his belief that Magyarism had been harmful not only for its adverse affect on Slovak national development, but for the harmful consequences it had had in fostering favorable attitudes toward the gentry class and disdain of the masses. For democracy to be successful, those beliefs had to be overcome. This could best be done through the rapid development of the school system. And so it was.

⁹¹ Štefánek, Anton: Masaryk a Slovensko. In: Weingart, Miloš (ed.): Sborník přednášek o T. G. Masarykovi. Prague 1931, p. 207.

⁹² *Ibidem* 224.

⁹³ Letter of 15 January 1919 from Štefánek to turčianský župan. Turčianská župa 291/1919 adm II B 1, ŠA — Bytča.

ANTON ŠTEFÁNEK UND DIE ENTWICKLUNG DES HÖHEREN SCHULWESENS IN DER SLOWAKEI

Es steht außer Zweifel, daß das slowakische Volk 1918 einen sehr ernsten Mangel an Bildungseinrichtungen jeder Art hatte, obwohl noch weitaus schlimmere Prognosen über das Schicksal des wenig gebildeten Volkes vielleicht zu stark betont wurden. Nach der Gründung der Tschechoslowakischen Republik fiel die Aufgabe, ein Schulsystem in der Slowakei aufzubauen, an Anton Štefánek, einen 41 Jahre alten Journalisten und Politiker mit großen soziologischen Interessen. Als Bildungsreferent in der sogenannten „Regierung“ des bevollmächtigten Ministers für slowakische Angelegenheiten widmete Anton Štefánek den größten Teil seiner Anstrengungen der Entwicklung des höheren Schulwesens; denn aus diesen Schulen würden die Intelligenz sowie die gebildeten Spezialisten, die für die fortwährende Existenz einer Nation entscheidend sind, hervorgehen. Anton Štefánek brachte keine speziellen Erfahrungen und Kenntnisse für seine Arbeit mit; er war allein der Überzeugung, daß es notwendig sei, die Schulen so schnell wie möglich von der ungarischen Sprache und dem ungarischen Geist zu befreien. Dieser Artikel beschreibt ausführlich, wie er dies bewerkstelligte. Er bekannte sich zu dem „demokratischen Prinzip der religiösen und nationalen Gleichheit der Bevölkerung vor dem Gesetz“ als dem wichtigsten Kriterium, das das Schicksal jeder Schule entscheiden soll. In der Praxis bedeutete dies, die Städte mit ihren schulischen Einrichtungen für die Mehrheit der slowakischen Bevölkerung in der angrenzenden Region zu beanspruchen. Nach wenig mehr als drei Jahren besuchten 9427 Studenten 37 slowakische Gymnasien und 14 Ausbildungsstätten für Lehrer, obwohl vor dem Kriege keine einzige slowakische Schule dieses Typs existierte. Es gab außerdem mehrere Industrie-, Handels- und Landwirtschaftsfachschulen. Denselben Kriterium der religiösen und nationalen Gleichheit folgend gründete Štefánek auch mehrere deutsche Mittelschulen. Unter den Problemen, die aufkamen, waren der Lehrermangel, das Fehlen von Stipendien und das sehr schlechte Bildungsniveau der Studenten. In diesem Zusammenhang muß Štefáneks Arbeit als Bildungsreferent der sogenannten „Šrobár-Regierung“ gerühmt werden. Er war es, der das Schulwesen in der Slowakei aufbaute.