

Slovak Committee of Slavists in cooperation
with the Institute of Slavonic Studies of Ján Stanislav
of the Slovak Academy of Sciences

SLOVAK COMMITTEE OF SLAVISTS IN COOPERATION
WITH THE INSTITUTE OF SLAVONIC STUDIES OF JÁN STANISLAV
OF THE SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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INSIGHT INTO SLOVAK-MAGYAR RELATIONS

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Contents

Introduction.....	6
Ladislav Deák On the Reliability of the Hungarian Nationality Statistics from 1910.....	7
Anton Hrnko Language is not only an Instrument of Communication Casting of Doubt on Slovak – Causes and Consequences.....	18
Jozef Darmo The Slovak Act on the State Language as Interpreted by the „Slovak” Press.....	31
Ján Doruľa Magyaromania	37
Ján Kačala Language Legislation from the Point of View of Linguistics.....	46
Ábel Kráľ The Party of the Magyar Coalition (SMK) and the Act on the State Language.....	55
Viliam Jablonický The Danger of extremist Videofilms and Views on Internet Pages and Computer Games	60
Marek Mihálik The Act on the State Language in the Context of International Law.....	68
Elena Kačalová The Need for an Amendment to the Act on the State Language.....	73
Gregor Papuček The Fairytale Land of Hungary or Fairytales are Proliferating round us	81
Egil Lejon Mastodon.....	86

Introduction

In the book *Insight into Slovak-Magyar Relations* we are publishing articles, which present the Slovak position of their authors on this relationship. The authors of the articles met on 18 September 2009 for an expert seminar in the Institute of Slavonic Studies of Ján Stanislav of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The paper by the Norwegian author Egil Lejon was read in his absence. The participants in the seminar especially welcomed the presence of the minister of culture of the Slovak Republic Marek Maďarič, and another honoured guest – the Slovak writer from Hungary Gregor Papuček. The seminar was organized by the Institute of Slavonic Studies of Ján Stanislav of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Slovak Language Department of the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and the Language Department of Matica Slovenská.

In the present tense situation in Slovak-Magyar relations, which Magyar figures from various fields of political, social and scientific life in Slovakia and Hungary have artificially intensified and are still sharpening, the authors of the papers point to the danger of this escalation. Some of our authors rely on their long-term research into Slovak-Magyar relations and in the spirit of Kollár's wise statement that „the life of the present has its roots in the past and can only be explained from it” they point to the genesis of the present Magyar views on Slovakia and the Slovaks. These views, a large part of which are absurdly anachronistic in present-day Europe, are deeply rooted in Magyar society and have been successfully cultivated, maintained and nourished for a long time. They are a constant source of tension in Slovak-Magyar relations.

To the framework of specific attitudes, it is also necessary to add the „objective news” from the daily SME, which is Slovak only in the sense that it is published in Slovakia and in the Slovak language. In its edition from 29 September 2009, it not only accuses the organizers of the expert seminar of lack of objectivity, because they did not invite Magyars to a presentation of the Slovak point of view, it also give a „cadre profile” of the „nationalist” participants in the seminar. It draws data about their participation in the seminar only from brief information given to the press. Especially humanly offensive is the reference to the „cadre profile” of our honoured guest from Hungary, who is said to be „mentioned among the authors on the web-site prop.sk, which publishes anti-Semitic texts.”

I believe that all those, who look at this book will find in it useful information, facts and evidence shedding light on the Slovak view of the problem of Slovak – Magyar relations.

The Editor

On the Reliability of the Hungarian Nationality Statistics from 1910

LADISLAV DEÁK

Since the break up of the historic Kingdom of Hungary, Magyar historiography, public writing and public opinion have constantly returned to the pre-war nationality statistics, produced in Hungary at ten yearly intervals from 1880 to 1910, and this still continues today. We want to devote special attention to the last of them. The delegation of the Magyar government used them as a basis for its arguments during the discussions of the Paris Peace Conference in Paris in 1920. Teleki's map of the ethnic composition of the Kingdom of Hungary was worked out from them. They were used at the talks with the Czecho-Slovak government in Komárno in October 1938, and formed the basis for the „ethnic frontier” drawn between Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary in the Vienna Arbitration of November 1938. The Magyar government delegation also started from them in its argumentation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946. Even today, the nationality statistics from 1910 are regarded in Hungary as a trustworthy and reliable source of information on the ethnic composition of the Hungarian state at the beginning of the 20th century, Magyar historiography and the political élite defend them in international fora. The present political representatives of the Magyar minority in Slovakia also appeal to them. They form the basis for the map „Hungarians [correctly it should be *Magyars*] in Slovakia in 1910,” which P. Csáky submitted to the European Union in Strasbourg on behalf of the Magyar minority in Slovakia. As a result, we consider it necessary to devote special attention to these last nationality statistics from 1910, to confront them with other historical facts from the period and with the results of historical research, and to place in the wider context of the nationality policy of the Hungarian state.

Slovak historians and the national historiography of the neighbouring states takes a critical view of the evaluation of the statistics by Magyar historiography about the ethnic composition of the of the population of Hungary during the last 50 years of the existence of the Monarchy. The greatest reservations concern the nationality statistics from the 1910 census, which do not express the real state of the nationality structure of the population, but the nationality policy of the Magyar ruling circles in the period of the culmination of the denationalizing effort. The increasingly systematic process of Magyarization from the 1870s was oriented in two directions: towards the comprehensive spread of members of the Magyar nation, and towards the deliberate reduction of non-Magyars by means of social, cultural and economic oppression of nationally conscious people. This trend was implemented with the help of administrative,

judicial, economic and educational measures and with intensive social pressure. Apart from data from different areas of the life of the population and the ethnic structure of the state, the census traced the progress of the process of Magyarization of the non-Magyar population. Data „were obtained” about how the ruling Magyar nation was „subduing by a natural process” the „uncultured” and „nationally undeveloped” non-Magyar nations and nationalities in the state. A key place in this process was occupied by the application and enforcement of the government fiction about the reshaping of the multi-national Kingdom of Hungary into the „united state of the Magyar nation.” Monitoring of the development of the nationality question in the state was part of this policy. On one side, the ruling elite insulted and discriminated against members of the non-Magyar ethnic groups, while on the other, it celebrated the heroic deeds of the Magyars, their culture and historic mission in Hungary, their chivalrous and aristocratic spirit, which was a direct challenge to people to declare themselves Magyars, with the argumentation that by changing their identity, members of the non-Magyar nations would lose nothing, and would only gain by doing what their loyalty to their country and civil duty to the state required.

The first official record of the ethnic composition of Hungary was produced in 1880, at a time of growing de-nationalization of the non-Magyar population. The trend applied then was continued in the three following censuses (1890, 1900, 1910). Experts in the Hungarian statistical office decided, that in contrast to the Austrian part of the Monarchy, where nationality was decided on the basis of language of communication, in Hungary, nationality was determined according to mother tongue, interpretation of which developed in a particular way. According to the official definition from 1900, „it is necessary to regard as the mother tongue, the language, which a person regards as his own and speaks best and most willingly.”¹ The term *mother tongue* could be understood as a language the person did not learn from his mother, but later in a different environment. This added to the original understanding of mother tongue a subjective element, dependent on external circumstances. In this way, the identification of nationality according to mother tongue lost its meaning and opened the way for the census commissioners to adopt arbitrary interpretations and uncontrolled practices, according to which the mother tongue could be the language, which fulfilled the function of language of communication, under which was actually understood the Magyar language. The new interpretation enabled people, who occasionally used the Magyar language, but were not actually Magyars, to be regarded as Magyars. This definition of mother tongue did not fulfill the criterion for ascertaining nationality, but practically expressed the number of citizens of

¹ SVETONĚ, Ján: Slováci v Maďarsku. Príspevky k otázke štatistickej maďarizácie. (The Slovaks in Hungary. Contributions to the question of statistical Magyarization). Bratislava 1942, p. 10 etc.

the state, who could speak the Magyar language. This related especially to members of the non-Magyar nationalities, who were forced to learn both languages, but in the atmosphere of nationalist passions, it could be dangerous to declare that the Magyar language was not the dearest to them or the language in which they preferred to communicate.

This concerned especially the national minority young people, who learnt the Magyar language during their education and so fulfilled the criterion for Magyar mother tongue as a result of inadequate teaching and cultivation of their mother tongue, or its complete exclusion from public life. This process especially affected young Slovaks, who were forced to learn the Magyar language from an early age in Magyar schools, and who gradually lost contact with their mother tongue. To make matters worse, from the middle of the 1870s, young Slovaks were completely deprived of Slovak private secondary schools and from the 1890s, the Slovak language as an additional subject was gradually liquidated in the lower classes. From 1879, the Magyar language was compulsory in all people's schools and from the beginning of the 20th century, there was a radical reduction of the teaching of Slovak even in the people's schools, as a result of the strengthening of the state schools at the expense of the Slovak church schools. The number of elementary schools where any attention was given to Slovak as a mother tongue was constantly falling. In 1880, there were 1716 people's schools in Hungary with Slovak as the language of teaching, but in 1906 there were only 241,² which meant that even in purely Slovak counties, Slovak children were forced to attend Magyar schools. The government decrees from 1902, according to which even non-Magyar people's schools had to teach the Magyar language for 18-24 hours a week, had a big impact on elementary schools. According to the so-called Aponi education acts passed in 1907, non-Magyar children had to master Magyar, both spoken and written, by the time they completed the fourth class. By doing this, Slovak children practically fulfilled the criterion for being Magyar by mother tongue and were registered as Magyars. As a result of these Magyarizing measures in education, from the total of 10.5% of the population of Slovak nationality according to the data from 1900, only 3.2% of Slovak children learnt the Slovak language in people's schools in the school year 1907-1908.

Children taken by Magyar societies, institutions or individuals in the Magyar lowlands under the pretext of protection of orphans or because of social poverty, did not escape Magyarization. About 1000 Slovak children suffered this fate in the period 1874-1900. Such hidden Magyarizing practices evoked

² For example in the County of Trenčín, where only 2.8% of the population declared Magyar nationality according to the official statistics from 1900, the Magyar children had available 280 people's schools, while Slovak children had only 77. Národný archív SR (National Archives of the Slovak Republic), (NA). Personal papers of F. Houdek, box 34, no.doc. 221/1b, fascicle (fasc.): How they Magyarized the People's Schools in the former Kingdom of Hungary.

indignation in Europe, especially when news spread that in 1887, 190 children were taken from the County of Trenčín, and sold in low land markets to people interested in their labour. Magyarizing practices were also introduced into nursery schools, which were established by law in 1891. In the school year 1907-1908, 97.4% of nursery schools were Magyar, and none were Slovak.³

In the interest of an overall review of the nationality structure of the Kingdom of Hungary, we will give the official statistical data on the number of Slovaks and Magyars in the whole kingdom (I) and in the 16 counties of Slovakia (II) during the three decades in question:

I Year	Slovaks	%	Magyars	%	II Slovaks	%	Magyars	%
1880	1 864 529	11.9	6 445 487	41.2	1 612 989	58.2	762 024	27.5
1890	1 910 279	11.0	7 426 730	42.8	1 654 652	56.2	859 359	29.4
1900	2 008 744	10.5	8 679 014	45.4	1 742 073	53.3	1 008 538	32.0
1910	1 967 970	9.4	10 050 575	48.1	1 708 592	51.4	1 189 262	35.7

The data shows that the number of Slovaks in relative terms declined, and from 1900, the absolute numbers also fell. In 30 years, the Slovak population grew by only 5.5%, while the Magyar population grew by 55.9%. In the territory of the 16 counties, where the Slovak ethnic group lived, the Slovaks declined from 58.2% to 51.4%, while the Magyars increased from 27.5% to 35.7%. The number of Slovaks grew by only 95,603, while the number of Magyars increased by 427,238 according to the official statistics.⁴

In this context, it is necessary to ask what were the reasons for the rapid decline of the Slovaks, while the number of Magyars enormously grew. Can this be explained by the natural route, by substantial ethnic changes, by a Magyar population explosion or higher death rate among the non-Magyar population of Hungary? We do not find anything like this. Magyar historical literature gives other reasons. It emphasizes the population strength of the „Magyar race and culture.” which had the ability to assimilate the „uncultured” nations in the state. Among the unfavourable factors for the Slovaks are mentioned emigration, a lower birthrate, migration within the country and assimilation outside their own ethnic territory in the process of the industrialization of the country.

³ Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (AMZV ČR), VI section, box 64, fasc. 20, no. doc. 88. On the unreliability of the Magyar nationality statistics from 1910 see p.4.

The spirit of education in the nursery schools is illustrated by an example from the village of Krátke Kesy. After 25 years of work in the nursery school there, E. Kapočiová (Kapocsy) was proposed to the ministry in 1908 as someone deserving praise for her successful Magyarizing activity. When she came to the local nursery school, it was attended by only 2 Magyar children, the others all spoke Slovak. 25 years later, Magyar was already spoken in the village. See: VARSÍK, B.: *Národnostná hranica slovensko-maďarská v ostatných storočiach* (The Slovak – Magyar nationality frontier in the last two centuries). Bratislava 1940, p. 15.

⁴ SVETON, Ján: *Štatistická maďarizácia*. (Statistical Magyarization.). In: Slovenská liga. Bratislava 1942, p. 15-16.

Where emigration overseas is concerned, it is true that the Slovak ethnic group was affected more than the Magyar, but this decline in Slovakia was not replaced by people of Magyar nationality. The original ethnic composition of the population was not disturbed, but in spite of this, the statistics show a decline of the Slovak ethnic group. The argument that there was greater natural population growth among the Magyars is untrustworthy and misleading, because the Magyar population has generally and for a long time had a lower birth-rate. For 1000 children born among the Magyars in 1900, the coefficient of natality was 39.1, and in 1910 it was 35.1, while among the Slovaks it was 43.9 in 1900 and 38.4 in 1910.⁵ Matej Bel already pointed to the low population ability of the Magyar ethnic group in the 18th century, when he stated: „While Slovaks have 3 or 4 to 6 children in their families, Magyar families have only one or two.”⁶ The Magyar sociologist O. Jászi admitted that in the decade 1880-1890, the Magyars had grown in number by 294,000 persons more than was explained by their natural birthrate. In the decade 1890-1900, the figure reached 473,000 and in 1900-1910 it was 251,000 persons.⁷

In the case of assimilation of the Slovak ethnic group in the Magyar environment of the Low Lands, it is necessary to note that because of the closedness and conservatism of the small farming element, the process of assimilation occurred slowly and involved mainly the urban middle class and the intelligentsia. There should have been a comparable process of the Slovakization of Magyars in the Slovak environment of other regions, but the Magyar statistics do not show this. The claim of the lower birthrate among Slovaks outside their original ethnic environment is refuted by the example of Croatia and Slavonia, where the number of Slovaks grew in the decade 1900-1910. The process of industrialization of the country is also connected with this question. According to the official statistics, the Magyar element was strengthened not only in Budapest, but also in the towns of Slovakia. This claim applies only to the Magyar environment. The sudden growth in the number of Magyars in the Slovak towns at the end of 19th century was not natural. The Slovaks did not leave the towns and Magyars did not replace them. There was also a continual flow into the towns from the Slovak surroundings. Magyarization in the Slovak towns had other causes. Magyar dominance was achieved with the help of the Jews, who moved to the towns and declared Magyar or German nationality, so that the Slovaks were placed in a minority. The statement „about the population strength of the Magyar race and culture” has no real basis. The Magyar government elite, county authorities and

⁵ Viedenská arbitráž (The Vienna Arbitration), 2. november 1938. Dokumenty I. (20. september 1938-2. november 1938). Compiled by Ladislav Deák. Martin 2002, p. 148, no. doc. 98.

⁶ Slovensko. Dejiny (Slovakia. A History). Compiled by Ján Tibenský. Bratislava 1978, p. 441.

⁷ AMZV ČR, VI. section, box 64, fasc. 20, no. doc. 88. On the unreliability of the Magyar nationality statistics from 1910 see p. 7.

official regulations deliberately limited and suppressed linguistic, educational and national consciousness growth among the non-Magyar nations and nationalities, so that their backwardness could be used in favour of the assimilation policy, which they would not interpret as the loss of their national identity, but as the cultural and humane mission of the ruling Magyar nation.

As a result of the fact that the Magyar argumentation does not give an explanation of the rapid and unnatural decline of the Slovak ethnic group, we must devote greater attention to the official Hungarian statistics, subject them to analysis, especially from the point of view of their reliability, and concentrate on the conditions, social situation and the factors, which determined them, so that we can answer the basic question of whether they reflected the real state of the ethnic structure of the country at the time of their origin. As we already said, the official interpretation of mother tongue as the main criterion for determining ethnic origin, was imprecise and gave the census commissioners the possibility of interpretations, which enabled the production of distorted and untrue data about the size of the non-Magyar nationalities in the Kingdom of Hungary. In 1912, O. Jászi wrote that during his research in the field, he heard many complaints about census commissioners, who deliberately „improved” the statistics in favour of the Magyar mother tongue.⁸ We encounter many manipulations and distortions of the nationality statistics among the members of non-Magyar nationalities, who were under pressure from government representatives, social and church organizations. This was most successful among employees of the state or county administration and among people dependent on Magyar landlords or businessmen. The local parish priest, teacher, notary or organist often decided the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of a village. Under these pressures, many reported Magyar as their mother tongue, not only as an expression of loyalty to the state, but for simple reasons of survival. We also encounter them in purely Slovak surroundings. In 1910, 306 persons were recorded as Magyars in Čadca, 2997 in Trenčín, 2336 in Žilina, 1735 in Ružomberok and 1440 in Piešťany.⁹ The group of Magyars also included many, who could also speak Slovak. As the pressure to assimilate grew, their number increased. In 1880, they numbered 219,404 persons in the whole of Hungary, in 1890 268,743 and in 1910 already 547,802. According to the last official figures, two and a half million Magyars said that they knew one of the nationality languages, with Slovak in second place after German.¹⁰

⁸ JÁSZI, OSZKÁR: A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzeti kérdés. Budapest 1912, p. 359.

⁹ NA SR, Slovenská liga. Škatuľa 76, fasc. Slováci v Maďarsku. Popis ľudu 1910 a 1930 (The Slovaks in Hungary. The 1910 and 1930 Censuses).

¹⁰ NA SR, Osobná pozostalosť F. Houdeka (Personal papers of F. Houdek). Škatuľa 34, č. dok. 221/1b fasc. Poznámky k maďarskej úradnej štatistike o národnostiach (Comments on the Magyar official nationality statistics).

Bilingual people of non-Magyar nationality were also assigned to the category of Magyars. Even if people had only a little knowledge of the Magyar language and used it only occasionally, it was enough to get them recorded as Magyars. This happened especially on the Slovak-Magyar ethnic boundary. The grotesque conclusions of the Hungarian nationality statistics are illustrated well by the following examples: The number of Magyars, who also knew the Slovak language increased during the two decades from 1890 to 1910 in the eleven counties of southern Slovakia. The official statistics recorded 103,445 such persons. Their number increased by 100% in the counties of Bratislava, Nitra, Komárno, Tekov and Zemplín, while in Košice they tripled from 4,367 to 13,891).¹¹ Can we trust nationality statistics showing an enormous growth in the number of Magyars able to speak Slovak during a time of forcible Magyarization, when Slovak people's schools declined to a minimum and Magyar was the only language used in public, the state apparatus, schools and churches? Nobody was forcing ethnic Magyars to learn the languages of the nationalities, and bilingualism on the ethnic boundary was clearly in favour of the Magyars. From where did these Magyars learn Slovak, if this language was not taught at school and they did not need it, because they were understood everywhere in Magyar? In addition, arrogance, pride and membership of the ruling nation prevented them learning the „low and uncultivated” language of the Slovak nation, which the Magyar ruling elite scorned, humiliated and discriminated against in civil life. We will not be far from the truth if we attribute these statistics to the various machinations and deliberate falsification of the nationality data. We also encounter an enormous growth of so-called statistical Magyars at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century in the Slovak environment of the northern counties of Slovakia.¹² It is a paradox that according to the official Hungarian statistics from 1890, the percentage of Slovaks who knew Magyar was smaller than the percentage of Magyars who knew

¹¹ J. Svetoň: Slováci v Maďarsku..., p. 49-50.

¹² Growth in the number of Slovaks and Magyars in the 5 northern counties of Slovakia 1880-1910:

County	1880				1910			
	Slovaks	%	Magyars	%	Slovaks	%	Magyars	%
Liptov	67 554	90.4	1 438	1.9	78 098	89.9	4 365	5.0
Orava	60 270	92.6	351	0.5	58 936	93.3	1 862	2.9
Trenčín	222 786	91.0	2 576	1.0	284 770	91.7	13 204	4.3
Turiec	33 951	73.9	1 063	2.3	38 432	69.0	5 560	10.0
Zvolen	92 621	90.4	2664	2.6	113 294	84.8	16 509	12.4

See ŽUDEĽ, JURAJ: Národnostná štruktúra obyvateľstva Slovenska roku 1880 (Nationality structure of the population of Slovakia in 1880). In: Geografický časopis, 1993/I, year 45, p. 8-9. Ibidem: 1994/4, year 46, p. 414-415.

Slovak, which is illogical, because at the time of growing Magyarization, when Magyar was the only state language, it is not possible that the Magyars who knew Slovak were more numerous than the Slovaks who knew Magyar.¹³

What do the Hungarian statistics for the period 1880-1910 show? On one side, they give tendentious and deliberately distorted statistics on nationality, not excluding even falsified results in favour of the Magyar ethnic group, and on the other they show the zeal of many government and county officials, local Magyarones (pro-Magyar Slovaks) and census commissioners, who regarded simple knowledge of the Magyar language as sufficient reason to record a person as a Magyar. The official report of the state statistical office also points to many mistakes and falsifications of nationality. The 1890 report states that „in some districts, knowledge of the Magyar language was regarded as the criterion for identifying people as Magyars, and people with other mother tongues were recorded as Magyars with excessive optimism.”¹⁴ There were frequent cases in the countryside of not very aware Slovak inhabitants succumbing to the deceptive agitation of local figures. Allegiance to the Hungarian state was deliberately identified with membership of the Magyar nation.¹⁵ There were cases of whole Slovak villages being recorded as Magyar under the influence of local Magyar or pro-Magyar figures such as landlords, as examples from the counties of Šariš, Spiš, Abov and Gemer show. Apart from this, it is possible to observe that the statistics show sudden unexpected changes in the ethnic composition of villages without any clear reason. We encounter them especially on the Slovak-Magyar ethnic boundary.¹⁶ Such

¹³ AMZV ČR VI. sekce, Škatuľa 64, fasc. 20, č. dok. 88. On the unreliability of the Magyar nationality statistics from 1910 see p. 7.

¹⁴ NA SR, Slovenská liga. Škatuľa 76, fasc. Poznámky k demografii Slovákov v Maďarsku (Comments on the demography of the Slovaks in Hungary).

¹⁵ It happened that in the Slovak villages of Šivetice, Jelšavská Teplica and Prihradzany in Gemer, only 4 from the population of 944 were recorded as Slovaks because of the influence of the local parish priest. In the 1890 census, with a different parish priest, 772 inhabitants were recorded as Slovaks. See J. Svetoň, *op.cit.* p. 82 and p. 142.

¹⁶ We will give specific examples of how the nationality statistics were manipulated:

County	Community	1880		1910	
		Slovaks	Magyars	Slovaks	Magyars
Hont	Batorová	118	192	19	312
Novohrad	Častva	177	229	1	627
Gemer	Tomášovce	604	219	65	996
Abov	Seňa	404	875	104	1400
	Šaca	415	61	124	427
	Haniska	666	251	355	711
Zemplín	Hraň	551	445	116	1130
Komárno	Nová Ďala	806	125	261	881

changes can be explained only by artificial interventions and deliberate falsification of statistics, with the aim of proving the ethnic dominance of the Magyars in Hungary at any price.

As the Czech ethnographer L. Niederle states, there was deliberate manipulation of the nationality statistics if the situation required it: „There is evidence that the population of many villages was recorded as Slovak in the census, but appeared as Magyar in the official statistics. In this way, about 20,000 Slovaks disappeared from the counties of Novohrad and Pest Pilis, where the Magyars could achieve a decline of the Slovak population only by direct falsification.”¹⁷ The case of the town of Nyíregyháza provides good evidence of how obviously and quickly the Slovaks were disappearing from the official statistics. The town originated from the colonization of the Low Lands by Slovaks, and in 1869 half the population still declared Slovak nationality. When they began to artificially fabricate Magyars in the statistics, the number of Slovaks rapidly declined. In 1880, the official statistics recorded 38.2% of Slovaks, but in 1910 there were only 1.1%, although they had not disappeared in reality. The Slovak language could be heard in the street and priests gave Slovak sermons in the church.¹⁸

Although the official statistics record Magyars in the Slovak environment, in towns, in the countryside and especially on the ethnic boundary, the enormous and unnatural growth does not correspond to the real situation. It was easier to report fictional Magyars than to reshape them into real Magyars. The Magyarization of the non-Magyar population was a more complex process than was presented in the official nationality statistics. Ethnic assimilation occurs slowly. Appropriating the language of another nation still does not mean giving up one's own national identity. Also according to I. Séčeni: „knowing the Magyar language does not make somebody a Magyar.” Assimilation occurred mostly in more educated groups, in the towns, in the Magyar environment, where Magyar education, social pressure and increasing dependence on government controlled institutions had their effects. It had less effect on ordinary Slovaks, who kept their language, although at the price of a lower level of culture and education. The creators of the government and state doctrine of the reshaping of the multinational Kingdom of Hungary into the national state of the Magyars attached great importance to the Magyar ethnic group achieving predominance over the non-Magyar nations and nationalities in the state. Especially from the beginning of the 20th century, pressure grew for reform of the election law, so that the new parliament would have members exclusively of Magyar nationality, and the na-

NA SR, Osobná pozostalost' F. Houdeka. Škatuľa 34, fasc. Rozhraničovacia komisia československo-maďarská (Czechoslovak-Hungarian frontier commission), č. dok. 221/1a.

¹⁷ AMZV ČR, Mírové smlouvy a reparace (Peace treaties and reparations), škatuľa 2, fasc. 8, č. dok. 87.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

tionality problem in Hungary would be permanently „solved.” It turned out that the last nationality statistics from the historic Kingdom of Hungary, produced in 1910, did not fulfill these expectations. Even with deliberate manipulation of the nationality data, fabrication of fictitious Magyars and artificial interventions, they could not change the multi-national character of Hungary, and achieve a Magyar majority in the state. In 1910, 48.1% of the population of Hungary declared Magyar as their mother tongue. However, this did not stop the Magyar ruling elite presenting the nationality statistics as proof of a significant weakening of the nationality struggles and a blow to Pan-Slavism and Daco-Romanism in the country. With the aim of achieving a numerical predominance of the Magyars over the other nationalities, the statistical office deliberately excluded Croatia and Slavonia from the statistical tables for the whole state, as a result of which the percentage of Magyars in Hungary increased to 54.5%.

It is possible to summarize that the huge and continually growing pressure from the Magyar ruling elite after the Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich brought significant results by about 1900, in the form of denationalization of non-Magyars, which was achieved by tendentious interpretation of the term „mother tongue,” various statistical machinations in the course of the census and after it, recording of so-called statistical Magyars outside the territory of the Magyar ethnic group, and forcible expansion of the use of the Magyar language in regions with a mixture of ethnic groups. According to the estimates of O. Jászi, about two million non-Magyars were Magyarized in the period from 1787 to 1880. According to the Slovak demographer J. Svetoň, at least 400,000 of these were Slovaks. The loss meant significant weakening of the Slovak ethnic group in 103 communities.¹⁹ In the later period of the culmination of Magyarization from 1880 to 1910, statistical machinations and various authoritarian practices increased the Magyar ethnic group by a further 2 million. This meant that about 300,000 Slovaks fell victim to cruel Magyarization and the Slovaks lost their majority position in another 160 communities.²⁰

In conclusion, it is necessary to state that the official Hungarian statistics from 1910 do not provide an objective picture of the ethnic composition of the population, and so cannot serve as a basis for determining the Slovak-Magyar ethnic frontier in southern Slovakia. As a result of the fact that they originated in the period of the greatest oppression of nationalities, it is extremely disadvantageous to determine the number of ethnic Magyars in the territory of Slovakia before 1918 according to them. In addition, the main aim was not to ascertain

¹⁹ J. Svetoň, *Slováci v Maďarsku...* p. 7-8.

²⁰ NA SR, Slovenská liga. Škatuľa 71, fasc. Poznámky k vývoju a stavu národnostného zloženia obyvateľstva južného Slovenska (Notes on the development and ethnic composition of the population of southern Slovakia), without number.

the ethnic structure of the Hungarian state, but to monitor the process of assimilation of the non-Magyar population and fulfillment of the fiction of the „united Magyar nation.” At the time of its origin, critical voices were already heard from the side of the non-Magyar nations and nationalities, from politicians, ethnographers, writers and foreign experts on Hungary. There were even reservations from some Magyar historians, scientists and even politicians. The strongest reservations from the Slovak side were expressed in 1938, during the preparations for the Vienna Arbitration. Their seriousness is shown by the words of the Slovak ethnographer A. Granatier, who wrote the following in 1938 about the reliability of the Hungarian nationality statistics from 1910: „The Slovaks would deny their sad past in Hungary, if they declared that their painful calvary under Magyar rule was actually well-being and if they recognize the Magyar statistics from 1910 as the basis for determining the future frontiers. A Slovak hand will never sign such a document.”²¹

Recent Magyar historiography admits that the final nationality statistics from 1910 include inaccuracies from the scientific point of view, but does not forget to add that no other data are available. In our view, they can only provide general orientation as a result of their unreliability, bias and deliberate manipulation of nationality data. It is completely impossible to use them in scientific argumentation or reliable research into the period of Dualism or the nationality structure of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of the 20th century. In spite of the fact that since the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Magyar historiography, the political elite and writers for the public, both at home and in international fora, have appealed to these statistics, they cannot be accepted. It is even less justified to draw from the 1910 nationality statistics political conclusions about the injustices committed against the Magyar nation and claim that the Entente powers after the First World War and the anti-Hitler coalition after the Second World War inflicted a historical error and injustice on the Magyar nation, when they decided the frontiers between the Magyar state and its neighbours.

²¹ NA SR Slovenská lig. Škatuľa 71, fasc. Národnostné pomery na východnom Slovensku (The nationality situation in eastern Slovakia).

Language is not only an Instrument of Communication

Casting of Doubt on Slovak – Causes and Consequences

ANTON HRNKO

Language policy has played, still plays and will continue to play a very important role in our region. It is necessary to say that even at the time of the entry of the Slovaks into European history, the problem of language formed a key and vital question of state sovereignty and independence. Always, when the question of language appeared as a political question in our history, it was, above all, about the ontological essence of the Slovak nation, not about language as such. Prince Rastislav did not send his ambassadors to Rome and later to Constantinople primarily so that they could help to Christianize the Slovak people. In his time, that was no longer the main problem. The population of Great Moravia was most probably baptized – according to the latest archaeological finds at Bojná¹ – at least one, if not two generations before Rastislav's accession to the throne. The summoning of a mission from the Byzantine Empire was mainly intended to secure separation from the Bavarian hierarchy, and in this way to strengthen the sovereignty of the state. Therefore, the introduction of Old Slavonic to the liturgy was not primarily a matter of religious teaching. The Bavarian and Aquilean missionaries must have also explained the basics of the religion to the people in their own language. Latin was used only in the liturgy and those who experienced the pre-Vatican II liturgy know that Latin was not a problem for us. The introduction of Old Slavonic to the liturgy had the aim of strengthening the sovereignty of Great Moravia by detaching it from the legal authority of the Bavarian episcopate and founding a separate Church province. This was successfully achieved by the establishment of a Church province of Moravia-Pannonia. Svätopluk I's later loss of interest in the Old Slavonic liturgy can also be understood in this context. After the establishment of a separate Church province, the direct influence of the Bavarian episcopate was eliminated and the language question no longer had such an important role, but caused problems for Svätopluk in connection with his policy of expansion to the west.

It is interesting that language again appeared as a political issue at the time of the establishment of the Hungarian state. The famous statement of St. Stephen to his son (*Regnum unius linguae et moris imbecile et fragile est – A kingdom with only one language and custom is weak and fragile*) is often quot-

¹ PIETA, K. et al.: Bojná, hospodárske a politické centrum Nitrianskeho kniežatstva (Bojná, the economic and political centre of the Principality of Nitra). Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Ponitrianske múzeum 2006.

ed, but, at least in the literature accessible to me, I have not found its geopolitical explanation. Why did St. Stephen actually feel the need to leave such a message? I am convinced that it was because he was aware of the reality of the given period. This reality was the fact that in the Early Middle Ages only a country with clearly defined natural frontiers could survive for the long-term. The early Magyars, who lived only in the lowland plains of Hungary, would sooner or later succumb to pressure from the marginal territories of the Carpathian Basin inhabited by non-Magyar groups. St. Stephen solved this geopolitical question by working from the beginning, not to build a Magyar national state, as was usual in that period in the rest of Europe, but a multi-national state. This was the basic idea on which his state was built, Latin was used as its common language,² and this situation continued until the 18th century, even in a situation when the ethnic Magyar territory was separated from the state by Ottoman occupation. Violation of these principles by those, who most loudly proclaimed and still proclaim the heritage of St. Stephen, and the effort to build a „regnum unius linguae et moris” from the end of the 18th century by means of Magyarization, can be regarded as the main cause of the break up of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1918.

Magyarization in relation to the Slovaks had many forms – from humiliation of members of the nation (Tót nem ember „a Slovak is not a human being”), through obstructing the unification tendencies associated with use of a standard written language, to deliberate splitting of the national community on the basis of dialects. The aim of my paper is to point to these methods, which did not entirely end with the break up of the Kingdom of Hungary. They were continued under the First Republic, after the Second World War and surprisingly even today. In my view, they are appearing again in various veiled forms. We should not underestimate them, because, for example, by under-estimating efforts to achieve linguistic disintegration on the basis of dialect, we lost territories in northern Orava and Spiš. My paper will certainly not give a complete account of the problems it outlines, but I want to point out that the protection of language is an important political task for the state and cannot be neglected. I will devote attention in my paper to the given question in the period, when the linguistic unification was culminating, but I realize that this problem was „not born” in the given period.

When the modern Slovak standardized language was established in the 1840s and national integration of the Slovaks on its basis made rapid progress, the first attempts appeared to stop this process by struggle against Štúr’s reform. The attacks on Štúr’s Slovak from the old conservatives led by Ján Kollár are well known. They feared that the introduction of a new written language for the

² A similar linguistic situation exists today in India. The government has to use English as the state language to hold the country together. Attempts to introduce Hindi as the state language after independence failed because of opposition from the other language groups.

Slovaks would divide the forces of Slavdom in the struggle against the Germans and Magyars. It is less well-known that, as Ján Marták pointed out, the attempts to defend „Biblical” Czech as the written language of the Slovaks did not develop only from fears about splitting the forces of Slavdom. The opponents of Štúr’s Slovak and supporters of continued use of „Biblical” Czech also included supporters of Magyarization (Launer and Lanštiak), who realized the great strength of the new standard language in the national integration process of the Slovaks and in their defence against Magyarization.³ However, they were not able to significantly influence the penetration of Štúr’s Slovak and its application as the written language of the Slovaks. In the course of the 1860s, standard written Slovak became an indisputable fact, and so played an important part in uniting the nation. By means of *Matica Slovenská*, the Slovak grammar schools and Slovak press, it gained a significant role and was applied in all spheres of cultural, scientific and political life. The new intensification of Magyarization after the Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich of 1867 did not avoid the standard written language of the Slovaks. After the closure of *Matica Slovenská* and the Slovak grammar schools, there was also an attack on the national integration function of standard written Slovak. The Magyar ruling circles used a tradition of using eastern Slovak dialect as well as the standard form of Slovak in eastern Slovakia. In the 1870s, they published textbooks for people’s schools of this region in the Šariš-Zemplín dialect.⁴ The aim of this measure was clear: to hinder the integration process of the Slovak nation and accelerate the Magyarization of eastern Slovakia by restricting the use of standard written Slovak. These efforts were not directed towards disintegration of the Slovaks, but towards assisting the implementation of Magyarization.

A new situation came at the end of the 19th century, when the process of national integration was essentially complete, and when the Slovak politicians emerged from passivity, they achieved their first successes in the struggle with Magyarization. In this period, the Magyar ruling circles made direct attempts to misuse dialect differences in Slovak to achieve the national disintegration of the Slovaks into dialect areas. The most extensive of these attempts was to present the population of the eastern Slovak dialect area as an independent national unit, as the so-called Slovjaks. However, it is possible to say that activity in northern Slovakia had no less far-reaching consequences. In this regions, Galician Poles began to be active among the Goral population of northern areas of the counties of Trenčín, Orava and Spiš, in support of „renewal” of the alleged Polish identity of these people. The first attempt to use the dialect differences in the territory of

³ See MARTÁK, J.: Útok na spisovnú slovenčinu roku 1847/1848 a jeho cieľ (The attack on standard written Slovak in 1847-1848 and its aim). Martin: Matica slovenská 1938.

⁴ See: TAJTÁK, L.: K otázke vydávania učebníc vo východoslovenskom nárečí (On the question of the publication of textbooks in the eastern Slovak dialect). In: *Nové obzory* 6/1964, p. 43-57.

Slovakia to achieve the disintegration of the Slovak nation was the agitation of certain circles from Galicia, beginning in 1904 in northern Orava, under the leadership of the Krakow advocate F. Wojciechowski and J. J. Teisere. Especially J. Wisniewski continued this work in the northern areas of Spiš. It acquired an organized form only under the leadership of the district doctor of medicine from Nowy Targ J. Bednarski and the writer F. Gwizdź, whose activities included publication of the magazine *Gazeta Podhalanska* from 1913. It promoted the Polishness of the Slovak Gorals.⁵ Without more extensive research in the Hungarian archives, it is impossible to ascertain to what degree the Magyar ruling circles stood behind this action with the aim of using it to break up the national unity of the Slovaks and so create favourable conditions for Magyarization. However, from the point of view of the old principle of Roman law „who does it favour,” it is possible to suppose that it at least suited the Magyars, even if they did not organize it. The local Magyar and Magyarone figures in northern Orava and Spiš, directly supported pro-Polish activity as a means of weakening the ethnic and national consciousness of the local people, so that they could be Magyarized more quickly.⁶ The agreement in time of the Polish action in northern Orava and Spiš with the similar Magyar actions in the rest of Slovakia, testify at least to the intermeshing of the agitation of the Galician Poles with the Magyarization plans in Hungary. It is necessary to say that without the break up of the Kingdom of Hungary, the action of the above mentioned Galicians could not bring the desired results for the Poles. The Gorals rejected it at that time and so it had no meaning. There was no way of predicting that the Kingdom of Hungary would break up in 1918 under the influence of national and democratic revolutions. After 1918, when 25 communities from northern Orava and Spiš were attached to Poland, and when the ruling circles in landowner dominated Poland demanded further areas of Slovakia, this question became a serious obstacle to Polish-Czecho-Slovak relations. It had further consequences at the time of Munich in 1938 and later.

The attempts of Budapest to stop the spread of national consciousness and national integration in eastern Slovakia by limiting the use of standard written Slovak, appeared, as I already said, in the 1870s in connection with the publication of textbooks for people's schools in the eastern Slovak dialect. However, it turned out that overcoming of backwardness in this region was also expressed in the growth of national consciousness among the eastern Slovak people. Slovak emigrants to the USA played an important part in spreading national consciousness in eastern Slovakia. They were nationally awakened by the situation in

⁵ One of the organizers of the whole movement, F. Machay also admitted this inadequacy. See MACHAY, F.: *Moja droga do Polski* (My route to Poland). Krakow 1938, p. 89-102.

⁶ BIELOVODSKÝ (A. Miškovič): *Severná hranica Slovenska* (The northern frontier of Slovakia). Bratislava 1947, p. 61-62.

the USA, and if they returned home, they influenced their surroundings.⁷ The flourishing of national-political life in Spiš, Zemplín and Šariš surprised the Magyar ruling elite and stimulated a reaction from them. In this case, it could not be only a matter of holding back the development of national consciousness and national integration, because this had proved to be ineffective and had not brought results. Instead they attempted to break up the national unity of the Slovaks on the basis of the eastern Slovak dialects. Some renegade members of the intelligentsia from eastern Slovakia were employed to implement these plans of the Magyar ruling circles. Under the leadership of the landowner Z. Dešöfi, the magazine *Naša zastava* began to be published at Prešov in the Šariš dialect from 27 October 1907.⁸ In our literature and in general knowledge, this action is associated with the activity of the county archivist in Prešov V. Dvorčák. However, its origin was associated with various people, including the above-mentioned landowner Dešöfi and clergy from various confessions, such as G. Žebracký, L. Liptai and J. Repák.⁹ The aim of the „Zastavists” was substantial. Using financial resources from the Hungarian government, they wanted to instil in the people of eastern Slovakia the idea that they had nothing in common with the Slovaks in the rest of Slovakia, but that they formed a separate group independent of the other Slovaks. The final result was intended to be the estrangement of the eastern Slovaks from the rest of the Slovak nation, which would facilitate the penetration of Magyarization.¹⁰ Struggle against standard written Slovak played an important role here. Publication in the standard written language was limited and dialect with variable usage was applied, so that the language was inappropriate for communication in higher intellectual spheres. Competition from the nationally conscious press, written in standard written Slovak, was prevented by the county authorities, which used terror to prevent its distribution in eastern Slovakia.¹¹ The „philanthropy” of the spreaders of *Naša zastava* is shown not only by the clearly reactionary program of the whole movement, but also by the fact that it was backed by the greatest enemies of the Slovak national movement and representatives of Magyarization in the region.¹²

During the First World War, the organizers of the movement around *Naša zastava* progressed from propagation of hidden separatism in form of attacks on standard written Slovak, propagation of the Šariš dialect and absolutization of the

⁷ MIŠKOVIČ, A.: *Maďarské úmysly so Slovákmi* (Magyars plans for the Slovaks). Bratislava 1944, p. 8.

⁸ TAJTÁK, L.: *Naša zastava – nástroj politiky maďarských vládnych tried* (Our flag – an instrument of the policy of the Magyar ruling classes). In *Nové obzory* 8/1966, p. 82-84.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ TAJTÁK, L.: *K niektorým otázkam koncepcie dejín východného Slovenska obdobia uhorského kapitalizmu* (On some questions of the conception of the history of eastern Slovakia in the period of Hungarian capitalism). In: *Historica Carpatica* 7/1976, p. 276.

¹¹ L. Tajták, *Naša zastava*, p. 101.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 102.

ethnographic differences, to open separatism. In 1916, certainly also under the influence of the first successes of the Czecho-Slovak struggle abroad, V. Dvorčák published a pamphlet in which he openly propagated the national distinctness of the so-called Slovaks.¹³ In this period, Budapest already adopted measures, of which the full meaning was shown in 1918 and 1938. Their meaning was to geopolitically mutilate the territory of Slovakia so much that the right of the Slovaks to self-determination would become entirely illusory. This was precisely the aim of the action of Dvorčák and his supporters, and the organization of eastern Slovak „separatism” by the Magyar ruling elite. The creation of the so-called Eastern Slovak National Council headed by V. Dvorčák in November 1918 essentially served this aim. When it was proved that the so-called Eastern Slovak National Council with its program of breaking up the Slovak ethnic unit, could not succeed, the initiators of Eastern Slovak „separatism” changed their tactics. The Budapest government wanted to keep the whole of the territory of Slovakia within its state, not only part of it. Therefore, on 11 December 1918 they attempted to create the so-called Slovak People’s Republic in opposition to the establishment of the Czecho-Slovak Republic in the territory of Slovakia.¹⁴ The pro-Magyar groups around Naša zastava even found a relationship to standard written Slovak. This fact also shows the degree of sincerity of their „Slovak” identity, its real purpose and for whom they were working. However, in the given power-political situation, they could no longer thwart the right of the Slovak nation to self-determination, and in the course of the first months of 1919 the whole territory of Slovakia came under the sovereignty of the Czecho-Slovak state. However, little is written about the fact that the so-called Slovak Soviet Republic, declared in Prešov with the assistance of the Magyar Red Army, drew its personnel especially from the activists of Eastern Slovak „separatism,” apart from Czech A. Janoušek, and it published its documents in Šariš dialect.¹⁵

It might appear that after the origin of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, when the indivisibility and unity of the Slovak nation was very clearly proved in all the dialect areas of Slovakia, in bourgeois-democratic conditions, the attempts to break up the unity of the Slovaks on the basis of dialect differences within Slovak, should have ended, but this did not happen. The Magyar ruling circles outwardly abandoned these practices, because their irredentist and revisionist policy was not aiming at partial, but at complete revision, that is at return to the pre-war frontiers of the Kingdom of Hungary. The leading representative of Eastern Slo-

¹³ A. Miškovič, *Maďarské úmysly*, p. 11-12.

¹⁴ TAJTAK, L.: Úsilie maďarských vládnucích tried o udržanie Slovenska v rámci Maďarska roku 1918 (The effort of the Magyar ruling classes to keep Slovakia within the framework of Hungary in 1918). In: *Historický časopis*, 4/1966, p. 577-580.

¹⁵ GREGUŠ, P.: Slováci – výtvor maďarónskej propagandy (The Slovaks – a creation of pro-Magyar propaganda). In: *Slovo*, no. 30/2001.

vak „separatism” V. Dvorčák, in the service of Horthy’s Hungarian government, had to temporarily give up his original dream of a „Slovjak nation” and join F. Jehlička in forming the so-called Slovak Council at Geneva in 1933. This was supposed to represent the „wish” of the Slovaks to reunite with Hungary.¹⁶ Since the aims of the Magyar ruling classes concerning the question of the territories of the former Kingdom of Hungary and the nationalities living in them, remained constant in this period, they could not entirely abandon the „Slovjak question.”

In the 1930s, the dialect differences in Slovakia again received attention from some groups in the ruling classes of land-owner dominated Poland. Their plans were basically a matter of „scientifically” proving the Polishness of some parts of Slovakia. It was not only a matter of the traditional untrue claim that the Slovak Gorals are actually Poles without national consciousness, and so extensive territories in Orava, Spiš and the Čadca district must be added to Poland. The circle of Krakow „Slovakophils” around Prof. W. Semkowicz, included experts such as senior lecturer Zd. Stieber, who „scientifically” proved in 1935 that the eastern Slovak dialects are of Polish origin and the inhabitants of eastern Slovakia are Poles.¹⁷ It is obvious that the aims of these Polish circles were not nation building. This „proof” was intended to serve the blind imperialist policy of claiming the whole of Eastern Slovakia and its wealth of raw materials. They had even worked out a plan to create a Polish strategic triangle, which would be based on the natural resources of Eastern Slovakia up to Košice.¹⁸ It is surprising that a whole wing of Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party headed by K. Sidor, did not notice the aims of these „friends” of Slovakia around W. Semkowicz. In spite of an adequate number of warning signals,¹⁹ they considered it useful to cooperate with the Poles in their anti-centralist and autonomist policies. The aim of these circles was to get the Slovak political elite into such a position that they could, as Semkowicz himself stated: „openly pose to the Slovaks the question of the above-mentioned changes, and gain recognition of our truth on a friendly platform.”²⁰ This meant forcing acceptance of the Polish territorial claims in Slovakia. The Poles wanted to actively bring about such a situation with the support of Hitler’s anti-Czecho-Slovak plans. However, the Poles did not find Slovak understanding for their claims to Slovak territory, and so Beck’s Poland had to obtain its insignificant territorial gains by

¹⁶ TILKOVŠZKY, L.: Južné Slovensko v rokoch 1938-1945 (Southern Slovakia in the period 1938-1945). Bratislava, Veda 1972, p. 80.

¹⁷ Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archive) (SNA), fond Krajinský úrad (Regional Office Collection), šk. 263, č. 20777, Správa čl. konzula z Krakova z 18. 3. 1935 (Report from the Czechoslovak consul in Krakow from 18 March 1935).

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Archív FMZV, pol. sekcia III, šk. 1278, dok. 26785, Správa čl. veľvyslanca z Varšavy z 24. 2. 1936 (Report of the Czechoslovak ambassador in Warsaw from 24 Feb 1936).

²⁰ Archiw Akt Nowych, Warsaw MSZ 10412, P III, Report on a session of the committee on the issue of Orava, Spiš and Čadca from 15 Dec 1937.

force. After less than a year the results of this policy were clearly revealed in the fates of both nations and especially that of the Poles.

Munich opened the way to the opening of the so-called Slovjak question. A supplement to the Munich agreement, which also demanded solution of the territorial disputes between Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary, again enabled the Magyar ruling circles to attempt such a mutilation of Slovak territory, that any possibility of independent life for Slovakia would be geopolitically liquidated, and this would automatically lead to Slovakia's attachment to „St. Stephen's state.” This was also the main aim of the far-reaching demands for territorial concessions, including Bratislava, Nitra and Košice, which the Magyar government submitted at Komárno,²¹ and Eastern Slovak „separatism” was also revived with the same aim. The justification of the partition of Slovakia into four parts by the referendum foreseen and demanded by the Horthy regime after the removal of the territory inhabited by the Magyar minority, was based on the claim that „the Slovaks living in the counties of Užhorod and Zemplín with the inhabitants of Spiš and Šariš are linguistically and ethnically different from the Western and Central Slovaks,” and one of their „ethnic” peculiarities was supposed to be that they wanted „unreservedly to belong to Hungary.”²²

In spite of the fact that it harshly violated the right to self-determination by awarding to Hungary extensive territories in southern Slovakia, the Vienna Arbitration of 2 November 1938 did not satisfy the revisionist appetite of the ruling circles of Horthy's Hungary, which were very surprised by the opposition of the Slovak people to the renewal of their rule in Slovakia. However, they failed to mutilate Slovakia as much as they had wished. A new arbiter had appeared in Central Europe in the form of Nazi Germany, whose decision had to be accepted. The Nazis had their own plans for Slovakia, which were not compatible with the idea of „Greater Hungary.” However, in case things changed or a different situation arose and with the intention of weakening the national unity of the Slovaks in the occupied territories, Budapest again revived Eastern Slovak „separatism.”²³ Naša zastava reappeared and was smuggled into Eastern Slovakia in large numbers.²⁴ Apart from this, especially the priest Siladi was very active on the ground, making a great effort to prove the separate identity of the „Slovjak nation,” and get

²¹ Országos Levéltár, Miniszteri elnökség. Flachbart's memorandum from the end of 1938.

²² SNA, fond MZV, šk. 112, 11334/39. Správa slovenského vyslanca v Budapešti (Report from the Slovak ambassador in Budapest).

²³ The reaction of the Slovak government to the revival of „Eastern Slovak separatism” is interesting also from the present-day point of view. It testifies to the permanent sensitivity of the Slovaks to stimuli in the field of language. At a session on 29 August 1939, the government passed a resolution banning state employees from using dialect in business or private communication. SNR, MV, šk. 7, 15934/39. Obežník Ministerstva vnútra (Circular of the Ministry of the Interior) from 11 Sept 1939.

²⁴ DEÁK, L.: Autonómia Slovenska v plánoch horthyovského Maďarska v roku 1938 (The autonomy of Slovakia in the plans of Horthy's Hungary in 1938). In: Historický časopis 3/1988, p. 409.

Eastern Slovak dialect introduced into the schools.²⁵ For the purpose of confirming the separateness of the Slovjaks, the activists of the movement held a meeting in Košice in September 1939. They invited the professor of Slavonic studies J. Melich, who was expected to provide scientific proof of the existence of the Slovjaks. However, to the great disappointment of the participants, he explained to them that the Eastern Slovak dialect is an integral part of the Slovak language, and its division from the Slovak language was scientific nonsense.²⁶

However, the organizers of the whole movement forgot that the 1940s was no longer the pre-revolutionary period, when the Magyar ruling circles in the old Kingdom of Hungary had almost unlimited power over the nationalities. They could establish a small organizational base of egoistic, pro-Magyar and careerist elements, in the form of *Naša gazdovská strana* (Our Farmers' Party),²⁷ and introduce the Šariš dialect as the language of worship in some churches, but they could not succeed in pushing standard written Slovak out of the public and cultural life of the people of Eastern Slovakia, or even out of the schools in the occupied territories. The local population was strongly opposed to this,²⁸ and they were not alone and defenceless in their struggle. The tragedy of the Magyar political elite as a whole was that it could not detach itself from the artificial constructions in the nationality policy they had created. They clung to it at a time, when the whole fascist bloc, to which the Horthy regime belonged, was collapsing before the advance of the anti-fascist forces. No force was found in its ranks, which could find a way to join the democratic anti-fascist forces from other Central European nations in their struggle, and so they had to drink the bitterness of military defeat to the bottom.

With the fall of the Horthy regime in Hungary, the attempts to divide the Slovak nation on the basis of dialects came to a definitive end. The role of the society and magazine *Svojina* (Our Own), which appeared in the period 1946-1950, in this question is not entirely clear. It showed elements of Eastern Slovak separatism and was allegedly founded by supporters of Beneš's Czechoslovakism with similar aims to those of *Naša zastava*. This problem has still not been researched, although it deserves to be. I will not devote further attention to it here.

From the 1860s, standard written Slovak was an essential factor, which penetrated into all social spheres, as the national written language. It was applied not only in literature, but also in science and other social spheres, where

²⁵ L. Tilkovszky, op. cit., p. 132.

²⁶ SNA, fond MZV, šk. 112; *Správa slovenského vyslanca v Budapešti* (Report from the Slovak ambassador in Budapest). Considering the recent unanimous agreement with criticism of the Slovak Language Act from the circles of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in comparison with the position of Prof. Melich in entirely different circumstances, it is necessary to consider where we have reached in building democracy.

²⁷ FABIAN, J.: *Svätoštefanské tiene* (St. Stephen's Shadows). Bratislava 1966, p. 120.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

standard written language is used. The attempts of Budapest described above, already could not stop its development. However, the change in the constitutional position of Slovakia brought a new phenomenon into the development of the Slovak language: that of *ethnic Czechoslovakism*. Ideological and partially also power political means were again used to limit the use of the Slovak language or to cast doubt on its ability to fulfill all the functions of a standard written language. On the ideological level, especially M. Hodža opposed Slovak in his work *Československý rozkol* (The Czechoslovak Split), as did A. Pražák in a whole series of articles and studies. A whole series of ideologically influenced linguists and theorizing politicians naturally joined in.

The basic concept of the people casting doubt on the Slovak written language was to ignore the real linguistic development of Slovak and claim that Slovak was not an independent Slavonic language, but only a dialect of Czech. The origin of Slovak was denounced as linguistic separatism, even as Hungarianism.²⁹ The constitutional act no.122 from 1920 declared that the official language was „Czechoslovak” with two variants – Czech and Slovak – and § 4 enacted that official business in Slovakia would be done in the Slovak language, but this situation was considered only temporary. Various surveys³⁰ tried to persuade the Slovaks that clinging to Slovak was nonsense, that it was necessary to abandon it and that Slovaks should go to Prague and accept Czech, just as Scots went to London. Allegedly this was the only way to reach the higher aims of civilization.³¹ Others, for example, A. Pražák, did not deny the importance of Slovak as a language of fine literature, but they strove to exclude it from the field of science, where Czech had to dominate.³² The *Učená spoločnosť Šafaříkova* (Šafařík Learned Society), which was active at Comenius University in Bratislava, put this theory into practice.

However, all these attempts failed. The attempt of Professor V. Vážný to forcibly bring the Slovak language closer to Czech by means of Czechizing the rules of Slovak grammar and the vocabulary of the Slovak language was also condemned to fail. It can be said that the Matica revolution of 1932 struck a strong, perhaps fatal blow against these tendencies.³³ Paradoxically, it was actually the

²⁹ HODŽA, M.: *Československý rozkol* (The Czechoslovak Split); most recently published in the framework of the publication: *Polemika o československom rozkole*. Bratislava: Matica slovenská 2009.

³⁰ *Slovenská otázka. Anketa Kostnických jisker* (The Slovak Question, a survey by Kostnické jiskry). Prague: Nákladem Kostnických jisker 1926.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² PRAŽÁK, A.: *Češi a Slováci. Literárne dejepisné poznámky k československému poměru* (The Czechs and Slovaks. Literary historical comments on Czechoslovak relations). Prague: Státní nakladatelství 1929.

³³ For more details see e. g. WINKLER, T. – ELIÁŠ, M. et al.: *Matica slovenská. Dejiny a prítomnosť* (The Matica slovenská cultural organization. History and present state). Bratislava 2003, p. 135-138.

Slovak pupils of the Czech professors H. Bartek,³⁴ L. Novák³⁵ and others, who scientifically proved the unsustainability of the conception of a Czechoslovak language and confirmed the independence of the Slovak language. This reality was also later confirmed by the publication of the Rules of Slovak Orthography (*Pravidlá slovenského pravopisu*) in 1940, and especially in 1953.

Whatever view we take of the period 1948-1989 from the political point of view, it was extraordinarily positive from the point of view of the development of standard written Slovak. It brought the culmination of projects such as the Dictionary of the Slovak language,³⁶ and other dictionaries, unfortunately still not including an etymological dictionary, guides to grammar and speech, considerations of theory and scientific proof of the early Slavonic origin of the Slovak language.³⁷ The standard written language was systematically cultivated and language correctors in offices and institutions using the standard language cared for its purity. It was unthinkable that a person, who had not comprehensively mastered the standard written language, could become an editor for Slovak radio or television. Although we did not have a language act, a system of control of editors was worked out in these media. Every violation of the norms was traced and evaluated. Naturally in the end there were penalties, especially of a financial nature. For the authorities of the time, it was unthinkable that a weaver in a factory should be penalized for poor quality work, but not editors and reporters.

The road to the independence of the Slovak Republic after 1989 also included struggle to give the Slovak language an appropriate, legally sanctioned position in Slovak society. Although this was more complex than could have been expected, it has finally been achieved after almost twenty years with the passing of an act corresponding to modern trends and the needs of society, but only in one area – the use of the Slovak standard written language as a universal means of communication in Slovakia. However, hardly anything has been done for the internal protection of the Slovak standard written language and against its exclusion from spheres not directly connected with state and public administration. In spite of the vociferous arguments of some representatives of Slovak linguistics³⁸ on the best position for the Slovak language, I must state that not everything is rosy with the position of the Slovak language in our society. In

³⁴ For example in the work: *Príspevok k dejinám slovenčiny* (A contribution to the history of Slovak). Trnava 1936.

³⁵ *Jazykovedné glosy k československej otázke* (Linguistic comments on the Czechoslovak question). Martin 1935, can be regarded as his most important in this field.

³⁶ *Slovník slovenského jazyka*. Bratislava 1959-1968.

³⁷ For example PAULINY, E.: *Dejiny spisovnej slovenčiny od začiatku po súčasnosť* (A history of standard written Slovak from the beginning to the present day). Bratislava 1983.

³⁸ See for example, the interview with S. Ondrejovič, director of the Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the magazine *Týždeň* no. 21, 2009.

the 1920s and 1930s, some people argued that Slovak should not be used in scientific works. People realize that financial questions also play a role here, and publishers will offer what people want to buy, but I think that the state should also regulate this sphere.

Especially the word stock has been seriously affected, and not only by Czech, but also by English. We do not even take English words directly from English, but through Czech, which means that we are further adapting the phonetics of the Slovak language to those of our brother nation. I sometimes get the impression that somebody has an interest in the greatest variability in the norms and semantics of Slovak words to reduce the clarity of their meaning.

It is also necessary to point to the revival of some tendencies, which endeavour to show that the Slovaks speaking Goral dialects are really Poles.³⁹ In connection with the activities of Polish priests and members of religious orders in these regions, we must again ask whether we underestimate some things. Let us mention only the unsuccessful supplementary educational materials for schools, which arose from cooperation between Slovak and Polish authors, and in which the Poles came out with explicitly revisionist views.⁴⁰ Their Slovak version did not get into Slovak schools, but the Polish version is fulfilling its „mission.” In this context, it is necessary to welcome the universality of the Language Act, which will remove the abnormal situation in some northern Slovak communities, where, for purely commercial reasons, Polish language signs have appeared like mushrooms after rain, so that the malevolent observer might regard them as an expression of the Polishness of this region.

In conclusion, I must state that the linguistic situation in the territory of Slovakia requires the active protection of the Slovak language as the state language of the Slovak Republic. Therefore, I welcome the passing of the Language Act, which, compared to the 1995 version, again introduces sanctions for violations of the act. We have seen that the Language Act was not observed, and in a very ostentatious way. At the same time, it is not only a matter of some backward mayors of villages mainly populated by ethnic minorities, who refuse, and I hope not for very long, to make accessible information about their activities in the state language, for those who are not members of the Magyar national minority. But let us move on. The authorities of the capital city of Slovakia and representatives of many other Slovak towns very openly refuse to follow the rules of Slovak

³⁹ For more details see e. g. MAJERIKOVÁ, M: *Vojna o Spiš. Spiš v medzivojnovom období v kontexte česko-slovensko-poľských vzťahov* (The war for Spiš. Spiš in the inter-war period in the context of Czecho-Slovak-Polish relations). Krakow 2007, and more popular style works by M. Andráš, J. Ciągwa and others.

⁴⁰ ANDRÁŠ, M.: *Ako možno vy(zne)užívať program PHARE* (How to (mis)use the PHARE program) <http://www.kultura-fb.sk/new/old/stare/andras-12.htm>

grammar, when they do not respect the rule that the names of personalities from our national history have to be written in Slovak orthography.

However, the passing of the Language Act does not solve all questions connected with active protection of the Slovak standard written language. It is also necessary to adopt measures to protect it against degradation and degeneration. It is necessary to make sure that directors of both public-service and commercial mass media will not select their editors and presenters according to their blue eyes or similar criteria, but according to their mastery of the standard written language. I am not against development of the Slovak language, its enrichment with new words and phrases, but this cannot happen at the expense of equally valid Slovak elements, inherited from preceding generations. Therefore, I do not understand claims of the type: The frequency of the word *prasači* (*pig, swine – adjective*) is three times greater than that of the word *prasáci*, so it is necessary to consider, which is correct.⁴¹ They already taught us in our education that science is a system. Statistics is good for knowledge of the real state, but cultivation should lead above all to systematization. I also do not understand the conception of publishing a Dictionary of the Contemporary Slovak Language, rather than a Dictionary of the Slovak Language. Are we supposed to understand that archaisms are not part of the contemporary Slovak language and do not need to be preserved for future generations? The Slovak language has struggled for its place in the Sun throughout history. We cannot comfort ourselves with the idea that this struggle has ended. Linguistic confrontation is still continuing. The pressure of globalization will create conditions for the more predatory, stronger languages, at the expense of the weaker and less agile. Slovak will be resilient in this environment only if it will be an effective and independent instrument. To achieve this, it must be constantly cultivated and enriched, but also defended. Legislation is obviously required as part of this protection, but it is not enough.

⁴¹ S. Ondrejovič in the cited interview.

The Slovak Act on the State Language as Interpreted by the „Slovak” Press

JOZEF DARMO

The title of the article has its justification in this mostly expert discussion. More than politics or diplomacy, the field of communications in Slovakia has changed into a battlefield of irredentist mass media operations. The essential thing is that the mass media arena has changed not into a forum for dialogue, but into an arena for conflict. We are seeing the proliferation of the familiar method of consideration according to the principle that the worse something is for the facts, for the truth and for the reality of life, the greater the possibility to raise a smoke screen with the aim of concealing bad aims from nations and from humanity.

It is not a matter of the Language Act in particular. It is a matter of the fact that it was adopted, and that it was adopted by the Slovak Republic. It is a matter of the attitude of Hungary to the Language Act, and this attitude is historically determined by the familiar orientation of Magyar policy in Central Europe, in the geopolitical relations of Central and Eastern and the Balkans as a space and as an object of geopolitical struggles to achieve dominance in Europe. In spite of undoubted research achievements, our historiography has not sufficiently uncovered the processes, which had the result that the nomadic ancestors of the Magyars, from their penetration into Pannonia until after the Battle on the Lechfeld, became the chosen „state-builders” of the emerging Hungarian state. Our historiography must also explain the true role of the Estates uprising in Hungary, when the Hungarian nobility of Magyar origin conspired with the Turkish Moslem project in struggles with the power-political and spiritual course of Austria and Europe, to achieve the revival of the Turkish presence in Europe. The Turkish asylum for the leaders of these uprisings was not accidental. Have we sufficiently evaluated the impact of these events on Slovakia, Austria and Europe? Our historiography has not given an unambiguous answer to the historical question of why the Magyar language, spoken by scarcely a third of the population of the Kingdom of Hungary, became by the decision of Vienna, the official language of Hungary after the end of the dominance of Latin in European communication. Our historiography must also explain why Vienna „rewarded” the Slovaks for their active participation on its side in the revolutionary years 1848-1849, in the way that it did at the time of the Slovak memorandum demands. It is equally necessary to explain the geopolitical consequences of the Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich and the new attitude of Vienna towards the Slavonic part of the Kingdom of Hungary and the projects of the heir to the throne and his subsequent assassination.

The cause of the First World War was not Sarajevo, but the effort of the colonial powers to use military conflict to achieve a new power-political division of continental Europe. However, the First World War did not fulfill the expectations of the Western strategists. The results of the war placed the leavers of power in the hands of the West, but the break up of Austria-Hungary brought full state-political life to the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The war did not succeed in liquidating or weakening Russia. On the contrary, the Stalinist terror also liquidated the bearers of the control of Russia by the West. With the help of the ideology of communism, class war and some aspects of the social state, Russia became an opponent or opposite pole to liberal capitalism. Therefore, the project of the Second World War was born. It was intended to deal with the Slavonic Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe and Russia. The results of this war with the constants of Munich and the Vienna Arbitration, with the whole context of Magyar activities in this project, are well known. Even the Second World War did not achieve the strategic aims of the West. On the contrary, it deepened the bipolarity of the world. The Cold War came with its denouement after 1989. However, history has posed serious questions. After the military „solution” of the Balkans with the Kosovo problem, we come to another level of perception of the policy of Hungary in Central Europe and towards its Slav neighbours in particular.

It is especially necessary to notice the latent character of Hungary's relations with Slovakia, the activation of Hungary with the task of destabilizing the geopolitically strategic space of Slovakia. It is clear that the break up and crippling of Serbia was not the only aim. A „new solution” also had to be prepared in the Danubian region with the strategic position of Slovakia. The aim of the Magyar irredentists concentrated in the radical wing of the Party of the Magyar Coalition was to achieve the Kosovo variant. The Dunajská Streda – Komárno area would be like Priština, with marking of the Slovak south with Turul monuments and tablets with the subtext of usurpation of the Slovak south. Enactment of bilingual naming of towns and villages with a Magyar minority of at least 20% created a real platform for Magyar irredentism. The appropriate towns and villages came under its political and communications control, so that they became platforms for the project of Magyar autonomy in this territory inhabited by a Slovak majority. The establishment of Komárno University was the culmination of the project of intellectual and civil estrangement of the Slovak south. How and in what spirit, also in terms of linguistic communication, is teaching carried on at this university, which is „Slovak” from the point of view of location, the constitution and educational legislation? Is it a matter of a new constitutional supra-national „representative” filling of the Central European space in the triangle: Vienna – Budapest – Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg)? Therefore,

the „status” of an international city is being diligently prepared for Bratislava, also in the „Slovak” media with the tie on label of monopolies of the supra-national mediocracy, not the capital of the Slovak Republic, but a cosmopolitan metropolis, a sort of Hong Kong on the Danube, without a Slovak face.

The present government has begun to return Slovakia to the Slovaks and to the citizens of Slovakia as their homeland, without regard for nationality or confessional orientation, as a homeland living and governing itself according to the values of democracy (rule by the people), in a Christian spirit, not in the spirit of the atheist-bolshevik-liberal-market exploitative enslavement of man. The constitutional position of the president, government and parliament in the sphere of the economic, historical-intellectual, social, national identity of the Slovaks, supplemented by the rights of minorities, could not ignore such a key phenomenon of the identity and political and territorial integrity of Slovakia as the state language. It is a key and fundamental phenomenon, just as much as the historically given territorial integrity and Slovak statehood itself. Language and territory are the foundations of the existence and identity of a nation. Passing of an amendment to the Act on the State Language entirely unveiled the corridors, robbers and enslavers of Slovakia. The national-assimilationist eruptions of Magyar policy are already a Central European, indeed a European ritual, they are a ritual of its „self-presentation” in Europe.* However, they are a useful article, a joker in the geopolitical game for domination in Central Europe and destruction of the European space of the Slavs. This is the background of the indulgence of the West towards the adventures, which the Magyars can undertake with impunity. Their internal genocide of the minority identities of the Jews, Germans, Slovaks, Sub-Carpathian Ukrainians and Ruthenians of Hungary is tolerated. They did not succeed in „legitimately” solving the Slovak south including Bratislava according to the Kosovo scenario, already in the course of

* The President of Hungary László Sólyom: „The role of Hungary is to assist the justified demand of the part of the nation living beyond the frontiers for recognition of the Magyar language by the neighbouring countries as a regional language.” (Plus jeden deň 20 Aug 2009, p.2) In other words, they had to recognize the communication hegemony of the Magyar language in the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary, and legalize Magyar as an equal second state language in the communication systems of the neighbouring states. It means the communication policy revival of the hegemony of Hungary in Central Europe.

On the question of the fact that the representatives of the other minorities expressed support for the Language Act, and that the only opponents are the Magyars: Csáky replied: „I ask the representatives of the minorities, what language do they normally use at home and at work? Usually it is Slovak. They are in a different position from us. The Magyars are the only minority, who are numerous enough to have their own institutions and in some regions form the regional majority, so they have a claim to use their mother tongue” (Maďarov sa netreba báť [It is not necessary to fear the Magyars]). SME 5 Sept 2009, p. 4. Mr. Csáky already does not say that he sees Magyar as a second state language.

the Kosovo operation. The Kosovo solution has also affected the West with a boomerang effect. It increased the activity of the Basques, Catalans, Flemings, Irish, Scots, Welsh, Palestinians and Moslems already civilly „accredited” in the West. Magyar raising of the „state-forming” banner of minorities is difficult to accept before the courts of the nations. Therefore, that unusually „sensitive” position reflecting the philosophy „neither a fish nor a crab” may not entirely unmask the activities of Hungary in its geopolitical services. This is embodied in the statement that the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic may not be in conflict with European legislation and practice, but with the addition that this does not mean it is a good law!

The literally anarchist ignoring of the democratic essence of Slovak statehood and its legitimate institutions – president, parliament and government, their literally hooliganish ridiculing is a visiting card, indicating the degree of decline of intellectual culture. The life giving word has changed into media poison. It is not a matter of the critical or uncritical character of the mass media. The communication space of Slovakia, which belongs to the citizens, is contaminated by media, which are not anchored in Slovakia, either by values or the aims of their activity. They do not represent Slovakia either to itself or to the nations of Europe and the world.

Against this background, we come to the uproar around the amendment to the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic. Why is there such an uproar precisely around the Slovak language? When assessing the adventures of Magyar policy as a geopolitically cloned chicken on the rubbish heap of Central European power-political transformation, it is impossible to perceive these Magyar irredentist adventures against Slovakia only as Magyar-Slovak banter. The Slovak south could be the Central European Kosovo. The changing of the guard in the Party of the Magyar Coalition with the strengthening of the aggressive wing, the activity of pro-Magyar Western lobbying, the almost military summary justice of the supra-national mediocracy in Slovakia, the activity of the accommodating pro-Magyar monopoly dominated media, destruction of the public-service media, destruction of the plurality of the printed media, their tabloidization in the direction of discrediting the state-forming and intellectual forces of Slovakia, militarization of the journalistic professional environment by breaking up the space for dialogue in the journalists’ professional organizations, all creates space for the Anschluss of the Slovak south. The struggle over the amendment of the Press Act with the right to reply was the first power struggle over Slovak statehood. The spreading of anti-national nihilism, efforts to assign expressions of national existence to the category of extremism, xenophobia and non-Europeaness, nihilization of national identity and historical memory, marginalization or ridiculing of memorial days and historical events of the na-

tion and its personalities are playing their assigned role. In the journalistic hall of traditions, erasing of the memory of the epic of the generations of journalists from the period of ethical, moral, national and civil elevation of freedom and democratization of journalism, which culminated in 1968. Without a report in the ever-present tabloids, without a word of protest from the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists, the memorial tablet with the names of personalities from the front line of the struggle for freedom, democracy and understanding between nations, personalities who raised the level of civilization to a higher dimension of humanity and social and intellectual justice with a „human face,” was removed from the building containing the editorial office of the journal Kultúrny život on Štúrova ulica. The new owner of this building removed the tablet from the facade of the building with impunity and with no protest from journalists, and put it in the cellar! It is necessary to discredit Slovakia as a state.

The amendment to the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic. The second decision of the finally nationally responsible Slovak government to stop the spread of open irredentism, aiming at the annexation of the Slovak south is directed against this machinery of manipulation. Magyar irredentism had already marked the south with Turul monuments, Magyarized the villages and towns, and subverted the foundations of the state-civil education of the young generation of Magyar nationality. The communication integrity of Slovakia was completely paralysed in the Slovak south. The Hungarian government structures, diplomatic service and various pressure groups, with the support of media activities in Slovakia and of the foreign opinion forming media, directed their attack against the defensive activities of the Slovak Parliament, President, Prime Minister and Ministry of Culture. That is the reality of recent days.

What did the position of the mass media in Slovakia prove? We have in mind the printed, opinion forming, and electronic mass media, including the legally public-service media. Slovakia does not have media support directed towards defence of its basic existence as a state, its constitution, sovereignty, historical foundations, the values of its spiritual life, freedoms and rights in the family of nations of Europe and the world. What was the language of some of the media in relation to things, which should be sacred to every Slovak journalist? „Let us not tolerate a rubbishy state” (Mikuláš Sliacky, Pravda 14 Sept 2009; „Dear pupils, Slovaks! The nation does not need knowledge, but national consciousness! So instead of new textbooks, we will regularly sing the national anthem! Róbert Fico, your premier for all time!” (Danglár, Pravda 3 Sept 2009, p. 15); „In Slovakia, in Slovak! We want foreign, but we won’t give up our own!” (Pravda 25 Aug 2009, p.28); „The schools resist Fico: They cough at parades with the national anthem and flag!” (Pravda 3 Sept 2009, p. 2); „Mass rejection of the Language Act” (Nový čas 2 Sept 2009, p. 9); „Csáky is going to complain to America”

(SME 8 Sept 2009); „The act will drive the Magyars out of Slovakia” (Pravda 22 July 2009, p. 6, István Lanstyák); „The act is in order, in contrast to Csáky” (Dag Daniš, Pravda, 17 Sept 2009, p.18 – for once an objective editorial).

The physical, moral and ethical devastation, the caricaturing and ridiculing is already not just the moral ridiculing or discrediting of individual people. It is, above all, the ridiculing and devastation of the institutions of Slovak statehood, which should have the respect of every citizen and journalist. The activity of servants at the altars of this statehood should be evaluated from the position of the ethical and moral values of these institutions. The third sector, non-government structures became legalized instruments for the intervention of supranational structures in the running of Slovak statehood. They are open agencies of the destruction of the nationality and civil nature of Slovak statehood. This also concerns the sphere of media communication. Their network has achieved domination of the public-service radio and television, the professionally organized life of the journalists and the media section of the Literary Fund.

Today, Slovakia and Slovak statehood have no fully qualified media coverage. Just as in the name of support for the open economy, Slovakia has sold out its economy, so it has also sold out its communication space. Now it is necessary to quickly activate all the components forming the spiritual or intellectual foundations of Slovak statehood.

Magyaromania

JÁN DORUEA

Magyaromania was named by Ján Kollár (1793-1852), for many years pastor of the congregation of Slovak Evangelicals of the Augsburg Confession in Pest. It meant the ruthless, harsh, Magyarizing obsession, which aimed to transform the multi-national Kingdom of Hungary into a Magyar state with one nation and one language as quickly as possible. When anti-Slovak hatred caused the murder in June 1826 of the 33 year old Slovak Jozef Hlubocký from Stará Turá, one of a group who had transported cheese, bryndza and butter to Budapest by raft on the rivers Váh and Danube, Kollár sharply condemned in his funeral sermon, the campaign of hatred against the Slovaks then being publicly cultivated in Magyar society. J. Kollár attributed to this artificially nourished hatred greater responsibility for the death of an innocent young Slovak, the breadwinner of a family, than to the actual killer, who was only the product of whipped up social intolerance – or Magyaromania. Among other things he said: „Let us be angry, not with the killer, but with the origins and causes, which made him into one, namely the national hatred, which is unfortunately growing more and more pernicious in our country from year to year, and is already morally poisoning people from the lower classes.”¹ Another Slovak, Štefan Vrabc, died soon after being whipped in front of the county house in Veszprém. According to the verdict of the county office, they beat him because he had written a letter to his fellow believers calling for „church services to held in the Slovak language, and for school children to be taught in that language, not in Magyar, especially for religious education.”² The county justified its verdict on the punishment of petitioners with the statement that „respect for the national language is obviously necessary because unity of language revives nations, unites hearts, supports a happy life for the homeland, and strengthens the position of the state or kingdom, while the reverse – competition of various languages leads to hatred, persecution and unrest, destroys the foundations, which support the flourishing of

¹ For more details see the paper: DORUEA, J.: Slovansko-slovenský vlastenec Ján Kollár (The Slavonic-Slovak patriot Ján Kollár). In: *Slavica Slovaca*, 2009, year 44, no. 1, p. 65-68.

² See, *ibidem*, p. 67.

happiness in the nation.”³ As can be seen, the verdict of the Magyar county authorities is in sharp contrast to the message of St. Stephen to his son Imrich, according to which a „kingdom with one language and one custom is weak and fragile.”⁴ The present-day Magyar irredentists and the entirely unconcealed and deeply rooted general consensual Magyar view of the message of St. Stephen and the Crown of St. Stephen as the symbol of Hungarian statehood, interpret them in narrowly ethnic Magyar terms. This does not have connection with the message of St. Stephen quoted above, but with the line of Magyar policy towards the nationalities in Hungary, witnessed by Ján Kollár and expressed in the verdict of the ethnic Magyar authorities in the county office at Veszprém. This is symbolized today by the statue of St. Stephen in Komárno, where extreme Magyar chauvinist irredentist organizations place flowers and wreaths. Štefan Vrabec was not the only person to pay for this policy with his life. The application of this policy down to the present-day has caused immense suffering and often tragic consequences, for innumerable other Slovaks. This was proved also in the „struggle for freedom” of the 1848-49 revolution, which was a struggle only for Magyar freedom. In 1861, Andrej Sládkovič wrote: „Slovak goodness, regularity, tried the path of reconciliation or friendly settlement. They thought of the Christian commandment, the common homeland and common destiny, they thought only of association and solidarity in work and struggle for the good of the whole country. Appeal after appeal, reason after reason, expectation after expectation. In vain. If you again wet your pen to describe the reply of the leaders of the revolution and superintendents of Magyarization? It is abhorrent for us to uncover the shortcomings here, the cruelty and lack of conscienciousness, how they received the rightful demands and moderate requests of the Slovaks in that fateful period! Everything is fresh in the memory of both the oppressors and the oppressed.”⁵ Štefan Marko Daxner, a qualified lawyer and main author of the text of the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation from 1861, remembered as follows: „I have seen how the Magyars behaved, what policy they applied against the non-Magyar nations of our homeland in the years 1859 and 1860. To you, who directly observed it as I did, I am saying nothing new, but to those, who did not experience it, let them remember at least our experience. The above mentioned time includes the period of the platonic love of the Magyars for us. Liberty, equality and fraternity in the civil and national respect are emphasized in

³ Cited from the work: KOLLÁR, Jan: *Wýklad čili Přjímětky a Wysvětlivky ku Slávy Dceři* (Explanation of Sláva’s Daughter). Budapest, Trattner and Károli, 1832, p. 374. (Kollár gave the quotation in Latin.)

⁴ MARSINA, Richard (ed.): *Legends stredovekého Slovenska* (Legends of Medieval Slovakia). Ed. Pavel Dvořák, RAK Budmerice 1997, p. 30.

⁵ *Slovenské národné shromaždenie v Turčianskom Sv. Martine 1861* (The Slovak National Assembly at Turčiansky Sv. Martin in 1861). Matica slovenská 1941, p. 32.

their journalism and social life. National equality was spoken of as a principle, without any doubts...”⁶ However, in a further part of his memoirs, Š. M. Daxner wrote: „In 1861, the Magyars had a beautiful opportunity to solve the national question on a natural basis, to achieve a real, just and historic solution. ... But as the Magyars came to power and glory, they forgot the most sacred interest of the homeland, namely that it is the homeland of all the nations living in it, and in their fatal – Cuman – pride and intolerance, they appropriated it entirely, as if it was only their achievement or their exclusive property. They forgot their earlier promises to the non-Magyar nations, given when it was still necessary to cooperate with these nations. Then, national equality was a sacred slogan to them, but when they achieved their aim, it became nonsense to them. It meant dividing the country, a state within a state, it was unconstitutional, treacherous, Daco-Romanism or Pan-Slavism. Formerly, they recognized the non-Magyar nations of the homeland as nations, but later only as foreigners («idegen faj») in the words of Deák), as nationalities without national existence, and so as results without causes, because according to their invented and dishonest doctrine «all citizens of Magyarország, without regard for language form one nation from the political point of view, a single indivisible Magyar nation corresponding to the historical concept of a Magyar state.» (See report of the parliamentary commission, on the matter of the nationality delegation. In: Pešťbudínske vedomosti no. 44, 1860.). With this murderous doctrine and fiction they built the alternatives that either the non-Magyar nations of the homeland must be morally eradicated and Magyarized, or this homeland must break up into as many homelands as there were nations having the right to life. Therefore, with this doctrine they inaugurated in our homeland a permanent conflict of life and death between nations, as long as the alternatives of one or the other method does not end the conflict. True friends of the Kingdom of Hungary can only lament the fatal turn by which the thousand year old basis of the integrity of the Kingdom of Hungary, namely the common interest of its nations, is subverted, and in its place they establish «Magyarország» with the domination of one nation over the others, and with its integrity resting on violence, fiction and injustice. ... By subverting the thousand year old Kingdom of Hungary and putting Magyarország in its place, conflict is established between the Magyars and the non-Magyar nations in Hungary, over the life or national existence of the non-Magyars. If there is conflict, it will increasingly penetrate into all spheres of civil and social life. ... I am thinking of the unchangeable law of God, according to which every crime brings with it a penalty and its own undoing. The sympathy Europe gave the Magyars in their struggle

⁶ DAXNER, Štefan Marko: *V službe národa* (In the service of the nation). The selection was edited, the study written and the notes worked out by František Bokes. Bratislava: Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry 1958, p. 163.

against Bach's absolutism, is already disappearing, because the former oppressed fighters for freedom have become the oppressors and destroyers of freedom."⁷ After painful experiences and disappointments with broken promises from the Magyar political elite, the important Slovak politician, journalist and linguist Ľudovít Štúr wrote in 1851: „Do we have to unite with those, who worked hardest for our destruction, prosecuted every result of our movement, cruelly persecuted all persons working for the spiritual flowering of our nation, who vowed our uprooting with the most terrible curses, who mocked our honesty, our willingness and hardworkingness as slavishness, the result of our long subjugation as our inadequacy or inborn stupidity and slavishness, who declared with a thousand throats that our interest in ourselves as a wretched people was treason, who ridiculed and scorned our very name most effectively and with diabolical delight. Do we have to unite with those who in the most recent period wanted to axe the root of our life, putting in all our regions, towns and villages lots of gallows, «in the time of freedom» as they welcomed every wish for more freedom by torturing our best people. The executioners took innocent people, more educated, young and old, without distinction to the gallows with diabolical pleasure, in large numbers and without any need. Do we have to unite with such people? Was it all so long ago? And what are the present-day Magyars doing? Aren't they still suppressing our language, our nationality, aren't they blackening all our more important men and our efforts wherever they can? Do we not suffer from the painful results of all this? They all do it without distinction: the old reactionary and the open revolutionary, the so-called liberal and the conservative, one like the other, today as in the past. It is the very spirit, the tenacious malice, which formerly raged against us. If they regain their former power, all the crimes committed against us will be repeated with even greater madness and cruelty. With these puffed up, empty, boasting, crazy, enraged, unreformable villains, there can be no peace and reconciliation. ... We see the results of their rule in the impoverishment, enslavement and wretchedness of our people. We saw how they gloated over its soul and emaciated body, we saw how they loved to use the whipping post with the continual lash of whips by soldiers on the chosen! Yes, yes, the whipping post and the soldier are the Magyar gifts to our people! Why is no Slavonic people so depressed, impoverished and wretched as ours and so militant compared to their brothers?"⁸ It is necessary to say immediately that Magyar policy towards the nationalities did not change at all after the break up of the Monarchy in 1918. The Slovaks in the territories occupied by Horthy's Hungary

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 175-177.

⁸ Úvahi o spise „Hlas od Tatjer“ (Considerations of the text „Voice of the Tatraš“) by S. Vozár in Banská Bystrica, published by Filip Machold, 1851, p. 62. From Ľudovít Štúr. In: Slovenskije Pohľadi na vedí, umeňja a literatúru. Editor: M. J. Hurban. Part 1, 25 May 1851. Vol. 4, p. 148-149.

after the Vienna Arbitration of 1938 again experienced its effects in an entirely unfalsified barbarous form. The liquidation of the minorities in the territory of the Hungarian Republic testifies to its „European democratic character.” The national minority schools in Hungary are an effective instrument for this. If the Hungarian model of national minority education was applied in Slovakia, the political representatives of the Magyar national minority would regard it as a crime against the Magyars in Slovakia.

It is worth mentioning here the recent statement by a compatriot of the Norwegian writer Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. It comes from Egil Lejon, who recently wrote: „The situation as it was, when oppression reached its climax was described exactly by the Norwegian Nobel laureate B. Bjørnson in his article from August 1907 published in various European newspapers: «What is happening in Hungary is simply outrageous. Such a shameful despotism cannot be found in any other European state.» Whether it pleases somebody or not, the truth remains that up to now no Hungarian government has been willing to officially apologize for the crimes committed against the Slovak nation. It is even more surprising that no Hungarian government has ever admitted that these crimes and oppression happened. ... This policy against the Slovak minority in the territory of the Hungarian state continued after 1920, so that from the original minority of about 400,000, there are now scarcely 10,000 officially registered Slovaks in the present territory of Hungary, while the Magyar minority in the territory of Slovakia has grown. So who has to be criticized for suppression of their minorities? ... When European politicians return to the idea that «the innocent should suffer for the guilty,» we should ask the question, why, for example, did the Secretary of State James Baker in an interview for the Japanese daily Asahi Shinbun in 1994 openly say: «Hungary, which cooperates with the separatist political movements in Rumania and Slovakia, where nationalist groups want to gain power, so that they can later annex territories and the nations living in them, cannot become a member of NATO» (Pravda 18 Jan 1994). The American Secretary of State changed, but the position of Hungary did not.”⁹ Egil Lejon also mentioned another recent and very shameful fact, namely the abolition of the Bjørnstjern Bjørnson Prize, which happened when the Magyar ethnic party was part of the Slovak government. Lejon commented: „The abolition of the prize bearing the name of B. Bjørnson was intended to be an apology to the politicians representing a tradition of never showing regret over historical crimes against the Slovak nation, and which still continues this tradition.”

These voices, especially the voices of important Slovak scholars and intellectuals from the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries are mentioned

⁹ LEJON, Egil: Tak to bolo... (It was so...). In: Literárny (dvoj)týždenník, 6 September 2006.

here, not only as historical testimony about Magyar nationality policy, but to accurately describe the present policy, which has not essentially changed since those times. For example, Péter Hunčík, a Magyar intellectual living in Slovakia describes the „traditional” attitude to the Slovaks, that is the generally accepted view, already spread in all areas of mass activity – churches, schools, offices, journalism – in the 19th century, and still nourished but rarely articulated in Magyar society today. Hunčík represents it as the relationship of the lord to the serf, the count to the coachman. He sees nothing unusual in this, nothing that should be changed or Europeanized by upbringing and education. He expresses surprise that such an attitude is unacceptable for Slovaks, he even blames them for rejecting this „normal” Magyar attitude and so bringing tension into Slovak-Magyar relations.¹⁰ It is a really well-done, up to date „European” excuse for some unjustified, intellectually empty, primitive megalomania. This empty, bombastic arrogance is often expressed by the political representatives of the Magyar national minority in Slovakia, closely coordinated with the government and all the non-governmental institutions, societies and associations in Hungary, which reject the post-Trianon state arrangements in Central Europe. Therefore, they do everything possible to achieve the restitution of the pre-Trianon Magyar „achievements,” with forced cultivation of the idea of the historic Kingdom of Hungary as an ethnic Magyar state. This was expressed in the struggle for the legalization of Magyar language geographical names, which were artificially created in the period of the most intensive Magyarization and never used in ordinary communication. They have again appeared in textbooks used in Slovakia in schools where Magyar is the language of education. These artificial Magyarized names for the whole territory of Slovakia, including regions where Magyars never lived, are being crammed into the heads of pupils, although they will never encounter them in ordinary life, and this will only be an obstacle for their understanding in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The „obliging” Parliament of the Slovak Republic accepted this musty Magyarizing law dug up from the end of the 19th century, although it is in clear contradiction to the valid Slovak legislation and the Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, to which the proposers of the appropriate amendment wrongly appeal. The aggressive vehemence and falsity with which the anti-Slovak Magyarophile press written in Slovakia in the Slovak language fought against the use of Slovak geographical names in textbooks for schools with teaching in the Magyar language is incomprehensible to healthy human reason. They give such „justifications” as the view

¹⁰ P. Hunčík expressed his views in an article *Úvahy o istom prieskume* (Consideration of some research) published in the Magyarophile daily *SME*, which is published in the Slovak language in Slovakia. For more about this article see: DORUĽA, J.: *Slovenčina ako politikum včera aj dnes* (The Slovak language as a political issue yesterday and today).

that Slovak names in the context of the Magyar language, destroy or „mangle” the Magyar language, although hundreds or perhaps thousands of names from other languages do not harm Magyar in any way.¹¹ Only the language of inferior coachmen harms the language of the lords. Another campaign being carried on in the neo-Magyarizing spirit, after dusting off a thick musty layer, is also symptomatic in this context. It calls for the introduction of Magyar orthography for writing the names of historical personalities in the Slovak language, in the spirit of false unhistorical ideas about our former common state as a state of the Magyar ethnic group. The Slovaks have to accept this falsification of history and direct intervention in the Slovak language, in the name of Slovak-Magyar friendship, built on the „normal European” relationship of the Magyar count and Slovak coachman. The idea of a never existing Magyar cultural supremacy has to be retrospectively constructed here.

The hysterical Magyar campaign against Slovak as the state language and not only against the act or its amendment, also uses curious „argumentation,” which aims to prove that this unfortunate act will also harm the Slovak language, because in the spheres of public communication it concerns, it prescribes use of the codified form of the state language or the standard written language. It is necessary to say that this standard form of the language, which the citizens of any civilized state in the whole world learn as the common language of public communications – the language of schools, offices, legislation, government decrees, international agreements, diplomatic discussions and so on – where it is entirely natural that dialect cannot be applied, because its use is territorially and functionally limited, is also learnt by the Slovak citizens of Magyar nationality at school, if they learn it at all. The Slovak act on the state language does not really exclude use of non-standard language, if they have a function in the context of the standard written language. It is really curious that the Magyar party points to such „dangers” of the act in a country where the National Theatre presents plays by a well known Slovak writer transformed into the most westerly dialect, where television regularly broadcast programmes in which Eastern Slovak dialect is frequently used, and where popular and well attended folklore groups present folk creativity in its original linguistic form.

The present struggle against the state language of the Slovak Republic, accompanied by unbelievable falsehoods spread to the whole world from Slovakia and Hungary, is continuing in the spirit of the Magyarizing line outlined above. This false struggle is being carried on by only one of the minorities in Slovakia, namely by the political representatives of the Magyar national minority by means humiliating to their own human dignity. They are struggling against

¹¹ For more details see our article: Slovenčina ako politikum včera aj dnes.

Slovak as the state language in the spheres where the act requires its use in the interest of preserving the territorial integrity of the state and the uninterrupted civil coexistence of all the citizens of the Slovak Republic. They are struggling against an act, which they know does not threaten the preservation of the ethnic identity of the Magyars in Slovakia in any way.

The political representatives of the Magyar minority and the representatives and members of other Magyar societies and associations are carefully „monitoring the situation,” which means that they are watching „their” Magyars to make sure that they do not use the state language where it is not „necessary,” while Slovaks in the ethnically mixed territories are warmly recommended to use the Magyar language. They devote blood and sweat to the struggle to ensure that use of the state language together with Magyar is not ordered in any sphere of public communication in the ethnically mixed territory. They do not take into account the fact that Slovaks actually form the majority of the population of this territory. The Slovaks of the region are expected to „adapt,” which means to become Magyarized.

The present Magyar hysteria, the history of Slovak-Magyar relations, the present unconcealed cultivation of continuity of these relations along the lines described above, the isolationist policy of the political representatives of the Magyar national minority in Slovakia and the policy of the governments of the Hungarian Republic up to now, enable us to create a sufficiently realistic, although threatening picture of the state and future of Slovak-Magyar relations. Just as our ancestors believed, we should also believe that the world will not believe all these blatant falsehoods, that justice will finally incline to our side, as „our” unforgettable Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson so bravely demanded for the Slovaks. His memory has been humiliatingly shamed in Slovakia, but it was not shamed by Slovaks. Our Norwegian friend Egil Lejon also wrote this in the article cited above: „It is not surprising that B. Bjørnson gained such an important position among the Slovaks. There are enough documents to show how the Slovaks at home and their associations in the USA, Canada, Argentina and elsewhere, representing hundreds of thousands of Slovaks, who had left their country because of the unbearable conditions under Magyar oppression, expressed the deepest respect and gratitude for what Bjørnson did for them. They honoured him as if he was a son of their own nation. The fact that streets, hotels and buildings are named after him, and the famous Slovak architect Dušan Jurkovič proposed that a mountain in Liptov should be given his name, show the gratitude of the Slovak nation. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bjørnson’s death, the Slovak composer Oto Ferenczy composed a cantata for barytone, mixed choir and orchestra on the theme of a poem by Ján Smrek Hviezda severu (Star of the north) in his honour. Other Slovak poets dedicated

poems to Bjørnson, including Vladimír Roy and Emil Boleslav Lukáč. In 1992, Milan Rúfus wrote a poem entitled Pán Bjørnson.”

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the main aim of the unprecedentedly malicious, dishonourable and humanly undignified campaign against the amendment of the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic is not the act itself. The outrageous campaign to blacken the reputation of the Slovak Republic in the international arena, to make acceptable the accusation of the innocent, is intended to internationally discredit the Slovak Republic. The Language Act is sand, which is unpleasantly irritating the running of the well constructed and harmonized mechanism of the mill of Magyar irredentism.

Language Legislation from the Point of View of Linguistics

JÁN KAČALA

1.0. The conceptual positions, from which language legislation starts can be divided into two:

1. The declarative aspect of the language act, by which we understand statement of the particular cultural and moral values and obligations of the given society in relation to the national language.

2. The definition of particular obligations of institutions towards the state language and formulation of the conditions under which failure to observe the provisions of the act can be penalized by the state authorities.

The Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the State Language of the Slovak Republic from 15 November 1995 contains both these components. As scientists and cultural workers, we may have our view especially on the second of them. We may have reservations especially towards sanctions for not observing the provisions of the act, but it is necessary to recognize that an act without statement of specific norms in relation to the application of the provisions of the act, without imposing obligations in relation to the subject regulated by the legislation, without definition of control mechanisms to monitor observance of the act, and finally without setting of sanctions against violations of the provisions of the act – is not a true legislative act. Legislation is prepared by legal experts, not by linguists or other scientists. Clearly, language legislation should fulfill the legal ideas of the experts on law, so these ideas need to be respected. In my paper, I will concentrate on the first of the components mentioned above, and within it on the following partial themes: 1. The functions and aims of the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic. 2. The meaning of the adjective „State” in the title of the Act on the State Language. 3. The trend towards internationalization of language and linguistic communication and use of domestic linguistic resources. 4. The history of language legislation in the Slovak Republic. 5. The writing of manuals of the standard written language as a basic task for Slovak linguists, and the popularization of linguistic information and linguistic education at school and outside it.

1.1. The aims of the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic are above all fulfillment of the national integrative, social integrative and state integrative functions of the state language. The amendment to the Act on the State Language approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 30 June 2009 is especially concerned with fulfillment of the social integrative and state integrative functions. It legally guarantees the use of the state language of the Slovak Republic in the whole territory of the state, including the

region of southern Slovakia, where its use was threatened. The Magyar politicians from Hungary and their extended hands in Slovakia are well aware of the fulfillment of this aim. This is why they unleashed an unprecedentedly dishonest and slanderous campaign against the approved amendment to the Language Act in Slovakia, Hungary and other countries. They naturally blackened the image of the proposers of the act and the legislators, because with this amendment its supporters used the state language to significantly hinder the possibility of further disintegration of the territory of the republic and the possibility of territorial autonomy in southern Slovakia. From the historical point of view, it is possible to comment that the Act on the Official Language from October 1990 completely failed precisely because it did not include this national integrative, social integrative and state integrative function. It was passed by the Slovak National Council with the support of the coalition of the time, after several months of social and political struggles, instead of a better quality proposed Act on the Slovak Language prepared by the Matica Slovenská cultural organization.

1.2. The cultural function of the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic lies in the appeal addressed to every citizen of the republic, to cultivate a positive relationship to the national language as an important national and cultural treasure, as the common property of all members of the Slovak nation, which deserves the highest level of care and cultivation. The cultural function also means obligations for the state authorities of Slovakia, to support the overall development of the Slovak language, as well as scientific research into the language and publication of the results, so that specific and serious works can contribute to raising the cultural level of standard written Slovak and especially the quality of linguistic education inside and outside the schools.

1.3. By means of the communicative function, the Language Act requires that producers or distributors of the most varied types of goods should make information about the use of the goods accessible in the state language, and it appeals to the creators of public linguistic statements to ensure the general comprehensibility of statements, especially if intended for the wider public. Among other things, such a demand has an important democratic dimension, because it pursues the aim of making relevant information accessible to the whole range of inhabitants in the state language, which every citizen of the Slovak Republic should know. The act encourages the spreading of this information in comprehensible form. In pursuit of this aim, the use of the state language has to be expertly monitored and any violations of the provisions of the Act on the State Language, especially in socially important spheres of communication and in public statements and texts aimed at the wider public have to be identified. In the end, it is necessary to impose sanctions on institutions and legal entities responsible for multiple or systematic violations of the act.

2. The Slovak Language Act from 15 November 1995 is officially called the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the State Language of the Slovak Republic. Before it was passed, there was discussion about whether it should be the act on the state or on the official language. Finally it followed the wording of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, adopted by the legislative body on 1 September 1992, and stating in article 6 that the state language in the territory of the Slovak Republic is the Slovak language. The constitution as the highest law of the state, gives the Slovak language the status of the state language. The adjective “state” in relation to the Slovak language is entirely appropriate here. It is conditioned among other things by the exclusive position of the Slovak language in the territory of the Slovak Republic, because the Slovak Republic is, above all, the state of the members of the Slovak nation. The Slovaks do not have any other state of their own anywhere else in the world.

It is possible to ask, what does it mean for a language, when the basic law of the state attributes it this status. Such a designation of the national language does not mean immediate changes and it does not require any special regulation of the language. However, it means a great change in the social position of a language, especially of the Slovak language, because such an official status was given by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic to the Slovak language independently for the first time in its long history, and in the conditions of an independent and democratic Slovak Republic. This attribute means that in the Slovak Republic, the Slovak language is the official language of the state, confirmed as such by the state and its basic law, that the state, its authorities and mechanism stand behind the Slovak language. Therefore, it means social and legal recognition of the Slovak language by the state, recognition and public declaration of the state functions of this language. This raises its social status in the eyes of its users and of others who come into contact with it.

Apart from this very serious declarative level, it is also necessary to speak here of the important and irreplaceable „practical” level. The experience of European and other nations confirms that the state organization forms an extraordinarily important base of support for the whole national culture in the wide sense of the word, including the contacts of the national culture with other national cultures and the continual communication between national cultures. In this complex of national culture, interest in the national language and its continuous development, scientific research, application in social practice, linguistic education and linguistic culture, has the leading position. It is also necessary to place here, the fact that state authorities and advisory bodies such as the Central Language Council as the advisory body to the Ministry of Culture of Slovakia and other institutions initiate and support the publication of expert literature about the language on the basis of scientific research and

description of the national language and scientific codification of the norms of its standard written form.

The care of state bodies for the development and scientific research into the state language and its relations with other languages, but also research into other languages used in the given state territory, into the use and culture of the standard written language, especially into expert terminology, which is developing rapidly in the information society, and into language legislation, is the subject of interest of language policy. By language policy, we understand a particular consistent set of views and practical steps of a given political representation in the field of the state language and other languages used in the given state territory. It is not, or at least not primarily, a matter for linguists, although they can naturally initiate, propose or expertly assess various things. In this context, language naturally emerges as a political question, which naturally belongs to the field of interest of linguists and other cultural workers, especially in our historical and social conditions, in which Slovak not only had an important national identifying and nation preserving position, but was also the subject of ideological and political disputes and was an instrument used in these disputes.

The theme of language as a political issue is scientifically attractive, especially today when it is possible to write freely about things without the burden of ideological and political spectacles, and when it is also possible to objectively evaluate the situation in past decades from this point of view. The position of our mother tongue during the 20th century deserves special attention from this point of view. It was not only a century of extraordinary historical growth for the Slovak language, but also a period of open and concealed scientific, political and ideological struggle over the separateness of Slovak as a Slavonic language, over its development according to its own internal rules and over its full validity as a modern European standard written language. In this respect, the scientific reply of Ľudovít Novák *Linguistic comments on the Czechoslovak question* from 1935, is still important and topical, but not sufficiently appreciated especially in educational practice. My publication: *The Slovak language, a political issue?* from 1994, also follows in Novák's footsteps, although, naturally starting from our linguistic situation in the last third of the 20th century.

3. One of the central questions, to which an answer is expected in the spirit of the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic is assessment of the relationship between the recent trend towards the internationalization of language and communication from one side, and the maintenance of domestic traditions of care for the use and culture of the standard written language, especially care for the development and standardization of expert terminology in the translation of expert, popularizing, journalistic and other texts in the conditions of the information society at the beginning of the 21st century on the other. The

process of internationalization in the area of word stock, especial in technical fields, but also in the syntax of the contemporary European languages is global and impossible to avoid. However, linguistic culture and language policy should pursue the aim of ensuring that these processes are favourable to European languages, and do not lead to their unification according to the strongest model and especially not to their destruction. It is impossible to forget that the terminology of information technology is formed from and is part of the terminology and word stock of a given national language or of its standard written form. A significant component of the whole terminological word stock of our national and standard written language is a domestic word stock of native roots. These will live only if they are used as roots for the formation of new specialized terms. This means that today, just as in the past, the domestic word stock of native roots cannot be left out of the sources for the creation of new specialized terms. In this field, where the experts from particular scientific disciplines have considerable influence on further development with their deliberate intellectual activity, it is also necessary to proceed carefully in the spirit of the domestic tradition, and to avoid mechanically adopting foreign elements and even whole systems of such elements or foreign syntactic constructions. Foreign elements are often forced on us in parts of linguistic statements, where we have an established and universally understood domestic term or expression.

In general, it needs to be said that a language act means strengthening of the linguistic sovereignty of the particular linguistic community, and it should also have a positive influence on raising the level of linguistic culture of the given community. When emphasizing the continuing use of domestic linguistic resources, we do not have in mind isolation of our linguistic development, or the stopping or freezing of further natural linguistic development. For further linguistic development, we have in mind balance of domestic resources and the process of internationalization, which derive from the present interconnected but still rather chaotically organized world. Codifying interventions in the standard written language and language legislation do not pursue the aim of stopping or slowing down linguistic development, because it is simply not possible. Codification and language legislation only aim at the rational and if possible conflict-free regulation of the use of language, especially in public communication with regard for the needs corresponding to the present level of development of human communication in the framework of the given language community and with regard for the general trends in the development of humanity.

4. It is certainly no accident that language legislation as a form of broad social engagement concerned with national affairs and especially with standard written languages developed intensively and is still developing in the last 20 years, a period in which political development in the world and especially in

Europe has been associated with the complete disintegration of multi-national and multi-nationality empires and the origin of numerous new states, established on a national basis. The national principle is not only important as the basis for a specific culture or particular language as the highest expression of the national culture, but also as the basis for a specific state, which also becomes the irreplaceable guarantee of the preservation and further development of the national culture. Especially in recent times, nations as natural communities of people bound together by consciousness of common origins, common culture, common language, common social, political and economic life in a common territory have become aware of the need to care for their languages in a comprehensive way, on the basis of their unique historical experiences and knowledge. Language legislation has been one of the significant means of such care in recent times.

Where the history of our language legislation is concerned in relation to linguistics and linguists in Slovakia, it is necessary to recall that the Slovak linguists took the initiative on questions of language legislation also in relation to the given political representatives of the state. Although they lacked legal qualifications and high social status, they were aware of the social dimensions of language and linguistics. As a result, they proposed legislative solutions to the questions of the social position and cultural level of the Slovak language. Jozef Ružička played the most significant role here. He was the first to propose, in the conditions of the common state of the Slovaks and Czechs, that the Slovak National Council should pass an act on the Slovak language. His proposal was reported in the daily *Pravda* on 8 May 1968. This problem is documented in detail in the supplement to Ružička's monograph *Standard written Slovak in Czechoslovakia* from 1970, where the proposed text of the act on the Slovak language is given on p.206. It is also little known that Jozef Ružička was also the initiator of a proposal to include provisions about Slovak and Czech as the national languages, which fulfilled the role of state languages in the conditions of the former Czecho-Slovak Socialist Republic, in the Constitutional Act on the Czecho-Slovak Federation, signed in Bratislava Castle on 30 October 1968. An open formulation of the status of Slovak and Czech as state languages was unacceptable in the conditions of the former regime and such a formulation was dangerous to its author.

Linguists were also among the first to initiate the passing of an act of the Slovak National Council about the Slovak language in the new social and political conditions after November 1989. This idea was also adopted by the *Matica Slovenská* cultural organization, several associations of members of the Slovak intelligentsia as well as individuals. It was developed especially from the point of view of an expert legal approach and legal formulation of the issue. General social support for accepting the version of the act on the Slovak language pro-

posed by Matica Slovenská was so high in 1990 that the Slovak political parties and movements tactically took up the idea of an act on the Slovak language as an issue in the election campaign. In an effort to blunt especially the formulations about the national integration and state integration functions of the Slovak language in the territory of the Slovak Republic, as was contained in the Matica Slovenská proposal, the parties in the ruling coalition of the time produced the so-called government proposal for an act on the official language. The coalition majority in the Slovak National Council succeeded in passing it at the end of October after long political struggles. However, the act as passed was toothless, was not applied in practice and its observance was not even monitored.

The general social effort to achieve an appropriate legislative solution to the social position of the Slovak language was crowned by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic from 1 September 1992, in which article 6 states that the state language in the territory of the Slovak Republic is the Slovak language. This constitutional provision was further developed by the passing of the separate Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the State Language of the Slovak Republic on 15 November 1995. Slovak linguists played an important part in the conceiving, editing and approval of this act.

5. In connection with what I have said up to now, however, another aspect needs to be emphasized in the position of linguists in relation to language legislation: It is care for comprehensive scientific research on the Slovak language with both contemporary and historical dimensions, research results on the natural stratification of the Slovak national and standard written language, its structures and use in everyday communication, as well as research into the relations of Slovak to other languages, whether related or unrelated. With this is connected especially the task of systematically and scientifically describing and interpreting the national and especially the standard written language, and caring for linguistic culture, as well as popularizing linguistic findings by means of education both in and outside the school system. Codification handbooks have a central position in this activity. They have to be high quality, accurate and useful to the users of standard written Slovak, and there have to be enough of them. The official codification handbooks or their latest editions have a so-called codification supplement in the spirit of the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic. In the latest editions, it is declared by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. A further summary of information of this type is contained in the measure of the Ministry of Culture from 8 April 2008 no. 1501/2008-10/5088 on declaration of the codified form of the state language in accordance with Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic no. 270/1995 Collection of Acts (Z. z.) on the State Language of the Slovak Republic as amended.

The codification handbooks not only need to be conceived, they also have to be harmonized with each other. Care must also be taken to ensure that they

are continually accessible to the users in the market and today also in electronic form. In this area, not only the linguistic institutions of Slovakia have an essential role, but also the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic as their most important state and political guarantor, and together with the leading publishers – Matica Slovenská, Veda the publisher of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and until recently also the Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, also a contributor to financial securing of the continual availability of these handbooks to the users. Thus, there is a whole system of institutions, individuals and groups, who should work in harmony on the basis of a specific coordination of all those interested in ensuring a higher culture of standard written Slovak, and its everyday use in communication practice by its users.

As a marginal comment, I will add that a complex and often twisting route led to the set of codifying handbooks valid since 8 April 2008 on the basis of the cited measure of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. It is generally known in the linguistic community that Czech linguists intervened in the preparation of the official codifying handbooks of standard written Slovak in the past, either officially or unofficially. Perhaps some people will be surprised by the information that the first *Pravidlá slovenského pravopis* (Rules of Slovak Grammar) worked out without Czech assistance was the one published in 1991 and the following editions from 1998 and 2000. Therefore, it is clearly no accident that some recent critics have been especially concerned with some steps in these rules, which are sensitive from the point of view of the culture of standard written Slovak.

6. Conclusion: Many components of linguistic work undoubtedly reached beyond the narrow framework of linguistics and acquire a wider social, cultural and political dimension. We also regard this factor as proof that linguistics is not an ivory tower science, but an extremely socially engaged science. Especially the fields of theory of standard written language, linguistic culture, preparation of scientific codification handbooks, language education and preparation of Slovak language textbooks of all kinds have this character. The engagement of linguists in questions of linguistic legislation and language policy in general connects with precisely this field of linguistic work.

From the point of view of linguistics, language legislation is a natural result of the social nature of language and the social dimension of linguistics and linguistic work. To speak of the harmfulness of the Slovak Language Act and its latest amendment is mistaken and unprofessional. Such a position naturally suits the mouths of malicious politicians, whose aim is to separate linguistics and politics, precisely in the fields of common interest and cooperation in questions of care for the culture of standard written Slovak and its improvement.

Linguistics places emphasis on the ethno-identifying, state integrative, cultural and educational functions of language legislation, but the nature of le-

gislation means that they also inevitably include provisions, which can be described as notifying and cautionary, and finally also penalty regulations. In spite of this, linguists will not stop emphasizing that the main resources for work in the field of linguistic culture are and will remain cultural resources, especially persuasion, education and winning allies for care for a higher level of culture of standard written Slovak and its everyday use, especially in public.

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The Party of the Magyar Coalition (SMK) and the Act on the State Language

ÁBEL KRÁČ

The present amendment to our Act on the State Language evoked sharp reactions from the parties of the present political opposition and especially from the politicians in the Party of the Magyar Coalition (Strana maďarskej koalície – SMK) and the party Most (Bridge), which has broken away from it.

It is already necessary to say in introduction that the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic from 15 November 1995 no. 270/1995 Coll. and its present amendment do not prevent the Magyar minority using the Magyar language in the ways they have up to now. If this amendment changes the existing situation, then only in a positive sense in relation to the minorities, because it is well known that the minorities in the Slovak Republic have a higher than usual level of rights in comparison with other countries in the world. In spite of this, the SMK unleashed a storm of protests against the amendment. It is noteworthy that the other minorities do not see this act or its amendment as limitations of their minority rights. Only the SMK, or more precisely the leading politicians of the SMK, are attacking it, and in this way misleading their voters. Why is it so?

First, a general comment on the sanctions against violation of this act: Legislation is produced to achieve and secure order in society. The need for a new act or amendment of an existing act arises when deficiencies appear in existing legal norms, their effectiveness and observance. It is generally true that sanctions support the aim of an act and its observance, if necessary with enforcement. An act without sanctions is not an act, but only a non-binding and unenforceable declaration or expression of wishes. This was precisely the situation in the past with public use of the state language in Slovakia.

The results of the relaxation of attitudes to the mother tongue and to standard written Slovak have made it necessary to amend our Act on the State Language. The strictness of linguistic order has been relaxed as a result of the use of civil freedom. What was formerly understood as a sign of linguistic culture began to be rejected, even in the official sphere, as deadening of linguistic movement and development, or as an unnecessary burden on the work of language professionals in radio, television and writing for the general public. There were and still are also deficiencies in the teaching of the Slovak language in our schools.

However, weakening of the healthy relationship to the Slovak language is leading to deadening and loss of linguistic creativity, which was and is an important component of the developmental and source of the wealth of language. The linguistic preparedness and expressive resources of many public speeches

have worsened, grammar, style and vocabulary have been impoverished, and the sound of professional speech in the so-called media has worsened. However, the deterioration of linguistic culture can also be seen in other spheres of culture.

As is well known, the mother tongue is a great national treasure. The Slovak language was an important factor in our historical development, as a sign of national identity, unity and distinctness. If foreigners wanted to rule us, they always started with pressure on our language. In a well known period, the Slovak language was excluded from schools and culture. A foreign language – Magyar – was harshly forced on us. Age-old Slovak phenomena, place names and even personal names had to be written in a foreign orthography. Later, our Slovak language was declared to be a dialect of another language – Czech. Rejection of this manipulation was expediently described as bad purism and was politicized.

There are further serious facts testifying to the importance of language for the individual and society. These support the need for social supervision of the state of the language in public communications, especially in certain historical situations.

So why does our amendment to the Act on the State Language, which does not take anything away from anybody, provoke such sharp reactions, especially among domestic and foreign Magyar politicians? I will state the following points in connection with this question about the amendment to the act.

1. If the Magyar minority in Slovakia has a higher level of rights than is usual in Europe, as is the reality, why do they set the alarm bells ringing, why have they even organized international activities against our language act? This amendment confirms and even extends the existing state in the use of minority rights. Our other minorities do not feel linguistically threatened. This is certainly not because they value their languages less. However, in contrast to the public lecture programmes of some politicians from the SMK and actually also the new party Most, they do not pursue autonomist aims or any power-political interests.
2. The politicians of the SMK use the Magyar language as an instrument of political struggle, and by mixing the terms „state language” and “official language”, they are trying to gain for Magyar the status of second language of the Slovak Republic. Not long ago, the politicians from the SMK demanded that Magyar should be used as the second language of discussions in the Slovak Parliament. This is not possible or necessary in our situation.
3. The unacceptability of such a development and state also derives from the political attempts of minority politicians to bring about a return to the so-called Felvidék – with Slovakia as the mountainous part of Hungary. Precisely such a glossed over aim stands behind their attacks on the amendment to the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic. Although they outwardly ar-

gue for the existing status quo in the sphere of language, it does not really suit them. Therefore they are organizing this language „march.” It could be more effective than the march of the Magyar Guards, the activity of Jobbik, the effect of the institutions of Magyar counties and so on, because it could more easily gain the support of the world.

4. In the eyes of aggressive Magyar politicians, the Slovak Republic is the weakest link in the chain, preventing the renewal of „Greater Hungary.” This is already no secret. This is why they are using the amendment to the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic as an opportunity to weaken the position of Slovakia and provoke a developmental dynamic in this way. They are inspired by the example of Kosovo.
5. Conditions for the easier achievement of these aims were formed by the first amendment of the Act on the State Language, which abolished sanctions for violations, and by the Act on the Use of Minority Languages from 10 July 1999, which created a new „status quo” compared to the previous situation. It is again necessary to emphasize that our present amendment generously respects this.
6. We recently unjustifiably and disadvantageously extended this „status quo” or the SMK idea of the „status quo” by passing the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on place names in the school text books of the Magyar minority. We created a controversy, which the SMK and Most are systematically using in pursuit of their aims.
7. Paragraph 5, section 7 of the present amendment justifiably and without any discrimination against minorities, secures the right of every citizen of the Slovak Republic to understand text. The act decrees that in harmony with paragraph 1, sections 1 and 2, inscriptions on monuments and memorial tablets will be given first in the state language – Slovak, and only then in the minority language.
8. The Act on the State Language ensures that officials in the state administration and health service staff are not legally required to know the minority language, but it does not prohibit the use of the minority language in official and working situations, if the need arises and it is possible.
9. The Act on the State language also ensures that every citizen of the Slovak Republic can learn the Slovak language, so that this is also secured for citizens, who declare membership of the Magyar minority. This secures equality, equal positions and the possibility of equal application of all citizens everywhere in the Slovak Republic. This is the opposite of discrimination. It is state protection of the linguistic minority.
10. The linguistic situation in southern Slovakia is our permanent problem. The dominance of the Magyar language is systematically applied there, and the

Slovaks are linguistically lost. They are involuntarily Magyarized. It is impossible to communicate in Slovak in some villages in southern Slovakia. However, the south is an integral part of the Slovak Republic, like any other part of our territory, and the Slovaks living there are twice as numerous as those declaring the Magyar language. Therefore, our Act on the State Language also secures the integrity and sovereignty of the Slovak Republic and the right of Slovak speaking citizens not to suffer linguistic discrimination in any part of the territory of their state, just as the members of the national minorities do not suffer discrimination. The act ensures that citizens of Slovakia, who declare membership of the Magyar minority, but statistically include non-Magyars, have the freedom to participate in every situation in the whole territory of the Slovak Republic. We know that this has not been true in practice up to now. It is not true even among the students at Slovak universities!

11. In connection with our Act on the State Language, it is necessary to mention how others understand the linguistic sphere, including our civil and political models. For example, in France, it is unthinkable for a French citizen not to know the French language. An applicant for French citizenship must prove knowledge of the French language. In Germany, German is the state language, in the USA only English. President B. Obama has strictly rejected the possibility of official public communication, for example, in Spanish. The prime minister of Australia recently expressed a very strict position on the language question. A member of the Slovak minority in Hungary is never allowed to have an interpreter in an office.
12. Legislation similar to our Act on the State Language is found in other states including Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Austria, Slovenia, Sweden, Italy and Great Britain. Opponents of our Act on the State Language use false arguments with examples from the world, for example, from Switzerland. Switzerland originated from the will of three or four cultural units by the union of their territories in the Swiss Confederation. Switzerland did not originate by the mixing of populations. The cultural and linguistic units preserve their languages, but consciously and deliberately declare themselves Swiss. They do not take any steps leading to assimilation, destabilization, domination of the majority, discrimination against minorities or the break up of Switzerland. The Swiss are a political nation.
13. It is also necessary to point to deficiencies in these areas in the book by Béla Bugár *Žijem v takej krajine* (I live in such a country, published first in Magyar, then in Slovak) from 2004. This book convinces the reader that the strategic program of B. Bugár is similar to the program of the present SMK, so that the SMK and Most will support each where strategic aims are concerned. Their re-

actions to the incident with King Stephen or more precisely with the President of Hungary, and their attitudes to the Mayor of Komárno testify to this.

I consider that the facts given here are already enough to explain and sufficiently justify why we passed the Act on the State Language and why we had to do it. There is no good reason for grumbling and struggle against this act, no acceptable reason for complaining to the world, no rational reason for stimulating resistance among members of the Magyar minority, because only its politicians and their patrons in Hungary are trying to make us into enemies and oppressors. For their own political aims, they want to gain support in the world by slandering the Slovak Republic and the Slovaks and spreading direct falsehoods, to find a way to destabilize the Slovak Republic, so that they can achieve their strategic aim of at least autonomy, Magyarization of the majority population in the mixed southern regions of the Slovak Republic, manoeuvring Slovakia and the Slovaks into the position of the former Felvidék. The reason for the revolution against the Act on the State Language is that this act blocks the way to these aims.

Does the latest incident with the unveiling of the statue of King Stephen, an attempt at a further signal that southern Slovakia is not the territory of a sovereign state, and the scandal over the co-patrons of Europe Sts. Cyril and Methodius at Komárno, not also fit into such a program?

The Danger of extremist Videofilms and Views on Internet Pages and Computer Games¹

VILIAM JABLONICKÝ

Markíza television news and specifically teletext from 9 December 2008 reported under the title *Flags are again burning on the Internet* otherwise rather neglected and unanalysed information that „various Magyar videoclips of burning of the Slovak flag have appeared on the Internet. They also include a simulation of the destruction of Bratislava by an atomic bomb.” Similar settling of „accounts” with opponents has appeared in other European countries, and the motif of the symbolic and simulated destruction of the other by atomic bomb was not new or original in the virtual or film arenas in Europe, although the original inspiration comes from elsewhere. The background of the extremism was partly uncovered by another part of the report: „In recent years, a period of sharpened Slovak-Magyar relations, various videoclips with nationalist content have appeared on the Internet. A video of an unknown band vulgarly insulting the student of Magyar nationality Hedviga Malinová,² who fabricated an ethnic hate attack according to the police, recently provoked controversy. The band also called for killing of a representative of the opposition Party of the Magyar Coalition (SMK). The police are investigating the case.” The report concluded with the statement that: „After the 2006 parliamentary elections, Slovak diplomacy condemned videoclips in which extremists burnt Hungarian flags.” However, the report did not state how the government authorities of Hungary dealt with similar and much more widespread extremist expressions, and not only in videofilms and clips, against non-Magyars, that is against others on their domestic soil.

In essence, it is possible to agree with the starting points and conclusions of the appeal of some intellectuals: *We live in a common country* (2008), which was published in the Slovak media and on Internet pages:³ „We regard national, ethnic, racial and religious extremism as the detonators of violence and terrorism. Therefore, it is necessary to look behind doors already at the beginning

¹ The author presented the original outline version of this text at a working scientific seminar with international participation *Symbióza médií a politiky* (*Symbiosis of the media and politics*) on 11 December 2008 at the Department of Journalism of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Constantine the Philosopher at Nitra.

² Legal and judicial investigation of her case, which evoked extraordinary agitation, political and media polemics, was still unfinished at the time this text was written in 2009.

³ *Žijeme v spoločnej krajine*: www.conservativinstitut.sk; Konzervatívny inštitút M. R. Štefánika 9 Dec 2008.

regardless of whether it is of domestic origin, an import or and export.” (Underlined by the author).

Around the end of November 2008 – A time of sharpening of Slovak-Magyar and Magyar-Slovak relations, I saw on the pages of www.kuruc.info a very one sided, tendentious and accusing seven minute video-film in English with the title: *Magyar Minority Rights in Slovakia* (video).⁴ There was apparently also a Magyar language version. According to the records, the film was installed in the Internet system *You Tube* on 15 November 2008 at 21.12. When I wanted to see it again on 10 December 2008, only the information in English: „We’re sorry. This video is no longer available,” appeared on the website www.kuruc.info. Information about what led to its withdrawal, apparently against the will of its authors and publishers is not available to the reader of the Internet site in English. However, we can assume that it happened as a result of various discussions between the top political representatives of Slovakia and Hungary in 2008, with the aim of solving and reconciling the tensions in mutual relations. Before its withdrawal, it was certainly seen by hundreds, if not thousands of visitors to the Internet site, and it unobjectively deformed their knowledge, especially if they were young visitors without deeper knowledge of the historical context, or of interpretations from the other, accused, that is exclusively Slovak side.

The whole website www.kuruc.info is characterized by constant spreading and deepening of nostalgia for the time before the allegedly unjustified and unjust international historical injustice, which caused the loss of historic „Magyar” territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary after 1918. The tendentious seven minute film *Magyar Minority Rights in Slovakia*, which was skilfully and professionally made from the point of view of form, also begins with images and quotations intended to document everything the Magyars suffered at the hands of one of the neighbouring nations, namely the Slovaks. It begins with Trianon, then the film continues with a clear chain of distorted historic events: the loss of civil rights by Magyars in Slovakia after 1945, without mention of the fact that this was temporary and short-term or of the historical causes, the taking of three villages near Bratislava after the Second World War, then a jump to the present “struggle of the Magyars in Slovakia”, the case of Hedviga Malinová and the intervention of the police against the radical „fans” at the DAC Dunajská Streda – Slovan Bratislava football match in 2008. There was no mention that the police intervened against angry fans from both sides and approximately equal numbers from each side were temporarily arrested. The linear structure of the minifilm naturally contains no mention of the dramatic historical relations between the Magyars, the Slovaks and the other nations, which practically involved the taking away of various ba-

⁴ www.kuruc.info: Magyar Minority Rights in Slovakia (video).

sic rights of the Slovaks, Rumanians, Serbs, Ruthenians and Croats before 1918, the brutal denationalization by Magyarization, which made some foreign experts, for example, the Norwegian winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature Björnsterne Björnson and the Scottish historian Seton Watson, describe the Kingdom of Hungary as a prison of nations, or the internationally rejected act of the Vienna dictat or so-called arbitration of 1938, which forcibly detached the territory of southern Slovakia and its mixed population from the rest of the country as a continuation of the unjust Munich dictat, which was annulled after the Second World War. It appears that the picture and text aspects of the short film one-sidedly depict the complex history of the relations between the two neighbouring nations, attributing injustices to only one side. It gives the impression that the Magyars are entirely innocent victims of the absolute and irreparable injustices inflicted on them by others.⁵ The tendentious schematization will scarcely be noticed by the uninformed visitor, who does not know the present situation from at least two different media sources from Slovakia, from Hungary or from abroad. This is precisely the danger of its strongly emotional subliminal and subconscious demand for solution of the allegedly obvious injustices, which one small nation and state has committed against a larger and historically „more rooted” nation. The shortened dimension of one-sided interpretation may provoke also in the interest of establishing a new, higher pseudo-justice and pseudo-truth, perhaps, for example, the need for entry to the radically oriented Magyar Guards and other growing and still only formally suppressed para-military groups, which are banned in Hungary according to the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947. If the film and text were deliberately made in English, to tendentiously inform the foreign public about the „new injustices,” the Slovaks are „repeatedly” inflicting on their Magyar neighbours. It is certainly not the only such action and this certainly has its consequences, as can be perceived from some conversations with Polish and Magyar intellectuals and journalists. It is possible to ask, whether similarly one-sided views have not influenced some more recent, opinion forming international publications, so far without wider critical and scientific reflection, external examination or general discussion. See, for example, the new German *Mayers grosses Länderlexikon*⁶ 2009, which, in spite of its subtitle „*Know, experience and understand all the countries in the world,*” contains a tendentious sub-chap-

⁵ The author of this article rejected the one-sided vision of themselves as an innocent and superior historical and cultural nation, the exclusive victim of modern history and all the neighbours including the Slovaks, in a polemic and critical review of a probably self-published shortened version of the book of a secondary school history teacher of Magyar nationality from Košice, distributed to some libraries in Slovakia and available on the Internet (Zoltán Balassa: Editura Matthias Corvinus, Buffalo – Toronto, 2004, 124 pages. See: Viliam Jablonický: Dva národy v jednej domovine [Two nations in one homeland]: Zoltán Balassa. In: Historický zborník, 2006, year 16, no. 1-2, p. 233-238).

⁶ *Mayers grosses Länderlexikon*. Alle Länder der Erde kennen, erleben, verstehen. Bibliographisches Institut & F. A. Brockhaus AG, Mannheim 2009 EDCBA. Printed in Spain. www.mayers.de Detailed bibliographical data: <http://dnb.ddb.de>

ter *Unterdrückung des Ungarischen* (Suppression of the Magyar language) in the chapter on Slovakia, as well as objective information and illustrations. According to this pub-chapter, there is „strong limitation of the use of minority languages” against the background of a revived Slovak effort to strengthen „their own national culture.” Allegedly the nationality conflict „has sharpened in recent times because of quarrels over language. It strengthened from 2007, when restraint towards the Magyars living in Slovakia was abandoned.”⁷ This is a great and very tendentious simplification for a supposedly scientific encyclopedia, which should observe one of the main principles of provision of information, namely truth and objectivity.

The above mentioned website www.kuruc.info at least temporarily included several videofilms, which aimed to prove the onesidedness of the intervention of the Slovak police against the Magyar „football fans” and numerous visitors at the DAC Dunajská Streda – Slovan Bratislava match. Before, during and after the match, some of the Magyar fans symbolically displayed banners and maps recalling the „unjust” division of the historic Kingdom of Hungary, in their view an ethnic Magyar state, by the Treaty of Trianon, against the background of the anniversary of Munich and of the Vienna dictat or arbitration. However, from the „balance” of the videofilms, it is not possible to identify the violence of Slovak police, as one-sidedly reported in Hungary verbally and by the media. The police sat in helmets and watched the match. In another shot, they push fans out of the stadium. There are also scenes of treating the wounded and smoke rising over the spectators...

However, in various ways the website www.kuruc.info shows strong and incurable nostalgia for the so-called Great and historic Hungary. It is perceived not only through the specific title *Anti-Magyarism*, through a symbolic depiction *Magyarok Fája* (Magyar headaches), with a map of the historic Kingdom of Hungary on which a tree grows from the south in the present territory of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, to the north, now the territory of Slovakia. It directly refers to the radical rightist party Jobbik, which is not represented in the Hungarian Parliament, but already has seats in the European Parliament. Jobbik uses suggestive resources to revive „Greatness,” with direct and indirect expression of the vision of a revived Greater Hungary. The link to the website www.kultura.jobbik.hu is clearly readable. Below and in front of a map of pre-Trianon Hungary overlapping with the Slovak (and former Upper Hungarian) cross with two pairs of arms, is the shadow of a thinking and diligently studying student. Another link leads to a further symbolic page of allegedly „wounded and humbled” but proud Magyarodom: www.turulbolt.hu.⁸

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ www.kuruc.info Description of the home page and links from 9 Dec 2008: www.kultura.jobbik.hu, www.turulbolt.hu

A report in English: *US Nazi Leader talks about Barack Obama*, placed there on 23 November 2008 at 12.44, betrays even more about the extreme ideological orientation of the whole Magyar website www.kuruc.info. According to a reference on www.wikinews.org, their kindred group: „The National Socialist Movement is according to its website the largest and most active Nazi party in the United States.” Obama is allegedly initiating great changes in the USA, as their Commander and leader Jeff Schoep states in the apparently innocent title: *Why is Obama good for our Movement*.⁹ It is noteworthy that the program article begins and ends under Nazi symbols with repeated swastikas on a background with the American flag and at the end also with Hitler!

How the extremism on apparently marginal Internet sites with extreme and extremist videofilms is connected with the political and social reality of the whole country, is very critically depicted in the article *Hungary's Anti-Romany Agitation* in the Austrian weekly *Die Furche*, which has not been published up to now in other European countries.¹⁰ The sub-title is even more eloquent: „The Magyar Guard demands a greater Hungary, inveighs against the Romany and other minorities – and their agitation is falling on fertile ground.”¹¹ The photograph above the article is already a warning. It shows numerous black uniformed Magyar Guards threateningly marching under their symbolic red and white striped „Arpádian” flags through a village or small town, accompanied at a distance by an excited group of adolescents, perhaps future candidates to join the guard, also with a Hungarian flag. They are also accompanied at the side by guards in green uniforms, identical to the uniforms of the unit, which laid memorial wreaths at Veľké Kapušany in Slovakia and in Dunajská Streda at the time of the football match, to commemorate „unjust Trianon” and the seventieth anniversary of the Vienna dictat, which brought a temporary „correction of the injustice.” In the description of the photograph we read: „The «Magyar Guards» [the author Ozsváth put them in quotation marks] have been marching through villages and parts of towns with a high proportion of Romany, for a year. Molotov cocktails fly and the law of the fist prevails...”

The reporter from the Austrian weekly describes one propagandist action of the extreme rightists. „Here is the centre of Hungary,” said Captain István

⁹ www.wikinews.org : Why is Obama good for our Movement.

¹⁰ Stephan Ozsváth: Ungarns Anti-Roma-Hetzer. Die „Ungarische Garde” fordert ein Gross-Ungarn, wettet gegen Roma und andere Minderheiten – und ihre Hetze fällt auf fruchtbaren Boden. Die Furche. Die österreichische Wochenzeitung 40/2. October 2008, year 64, p. 26.

¹¹ The author of this article has prepared a translation and commentary for one of the Slovak weeklies, and has pointed it out to some other European media, politicians and intellectuals. See: JABLONICKÝ, Viliam: Varovanie z Rakúska: Iredentizmus, rasizmus a nacizmus v Maďarsku ohrozuje civilizovanú Európu (A warning from Austria: Irredentism, racism and Nazism in Hungary threatens civilized Europe). In: Literárny (dvoj)tyždenník, 2009, year 22, no. 5-6, 11 Feb 2009, p. 15.

Demeter into a microphone, although the small town of Szarvas, a place, which had a numerous Slovak minority until not long ago, is situated only 70 km from the Rumanian frontier on the eastern edge of the state. Clearly, he was stating an irredentist „historic claim” to Rumanian territory. He was calling for a change of frontiers, which repeatedly led to war in the 20th century. The Austrian journalist observes that the captain of the para-military unit clearly referred to the period „before the First World War, when Transylvania, Vojvodina, Slovakia and part of Ukraine belonged to Hungary.” Captain Demeter emphasizes: „If God wills it, we Magyars will again be united,” that is in a common greater Magyar state with pre-Trianon frontiers, which all the nations of the former Kingdom of Hungary rejected because of the brutal suppression of the most basic national and nationality rights.

The Austrian correspondent regards this method of spreading the already widespread irredentism and extremism as a result of the establishment of the Magyar Guard in 2007 as an offshoot of the party Jobbik, a name with the cunning propagandist meanings of „better” and „more rightist.” S. Ozsváth experienced them on the Castle Hill in Budapest. Hundreds of „Guardists” – right-wing extremist „goys” came on motorcycles with shaved heads, *White-power* t-shirts and provocative Nazi views. Surprisingly, they were accompanied not only by people from the middle classes, but also by members of the political „elite” from the present opposition in Hungary.

As S. Ozsváth writes, the Magyar Guard and other para-military groups are ever more frequently marching through villages and districts where Romany live. They curse the „criminality of the Gypsies” and call for the segregation of Romany children in schools. The leader of the Guards, Gábor Vona, aged 30, is a member of Jobbik. In the elections they gained 2%, but they have already won seats on local councils in Debrecen, the third largest city in Hungary and elsewhere. However, they find support mainly in the student environment! Right-wing extremist views are suddenly becoming mainstream in Hungary.

Nazi views are spreading on the online portal You Tube. According to the correspondent, the most important Magyar rightist rock group *Kárpátia* fills whole stadiums. Other groups, as we know, travel to give concerts and spread extreme „ideals” of racism, irredentism and Nazism beyond the frontiers with impunity – in Slovakia, Rumania, Serbia, Ukraine, Croatia and perhaps also Slovenia and Austria.¹²

According to Ozsváth, the sociologist Tamás Pál estimates the electoral potential of the extreme right at 12%: „They are men aged about 30, who had great illusions before the political change and these have not been fulfilled.”

¹² Ibidem.

They not only hold intimidating marches through the streets, they also throw Molotov cocktails and „attack Jews and people who think differently.” The Hungarian ombudsman for minorities Ernő Kállai regards the attacks on Romany and Jews as a „search for scapegoats, which has wide support in society.” He compares this situation to the 1930s, when units of the SA in their brown shirts marched through German cities and carried out brutal purges of people who thought differently. However, so far his warnings to Magyar politicians about the „dangerous development and the need to stop it” have brought no results.

The proposals of the socialists in the Budapest parliament for a stricter ban or least restriction of extremism by law has been blocked by the rightist conservative potential winner of the next elections: Fidesz with its leader Viktor Orbán. As S. Ozsváth reports, the Hungarian Parliament recently supported an act similar to that of Germany, but the President of Hungary László Sólyom rejected it, because of alleged inconsistency with the Hungarian Constitution. According to the Constitutional Court, such an act is opposed to the right to freedom of speech and views. S. Ozsváth replies that here they are apparently defending the freedom of expression of the individual, but already not of the larger society and of minority or „weaker,” which need protection against verbal or physical violence.

S. Ozsváth points out that the causes of Magyar extremism extend far beyond the limits of Hungary. He mentions critical views from the environment of representatives of minorities, for example, the chairman of the Hungarian Jewish Society Péter Feldmajer or the initiator of the anti-extremist act, socialist member of parliament Tamás Suchmann, who criticizes the present state and points to the fact that extreme rightists were gaining predominance in Hungary and can „freely” hold „extreme views, which the whole of civilized Europe rejects.” Rejection of the act against incitement (Hassreden) is an invitation to, at least, anti-Semitic and anti-Romany incitement. In the absence of such an act, it is possible to „accuse Jews and Romany publicly and with impunity” as well as other nations and nationalities, including the Slovaks, who are also exposed to continual chauvinist pressure from extremists in Hungary.¹³

The Croatian journalist Slavenka Drakulić, on the basis of the dramatic and painful experience of the Balkan nations in recent times, has generalized the conclusions from the wars there. Originally „only” extreme and extremist political, media and virtual struggle became real and „hot” with all the tragic consequences for the population: „It is not possible to start a war without propaganda. First you must psychologically prepare people. If you are to kill people you do not know, they must convince you that they are your enemies by brainwashing

¹³ Ibidem.

through the media. In Yugoslavia, they prepared us with nationalist propaganda for at least five years.”¹⁴

A similar warning has come from German intellectuals and humanitarian and peace groups, which have observed that virtual war games on computers and the Internet can lead to serious lowering of the threshold of resistance to violence and to direct preparation for real wars. The Cologne appeal against violence in computers was published by the weekly *Zeit-Fragen* under the title: *How does war come into the head and into the heart? Cologne appeal against computer violence.*¹⁵

Internet spreading of often radical, unobjective, tendentious and chauvinist videofilms, views and articles leads to dangerous hatred of one group against another, which is sometimes misused by populist and unscrupulous politicians, who will use any excuse, falsification and distortion of reality to gain the support of the voters. This is clearly also the case with the tendentious interpretations of the amendment of the Act on Slovak as the State Language of the Slovak Republic valid from 1 September 2009.¹⁶ It is possible to progress from verbal exchanges and misinterpretation to uncontrolled media exchanges and deeper conflict between wider groups, even between whole nations and states. Such a development needs to be prevented by all humanitarian, intellectual, diplomatic, political and international legal means.

¹⁴ Slavenka Drakulić: V Chorvátsku sú gangstri smotánkou spoločnosti. Popieranie pravdy je na Balkáne stále bežné (In Croatia gangsters are the cream of society. Denial of the truth is still usual in the Balkans). In: SME, 13 Dec 2008, p. 10.

¹⁵ Zeit-Fragen. Wochenzeitung für freie Meinungsbildung, Ethik und Verantwortung für die Bekräftigung und Einhaltung des Völkerrechte: Wie kommt der Krieg in die Köpfe – und in die Herzen? Kölner Aufruf gegen Computergewalt. 50/8. December 2008, year 16, p. 1.

¹⁶ Pavol Dinka: Zápas o slovenčinu. Novela jazykového zákona. Pravda a lži (Struggles over the Slovak language. The amendment of the Language Act. Truth and lies). B. m. Political Science Department of Matica slovenská 2009, 207 pages.

The Act on the State Language in the Context of International Law

MAREK MIHÁLIK

How does international law look at the right of the state to have a state language? Some theories regard the state language as a sign of the sovereignty of the state, as a result of which this question is made untouchable, because the principle of international law on respect for sovereignty of the state and on non-intervention, together with the sovereign equality of states, makes this question part of the principles of sovereignty. Absolutization of this theoretical approach is „perpetuated” in decisions of the European Court for Human Rights, which decided in two cases against Latvia (Mentzen 7 Dec 2004, Kuharec 7 Dec 2004) and one case against Ukraine (Bulgakov 11 Sept 2007) with verdict no. 59894/00: „A language is not in any sense an abstract value. It cannot be divorced from the way it is actually used by its speakers. Consequently, in adopting the national language, the State undertakes, in principle, to guarantee its citizens the right to use that language both to impart and to receive information, without hindrance not only in their private lives, but also in their dealings with public authorities. In the Court’s view, it is first and foremost from this perspective that measures intended to protect a given language must be considered. In other words, implicit in the notion of an official language is the existence of certain subjective rights for the speakers of that language. Consequently, in the majority of cases, it may be accepted that a measure intended to protect and promote a national language corresponds to the protection of the «rights and freedoms of others,» within the meaning of Article 8 § 2 of the Convention. Furthermore, the authorities, especially the national courts, are in principle in a better position than the international judge to give an opinion on the need for interference in such a sensitive area.“

It is clear that the intervention of the state in private life by setting linguistic demands pursues a legitimate aim, namely that of protecting the rights of others to a national language. The same argument of the legitimacy of intervention is also present in the case of freedom of expression, which is guaranteed by article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Basic Freedoms. On 7 December 2004, the European Court for Human Rights stated in the decision „Mentzen” against Latvia (no. 71074/01): „The Court further notes that most of the Contracting States have chosen to accord one or more languages the status of official language or State language and have recorded them as such in their respective Constitutions. That being so, the Court acknowledges that the official language is, for these States, one of the fundamental constitutional values in the same way as the national territory, the organisational structure of

the State and the national flag.“ Therefore protection of the state language is the protection of a constitutional value, and article 6 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic says that the state language of the Slovak Republic is the Slovak language. Thus, the European Court for Human Rights already stated in 2004 that if a state has a state language anchored in its constitution, then it is a basic constitutional value on the level of the state territory. The European Court for Human rights says that the state has a duty to guarantee the provision of information in the state language, not only in private life, but also in contact with the public authorities.

For comparison we will state that in 2001 Hungary adopted an act, which regulates the use of language in advertising, commercial signs and announcements of public interest. This act does not concern only economic, but also non-economic signs accessible to the public, where, in contrast to economic signs, no language other than Magyar is allowed. Only communities, where minority autonomy exists, are exceptions, and only in relation to the language of the minority with minority autonomy in the community. If we would like to use, for example, English or German in written announcements of a cultural activity or organization in the territory of a community with no autonomous organization of the minority using this language, then we will violate article 3 of this act. The use of English is entirely excluded, because no minority using English exists in Hungary. On 19 January 2009, the Constitutional Court of Hungary decided that the demand to use the Magyar language in economic advertising does not belong to the requirements of article 61 of the Hungarian Constitution, because here it is more a matter of protection of the consumer in the context of sale and purchase of goods (473/B/2005 AB határozat). The whole approach of the explanation of the Constitutional Court of Hungary begins by clarifying the relationship of advertising to article 61 of the Constitution of the Hungarian Republic: „In the framework of checking some provisions of the Act on Commercial Advertising, the Constitutional Court in its decision 1270/B1997 stated that commercial advertising is the sort of information that is subject to protection according to article 61 section 1 of the constitution (ABH 2000, 713, 716; confirmed: resolution of the Constitutional Court 794/B/1999, ABH 2004, 1379, 1382: resolution of the Constitutional Court 483/B/2006, ABH 2007, 1994, 1998). However, at the same time, it was stated that the Constitutional Court grants increased protection to freedom of expression mainly as the essential means of expression for the individual, for the free development of his personality, and to assist the participation of the individual in democratic society. However, commercial advertising is not connected with these basic values of freedom of opinion, because its aim is to support sales and use of goods and not to enable participation in democratic dialogue. It follows from this, that in the case of information of a commercial

character, the possibility of state limitations and interventions can be qualified as constitutional to a much larger extent (ABH 2000, 713 718).” The Hungarian Constitutional Court divides democratic dialogue from promotion of goods and services: „The conclusions stated above are also authoritative for shop signs, the main aim of which is the promotion of particular goods and services, and not support for participation in democratic dialogue.” The decision of the Hungarian Constitutional Court concludes: „With regard for the fact that the obligations flowing from Grűft [author’s note: Grűft is the legislative abbreviation for the Act no. 96/2001 on the publication of commercial advertising, shop signs and some notices of public interest in the Magyar language] can be fulfilled by displaying advertising in the Magyar language, does not prevent businesses conceiving advertising in another language. Freedom of expression is not affected by having to use the Magyar language at the same time. As a result it is possible to state that there is no constitutionally provable connection between the regulations subject to objection and article 61 section 1 of the constitution.” Is this decision consistent with the principles for assessing freedom of expression in accordance with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as followed by the Human Rights Committee of the UN in 1993, in case „Ballantyne” v. Canada, when it stated that economic advertising is a matter of freedom of expression according to article 19 of the MPOPP? – „11.3 Under article 19 of the Covenant, everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right may be subjected to restrictions, conditions for which are set out in article 19, paragraph 3. The Government of Quebec has asserted that commercial activity such as outdoor advertising does not fall within the ambit of article 19. The Committee does not share this opinion. Article 19, paragraph 2, must be interpreted as encompassing every form of subjective ideas and opinions capable of transmission to others, which are compatible with article 20 of the Covenant, of news and information, of commercial expression and advertising, of works of art, etc.; it should not be confined to means of political, cultural or artistic expression. In the Committee’s opinion, the commercial element in an expression taking the form of outdoor advertising cannot have the effect of removing this expression from the scope of protected freedom. The Committee does not agree either that any of the above forms of expression can be subjected to varying degrees of limitation, with the result that some forms of expression may suffer broader restrictions than others.“ However, in Hungary they have adopted a different course. They decided to remove state regulation of the Magyar language in economic advertising, that is the obligation to use the Magyar language in advertising, from the protection of article 61 of the Constitution of the Hungarian Republic, because they do not see a connection between the freedom of expression guaranteed by article 61 if the Hungarian constitution

and use of the Magyar language in economic advertising. We also recall that in 2001, the Hungarian Constitutional Court abolished the right of reply, allegedly because of unforeseeable results. However, on 5 July 2005 the European Court of Human Rights approved the right to reply in the case of „Melnyčuk” against Ukraine, for cases of plurality of views and not only to correct inaccurate facts, especially in matters of literary and political discussion, as an inherent element of freedom of expression. The right to reply was placed under article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Basic Freedoms.

Act no. 318/2009 Collection of Laws (Coll.), which amends and supplements Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic no. 270/1995 Coll. on the State Language of the Slovak Republic not only requires that citizens of the Slovak Republic must have the right to receive and provide information in public life, but also that obstacles to the use of minority languages in public communication according to the existing text of the Act on the State Language, must be removed. For example, in 2006, the First Evaluation Report of the committee of experts of the Council of Europe for implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages observed that health care facilities in territories with a sufficient number of members of national minorities, should enable communication with patients and clients in the minority language, even if the client understands the state language.

It is also noteworthy that hardly any of the critics of the amendment to the Act on the State Language have noticed a change in favour of the minority languages, at the expense of the demand for comprehensibility in the state language, in local and regional radio for the national minorities. At most, they regard this change only as adoption of the European standard (member of parliament Á. Bíró), or they appreciate this change but still ask the President of Slovakia not to sign the act, as in the case of the Round Table of Magyars in Slovakia. The High Commissioner of the OBSE for national minority questions Knut Vollebaek did not appreciate this change. In his assessment from 2 July 2009, he mentioned it only as an exception to the linguistic regulation of broadcasting, without describing the text of this exception and counting it as a provision friendly to minorities. There are countries where broadcasting in minority languages is conditional on agreement from the government as in Flanders, or of a regulating body as in Walloon. Fulfillment of the obligation in article 11, section 1 sub-section b) point ii of the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages. Up to 1 September 2009, the text of article 5 section 4 of the act violated this obligation: „(4) Broadcasting by regional or local television stations, radio stations and radio facilities shall use the state language. Other languages may be used before or after broadcasting of a given program in the state language.” The amendment to the Act on the State Language brought a new ad-

justment here: namely that radio broadcasts to the whole state have to be in the state language, but regional and local radio broadcasts intended for members of national minorities are entirely without translation requirements. It is necessary to note that such an obligation applied to the Slovak Republic from 1 January 2002, when the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages became valid in Slovakia. For almost 8 years, during part of which the Party of the Magyar Coalition was in the government, none of the political representatives of the Magyar national minority were concerned that the possibility of free radio broadcasting was not secured by legislation. These representatives have not expressed their views on this question even during the present campaign against the amendment to the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic.

The Need for an Amendment to the Act on the State Language

ELENA KAČALOVÁ

In the first part of my paper, I would like to inform you about the reasons, which led the Ministry of Culture to the amendment of the Act on the State Language, and in the second part I will summarize the changes introduced by the amendment in comparison with the version of the act valid up to 1 September 2009.

The Ministry of Culture decided on the amendment to the Act on the State Language mainly so that the act, which we have had in Slovakia since 1995, will not be only a formal declaration, but a functioning legal norm, which really applies in social practice, as it should.

The aim of the amendment was not to change the basic rules on use of the state language in public communication, because the rules as given in the original act secure the status of the Slovak language in the position of the state language in the territory of the Slovak Republic in a way, which is standard both from the point of view of international law and of similar legal norms in other countries.

In spite of the fact that in individual stages of its preparation the proposed amendment involved greater or lesser changes, the basic conception and meaning of the act from 1995 is still preserved after the amendment. Therefore, the Act on the State Language still secures the use of the Slovak language as the state language in public communication in the whole territory of the Slovak Republic and guarantees its primary and obligatory use in some legally designated spheres of social life. At the same time, it gives citizens a legal guarantee that important publicly accessible information will be available in the state language.

Presentation of the amendment was preceded by thorough investigation of the present legal position of the use of languages in Slovakia and analysis of the international documents directly or indirectly connected with the given problem. We wanted to make the Act on the State Language an organic part of the Slovak legal system, to ensure that its provisions are in harmony with international legal standards and correspond as far as possible to the needs of present-day society.

The duty of the Ministry of Culture to monitor observance of the Act on the State Language derives directly from the act. From 1 January 1997 to 1 September 1999, the Ministry of Culture could impose fines of up to 500,000 Slovak crowns on institutions or organizations, which violated provisions of the act.

The passing of Act no.184/1999 Coll. on the Use of the Languages of National Minorities, which came into force on 1 September 1999, removed the

provision of sanctions from the Act on the State Language. We note that it was the only intervention in the text of the Act on the State Language when the Act on the Use of the Languages of National Minorities was passed. This limited the supervision by the Ministry of Culture to written statements, in which the Ministry asked the responsible persons to end the illegal state. If the conflict with the act was not removed after such a request, the Ministry of Culture had no further instrument for enforcing a correction. In some serious cases, the Ministry of Culture sent repeated requests, but these still could not achieve a correction. The staff of the State Language Section of the Ministry of Culture made journeys to visit the mayors of communities in southern Slovakia, which persistently refused to make announcements on the communal radio in the Slovak language. During such discussions, they usually promised correction, but they actually did nothing to ensure observance of the act and continued to ignore their obligation to make information available to the public in the state language.

It is possible to say that after 1999 the Ministry of Culture found itself in the position of a supplicant, requesting the application of the existing legal norms mostly without success. In the event of persistent ignoring of the valid legal state, the Ministry of Culture could only report continuing violation of the law. It is clear that such a situation was intolerable, because the activity of a state institution with responsibility for carrying out tasks in a particular part of the state administration, cannot be limited to observing and collecting data about the violation of a legal norm without any possibility to contribute to correcting the situation. During the preceding period, it was clearly confirmed that an incomplete legal norm, that is norm without associated sanctions, ceases to fulfill its basic role, which is to direct social practice in a given field. In this situation, it ceases to be an act in the true sense of the word.

The Ministry of Culture obtained information about violations of the act mainly on the basis of initiatives and complaints from citizens. Citizens regularly informed us, for example, about the declining level of language in the electronic media, in the press and in books, lack of instructions in Slovak on some types of goods, and preference for English in places where Slovak should be used. However, most reports came from the linguistically mixed communities of southern Slovakia, where the Act on the State Language was repeatedly violated, mainly by broadcasting of announcements on communal radio only in the Magyar language or by the publication of written information, posters and other notices only in Magyar, without making them available in the state language. This also concerns various monuments and memorial tablets installed in the territory of the Slovak Republic, either entirely without text in the state language or with the text in Slovak considerably smaller and shorter, and placed below the inscription in Magyar.

The Ministry of Culture obtained a large proportion of its reports from telephone calls, in which citizens did not give their names or asked for them to be kept secret because of fear of the possible consequences.

To illustrate this, we will give at the end of this paper some extracts from letters from citizens to the Ministry of Culture in recent times, including citizens of Slovak nationality and members of national minorities living in Slovakia, asking for help in securing their basic right to access to information in the state language.

An important change brought by the amendment to the act is the reintroduction of sanctions as stated in the new article 9a. The new sanctions mechanism is arranged so that anyone, who violates the act will have the possibility to correct the situation without imposition of financial sanctions. After identifying a violation of the act, the Ministry of Culture is obliged to inform the offending person in writing and request correction of the violation within an appropriate time limit. The imposition of a penalty is threatened only if the responsible person or organization does not correct the illegal state by the deadline. In this way, the imposition of penalties is deliberately delayed, because the aim of the sanctions provision is mainly its preventive educational effect.

The Ministry of Culture can impose fines only on the institutions or organizations mentioned in § 9a section 1, which means that physical persons or ordinary citizens will not have to pay fines.

Article 9 on supervision has been reformulated in connection with the introduction of penalties for violations of the act. The precise rules according to which the officials of the Ministry of Culture will perform their supervision have been defined. Supervision of some provisions of the act will be shifted from the Ministry of Culture to other appropriate state authorities such as the: the *Slovak Commercial Inspection Service*, *Institute of Public Health*, *Institute of State Supervision of Veterinary Bio-preparations and Medicines*, *State Institute for Supervision of Medicines*, *State Veterinary and Food Administration*, which will supervise the use of the state language in the fields of consumer protection and commercial advertising. The *Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission* will supervise the sphere of the electronic media, while in judicial proceedings, supervision will be carried out by the chairmen of courts.

The amendment has added only one new obligation to the Act on the State Language. It concerns people installing monuments or memorial tablets. This obligation is anchored in the new section 7 of § 5. From 1 September 2009, anybody who wants to install a monument or memorial tablet must ask the Ministry of Culture for a binding statement, in which the ministry assesses the harmony of the texts on the monument or memorial tablet with the demands of the Act on the State Language. These concern the presence of Slovak text and its linguistic

level, the order of bi- or multi-lingual texts and their sizes. However, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic has no legal power to approve these inscriptions. The view of the ministry will serve only as information for the appropriate building office, which gives permission for the installation of monuments.

Apart from this provision, the amendment does not widen the already existing obligations. On the other hand, some obligations are actually removed from the text of the act. For example, the amended act does not contain an obligation to prove knowledge of the state language when being accepted for employment in state authorities, state organizations, local government and public service institutions, although the obligation to master and use the state language remains. The obligation of reporters, presenters and editors to use only the state language in radio and television broadcasting is also omitted and the act no longer imposes the obligation to prepare all Slovak technical in the state language.

An addition to § 3 section 1 has removed the obstacle to the use of other languages in official contact with foreign countries in international communication, and an addition to § 8 section 1 removed an obstacle to the application of European law in the field of free movement of goods by combining in the form of a reference to appropriate legal norms in the field of consumer protection, which enable the use of other languages, apart from the state language, and other designations, for example, graphic symbols and pictograms

In relation to the Czech language, which is regarded as a language fulfilling the demand of basic comprehensibility from the point of view of the state (Slovak) language, the existing state is relaxed to allow persons, whose mother tongue is Czech, to use the Czech language in communication with the public authorities, and to submit Czech language documents issued by the authorities of the Czech Republic.

The new version of the act is especially generous to the languages of the national minorities. The amendment introduces various changes in favour of the minority languages used in the territory of Slovakia, which widen the possibilities for their legal use compared to the existing situation. The following cases are involved:

- In regional and local radio broadcasting use of the languages of national minorities is allowed, including live broadcasting without the obligation to provide a translation in the state language (§ 5 section 1, sub-section b). Up to now, there was an obligation to broadcast the whole program in regional and local radio broadcasting in both the minority language and in the state language.
- Television broadcasting – by introducing a united regime, use of sub-titles is enabled in regional and local television broadcasting using the languages of the national minorities (§ 5 section 1, sub-section a). Live television broadcasting in the languages of national minorities is allowed with simultaneous

or consecutive translation into the state language (§ 5 section 1 sub-section j). Up to now, it was necessary to broadcast the whole program in regional and local broadcasting also in the state language without the possibility of using sub-titles. The act did not allow live broadcasting.

- Audio-visual works for children The obligation to dub audio-visual works for children aged up to 12 into Slovak is removed, if the work is broadcast in the framework of television in the languages of the national minorities (§ 5 section 2). Up to now, the obligation to dub into Slovak applied to all audio-visual works for children aged up to 12.
- Publication of occasional cultural materials: catalogues of galleries, museums, libraries; programs of cinemas, theatres and concerts is allowed in minority languages, if the text in the state language is also provided (§ section 5). Up to now such publications could appear only in the state language, and any text in a minority language could only be a translation from the state language.
- Cultural events of the national minorities can be presented firstly in the minority language and only secondarily in the state language (§ 5 section 6). The existing regulation enabling the whole event to be held only in the minority language, without translation into the state language, remains valid. Up to now there was an obligation to present cultural events of national minorities firstly in the state language.
- Original creation of texts for monuments and memorial tablets, advertising and notices intended for the public can be done in the languages of national minorities, if the text in the state language is also provided. The text in the minority language does not have to be a translation of an original text in the state language (§ 5 section 7 and § 8 section 6). Up to now these texts could be written only in the state language and text in other languages had to be a translation from the state language.
- Written documents. Legal employment contracts, financial and technical documentation, statutes of associations, societies, commercial companies and political parties and movements can be produced in minority languages (§ 8 sections 2 and 3). Up to now, these documents could be produced only in the state language.
- Communication by patients and clients in medical and social facilities is allowed in minority languages in communities, where a minority language is used in accordance with Act no.184/1999 Coll. on the Use of the Languages of National Minorities, even if the patients or clients also know the state language (§ 8 section 4). Up to now patients could communicate in the minority language only if they did not know the state language.
- Official communication. With reference to Act no.184/1999 Coll. on the Use of the Languages of National Minorities, some provisions of the Act on the State Language cannot come into conflict with the provisions of Act no. 184/

1999 Coll., which unambiguously guarantees respect for the use of minority languages in official communication, including the designation of streets and geographical names in the whole legal extent, as regulated by Act no. 184/1999 Coll. Up to now the Act on the State Language had a reference only to Act no. 191/1994 Coll on the Naming of Towns and Villages in the Languages of National Minorities. It did not contain a reference to the later Act no.184/1999 Coll., which could cause problems of interpretation, when considering the relationship between these two acts.

With these steps, the Slovak Republic is only continuing to secure a high standard of protection for the rights, which it continually provides for the national minorities living in its territory. However, apart from the maintenance and raising of the level of language rights for members of the national minorities, the regular functioning of the state also requires strengthening of the position of the state language as the unifying and integrating means of communication in the state. Therefore, it was necessary to pass an amendment to the Act on the State Language to secure respect for its valid provisions and to prevent violation of the basic civil rights of Slovak citizens. In the interests of preserving the essential balance between the legitimate interests, needs and rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and the equally legitimate interests, needs and rights of the majority national community and of the state, in the territory of which the national minorities live, it was really necessary to strengthen the effectiveness of the legal norm, which guarantees the use of the state language in basic fields of public communication in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

**Extracts from written initiatives and complaints from citizens
to the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic
in connection with violations of Act of the National Council
of the Slovak Republic no.270/1995 Coll. on the State Language
of the Slovak Republic as amended by later legal norms**

Letter from citizens of a village in the district of Dunajská Streda, 1999:

„In spite of various oral and written requests to the mayor of the village, that the announcements on village radio should also be in the Slovak language, this request from the Slovak community has not been taken into account. The citizens of Slovak nationality feel that they are victims of discrimination in their own state. As examples, we can mention exclusion from cultural and social events, announcements about interruptions to the electricity or water supply, vaccination of animals and so on. All announcements of this type cause harm to our property. I believe that you will help us to solve this situation in our village. ...

When the mayor read our complaint, an administrator began to speak to those present in Magyar. She ignored my request for communication in

Slovak. She did not react to my second request, in which I told her that we do not understand Magyar, and so cannot discuss our complaint in that language. Again, she did not accept my request and informed me that now she would talk with those who do understand Magyar. Only after she completed her monologue, could I ask a third time for discussions in the Slovak language... The mayor told her to secure broadcasting in both languages, but she refused with the statement that it would be necessary to end broadcasting completely, because she would not broadcast in both languages. I have never encountered such sharp discrimination and such arrogant approval of violation of the law. To make matters even worse, it happened in the communal government office with a person authorized by the mayor to take care of the observance of the orders of the local council and the legislation of the Slovak Republic. I ask you to intervene in this matter, to end the discrimination against us and ensure that the valid legislation of the Slovak Republic is observed. ...”

Letter from citizens of a town in the district of Komárno, 2005:

„The mayor of the town sent invitations and information about activities organized by our town only in the Magyar language. A similar approach sometimes occurs with town radio broadcasts, which are sometimes only in Magyar. I believe that you will understand that for inhabitants of the town, who do not know Magyar, it is an extremely unpleasant situation.”

(Note: According to the last census, people of Slovak nationality formed 45.5% of the population of this town.)

Letter from citizens of a village in the district of Trebišov, 2005:

„In this way I am turning to your office with a request for help in achieving our demands – announcement of information by the local communal radio in the state language – Slovak. We have not succeeded by the normal route because the mayor of the village did not accept requests. *(Note: As another part of the letter stated, there had been repeated oral and written requests addressed to the mayor and the communal government office.)* ... We find ourselves discriminated against as citizens of the Slovak Republic, who do not speak Magyar. The procedure of the communal office causes economic harm to us by increasing our living expenses. There are frequent interruptions of water or electricity supply, we are not informed about events in the village or about sale of goods in the village. We cannot provide ourselves with a stock of water for when the supply is interrupted. We do not restrict anybody with our request and we consider it something normal. We add that the mayor and his administrator know Slovak very well and it would be no problem for them. We thank you for your understanding and we believe that you will secure our request in harmony with the law.”

Letter from citizens of a town in the district of Komárno, 2004:

„Events held in and its surroundings are announced to us by posters and town news reports only in the Magyar language. The inhabitants of our town are about half Slovak and half Magyar in nationality. This situation deeply offends and humiliates us Slovaks. Therefore, we ask you to investigate the violations of the law and correct these things.”

Letter from citizens of a village in the district of Dunajská Streda, 2009:

„I have asked several times at the local office that the local radio should also be in Slovak, because I do not know Magyar. The third time, the mayor told me that they do not have money for an interpreter. I ask you, how is it possible that an office of the Slovak Republic refuses to give information in the Slovak language? You cannot imagine how bad I feel, when they begin to announce information and I cannot understand.”

The Fairytale Land of Hungary
OR
Fairytales are Proliferating round us

GREGOR PAPUČEK

Many people have probably already noticed that fairytales flourish in the Carpathian Basin. However, not the old Russian ones, but rather of a different, uniquely Magyar character, which you could scarcely find anywhere else in the world. Excuse me for starting in such an unusual, metaphorical way. The metaphor is said to belong to the realm of poetry, so perhaps it is a professional illness for me.

We are not concerned with botany here, but with verbal flowers, which are proliferating like mushrooms after rain, and they really swell our ears. If I click on www.Bumm.sk and immerse myself in the article with the title: *Pozsonyovó*, as the website jokingly calls Bratislava. The sub-title is: *According to Maďarič we lie wonderfully about the Language Act*. In the text we read that: „Marek Maďarič, minister of culture, is appealing to all the Magyar politicians in Slovakia to publicly renounce «their wonderful lies» about the new Language Act, which, he claims, they are even spreading abroad. According to the minister, the Language Act is in order.” If you continue to read the article, it is not enough to gasp for breath: Csáky refuses, Csáky objects, Csáky lectures... I do not know where apart from Slovakia, this would still be allowed. It is well known that many of our Magyar fellow citizens are inclined to wander to unbelievable extremes, somewhere in the realm of fairytales.

In August 2000, an article in the *Ludové noviny* under the surprising title: *Christ was a Magyar*, stunned us. It was not claimed by anybody other than the head of the Office of the State Administration of the capital city Budapest, Dr. László Grespik. This gentleman, also an amateur „historian,” claims that: „it should at last be clearly stated that the Magyars have their origin among the Sumerians, Scythians and Huns. The Hungarian royal crown was not gained by St. Stephen, but already by Attila, and so the Magyars are one of the oldest nations in Europe. Jesus was a Sumerian, and since the Magyars are also descendants of the Sumerians, there is no doubt that Jesus Christ is of Magyar and not Jewish origin.” This shows an inexhaustible wish for uniqueness, to be exceptional or chosen by God in some way.

The following story also shows an immense wish to be first in the world. On 25 May 2008, I received a whole collection of fairytales under the title: *Adam was the first Magyar according to the Magyar Bible* (Source: www.pravda.sk – ČK, from the original source: *Gazeta Wyborcza* 2008-05-10). From the

whole text, I choose only one extract: „According to the author of the Magyar Bible, Adam was the first Magyar. This is proved by his name, which has the archaic meaning «I gave.» He gave his rib, from which originated woman, humanity and all the Istváns, Sándors, Andrásés, Lajosés, Ilonás and Zuzannás.” The writer for the daily Gazeta Wyborcza also sees this as a sign of megalomania, when he ironically comments: „With such roots, it is difficult to be satisfied with an unjustly small Magyar state.”

Obviously, we Slovaks also have our fairytales, although not such „world-shaking” ones, and so we know that we can always derive some valuable lessons from them. We would look in vain for the above mentioned tale in the collection of Pavol Dobšínský, but if Adam and Eve were also our Biblical ancestors and allegedly they were Magyars, then it is strange that instead of learning Magyar, we are approving an act to protect Slovak. Should we not show respect for our Magyar ancestors by beginning to learn their language? In my view we could start with the easier „undoubtedly Magyar” words such as *korcsma, pálinka, kovács, kapa, kasza, gereblye, gerenda, asztal, ablak, káposzta, szalonka* and so on.

I cannot fail to mention the still often quoted text from the advice of King and St. Stephen to his son Imrich in the 11th century: „A country with one language and one custom is weak and fragile. Therefore, I advise you my dear son, to provide willingly for arriving people, to welcome them generously, so that they would rather stay with you than go elsewhere.” „This message is still topical today, in the period of the formation of a united Europe,” said President László Sólyom 970 years after its origin. He also quoted it. He immediately added that he devotes extraordinary attention „*to the Magyars living as a national minority* in the territories of other states, because none of the Magyars living in Hungary can imagine what it is like to be a minority in a state.” Therefore he says that he will always be concerned that the Magyars living beyond the frontiers are not denied the rights flowing from the constitution.

Such frequent quotations of the advice of St. Stephen to his son Imrich aims to present to the world the idea that indulgence and generosity towards the national minorities living in Hungary is deeply rooted in the Magyars. However, when we look more closely at the details of this effort, the needle of truth clearly emerges and the king stands naked before us.

A statue of St. Stephen, placed in the centre of Slovenský Komlós (Tótkomlós) in 2001 comes into my mind. Wherever we live, we have a Magyar statue or monument erected. The quotation: „Mert az egy nyelvű és egy szokású ország gyenge és esendő” (A country with one language and one custom is weak and fragile) is found on its base, but only in one language and according to one custom – Hungarian. This situation expressed precisely what President Sólyom also stated, when he spoke in the quotation above only about the Magyar minori-

ties living beyond the frontiers of Hungary. Is it an accident that he did not say even half a word about the national minorities living in his country? Is President Sólyom not responsible for them? Is it not necessary to „devote extraordinary attention to them”? Can they be „denied the rights flowing from the constitution”? Can he not see what is happening around him in his country, does he look exclusively at regions beyond the frontiers? The ombudsman for minorities Eugen Kaltenbach recently said the following: „**As a result of lack of political will** there has been no real progress towards solving the problem of the national minorities in Hungary. **The minorities are practically assimilated.**”

The old people, who still know the national minority languages are gradually being called by the Lord God and the young already do not know the language. Is President Sólyom not afraid that his country will be weak and fragile, when it has only „one language and one custom”? I am thinking of those customs, which do not allow the quotation on the statue of St. Stephen in Slovenský Komlós to be in the Slovak language as well as in Magyar. Where is the sincerity, the agreement between words and practice? It is like somebody putting soup in the freezer to warm it. Apart from this, why does Stephen stand in Slovenský Komlós and not Pribina, when Stephen also stands in Komárno? Stephen here, Stephen there and Pribina nowhere?! This is how I describe our present situation.

Today we have many stories and many storytellers. At the beginning of July, we in Hungary celebrated Slovak Day. Those present included participants in the Day of Slovak Abroad, which is organized by the World Association of Slovaks Living Abroad, this time also in Hungary. In the village of Šára, until recently Slovak, but now joined to the Magyar village of Dabas, a numerous assembly of Slovaks from the whole world, was told the following by the chairman of the State Slovak Minority Administration: „It is necessary to say that our compatriots and many Slovaks in Slovakia have a rather distorted picture of us. They think that we hardly exist and are suppressed. We have many problems, understandably, but now you should learn that they are of a different character. We have not been following a show-case policy...” It is possible to say this because the vault of heaven is strong and will not fall down. If we were to believe this official optimism, we would have to suppose that E. Kaltenbach does not know the situation of national minorities in Hungary, even after 13 years as their ombudsman, which would be total nonsense. He knows very well what he is talking about.

The representatives of Slovaks from the world also visited the Hungarian Parliament on 3 July, the speaker Katalin Szili welcomed them and talked to them about the activities of the minority autonomous administration, about the establishment of the Forum of National and Ethnic Minorities, which carries on a dialogue with the Hungarian government, and about solution of the problem of the parliamentary representation of minorities. She spoke of the principle, which the government had allegedly conceived, that „not even the crisis can change the

sources of finance, which we want to devote to the minorities in the interest of preserving their identity.” The nonsense she so nicely spoke could burst a person’s heart. However, perhaps like President Sólyom, she was not really thinking of the minorities living in Hungary, but of those beyond the frontiers!

Otherwise, the Slovaks from abroad saw Slovaks living in Hungary happily singing, dancing, eating and drinking. Some accepted this picture as reliable, complete with the polite welcome in parliament. If they made any requests, they „met with understanding.” A Slovak woman said after two days of experience: „I am extremely surprised by the rights of the Slovak minority in Hungary. The generosity of the Hungarian Parliament towards this minority has really surprised me. I must say that even in the Czech Republic, the government is not so generous, especially where finance is concerned. Therefore, I am pleased that I came, that I have seen it, and I can quote it as an example for the Czech Republic.”

This lady left us properly confused. It is not the first time this has happened, because they are very good at telling stories here. It is a pity that between the stories and the reality, there is an abyss as wide as Challenger in the Mariana Islands. She might have noticed, like Mr. Lubomír Molitoris from Poland, that in the church at Mlynky (Pilisszentkereszt) „there was no Slovak Catholic priest when I was here 15 years ago, and there is not one now.” Dušan Daučík from Sweden also hit the nail on the head, when he noted: „It is easy to write words on paper, but the reality is often entirely different.” It is not enough to listen to speeches, it is also necessary to look into whether it coincides with reality.

It is said and written, even in our national minority press (!), that there are Slovak schools, even a Slovak school system, although in reality, the Slovaks in Hungary do not have Slovak schools on any level – nursery, elementary or secondary. There are schools with the sign *Slovak Nationality School* outside, but the teachers are Magyars and everything is taught in the Magyar language, apart from four Slovak language lessons every week. This is the situation everywhere in Hungary where members of the Slovak minority live. The only exceptions are 5 elementary schools and two grammar schools, but even these are bilingual with a predominance of Magyar.

Every village in Hungary with Slovak inhabitants has a church with a parish priest of Magyar nationality. Even with a magnifying glass, it is difficult to find a place in Hungary with occasional church services in Slovak. For example, in Budapest, services are held in Slovak in one church, once a month, but we organize them ourselves.

Hungary has had a nationality act (no. LXXVII) since 1993. It is praised in the world, but it is ineffective, because it does not include any sanctions against those, who violate or ignore it, and so it is not observed even by the parliament that passed it. For example, according to (1) § 20 „minorities have the right to parliamentary representation,” but this remains only on paper. Why? Because of lack

of political will. According to minority commissioner Kaltenbach, if there was will, the problem could be solved by a decision in the course of 5 minutes. Thus the act is only a fairytale, because it remains on the level of a mere declaration.

It is also said that nationalities in Hungary have autonomy. However, the so-called nationality autonomous institutions have little in common with real autonomy. Support for them depends on the good will of local government, but lack of this good will has not been made a punishable offence.

What more can be said here! Enough has already been said to show that the Slovaks in Hungary do not have the minimal conditions required for maintaining the Slovak language and Slovak identity.

Tension has recently arisen between the Slovaks and Magyars allegedly because, according to the Magyars, the amendment to the Slovak Act on the State Language limits the right of the Magyar minority in Slovakia to use the Magyar language. They demand the withdrawal of this amendment. However, this is taken out of the context of a more complex process and this has its causal connections.

However, if we look at who is more limited in this matter: the Magyar in Slovakia or the Slovak in Hungary, whose child is already Magyarized at nursery school, and has only Magyar at elementary school, so that the Magyar language entirely prevails, the child has a Magyar identity and is entirely Magyarized? The answer is obvious. If one of them has reason to complain, it is mainly the Slovak, but it is the Magyars who complain.

Since the destiny of two quarrelling neighbours never was and never is enviable, both have an interest in clarifying matters and putting them in order, so that they can live in a peaceful, friendly atmosphere.

According to long-term experience „balanced accounts make good friends.” If one side always has more and more demands, and the other side will only grant them, there will never be good relations. Measuring with two different standards is very harmful, it does not lead to good relations, and empty speeches solve nothing. Double standards need to be removed and accounts need to be balanced. In my view, this problem can be solved only by using the same standard and the principle of balance or reciprocity in the good sense of the word. Slovakia has an easy task in the field of nationality problems, because almost everything is solved. However, I cannot imagine Hungary starting on its unploughed nationality field, as she gets down from her high horse. One thing is certain: If the Magyars really put their affairs in the nationality field in order, not only beyond the frontiers, but also within Hungary, the accounts cannot remain unbalanced. We Slovaks living in Hungary would welcome it, if Hungary would give us the same rights as the Magyars in Slovakia. However, if Hungary wants to be the powerful model, then Slovakia will have to follow this model and give the Magyars only what we Slovaks have in Hungary.

MASTODON

EGIL LEJON

The Norwegian writer Cora Sandel (1880-1974) once wrote about the confusion she felt when someone tried to present for her information about what was called factual truth or a historic fact. Facing such confusing moments, she then always remembered a visit she once made to the Natural History Museum in Malmö, Sweden. And the reason was; as she said, that the zoological part of this museum contained the most parodic exhibition of strange creations she ever had seen. Especially she could not stand the elephant exhibited there... a huge, stiff, lumpy creature, totally out of any proportion and covered by a skin that had once belonged to an elephant...

The relation between something trying to establish itself as a fact, and that elephant, is a good illustration. However, if Cora Sandel did not have any idea what a real elephant should be like, she would most probably have to live with that lie – concerning elephants at least, and if she once should meet a real one, that lie could cause her a big problem when relating to the truth.

From my point of view, this illustrates the problems your conference is facing. Because Europe and big parts of the world have already been presented with an idea of the huge, stiff, lumpy creature of a Magyar mastodon; totally out of any proportion and covered by a skin that is not even an original one, or is original but does not belong to the Magyar mastodon... And in contrast to Cora Sandel, people have only the exhibited one as the picture of the real or as the fact.

Let this short story be my introduction to the questions your conference is going to discuss. Sitting here in the south-west part of Norway; far away from Slovakia and Central Europe, with all my senses directed to a smiling horizon over the North Sea, it is not easy to come to grip with your crucial tasks. I do not say this as a private thing. Not at all. I express it from the point of view of all the people here – and not only here – who in general – from an ideal point of view – should have been occupied with the questions you are raising at this conference.

The main and crucial question here is not that I as well as you and many others can recognize that funny and crazy mastodon that continues to try to establish itself as a historic, credible fact along the banks of Danube. The sad fact is that this parody of a mastodon is just the creation that the most people outside Slovakia, have in mind as a true picture of a real creation.

I think that at least some of the participants in the conference, will know my views on these questions. And I see no reason here in this paper to repeat them. Instead I will move the focus away from the Magyars or Magyarones, and ask more crucial questions: Why are Slovaks – in an international context

– not able to tear to pieces that skin of that elephant? Tear off the cover so that the world can clearly see what is hiding under it? Everyone using the Internet can find out that the picture of the mastodon cover nearly 100 % of the „information” given to the questions – in the English language, all Scandinavian languages, German, French, Spanish...

So it has been for a long time, and so it is after nearly 17 years of Slovak ‘independence’... Even in all the years when so called pro-Slovak governments were in power... Is it not that a shame on the Slovak nation? Shame on Slovak politicians? And on Slovak intellectuals?

Before I try to give an answer, I will touch some other parallel questions.

For several years Estonia – as an example – has practiced a minority policy, leaving a minority totally out of the most basic frame of accepted European human rights. In the same period of time, Slovakia has practiced the most liberal policy towards minorities that exists in any European country – including Norway. However, which country has been attacked by the EU in all these years for their minority policy? Estonia? Magyarország? Poland? Spain? France? Germany? Scandinavian countries?

No, we all know that the massive criticism has been and still is directed towards just that country which has one of the best and most liberal minority policies in Europe... The problem is that a little, tiny minority of Europeans know about it, and for the absolute majority there is either no knowledge or interest to get knowledge, or we will meet a huge opinion which will look at the argument as a lie, because the media for years has told the opposite; exhibited Cora Sandel’s elephant... It is, therefore, crucial for Slovak intellectuals to find out why it is so? And discuss the topic with friends abroad - and together with them form a counter-strategy and build up a network able to resist that false policy. However, that initiative has to come from Slovak intellectuals.

In order to look upon this problem in the most reasonable way, let me create a possible scenario of today based on historical experiences: Magyar re-vengists and revisionists organize a violent demonstration, and a demonstrator is killed in that demonstration. The maximal propaganda output for them will be that the killed person is a Magyar Jew who has found his or her place in the Magyar Guard. That can easily be fixed by the Magyar Guard themselves... And in a short time there is mobilized and organized huge demonstrations in Slovakia and Magyaria, and in some minutes the news about „this terrible, oppressive Slovak state” – which the world press already have ‘informed’ a lot about... is out. Journalists over the most of the world will then sit a couple of hours and read former published articles on Internet – and we all know the content of that ‘information’ – in order to put the news in a known frame. And a new campaign, stronger than ever, is already on the way...

Let me for a moment go to another, but real example... The example I will take from the Slovak historian PhDr. Milica Majeriková, and her work: *Slovensko-poľský spor o Spiš a Oravu* (The Slovak-Polish dispute about Spiš and Orava). In this work she tells the story about when Edvard Beneš and Władysław Grabski signed; under supervision of an international Arbitrage, a common document on 10 July 1920, and how these three partners 18 days later met in the small Belgian town of Spa, to set the tragic dot under the document which forced 13 villages in Spiš and 12 villages in Orava under the Polish flag. By this Arbitrage Poland occupied 170 km² of Slovak territory in Spiš, and 413 km² of Slovak land in Orava.

We do not need to mention that this act was against the will of the occupied population which was overwhelmingly Slovak, and afterwards neither was accepted as a minority, nor treated as a minority under ordinary human rights.

This Arbitrage was the beginning of the „new order” in Europe, and before the Nazis and fascists came to power. And the Arbitrage set a standard later on followed up in Munich and Vienna 1938... And looked upon in this perspective, it is fully understandable that the Polish government made their great protests to Adolf Hitler, because he did not accept them as an equal partner when the „Czecho-Slovak meat” once again had to be cut up at the European kitchen in Munich. Today, of course, the Polish officials do not want to talk about this, they want to see themselves as the victim, not as a country, which set a European standard of that game already in 1920.

Who and how many in Europe know about this today? And who among those who know very well, want to talk about it? Even the Slovak government actively puts a cover on the question...

Here we are facing another crucial question, How can Europe set a new, better and realistic standard – and create a buffer against new sins, when they are at all willing to speak about the old sins? And how can other Europeans learn from all the examples of Slovak history, when not even the Slovak government are willing to let them know?

A few years ago the French philosopher and essayist Jacques Rancière, wrote about the necessity of *Europeanizing* European history. The background of his idea was that he did not find it realistic to set a common European standard about how European states act towards one another, if there is no common and accepted knowledge and norm about European history. Personally I read Rancière in the way that I also have the right to add: There will be no future peace among European nations, as long as nations are not able to make peace with their own history, and openly admit their historical crimes. And what about all these beautiful words about democratic integration? Can anyone integrate peoples and nations who do not know each other; neither their actual situation nor their his-

tory? Of course one can do it somehow, but absolutely not in a democratic way.

So, let me once again go to the crucial question: Are Slovak intellectuals prepared for defending their country given such eventualities described above? Are the Slovak government? The Slovak state? Not at all...

All over Europe – as a result of long term crises, which have led recession and a state of deepening depression – the political forces and ideas that once created the Weimar political crises, are now creating a European Weimar, and the Magyar revisionists are once again in front of that process, and they are clear that they want to create a „new” standard that happens to be the old one created after Trianon... In order to stop that process it has to be done now, not after the tragedy is already a fact...

However, what is then, from my point of view, the biggest obstacle when it comes to organizing and running such a resistance network and movement? Maybe surprisingly I will answer: The politicians that make their career on the problems as they show up now, either they present themselves as pro-Slovaks or pro-Magyars. And when talking about the so-called pro-Slovaks, I have myself experienced that they are not at all interested in building up a broad support network inside and outside Slovakia – in other words in a similar way to the one Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson once succeeded in building up until he died in 1910.

What were the main elements in this policy and strategy? Basically the policy was developed and organized by a movement working for equal human and national rights, peace and social security. The intellectuals around Bjørnson, systematically built up a European network of writers, intellectuals and journalists characterized by a high degree of integrity and personalities known as non-corrupted persons. It was a movement build up from below, and not a movement directed from the top by a political party or movement. In everything that Bjørnson did, he followed that strategy. Nobody could, for example, be in doubt that if he wanted to make career in the Norwegian parliament, nobody could have stopped him. Because during many decades he was the leader of one the greatest mass-movements in modern Norwegian or Scandinavian history. Could he have become minister or even prime-minister? Without doubt, he could have achieved it... But he did not want... Because his idea was that any political party or state-apparatus had inherent tendencies towards corruption and fight for politician's own private interests and careers, and not for the interests of their electorate or nation... And the only force who could keep these tendencies down and oppress them, was a well organized people's movement from below... Bjørnson said this openly, and he also acted in this way.

Of course, Bjørnson supported certain parties, and the parties that got his support were certainly very happy about it, but at the same time, also very

afraid of his critical view. But he and his movement were independent and did not depend on the government's economic support.

Put this strategy in front of you and ask: Why is there no broad popular movement in Slovakia today able to organize effective information – at home and abroad – and then be able to tear off the false skin of the Magyar mastodon? Is it due to another strategy, as for example this one: Vote for me – vote for us – because I or WE shall fix all the problems not only in our corridors, in common European corridors, but even in the corridors of others – all of them places far away from ordinary people... and just the people that is said to be the corner stone in a democracy...

However, we can all be sure that if and when the tragedy is there... ordinary people will be the first to be forced to join the resistance... And careerists will once again find a way to make the best out of it... far way from the battle ground... And still in their own interests...

May be some will accuse me of overstating, exaggerating, my points... And what can I say? Only that I hope for God's sake that you are correct... I hope that I am mistaken. In fact nobody will be more happy than me, if someone can prove that I am mistaken. However, even if I should be 10-20 % right, the conference should concentrate on how to come out of that dead water your country is manoeuvring in... Not by crying to one another about the Magyars, because that we know, but about how to share that information with the majority of people outside Slovakia, who do not know at all. If you after so many years start building up a national and European strategy based on an independent ground, I will not only be satisfied with your conference, I will also actively do my best to support that work... I could have said a lot about what to do and how... Maybe I will later on... But there is now no need to dream about change, before the absolute basis for that change is laid down...

In the meantime I will continue my work with my friends in Slovakia, Norway and other Scandinavian countries, to organize and finance a translation of „Dejiny Slovenska a Slovákov” by Milan S. Durica into English...

You may know that in some points I have a different view than this author... But still I do not know a single book in Slovakia, more needed on every media desk in Europe and spread among honest intellectuals over the whole continent... Because that book gives intellectuals what they need as a frame to understand why Slovakia still has to bother about this Magyar mastodon moving along the banks of the Danube covered by that stolen, wrinkled and hard skin trying to hide its poor, rattling skeleton underneath.

Insight into Slovak-Magyar Relations

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