

MEMORANDUM

CONCERNING

THE CZECH-COMMUNIST MILITARY INTERVENTION
IN SLOVAKIA

PRESENTED

TO THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BY THE
SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA

AND THE
SLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL ABROAD



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MIDDLETOWN, PA., DECEMBER 22, 1956

RÉSUMÉ

The Slovak League of America, representing the vast majority of organized Americans of Slovak descent, and the Slovak National Council Abroad, representing Slovak refugees in the free world, respectfully submit to the attention of the General Assembly of the United Nations the latest developments in Slovakia, which resulted in a Czech-Communist military intervention in that country.

In this Memorandum, we wish to point to: 1) the artificial and undemocratic character of the Czecho-Slovak State as such; 2) the political captivity into which the Slovak nation was forced in 1945, after having been integrated against its will into the renewed Czecho-Slovakia; and, 3) to the violence exercised by the Prague Government without interruption upon the Slovaks ever since, with the clear intent of weakening their national resistance to both Communism and Czech domination, aiming thereby to destroy them nationally as an ethnic entity.

The Czecho-Slovak delegate in the United Nations is not a true representative of the Slovak nation; he is, in fact, an impostor in the same degree that, for example, the Soviet delegate is in respect to the peoples of the enslaved Baltic countries. Therefore, the Slovak League of America and the Slovak National Council Abroad feel that, in the absence of any legal representative of Slovakia in the United Nations, as natural trustees of the Slovak nation, they are entitled to place this Memorandum before the delegates of the civilized nations, requesting a full examination of all aspects of the Czech-Communist hegemony in Slovakia and its speedy termination.

I. UNDEMOCRATIC CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

For the Slovak nation, Czecho-Slovakia represents an undemocratic State in a double aspect: both the Communist regime there and also the State itself have been imposed upon the Slovaks by alien forces which are dedicated to their destruction as an ethnic entity.

While from among the Soviet satellites, such countries as Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria are ethnically homogeneous, Czecho-Slovakia is a political compound of two countries and two nations: Czechia and Slovakia. Even though they are neighboring nations, they are different historically, culturally, linguistically, and psychologically. Less numerous than the Czechs (3.8 million Slovaks for 8.5 Czechs in 1956, according to Czech statistics), the Slovaks adhere to their own national traditions. After having been second-grade citizens in Czecho-Slovakia for twenty-one years, the Slovaks separated from the Czechs in 1939 by proclaiming the independence of their country.

At the end of World War II, except for a small fraction of Beneš collaborators, the Slovaks were definitely against the re-establishment of the political union with the Czechs. Invoking the right of self-determination, the Slovaks were determined to have their independence recognized even in the changed international situation. Unfortunately, their voice was not heeded by the victorious United Nations at the end of the war. Even the Slovak Communists, a minority group led by Gustav Husák, preferred a Slovakia controlled directly by Moscow during the Communist-inspired and engineered uprising of Banská Bystrica in 1944 to a third Czecho-Slovak Republic, in which they clearly saw the menace of a prospective double supervision: from Moscow and from Prague. Husák and his group yielded only after Moscow had forced their hands. The Soviet Government did it by reaffirming its own loyalty in regard to the stipulation of "the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of Collaboration and Mutual Help," concluded by Beneš and Stalin on December 12, 1943. So, "the People's Democratic Czecho-Slovakia" of Beneš and Gottwald was not the result of a free joining of the Slovak people, but, in fact, was forced upon them by a series of agreements concluded in Moscow and London by the braintrust of Czech exiled politicians under Beneš backed by Stalin. The Czecho-Slovak Government itself was formed in Moscow and came to Slovakia in the trail of the Soviet Army.

After 1945, the Prague regime, ignoring the Slovaks completely, tried to keep the collapsing walls of the State together by a unified constitutional, i.e., external, roof and centralized police system, outlawing at the same time traditional Slovak political parties.

In spite of this maneuvering of Prague, Slovakia followed her own road. In the elections of May 26, 1946, when 56 per cent of the entire voting population in Czech lands voted for Marxist parties (42 per cent for the Communists and 14 per cent for the Social Democrats), Slovakia expressed herself by a majority of 68 per cent against Marxism and for the program of national self-government.

Angered by this deviation from Marxism and centralism, the Prague Government decided to crush Slovakia's resistance. The Czechs cultivated the cooperation in William Široký, an aggressive Communist from Slovakia, whom they appointed first as Vice-Premier and then as Premier. This "credited representative" of the Slovak people in Prague, the best the Czechs could find to sell out Slovakia to the Czech Communists, is, however, of Magyar origin. In the census of 1920, registered as a Magyar, Široký is most responsible for the terror under which Slovakia has been governed until now.

Between 1945 and 1947, under the pretext of collaborating with Germany, the Prague regime put on trial and had thousands of innocent Slovaks condemned simply to eliminate them from public life.

At the end of 1947 more than 2000 Slovak intellectuals were imprisoned for "conspiracy." Up to 1950, more than 40 groups of Slovak patriots were sentenced for alleged "anti-governmental" or "anti-State" activities.

In 1950 three Slovak Catholic Bishops were imprisoned and put on trial. On January 15, 1951, His Excellency Msgr. Ján Vojtaššák, Bishop of Spiš, was sentenced to 24 years imprisonment; His Excellency Msgr. Michael Buzalka, Auxiliary Bishop of Trnava, and His Excellency Msgr. Paul Gojdič, Uniate Bishop of Prešov, to life imprisonment.

But Prague, instigated by Široký, also got rid of well-known Slovak Communists. Vladimír Clementis, successor of Jan Masaryk in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, was hanged on December 3, 1952. In the meantime the group of Gustav Husák, including his political friends Laco Novomeský, Ivan Horváth, Laco Holdoš, Daniel Okály — all of them Communists and holders of important positions in the regional Government of Slovakia — had been jailed and convicted of "Titoism" and "Slovak separatism," in a spectacular trial, April 24, 1954, in Bratislava, to penalties extending from 8 to 30 years.

Besides the terror and constant police supervision, under which Slovakia's population suffers for years under the Czechs, with Premier Široký's approval, Prague has found other ways to weaken Slovakia and strengthen its own position. One of these was the resettlement of more than 320,000 Slovaks, carried out under different degrees of pressure, in the former Sudeten-German sector of Bohemia. This transfer of Slovak population has much in common with deportations of the Baltic population to Siberia by the Soviets. The main purpose of the Prague Government is to cut people from their native roots and thus weaken the resistance which the compact mass of the Slovak population could exert against both Communism and also Czech domination. Prague obviously figures that the Slovak population, submerged thus by its new Czech environment, will finally lose its original Slovak character and become either entirely Czech, or at least proletarian.

The total repudiation of democracy by the Czech Communist ruling class can be seen in the fact that Prague has created a system which permits direct control of Slovakia without any direct participation in it of the top native leaders, be they Communists or not. While Mr. Široký, an "international," "represents" Slovakia as Prime Minister in the central Government, the same Government put its strong man, Karel Bacílek, a Czech Communist of Stalinist type, former Minister of State Security, into the position of the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Slovakia, bypassing thus the authority of the regional Parliament and Government for Slovakia.

William Široký, Karel Bacílek, and President of the Republic Zápotocký form a triumvirate, composed of two Czechs and one Magyar, which is keeping the roof pitch of Czecho-Slovakia together. They always were and still are today adherents of the Stalinist line. What they fear most is any weakening of the Moscow influence in Czecho-Slovakia, because that would mean the end of their reign and the secession of Slovakia from Czech lands.

II. CZECH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SLOVAKIA

De-Stalinization produced a new atmosphere in Central Europe. Hopes and aspirations for freedom increased considerably everywhere. Recent events in Poland and Hungary have greatly stirred up anti-Communist feeling in Slovakia. The first series of recent demonstrations took place on October 25, 1956, in Bratislava, Levice, Lučenec and Košice.

While in Bratislava the police tolerated manifestations, preventing only the larger masses of people from joining them, in the other aforementioned cities, the demonstrators were dispersed by the local police.

Gatherings of sympathy with Hungary were repeated in Bratislava, on Saturday, October 27, 1956. Posters carried on by demonstrators read like this: "We stand with new Hungary — Long live freedom — Out with the Czechs — Go home Russians — Freedom and independence for Slovakia — Down with Stalinism," etc. At street junctions the demonstrators stopped walking and sang "La Marseillaise" and other patriotic songs.

At the time events in Hungary were turning into open rebellion, the demonstrations in Slovakia were getting stronger in their anti-Communist and anti-Prague character. Finally, the Czech-Communist Government of Prague decided to apply exceptionally strong measures in Slovakia. Certain news, scattered in the American press, hinted at what was going on there.

"The Washington Post," in its issue of October 27, 1956, published a news item entitled "Rumbling of rebellion heard from Slovakia." The news datelined October 26 from Warsaw said: "Dispatches reaching here today reported 'grave unrest' in Slovakia."

The same newspaper carried in its issue of November 3, 1956, information under the headline "Buying panic reported in Czechoslovakia." The report, released by Associated Press in Vienna on November 2, also contained the following statement: "The travellers (from Czecho-Slovakia) also confirmed earlier reports that demonstrations had taken place in Slovakia in sympathy with the Hungarian revolution."

In its issue of November 7, 1956, "The New York Times" published a short column "Some reservists called by Prague" (Prague, Reuters, Nov. 6). The essence of this report ran like this: "Czecho-Slovakia has recalled some categories of reservists belonging mainly to tank and transport units, usually well informed sources said today. The source said the reservists had been selected at factories by roving army teams and told to report to their units immediately."

In his article "Czechs warned against disorder," published on November 8, 1956, in "The New York Times," Sydney Gruson, reporting from Prague, commented on a speech of Premier William Široký, delivered before 50,000 workers in the Old Town Square. Široký reportedly said that "the enemy was trying to stir up the same kind of action in Czechoslovakia as had occurred in Hungary."

"Czech authorities," continued Gruson in his article, "called the British and French military attachés posted here and suggested that they should not visit Slovakia. The anger of the people, particularly in Slovakia, was such that an ugly uncontrollable situation could arise if they visited there, the attachés were told."

Thus, Prague warned French and British military attachés not against the anger of the Slovak people, but rather against their going to visit a territory which they wanted to remain closed to foreign observers.

More recently, John MacCormac's report from Vienna in The New York Times, Nov. 20, 1956, stated: "Large sections of track have been destroyed along the right of way from Salgotarjan, south of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak border, and Losonc, north of it . . . A rebel radio station in Salgotarjan said that last Saturday and Sunday heavy fighting took place near Eperjes . . . Report that Czechoslovaks were cooperating with the Soviet in suppressing the Hungarian revolution were confirmed by the news yesterday that two battalions of Czech motorized infantry without artillery had crossed the Danube to Komarom and were holding the bridgehead there."

Now, we know that Losonc, Eperjes, and Komarom is the Magyar spelling for the Slovak cities of Lučenec, Prešov, and Komárno, respectively. And since we know that the Slovaks sympathized with the Magyars in their attempt to throw off Soviet domination, then it was actually the Czechs — and not the Slovaks — who "were cooperating with the Soviet in suppressing the Hungarian revolution." The term "Czechoslovak" is not accurately and properly used in this instance by Mr. MacCormac, because the hard fact is that the Czechs, specifically the Czech Communists, backed by the Soviet Union, are in complete control of Czecho-Slovakia, victimizing the Slovaks. His reference to the two battalions of motorized infantry as "Czech" is quite correct, even though he probably was not aware of it, because two days later he wrote that the "Fourth motorized Infantry Division is reported to be concentrating in the Slovak mountains to cooperate with the Soviet infantry divisions that are pushing north against Hungarian rebel troops massed between the border and a line running through Vac, Hatvan, Gyongyos and Miskolc."

Now, what is the meaning of these rather fragmentary news reports centering around Slovakia?

It is definitely known that a state of emergency has been proclaimed in Slovakia. Under the pretext of protecting the Slovak-Hungarian frontier against "Hungarian rebels," the Prague Government had sent some six divisions from Bohemia and Moravia into Slovakia. Of course, the real purpose of this displacement is to place Slovakia's population under a tighter control and to prevent the Slovaks from continuing their demonstrations in their homeland against both Communist and Czech domination. In the garrisons of Slovakia officers of Slovak nationality, from lieutenant colonel up, were relieved of their duties and replaced with Czechs.

Moreover, the Government of Premier Široký ordered that factory militia in main plants of Slovakia be replaced by Czech worker's units. Hence the mobilization of Czech workers in Bohemia and Moravia.

All of Slovakia is controlled by Czech units of the State security police. Former deputies and higher officials, as well as all "politically unreliable persons" of Slovak nationality, have been arrested and hundreds of persons were rushed to Moravian and Bohemian prisons. Even Gustav Husák, former Slovak Communist leader of nationalist trend, a potential Slovak "Tito," was taken from a prison in Slovakia and transferred to a more secure jail in Czech lands. Another Prague "security" measure called thousands of anti-Communists for special military service.

In order to prevent information from leaking out about these moves in Slovakia, the police patrol on the Slovak-Hungarian and the Slovak-Austrian border was tripled. Orders have been given to shoot all persons not in uniform moving in the frontier zone. The control of personal papers has been increased for travellers and crossing of the border on collective passports has been suspended. Diplomatic cars moving between Vienna and Bratislava are subject to thorough search and diplomats can leave the country only by a "special" permit; their personal luggage is also subject to search. As the headquarters of the Soviet Army operating in North Western Hungary, Bratislava, Capital of Slovakia, is under a double occupation: Czech and Russian.

III. SLOVAKIA'S APPEAL TO THE CIVILIZED WORLD

The above facts prove better than everything else that States can be sustained only by the forces which originally brought them into being. Renewed Czecho-Slovakia owes its existence to Soviet bayonets and can be sustained only by Communist arms.

The Czech military occupation of Slovakia has exploded the fiction of "a brotherly Czecho-Slovak union" in Central Europe. Czecho-Slovakia is nothing else but a feudal power, in which Moscow-bound Czechs are practicing genocide on the less numerous but more fervent anti-Communist Slovaks. In compensation for their loyalty to Moscow, the Czechs have been allowed, at least temporarily, to dominate Slovakia, a deal which permits them to exploit that Christian country economically and politically.

The Slovak nation, suffering in the Soviet orbit and within the framework of Czecho-Slovakia by a double captivity, is looking through the fences

of its prison at the Western World pleading for deliverance from this horrible situation, into which it had been forced at the end of the Second World War by the victorious powers.

Having in mind the factual situation of Slovakia, as depicted above, as well as the fervent aspirations of the Slovak nation for independence, the Slovak League of America and the Slovak National Council Abroad, take the liberty of respectfully requesting the General Assembly of the United Nations:

1. to send a commission to Slovakia with the scope of investigating the whole situation there since 1945;
2. not to recognize the credentials of the representative of the Czecho-Communist Government in Prague as authorizing him to speak on behalf of the Slovak nation;
3. to vote a resolution requesting the Prague Government to withdraw Czech military and police units from Slovakia; and
4. to vote a resolution establishing free elections and granting the right of self-determination to Slovakia.

For the *SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA*:

PHILIP A. HROBAK,
President

For the *SLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL ABROAD*:

JOZEF C. HRONSKÝ,
President

DR. JOZEF PAUČO,
Secretary General

DR. JOZEF A. MIKUŠ,
*Chairman of the Foreign
Affairs Committee*

Middletown, Pa., December 22, 1956.