

## BEITRÄGE ZUR GESCHICHTE DES SLOWAKISCHEN VOLKES. 3 vols.

By *Ludwig von Gogolák*. Buchreihe der Südostdeutschen Historischen Kommission, vols. 7, 21, and 26. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1963, 1969, 1972. Vol. 1: DIE NATIONSWERDUNG DER SLOWAKEN UND DIE ANFÄNGE DER TSCHECHOSLOWAKISCHEN FRAGE (1526–1790). viii, 265 pp. DM 24, paper. Vol. 2: DIE SLOWAKISCHE NATIONALE FRAGE IN DER REFORMEPOCHE UNGARNS (1790–1848). viii, 280 pp. Vol. 3: ZWISCHEN ZWEI REVOLUTIONEN (1848–1919). viii, 193 pp. DM 32.

This is the first scholarly synthesis of Slovak history in a Western language, based on an exceptionally wide study of published sources in the Slovak, Hungarian, Czech, and German languages. It covers Slovak history under Habsburg rule, from the formation of the Habsburg Empire in 1526 to its dissolution in 1918.

Until 1918, when it became an administrative unit in the newly founded Czechoslovak Republic, Slovakia was for a thousand years an integral part of the kingdom of Hungary. Slovakia was a new political entity in 1918, but the Slovaks were not a new people. As a matter of fact, they had emerged on the stage of European history, together with other Slavs, well before the formation of the Hungarian state. They were a part of the population of Greater Moravia, a Slavic state in East Central Europe in the ninth century, before the Magyars destroyed it (906) and subjugated them. Unlike the Croats, the Slovaks were incorporated into Hungary outright, becoming one of its “submerged” nationalities until the general national awakening of its peoples at the end of the eighteenth century. They had no state, province, or territorial unit with which to identify themselves. Lack of national or provincial identity, however, did not mean lack of self-awareness. There is evidence that even before the rise of modern nationalism the Slovaks were aware of being Slavs and that they considered themselves the original inhabitants of the area of Hungary. But awareness of their ethnic identity had no political significance, for Hungary was (legally until 1848) a *Ständestaat*, in which the people were divided into feudal estates, without regard for their ethnic origin. Latin was Hungary’s official language as well the language of intellectual intercourse. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, under the influence of enlightenment and as a reaction to Emperor Joseph II’s centralizing and Germanizing reforms, Hungary’s nationalities awakened to a modern sense of nationalism. As Hungary’s founders, the Magyars then claimed pre-eminence in the state. In the nineteenth century they made a vigorous effort to assimilate the other nationalities and transform the polyethnic Hungarian kingdom into a uniform Magyar state. As a result of this policy, the Slovaks who had been socially and culturally their peers were reduced to a nation of peasants and workers.

The Slovak regression in the nineteenth century, when most European peoples made rapid progress, has been generally overlooked by historians. For different reasons, both Magyar and Czech nationalist historians have described the Slovaks as humble hewers of wood and drawers of water throughout their history. Western historiography, noting the humble Slovak status in 1918, has likewise tended to assume that it had never been any better. Ludwig Gogolák, an Hungarian historian living and working in Vienna since 1956, takes vigorous exception to this view. In the first volume of his book, covering the prenationalist period (1526–1790) of Slovak history, he endeavors to show that in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, when Habsburg (non-Turkish) Hungary consisted of little more than Croatia and Slovakia, there was a numerous Slovak-speaking Hungarian nobility, comprising gentry as well as magnates, and this nobility played an important political and cultural role in the country. Even in the eighteenth century a Slovak, Matej Bél (1684–1749), was the foremost scholar in the country.

In the second volume, covering the period of national awakening (1790–1848), Gogolák provides an excellent analysis of the roots of modern Slovak nationalism. He identifies the Slovak Protestants as the original ideologists of Czechoslovak unity and Pan-Slavism, both of which he regards as spurious movements. He shows no more patience with the exaggerations of Slovak nationalist historiography than with the distortions of Magyar and Czech nationalist historians. He dismisses the Slovak national uprising of 1848 in one sentence, and relegates the monumental work about the insurrection by Daniel Rapant, the foremost Slovak nationalist historian, to a single footnote. He pairs it there with an Hungarian account of the event and dismisses both as nationalist propaganda. In this cavalier treatment he shows a serious lack not only of a sense of proportion but also of psychological insight. It is true that the Slovak national insurrection was only a small episode in the total picture of war and revolution in Hungary in 1848–49, but it was the first conscious Slovak attempt to determine their fate with arms in hand. As such, it exercised a strong influence on the imagination of later generations of Slovak nationalists.

The last volume, covering the period from 1848 to 1918 during which Slovak national development reached its nadir, is the least satisfactory. Gogolák is at his best in dealing with the Slovak elites. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, there no longer was a Slovak-speaking nobility, and the Slovak intelligentsia lapsed into silence under the relentless pressure of Magyarization. There remained the concerns of the Slovak masses. But these were mainly economic and social. They do not appear to interest Gogolák, who seems completely untouched by his exposure to Marxist historiography in Hungary before 1956. Thus he says nothing about the vast Slovak emigration to the United States and its causes and impact on Slovak life. His treatment of the Slovak movement for independence during World War I is perfunctory. Although he is generally free of the shibboleths of Hungarian nationalism, he invokes those old bugaboos of Hungarian revisionism—Masaryk's trickery and the obtuseness of Allied policy—to explain the collapse of Hungarian rule in Slovakia.

To write history without provoking controversy is scarcely possible. Although this reviewer does not fully agree with Gogolák's interpretation of Slovak history, he finds his book an impressive tour de force of historical writing. It is the most ambitious scholarly synthesis of modern Slovak history ever written in a Western language, and is likely to remain unsurpassed for a long time.

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REFORM RULE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA: THE DUBČEK ERA, 1968–1969.

By *Galia Golan*. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1973. vii, 327 pp. \$18.50.

Reading the story of the proposed reforms, and their shattering collapse, one is impressed by their completeness, consistency, and imaginativeness, as well as