Commentary

In Step with the Times: A Slovak Perspective

M. Mark Stolarik

Paul Robert Magocsi has written a thought-provoking essay on the role of North American political diasporas from east central Europe before and after the seminal years of 1918 and 1989. While he showed that the pre-1918 diasporas had a major impact on the future of east central Europe during and after World War I, he found very little evidence of a similar impact before and after 1989. He suggested that we look closely at 1989 to see what, if any, impact such diasporas had at the end of the twentieth century.

While I agree with Magocsi's conclusions regarding 1918, I do see more of an émigré impact upon the period 1945–89 and later, especially when viewed through the prism of Slovak émigré history. Furthermore, even though the title of Magocsi's article refers to diasporas in "North America," he concentrated mainly on their impact upon the United States and had little to say about Canada. North American diasporas were truly "North American," and the border between Canada and the United States mattered very little to most of them.

Indeed, the first Slovak immigrants who came to Canada before World War I came from the American northeast. They started to settle in this region in the 1870s, finding work in the coal mines and steel mills of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois, and in the oil refineries and other industries of New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York. While over 500,000 Slovaks migrated to the United States before World War I, about 5,000 of them sought higher wages in western Canada, especially in the Rocky Mountain coal mines of the Crow's Nest Pass area of southern Alberta and British Columbia; in the coal mines of Vancouver Island; and, eventually in the twin cities of Fort William and Port Arthur (today's Thunder Bay) in the "Lakehead" region of Lake Superior, where they found work as longshoremen.[1]

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[1]For an overview of Slovak immigration to Canada, see Elena Jakešová and M. Mark Stolarik, "Slovaks," in *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, ed. Paul R. Magocsi (Toronto, 1999), 1168–79.

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After World War I, when the United States closed its doors to immigrants from central and eastern Europe, 40,000 Slovaks migrated directly to Canada. This time they ostensibly came to farm in western Canada—as the Canadian government wanted them to do—but in reality most found work in the mining towns of northern Ontario, in Quebec's industrial metropolis of Montreal, and in the industrial heartland of Canada—the Toronto-Hamilton-Niagara region. A few farmed in southern Ontario and on the prairies.

Even though the United States and Canada have been separate countries since 1783, the border between them did not much affect Slovak immigrants. Those who settled first, and in the greatest numbers, in the United States created the three pillars of future Slovak communities: fraternal benefit societies, parish churches, and newspapers. American Slovaks established about a dozen nationwide fraternal benefit societies, such as the National Slovak Society, which was founded in 1890 and headquartered in Pittsburgh, and the First Catholic Slovak Union, also founded in 1890 and based in Cleveland. The local branches of these and other societies organized and built over 300 parish churches in the American Northeast and Midwest between 1884 and 1930; American Slovaks also founded 121 newspapers by 1918. Canadian Slovaks eagerly organized branches of American fraternals right into the 1960s; they invited American-educated priests to serve their parishes, and they subscribed to dozens of Slovak-American newspapers—subscriptions that continue to the present day.[2]

American and Canadian Slovaks also established parallel political organizations that coordinated their efforts on behalf of Slovaks in the homeland. Thus, while Slovaks in the United States created the Slovak League of America in 1907 as a cover organization for all their fraternal and other societies, Canadian Slovaks followed suit with the Canadian Slovak League in 1932.[3] The Slovak League of America led the struggle for autonomy within the Kingdom of Hungary until 1915 and for independence within a federated Czecho-Slovakia between 1915 and 1918, as Magocsi has stated. However, after 1920, when the Czech-dominated Prague Parliament adopted a very unitary Czechoslovak constitution—and dropped the hyphen in the country's name—the Slovak League supported the interwar struggle of the Slovak People's Party for autonomy within the new state. So did its namesake and sister organization in Canada. Indeed, after some surprise and hesitation,

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[2]For the story of Slovak immigration to the United States, see my *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918* (New York, 1989); see also my entry on "Slovaks" in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. Stefan Thernstrom (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), 926–34. For the Slovak press in North America, see my "The Slovak-American Press," in *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, ed. Sally M. Miller (New York, 1987), 353–68. For relations between Canadian and American Slovaks, see my *Slovaks in Canada and the USA, 1870–1990: Similarities and Differences* (Ottawa, 1992).

[3]For the founding of the Slovak League of America, see Constantine Čulen, "Beginnings of the Slovak League of America," in *60 Years of the Slovak League of America*, ed. Joseph Paučo (Middletown, 1967), 26–36; for the founding of its Canadian counterpart, see Anthony X. Sutherland, *The Canadian Slovak League: A History, 1932–1982* (Toronto, 1984), 24–27. Unlike the Slovak League of America, the Canadian Slovak League was also a fraternal benefit society, and it did not serve as the cover organization for other fraternals.

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both rejoiced at the founding, with Nazi German support, of the independent Slovak Republic in March 1939.[4]

In World War II, however, the political unity of Slovaks in the United States and Canada broke down. While both Slovak leagues, with only a short interregnum, supported Slovak independence, a substantial minority of "Czechoslovaks"—Slovaks who supported the unitary Czechoslovak Republic—organized themselves into the Czechoslovak National Council in both the United States and Canada and supported ex-president Edvard Beneš's new liberation movement, which sought to re-create the prewar Czechoslovak Republic that had been destroyed by Adolf Hitler.[5]

After the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 and the re-creation of Czechoslovakia by the victorious Allies, the Slovak diaspora became even more polarized. The two Slovak leagues were strengthened by the arrival of several thousand political émigrés who had supported the wartime Slovak Republic and who were determined to see its resurrection. In 1948, several thousand more political émigrés fled the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia and gravitated to either the separatist or "Czechoslovak" camps. They then established their own, rival, organizations and tried to influence both the Canadian and American governments to support their aspirations. One group of Slovak separatists established the Slovak Action Committee in 1945 (renamed the Slovak Liberation Council in 1949), while a rival group set up the Slovak National Council Abroad in 1947. After much bickering and maneuvering, they finally reorganized themselves into the Slovak World Congress in 1970. The "Czechoslovaks," meanwhile, together with Czech exiles, created the Council for a Free Czechoslovakia in 1948. In 1963, most of its Slovak members broke off and created the Steadfast Conference of Slovak Democratic Exiles. Generally speaking, both the governments of Canada and the United States supported the "Czechoslovaks" because they were not tainted by alliances with Nazi Germany. Thus, the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe parroted the "Czechoslovak" line: the overthrow of communism and the re-creation of a democratic—that is, Czech-dominated—Czechoslovakia. Neither the

[4]For the role of the Slovak League of America in the interwar period, see Karol Sidor, "The Slovak League of America and the Slovak Nation's Struggle for Autonomy," in *Sixty Years*, ed. Paučo, 37–70. For Canada, see Sutherland, *The Canadian Slovak League*, 32–37. For the history of the Slovak People's Party, see James R. Felak, "*At the Price of the Republic*": *Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, 1929–1938* (Pittsburgh, 1994).

[5]The Slovak League's wartime activities were described by Mikuláš Šprinc in "Slovak League of America and Independent Slovakia," in *Sixty Years*, ed. Paučo, 71–103; The Canadian League's actions appeared in Sutherland, *The Canadian Slovak League*, 38–41; the wartime work of the "Czechoslovaks" in the United States and Canada has not yet been adequately documented. For Edvard Beneš's wartime activities, see Eduard Taborsky, "Politics in Exile, 1939–1945," in *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918–1948*, ed. Victor S. Mamatey and Radomír Luža (Princeton, 1973), 322–42. For the efforts of Dr. Milan Hodža, the pre-Munich prime minister of Czechoslovakia, to reach a compromise between the separatists and the "Czechoslovaks" in America, see Pavol Lukáč, "Politická Činnosť Milana Hodžu v emigrácii v USA a reakcie na jeho federalistické plány" (The political activity of Milan Hodža in the USA and reactions to his federalist plans), *Historický časopis* (Historical journal) 51, no. 4 (2003): 605–25.

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United States nor Canada supported the movement for Slovak independence, right up to 1992.[6]

While it is true, as Magocsi argues, that these émigré organizations had minimal impact on both Czechoslovakia and its relations with the United States government between 1945 and 1989, they did somewhat annoy the Czechoslovak government,[7] and it did respond in kind. The émigrés, meanwhile, had a profound impact upon Canadian society.

When Ferdinand Ďurčanský, the former minister of foreign affairs of the wartime Slovak Republic, established the Slovak Action Committee in Rome in 1945, little did he know that he was a dupe of the KGB and of Czechoslovak communists. It turns out that he was recruited by the notorious British double-agent Kim Philby, who encouraged Ďurčanský to make inflammatory radio broadcasts calling for renewed Slovak independence and to send naive volunteers from Austria into Czechoslovakia to raise a "White Legion" to fight the communists.[8] The Czechoslovak State Security (STB) quickly rounded up these hapless volunteers

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[6]This period has not been systematically studied by professional historians. Jozef Špetko, a post-1968 émigré, wrote a journalistic and pro-Czechoslovak account of the postwar émigrés in *Líšky kontra ježe: Slovenská politická emigrácia 1948–1989* (Foxes versus hedgehogs: The Slovak political emigration, 1948–1989) (Bratislava, 2002). His colleague Miroslav Ličko reprinted the most significant newspaper articles by the "Czechoslovaks" in this period in *Ako chutí cudzina? Slovenská demokrácia v exile 1948–1989* (The taste of foreignness: Slovak Democrats in exile, 1948–1989) (Bratislava, 1999). The separatists, meanwhile, published a very large number of books explaining and justifying their activities after World War II. The most famous is, perhaps, Ferdinand Ďurčanský's *Právo Slovákov na samostatnosť vo svetle dokumentov* (The right of the Slovaks to independence as reflected in documents), vol. 1, *Biela kniha* (White paper) (Buenos Aires, 1954). Jozef M. Kirschbaum compiled a history of the Slovak World Congress and its predecessors in *Desať rokov činnosti SKS* (Ten years of achievements of the SKS) (Toronto, 1981); and in 1996, the Matica slovenská organized a large conference on postwar émigrés and published the proceedings as *Slovenský povojnový exil. Zborník materiálov zo seminára Dejiny slovenského exilu po roku 1945* (The Slovak postwar exiles: Materials from the seminar on the history of Slovak émigrés after 1945) (Martin, 1998), to which a large number of still living émigrés contributed papers. For a longer discussion of the historiography of this period, see my "Slovak Historiography since the Downfall of Communism (1989)," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 29, nos. 1–2 (2002): 67–82.

[7]When I attended a scholarly conference in Slovakia in the summer of 1988, the Matica slovenská invited the attendees to a reception hosted by the Slovak National Council in Bratislava Castle. There I bumped into Vladimir Mináč, writer, member of the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party, and president of the Matica slovenská. He had had a few too many drinks and, when he spotted me, he approached and asked, "Well, Mr. Stolarik, is your father still crapping into that Canadian newspaper?" Shocked by his crudeness, but delighted that he knew about my father's political activities (my father was past president of the Canadian Slovak League and a supporter of Slovak independence), I replied, "Yes, he's still writing for *Kanadský Slovák*, and will probably do so until he dies." I described this trip under the pseudonym Leo Carpenter in "Looking for Mr. Glasnost: Scenes from Today's Czechoslovakia," *Crisis: A Journal of Lay Catholic Opinion* 7, no. 7 (1989): 33–39.

[8]Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Ratlines: How the Vatican's Nazi Networks Betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets* (London, 1991), 217–22.

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and tried and executed or imprisoned most of them.[9] To make matters worse, Czechoslovak communists used the "threat" of Ďurčanský and the "White Legion" as a pretext to stage the first putsch in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia in 1947. In November of that year, Gustáv Husák, the chairman of the Slovak Board of Commissioners, whose Communist Party had lost the 1946 elections in Slovakia, but who, with Prague's backing, refused to step down, purged his government of the legally elected Democratic commissioners and replaced them with Communists on the pretext that the "Democrats" were in league with Ďurčanský and his Slovak Action Committee.[10]

Once the Czechoslovak communists had seized power in Prague in 1948 and had consolidated their rule in the 1950s, they turned their attention to the Slovak separatists in Canada and the United States, who by then were publicly celebrating the anniversary of the declaration of Slovak independence every 14 March.[11] In 1959, the Toronto-based communist weekly *Ľudové zvesti* (People's news) publicly labeled Jozef M. Kirschbaum, a citizen of Canada and the former chargé d'affaires of the Slovak State in Switzerland (1941–45), as a war criminal. Members of the Canadian Jewish community repeated these charges in the *Canadian Jewish News*, and Kirschbaum sued them for libel. The matter was then settled out of court, although this controversy dogged Kirschbaum for the rest of his life.[12]

Canadian society, meanwhile, underwent a major transformation in the 1960s. Responding to the so-called Quiet Revolution in the province of Quebec, which included a demand for greater self-government by that province, the Canadian federal government established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 to deal with this problem.[13] When the commissioners held public hearings in Montreal and Toronto in 1965, they heard from representatives of the Canadian Slovak community, especially from the Canadian Slovak League and from some émigré clergy. These representatives—among them J. M. Kirschbaum—agreed that Canada should be officially declared a bilingual country (English and French),

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[9]Jozef Vicen, *Vo viroch rokov, 1938–1988* (The whirlpool years, 1938–1988) (Bratislava, 1999). Vicen was the leader of the "White Legion" until 1957, when he was kidnapped in Vienna by the STB and repatriated to Czechoslovakia. He lived to tell the tale.

[10]Róbert Letz, *Slovensko v rokoch 1945–1948: Na ceste ku komunistickej totalite* (Slovakia in 1945–1948: On the road to communist dictatorship) (Bratislava, 1994), 53–65.

[11]See *Kanadský Slovák* (Toronto) and *Slovák v Amerike* (New York), starting in March 1948, and continuing every March to the present.

[12]*Ľudové zvesti* (Toronto), 10 October 1959, p. 6; 6 February 1962; 28 June 1962, p. 4; and 4 July 1962, p. 4; *Canadian Jewish News* (Toronto), 27 July 1962, pp. 1, 8; *Kanadský Slovák*, 4 August 1962, p. 2; 6 July 1963, pp. 1, 5. While the *Canadian Jewish News* apologized to Kirschbaum and published a retraction on 28 June 1963, p. 1, Kirschbaum's enemies, whether "Czechoslovaks" or communists, kept attacking him for his alleged Nazi connections. Eventually, the leftist "muckraker" Paul McKay wrote a scathing article about him entitled "The Kirschbaum File," which took up the entire Saturday magazine of the Kingston *Whig-Standard*, 10 December 1988. McKay repeated the charges in his subsequent book, *The Roman Empire: The Unauthorized Life and Times of Stephen Roman* (Toronto, 1990), which was a vicious attack upon the late Stephen Roman, millionaire entrepreneur and supporter of Slovak independence, and his friendship with Jozef Kirschbaum.

[13]*Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, book 1, *The Official Languages* (Ottawa, 1967), xv.

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but they rejected biculturalism (English and French). Instead, as did other émigrés from central and eastern Europe, the Slovak representatives insisted on Canada being a multicultural society.[14] The commissioners were impressed and made such a recommendation. As a result, in October 1971, prime minister Pierre Trudeau proclaimed that Canada was a bilingual but multicultural country. The government then created a secretary of state for multiculturalism to enact and oversee the government's new policies, which remain in effect to this day.[15] Thus, a group of postwar political émigrés had a major impact on the definition of Canadian society.

Another (unforeseen) impact that political émigrés had upon both Czechoslovakia, the United States, and Canada in the period 1945–89 was in the realm of espionage. I have already shown how the communist spy apparatus used the Slovak émigré Ferdinand Ďurčanský to subvert the postwar democratic system in Czechoslovakia. Canada and the United States also used the émigrés, but for different purposes. After 1948, a small group of Canadian and American Slovak communists returned to the new "socialist paradise" of Czechoslovakia, and a few were rewarded for their zealotry.[16] Thus, Magocsi's statement that after 1945, "returning home was not an option" did not apply to the "true believers." Many of their children, moreover, who had been born and raised in Canada or the United States, were recruited by the STB, trained as agents, and then returned to North America, ostensibly because they could not adjust to life in Czechoslovakia. Both the FBI and the Security Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were very suspicious of these returnees and had them watched and eventually arrested—and sometimes turned into double-agents by their own counterintelligence agents, who in most cases were political émigrés![17]

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[14]*Kanadský Slovák*, 23 November 1962, p. 4; and 24 April 1965, p. 4. The full "Brief of the Canadian Slovak League to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism" was published by Kirschbaum in his *Slovaks in Canada* (Toronto, 1967), 435–39. For the Ukrainian position, see Bohdan Bociurkiw, "The Federal Policy of Multiculturalism and the Ukrainian Canadian Community," in *Ukrainian Canadians, Multiculturalism, and Separatism: An Assessment*, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Edmonton, 1978), 98–128.

[15]See the *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, book 4, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups* (Ottawa, 1970); and House of Commons, *Debates*, vol. 8 (Ottawa, 1971), 8545–46. For its impact on the Slovaks, see my "Multiculturalism in Canada: A Slovak Perspective," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 123–28.

[16]A good example was Cyprián Slimák, who was born in Liesková, Liptov county, Slovakia, in 1906. In 1922, he helped organize the Communist Party in his home village. He emigrated to Canada in 1930 and spent the next eighteen years organizing his countrymen into various "worker" societies, and he also served as chief administrator of the communist weekly *Robotnícke slovo* (Workers' world; the predecessor of *Ľudové zvesti*). In 1948, he returned to communist Czechoslovakia, was hired by the Czechoslovak Foreign Service, served as a consul in Budapest and Shanghai, and worked at the Institute of the History of the Communist Party in Bratislava until his retirement. In 1966, he was given the "Award for Work," the state's highest decoration. He died in 1972. See *Ľudové zvesti*, 11 November 1972, pp. 1–2. The phenomenon of the return of communist zealots among Slovaks remains largely unexplored.

[17]Information provided by a political émigré and former member of CSIS (the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the civilian successor to the Security Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted

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Finally, political émigrés, specifically the Slovaks, had a major impact on communist Czechoslovakia and its future in the realm of religion. Since the communist authorities tried to destroy all organized religion in Czechoslovakia, especially the Greek and Roman Catholic churches,[18] which were their main opponents, political émigrés fought back as best as they could and scored several major victories. In 1963, Slovak émigrés in the West not only lavishly celebrated the eleven-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Sts. Cyril and Methodius to the early medieval Slovaks, but they also established the Institute of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Rome.[19] This institute started to train priests to serve in a future (liberated) Slovakia, published the scholarly annual *Slovak Studies* to promote the cause, and smuggled religious literature into Slovakia via Poland.[20] Most important of all, institute affiliates and other émigrés lobbied the popes to create an independent Archbishopric and Church Province for Slovakia.[21] Pope Paul VI acceded to these Slovak émigré requests in 1977. The communist government merely accepted this creation; it blocked the appointment of an archbishop until 1988.[22] Nevertheless, an independent Church Province for the Slovaks, the first since 870, was a major victory for Slovak émigrés in the West, most of whom lived and worked in the United States and Canada. Many regarded it as a symbolic first step toward independence for Slovakia.

Indeed, very shortly after the communists gave up power in Czechoslovakia during the so-called Velvet Revolution in late 1989, Slovak émigrés in the West swung into action. Leaders of the California branch of the Slovak World Congress called for Slovak independence before the year was out.[23] In February 1990,

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Police; CSIS was broken off from the RCMP by the Canadian government in 1983). My informant requested anonymity. It will be some time before historians are allowed access into RCMP and CSIS files dealing with espionage and double-agents.

[18]This sad chapter in Slovak history was first documented by the Rev. Theodoric J. Zubek in *The Church of Silence in Slovakia* (Whiting, 1956).

[19]*Kanadský Slovák*, 5 January 1963, p. 4; and 5 October 1963, pp. 1, 5.

[20]This part of the story still needs to be documented. The late Rev. Štefan Senčík, S.J., former provincial of the Slovak Jesuits in Canada, told me a part of it.

[21]See, for instance, the "Memorandum of the Central Assembly of the Canadian Slovak League to the Vatican requesting a Church Province and Archbishop for Slovakia," *Kanadský Slovák*, 25 September 1965, p. 1. J. M. Kirschbaum had first suggested this move in 1959. Ibid.

[22]Peter Mulík, "Úsilie o zradenie slovenskej cirkevnej provincie od roku 1939 a jej vývoj po súčasnosť" (Efforts to establish a Slovak Church Province from 1939 and its development to the present), in *Katolícka cirkev a Slováci. Úsilie Slovákov o samostatnú cirkevnú provinciu* (The Catholic Church in Slovakia: Efforts of the Slovaks to establish an independent Church Province), ed. Peter Mulík (Bratislava, 1997), 63–85, does recognize the efforts of émigré Slovaks, but also gives credit to the collaborationist priests in the procommunist "Pacem in Terris" organization and to Communist Party first secretary and president Gustáv Husák of Czechoslovakia for not having prevented it (p. 68). Since Mulík provides no footnotes, one wonders where he acquired such curious information.

[23]See the "Žiadosť kalifornských Slovákov na národ doma" (Appeal of California Slovaks to the nation at home), dated 13 December 1989 and mailed on 14 December by Igor Bazovský, president of the Slovak American Association of California to Dr. Ján Čarnogurský, first deputy prime minister of Czechoslovakia, with copies to, among others, federal prime minister Marián Čalfa, Slovak prime minister Milan Čič, speaker of the federal parliament Alexander Dubček, and

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a delegation of the Canadian Slovak League visited noncommunist Czechoslovakia, met with Slovakia's principal political leaders, and urged them to seek either more home rule in a federated Czecho-Slovakia or complete independence.[24] The Slovak League of America sent its delegation to Slovakia in the first week of May 1990, and its members also urged Slovaks to seek more home rule or else independence.[25] The convention of the Slovak World Congress, which met in the second week of May 1990 in Toronto, was attended by a group of high-level Slovak politicians, including speaker of the federal parliament Alexander Dubček, prime minister of Slovakia Milan Čič, and speaker of the Slovak parliament Rudolf Schuster; some of the delegates called for Slovak independence.[26] While most Slovak politicians hesitated to take such a drastic step in 1990—with the exception of the Slovak National Party, founded in March 1990—they eventually came around. Vladimír Mečiar, prime minister of the Slovak Republic (the country had been federalized during the "Dubček Era" in 1968) between 1990 and 1998, did not initially desire Slovak independence, only a looser federation with the Czechs. However, he was rebuffed by prime minister Václav Klaus of the Czech Republic, and by 1992, these two political leaders concluded that they had irreconcilable differences and settled on the "Velvet Divorce" in 1993.[27] Exactly how much influence Canadian and American Slovak émigrés had upon individual Slovak politicians, and especially Vladimír Mečiar, remains to be determined. However, MP Viliam Hornáček, who was (and is) a strong supporter of Vladimír Mečiar in the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), told me at a 1998 Conference for Slovaks Abroad: "We Slovaks at home were very impressed when Slovaks from the West started to arrive in our country in February of 1990, suggesting that we seek independence from the Czechs. We had not yet started to think this way until you [Slovaks from

several Slovak newspapers and radio and television stations. Interestingly enough, Rudolf Schuster, speaker of the Slovak Parliament—and future president of the independent Slovak Republic in 1999–2004—received a copy of this letter from Ján Čarnogurský and promised to "take it into account"! See the Jozef Mikuš Fonds, ARCS 95-1, Series V, File 30, Slovak American Association of California, in the Slovak Archives, Archives and Special Collections, Morisset Library, University of Ottawa, Canada.

[24]The visit was covered by the Slovak dailies *Smer* (Direction), 15 February 1990, and *Práca* (Work), 16 February 2002, among others. Rudolf Schuster, who was then speaker of the Slovak Parliament and later president of the Slovak Republic, mentioned the visit in his autobiographical *Ultimátum* (Bratislava, 1996), 101–2. He also published photos of this meeting in an extensive photo section between pages 96 and 97.

[25]I happened to be a member of this delegation. We were received by the Slovak prime minister Milan Čič and by the speaker of the Slovak Parliament, Rudolf Schuster. The June 1990 issue of *Slovák v Amerike* carried a complete report on our activities. Schuster also published a photograph of our meeting in *Ultimátum,* between pages 224 and 225.

[26]Schuster, *Ultimátum*, 208–9.

[27]The best account of the breakup of Czechoslovakia is Jan Rychlík, *Rozpad Československa: Česko-slovenské vztahy, 1989–1992* (The collapse of Czechoslovakia: Czech-Slovak relations, 1989–1992) (Bratislava, 2002). Rychlík also included a brief discussion of the role of Slovak émigrés in the independence movement in 1990. See ibid., 107–10.

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the West] planted this idea in our heads."[28] This contradicts Magocsi's statement that "America's central European diasporas were politically out of step with the times." Rather, Slovak émigrés in the United States and Canada, who were organized in the two Slovak leagues, and in the Slovak World Congress, were in the vanguard of Slovak independence, much like their predecessors in World War I, who had called for the destruction of Austria-Hungary and the creation of the Czecho-Slovak Republic long before their cousins in Slovakia had considered such a possibility.

Magocsi's call for a study of the impact that émigrés had upon the states of east central Europe after the fall of communism, and the use—or abuse—of émigrés by the postcommunist governments is right on target. In terms of the Slovak community in Canada, it can boast that its lobbying efforts with Canada's government resulted in the Department of Foreign Affairs allowing Slovaks to utilize the consular services of Canada's embassy in Vienna, rather than having to travel to distant Prague for such services. Much to the annoyance of Slovaks at home and abroad, Canada does not have an embassy in Bratislava. It still utilizes its embassy in Prague to serve both the Czech and Slovak republics.[29] Also, the recent election of the Canadian and American émigré hockey star Peter Šťastný to the European Parliament by Slovakia's voters shows that some Slovak émigrés did return to Slovakia and enjoyed a limited success in their country of origin.[30] How many did so, and how successful they were, remains to be determined.[31]

Meanwhile, the Slovak government has also interfered, in a small way, in the affairs of Slovaks abroad. In 1992, I published an article by Paul Robert Magocsi about the Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe in the journal *Slovakia*.[32] Magocsi's article very much annoyed president Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine, so much so that he complained to prime minister Vladimír Mečiar of Slovakia, who in turn complained to Ján A. Holy, the secretary-treasurer of the Slovak League of America

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[28]Hornáček's discussion with the delegates to the Conference on Slovaks Abroad, Government Conference Center, Častá-Papierníčka, Slovakia, 5 May 1998.

[29]As president of the Canadian Slovak League from 1994 to 1999, I coordinated a letter-writing campaign to the Canadian government to either open a Canadian embassy/consulate in Bratislava or, failing that, to let Slovaks utilize the consular services of the Canadian embassy in Vienna, which is only 50 km west of Bratislava, as opposed to Prague, which is 400 km west and 800 km from eastern Slovakia. See, for example, my letter to Sergio Marchi, minister of citizenship and immigration, 13 October 1995, and his reply of 9 November 1995. Author's personal correspondence.

[30]*Kanadský Slovák*, 19 June 2004, p. 3.

[31]Émigré politician of the postwar Slovak Democratic Party and a leader of the Council for a Free Czechoslovakia Martin Kvetko returned to Slovakia from New York in 1990 and resurrected his Democratic Party. However, it enjoyed no electoral success and died with him. See, for example, *Pravda* (Bratislava), 15 January 1990, p. 1. Meanwhile, the post-1968 émigré Igor Uhrík and his wife Natalia also returned in 1990 to help out. Igor joined the Slovak National Party and served as an unpaid advisor to the minister of privatization in the Jozef Moravčík government (1994). However, he found the corruption in Slovakia so widespread that in the fall of 1994 he returned to New York in disgust. Telephone conversation with Mr. Uhrík, November 1994.

[32]Paul R. Magocsi, "Carpatho-Rusyns: Their Current Status and Future Perspectives," *Slovakia* 35 (1991–92): 36–57.

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(the publisher of the journal in question), and the latter complained to me![33] That the president of the fifty-million strong Ukraine should be so concerned about Paul Robert Magocsi and his support of the recent Rusyn revival speaks volumes about the current leadership of some of east central Europe's newly independent states and the impact or influence of political émigrés upon them. By all means, let's have a conference on the subject and study how we—the émigrés, or the children of émigrés—have influenced our homelands, not just after 1989, but after 1945, and how our homelands are still influencing us.

[33]Ján A. Holy told me about these communications in the summer of 1996.

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