

of the Biele Karpáty, it appears that the district below Bradlo and Veľká Javorina gave Slovakia and the world some important diplomats.

Štefan Osuský, whose signature we find on the Treaty of Trianon, and Ján Papánek, one of the 14 diplomats, who formulated the final text of the United Nations Charter, are undoubtedly the first class stars in this Slovak “diplomatic pantheon”. Vladimír Hurban also participated in the founding assembly of the UN in San Francisco as a member of the Czechoslovak delegation. Ivan Krno was Deputy General Secretary of the UN. Juraj Slávik participated in the Paris Peace Conference of 1946 as a member of the Czechoslovak delegation. The gains from Michálek’s book include the fact that apart from these best known diplomats, he presents another important but less known diplomat: Vladimír Martin Palic, first secretary of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington, who had worked as a leading specialist at the Library of Congress in Washington for twenty years, after emigrating to the USA.

The three books in three languages from the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences are important contributions to spreading knowledge of Milan Rastislav Štefánik, and in the last case also of his successors in the field of diplomacy. It is necessary to hope that after the end of Štefánik’s Year research on him will continue, because these three important publications also show that many aspects of this important personality are still not sufficiently known.

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KÁZMEROVÁ, Ľubica. *PRÍBEH UČITEĽA. Jozef Sivák v školských službách 1918 – 1944*. [THE STORY OF A TEACHER. Jozef Sivák in the Educational Service 1918 – 1944]. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Veda, 2019, 108 pages, ISBN 978-80-224-1745-5.

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The author Ľ. Kázmerová has long devoted her publishing activity to the problem of schools, education and spreading of information in Slovakia during the period of great changes from 1918 to 1945. Numerous books and studies are evidence of this. Her latest publication is also a contribution to the history of education, schools and teaching in Slovakia. By sharpening our view of the teacher, school inspector, publicist, Member of Parliament for the Slovak People’s Party (SPP, from 1925 Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party – HSPP) and Minister of Education Jozef Sivák, the publication reviewed here has the potential to interest not only historians and experts on education, but also the wider teaching community. The author presents Jozef Sivák as a person who devoted the greater part of his working life to educational and cultural activities. From his many sided activities, she devotes attention to that which appears to have been his dominant concern in the period 1918–1944. This was questions of education in the political context of the People’s Party, although Jozef Sivák recast them according to his own ideas and made them more specific in practice. In this spirit, Ľ. Kázmerová has mapped the views and activities of J. Sivák in the context of their social significance. By presenting a

selection of the facts, she offers the reader the possibility to compare the statements of the participants with the actually applied education policy and its subsequent evaluation.

The publication is structured into three chapters with internal divisions into sub-chapters. Chapter 1: ***In the service of education and politics (1918–1938)*** with sub-chapters: *The beginnings of a teacher, To be or not to be a teacher, In the post of school inspector, Crisis of the intelligentsia? For Slovak technology.* Chapter 2: ***Education in the Slovak state under Sivák's leadership*** with sub-chapters: *In the autonomous Slovak region, At the inauguration celebrations of Pope Pius XII, In the Slovak state, Personnel changes in Slovak schools, Reform of the school system, Jewish education in a period of structural change, Higher education and Minister Sivák, The international contacts of the Ministry of Education and Public Information.* Chapter 3: ***Culture and enlightenment or the education of the people*** with sub-chapter: *The Ministry of Education as mediator of information and culture, The Slovak National Theatre under the supervision of the Ministry, The last school year in the service of the Ministry.* The choice of conception for grouping facts from the sources, mostly archive materials is a good guide for deeper penetration into the justification for Sivák's decisions and assessment of his career in the education system. Jozef Sivák was active in politics until 4 September 1944. After the end of the Second World War, he was put before the National Court. The documents of the National Court, judicial proceedings, speeches of the prosecution and defence can be put into context with Sivák's practical actions and published views. The reviewed publication can also be assessed from the point of view of the significance of the participation of an individual in historic events.

In the reviewer's opinion, the selection of facts and their analysis according to the structure stated above did not avoid frequent repetition of information. This repetition may be too much for some readers, while for others it may serve as an appropriate reminder of the already said or a more specific explanation of a problem.

The text of the publication is supplemented by pictorial material and an extensive note apparatus. Apart from citing sources, this is extensively supplemented by significant characteristics of personalities mentioned by the author in the context of the time, but without further information. Such notes are justified and are part of the description of the social conditions in which the life and political decisions of Sivák.

When mapping Sivák's teaching career, the author emphasizes his rightist Christian – national orientation and position as a moderate member of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSPP). She also emphasizes Sivák's critical views on some questions in educational policy. The publication provides enough facts to create a more concrete picture, but also enough stimuli for further research.

The reader will find information about Sivák's systematic work in the 1920s directed towards regenerating the administration of the school system and connecting the schools with the everyday life of the population. His publishing activity and rich public information activities associated with party activities got him nominated for a seat in the National Assembly for the Slovak People's Party. From the second half of the 1920s, he did not deviate in high politics from the aim of deeper Slovakization of the School system in Slovakia, support from Roman Catholic church schools and improving the school system in Slovakia in the fields of lacking expertise and a university with a technical orientation.

Sivák did not abandon the field of schooling and education in his public writing when he became the responsible editor of the People's Party daily newspaper *Slovák*. A frequent theme of his articles and of his statements in the National Assembly was the question of the use of the Slovak language in education and especially in secondary schools. After an appeal from A. Hlinka, he also participated in the preparation of Slovak textbooks. He was also aware of the need for public information, educational and cultural activities outside the school system, which led to theatre, lecture and organizational activities. He was chairman of the Society of Slovak Artists and active in Matica Slovenská and the Society of St. Vojtech. His teaching vocation and prevailing orientation towards schooling were combined with political activity over more than 25 years.

In the function of Minister of Education and Public Information of the Slovak state, he implemented various ideas to change the Slovak school system, which he advocated already during the First Czechoslovak Republic. In that period, he supported an autonomous position for Slovakia within Czechoslovakia. Under his management, the school system was reorganized and supplemented, new universities opened and a scientific institution, the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts established, all in the framework of the totalitarian ideology of HSPP.

Sivák held a critical view of schools without authorities, since in his view it suppressed the authority of the Church. He rejected non-confessional "*free schools*" subordinated to the "*complete service of free thought*". He supported the idea that: "*Where a feeling for authority is not taught, there also ceases to be obedience, decency, politeness and so on.*" He continued with his own understanding of obedience as an expression of the "*higher intellectual qualities*" characteristic of the intelligentsia. This was also the reason why teaching of religion was placed among the compulsory subjects in Slovak elementary and secondary schools. This changed the ideological content of teaching in the direction of supporting Christianity. Access to teaching of religion was one of the issues on which the People's Party had most criticized the policies of the First Czechoslovak Republic. Sivák did not agree with the structure of the school system, in which, according to him, state schools predominated over church schools. Sivák was also dissatisfied with the incomplete structure of the highest level of education in Slovakia during the First Czechoslovak Republic. Slovakia had no top level universities, faculties or colleges for natural science, technology, the economy, trade and pharmacy. Minister Sivák presented to the Culture Committee of the Slovak Parliament proposed reforms to the school system, which he saw as a correction of the preceding policy of the Czechoslovak state. He associated the reform first of all with changing the values as well as the knowledge content of education. He considered it necessary to harmonize education with the ideology of the People's Party. Under his leadership, the Slovak schools had to fulfil "*a dual role: to educate and re-educate*". He also expressed his conservative positions on the questions of the employment of married women and on ending co-education of pupils and students. Act no. 246/1939 in the Slovak Statute Book on regulation of the working conditions of married women teachers (passed on 28 September 1939) led to the dismissal of married women teachers. Evaluation of the remaining married women teachers was not favourable. Women teachers were thought to be incapable of work more often than their male colleagues, and they were a problem for the running of the

school. In Sivák's view, this caused the still unsolved question of determining priorities in the position of the female teaching population, which society forced on them. For the regime, dismissing married women teachers in the spirit of the ideology of the People's Party became one of the ways to put women back into the family and so support the quality of family upbringing.

From the opening of the school year 1939/1940, it was obligatory classrooms to contain the Christian symbol of the cross and portraits of national figures. The greeting "Na stráž" (On Guard) had to be used in schools. The selection of values and facts according to which the educational curriculum was shaped had the same implicit conceptual concept as the programme for the activities of the Hlinka Youth (HY). Teachers were expected to provide the ideological influence on the HY youth organizations. They became functionaries with many roles. The Ministry of Education required the directors and administrators of all schools to ensure that teachers and professors devote appropriate attention to work in the HY, which the ministry recognized as extra-curricular activities. In spite of this, as the author notes, during Sivák's time as minister, the ministry only rarely spoke openly about the connection of school education with the activity of the HY. The chief commander of the HY Alojz Macek criticized him for the inadequate number of teachers and their low level of engagement in the activities of the youth organization. Macek also criticized the content of the public information and value shaping activities of the Ministry of Education among school age people. National values seemed to remain weak among young people.

J. Sivák came more frequently into confrontation with the political positions and steps of the radicals. At the time of the reconstruction of the government in October 1940, Vojtech Tuka urged President J. Tiso to dismiss Sivák from the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Public Information. According to Tuka, Sivák lacked the "revolutionary spirit". When asked by the National Court in 1946, Sivák declared: "*I did not show an interest in Slovak independence, and I was restrained in proclaiming the national socialist programme.*" During Sivák's period of more than five years as minister, elements of national socialism did not get directly into the teaching process. According to the author, expression of the ideas of national socialism remained rare in Sivák's statements, and he did not return to them or clarify them.

An attitude of sympathy with the Jewish population was characteristic of Minister Sivák. He was able to find ways to exploit loopholes in the law in favour of Jewish teachers and pupils. When the Jewish Code was supposed to be implemented, Sivák opposed this political step. He declared that if such a government decree came into force, he would resign from his position as Minister of Education. In the end, he did not actually resign because of requests from Jewish rabbis. Prime Minister V. Tuka pointed out to Minister Sivák the interpretation of the decree on excluding Jews from school education. However, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Economy had the right to grant exceptions. The last head of the Jewish Centre Oskar Neumann addressed a letter to J. Sivák on 17 February 1946 mentioning his efforts in favour of Slovak Jews.

The tension between the minister of education and the radical wing of HSPP was also expressed in the field of higher education. After Slovakia became independent on 14 March 1939, Czech teachers in Slovak universities could keep their jobs only if

the Slovak Ministry of Education could not find replacements among Slovak teachers. According to Sivák, 16 professors of Czech nationality were employed at the Slovak University in January 1939. That is the number mentioned in his testimony from 1946, in the preparatory phase of his trial by the National Court. However, interest in retaining the expertise by keeping Czech professors in their teaching positions had an impact on Prime Minister and University Rector V. Tuka's view of the minister of education. Tuka addressed to Sivák the following words: "*I thought that you were a Slovak, but now I see that you are a Czechoslovak.*" At a session of the Presidium of the People's Party at the beginning of March 1943, President J. Tiso expressed dissatisfaction with the inadequate promotion of national values in higher education, and with the political unreliability of the teachers in both secondary and higher education. The continuation of the session was concerned with accusing the Ministry of Education and Minister Sivák of inactivity on these problems.

After the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising, V. Tuka's government offered its resignation and Sivák never returned to politics, but since he had been a leading political personality during the Slovak Republic, he was arrested on 4 May 1945 and placed before the National Court for retribution.

For Sivák, the school year 1943/1944, which brought reversal on the fronts of the Second World War, became a year for balancing the five year of existence and activity of the Ministry of Education and Public Information of the Slovak state and his own activity at the head of that ministry. Under his editorial supervision, the ministry published a book *Pát rokov slovenského školstva (Five Years of Slovak Education)*. The evaluation of the ministry in the book is largely pragmatic to reserved in relation to political events in the Slovak state, as if the compilers understood from the military maps and information about the "successes" of the Third Reich at the front, the possibility of a change in the position of the Slovak state in the event of the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The method of writing the individual chapters of the book *Príbeh učiteľa. Jozef Sivák v školských službách 1918 – 1944* will interest both experts and the wider reading public. Approaching historical reality through the story of an individual can lead to deeper interest in the position of the teacher and his role in the "force-field of time", in changing socio-political conditions. In the context of analysing themes, it is possible to apply the view that history as a story is not shaped only by big events, but also by subjective experience.

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