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Portugal and Slovakia in European comparison: Some historical, political and multicultural observations

This essay tries to make a comparative analysis of Portugal and Slovakia as European nations from a modern historical, contemporary political and multicultural perspective. It is hoped that in this way not only the differences but also certain similarities between the two countries can be elucidated. The historical perspective shows that there are parallels between Portugal and Slovakia in various ways, e.g. with regard to the strong position of the Catholic Church and the problems in introducing earlier programmes of social, cultural and political modernisation. The political analysis of developments in the twentieth century shows that in both nations it was rather difficult to carry through policies of democratic political reform, as Portugal fell prey to a right-wing authoritarian regime with fascist overtones and Slovakia first experienced a similar form of 'clerical fascism' and then had to undergo the yoke of communist totalitarianism. As a result both countries are still suffering from a legacy of 'democratic deficit', although Slovakia probably more than Portugal. Not the least interesting aspect of the social, cultural and political profile of present-day Portugal and Slovakia is the issue of multicultural problems and population structure. In both countries this is a notable feature of the contemporary scene. In Portugal the issue is mainly the result of mass immigration from the country's former colonies; in Slovakia it is rather a question of long-standing problems such as the status of the Hungarian minority and the social integration of the substantial Roma population. A comparison of both variants of the multicultural problematic is an interesting and challenging task for contemporary historians and social and political scientists.

Key words: Europe comparison, multiculturalism, modern nation, political reform.

An attempt to examine Portugal and Slovakia in one and the same context and to look for the most significant similarities and differences between them may seem at first sight a somewhat fanciful undertaking. Many people would probably see no apparent political, cultural or historical parallels between the two countries at all and would regard a comparative analysis of them as a waste of time. But such an approach would be wrong. What Portugal and Slovakia have in common is first of all the fact that both nations belong to Europe and that they share a common European history in a broad sense of the word. Their role and their specific position in this broader European history may have been quite different over the course of five or even ten centuries or so, but both nations made a special contribution to it and both shared a number of common European experiences in the cultural, religious, economic and political sphere. Moreover, at the end of the twentieth century both Portugal and Slovakia became part of a new European experience: the endeavour to create a new form of European unity and to make all European nations participate in the project of ensuring stability and prosperity for the people of Europe as a whole.

We want to look at Portugal and Slovakia in three ways: by paying attention to their history as European nations, which includes both the differences and the parallels between them; by making some observations on their political experiences especially in the tragic and contradictory twentieth century; and by looking at the specific issue of the existence and the position of ethnic, national and sociocultural minorities in both countries, i.e. the fact that both Portugal and Slovakia are 'multicultural' and ethnically pluralistic states. The first topic is important enough in its own right and in addition is meant to provide the necessary historical background to any attempt at understanding the present-day condition of Portugal and Slovakia. The second topic may help us to understand how and why both countries had many difficulties in achieving democratic political conditions in the twentieth century and, perhaps, why both rank among those nations of Europe which had – and perhaps still have – to make a special effort to consolidate their democratic systems and to develop their democratic political culture. The third topic may give us an insight into the cultural complexities of Portuguese and Slovak society as both nations try to combine a broad European orientation, an old national consciousness, and the reality of also having to include groups of people some of whom are seen as minorities with a different and perhaps 'problematic' identity. In other words, 'European identity', 'national identity', and 'multicultural identity' are interrelated in a complex, and sometimes surprising, way.

The role of Portugal in European history is in some ways quite unique. The country was the first in Europe to embark on the project of maritime and colonial expansion with the aim of exploring new trade routes and developing new ways of gaining profits from them. This new development began already in the fifteenth, even the fourteenth, century and was in many ways a continuation of Portugal's (and Spain's) struggle against Islam and against the dominant Islamic powers of the late medieval era. Portugal's capital Lisbon soon became the largest and richest city in Europe and was convincing proof of the success of the Portuguese colonial and maritime explorations. It is interesting that, while Portugal and Spain became the most dynamic nations of fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century Europe, both countries always stubbornly continued to adhere to their rather inflexible Catholic religion, while other nations who began to play a role on the world stage later in the sixteenth century – especially England and Holland – experienced Protestant revolutions which gave their societies a more modern sociopolitical, cultural and economic profile by the seventeenth century. The reason why Portugal always remained so consistently and conservatively Catholic was probably that the Catholic faith and the Catholic Church had become a major hallmark of its national identity during the long struggle against the Islamic enemy. This deeply rooted Catholic identity was bound to remain a crucial feature of Portugal,[1] despite the fact that beginning in the nineteenth (or even the eighteenth) century there also sprang up a countertrend of anti-clericalism. That this Catholic loyalty and Catholic religious orientation could also become a source of weakness and internal division was shown, for example, by the remarkable Catholic Portuguese intolerance of the Jews and their different religious and 'racial' (as it was sometimes defined) identity. The Jews were an important social and economic population group in fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and sixteenth-century Portugal but by repeatedly suppressing them and finally driving most of them out of the country, Portugal

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[1]   For the question of Catholic identity in Portugal and the relationship between religious and national identity, see A. Matos Ferreira, 'Nação e religião: identidade e contradições', pp. 105-118, and Manuel Clemente, 'Catolicismo e identidade portuguesa', pp. 119-32, both in H. Fernandes, I. Castro Henriques, J. da Silva Horta, and S. Campos Matos, eds., *Nação e Identidades. Portugal, os Portugueses e os Outros*, Lisbon 2009.

arguably acted against its own economic interests.[2] It was difficult for the nation that pioneered the economic and scientifically underpinned Atlantic and international expansion of Europe to develop a more rational and tolerant approach to social, cultural and religious issues. Many of the wealthy Portuguese Jews moved not only to North Africa and the Ottoman Empire but also to an emerging new European power like Holland, which soon became a major competitor of Portugal in the field of overseas trade and international maritime expansion by using, among other things, the expertise and financial resources of refugees from other, more intolerant, countries in Europe.

Between 1580 and 1640 Portugal was incorporated as a part of the Kingdom of Spain. This 'dark period' in Portuguese history was an important additional reason for the Portuguese people to define their nation in opposition to Spain[3] and, perhaps, to seek a degree of isolation from all their enemies and competitors in Europe and overseas. A pragmatic exception was made with respect to England, which already long ago had begun to act as the protector and ally of Portugal in her endeavour to remain politically independent and to keep the Spanish enemy at bay. At the end of the seventeenth century a new source of wealth was found in Brazil (gold) and during the eighteenth century the Portuguese monarchy, the aristocracy and the Catholic Church took advantage of this to strengthen their traditionally powerful political position and to carry out a number of rather exhibitionist architectural projects displaying the status and wealth of these ruling strata of the nation. Perhaps this should be seen – and indeed it has been seen by many historians – as a missed opportunity for the Portuguese to initiate a new phase in economically modernising their country instead of throwing away their resources for the sake of prestige projects; in fact similar earlier opportunities and sources of colonial revenue had been squandered as well. The wealth from Brazil and from other Portuguese colonial possessions could have been used to start new industries, to encourage the development of a stronger national bourgeoisie, etc. But unfortunately this did not happen and Portugal gave the impression of being stuck in an older age of monarchical, aristocratic and feudal Catholic splendour instead of embarking on a new era of internal 'regeneration' (a term that became popular only in the nineteenth century) and strengthening its competitive power in the arena of the European-dominated international economy. The country that benefited from this was Brazil, which received hundreds of thousands of additional poor immigrants from Portugal. Besides the traditional aristocracy, one significant factor behind Portugal's social, cultural and psychological conservatism was the powerful Catholic Church, which was afraid of all experiments in modernisation that might threaten the existing social and political order. It was painful to see how in the age of the European Enlightenment Portugal was still continuing its horrific practice of ritually burning at the stake groups of 'heretics' of various

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[2]   See Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, 'Le judaïsme séfarade entre la Croix et le Croissant', pp. 24-31, in his *Sefardica. Essais sur l'histoire des Juifs, des marranes et des nouveaux-chrétiens d'origine hispano-portugaise*, Paris 1998, for a brief account of the intermittent persecution and expulsion of the Jews since the 14th and 15th centuries; see further Esther Benbassa (ed.) et al., *Mémoires juives d'Espagne et du Portugal*, Paris 1996; David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, 2nd edn, Cambridge 2003, chapters 1 and 2 passim.

[3]   See for the interesting issue of the relationship Portugal-Spain, Michael Scotti-Rosin, 'Nahe Ferne oder ferne Nähe: Überlegungen zu einer schwierigen Beziehung', *Lusorama* 59-60 (November 2004), pp. 61-85. For the question of nationalism and national identity in the region see further Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith, eds., *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula (Competing and Constructing Identities)*, Berg 1996, especially the introductory chapter: Angel Smith and Clare Mar-Molinero, 'The Myths and Realities of Nation-Building in the Iberian Peninsula', pp. 1-30.

descriptions 'to demonstrate that the church was still mightier than the state.'[4] Only the terrible earthquake destroying a large part of Lisbon in 1755 and the subsequent reform programme of the notorious enlightened despot the Marquis of Pombal seemed to be able to lift Portugal out of its medieval-like cultural inertia, social backwardness and counterproductive Catholic conservatism. But later in the eighteenth century some of these reforms were diluted again (though not completely eliminated) after Pombal had lost his position of influence. In the early nineteenth century, moreover, Portugal was badly damaged by war and invasions, first having to fight the French and then, in the national revolution of 1820, even the old British 'ally' who had in fact become an occupier of the country. Civil war in the 1830s weakened the country as well and it took Portugal a great effort to start a new attempt at modernising its political, economic, social and cultural institutions. But the country more or less succeeded in doing this during the period 1820 – 1850.

When we look at the history of Slovakia during the same period – roughly from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century – we may observe a number of similarities as well as certain differences as far as the country's long-term historical experience is concerned.[5] Like Portugal, Slovakia had to deal with the Islamic enemy, in Slovakia's case the expanding Ottoman Empire. Slovakia ('northern' or 'Upper Hungary') was a part of the Kingdom of Hungary, one of the oldest state formations in Europe that had been founded around the year 1000, more than a century before the establishment of the Portuguese Kingdom in the early twelfth century. Slovakia as a region in multilingual and multinational feudal Hungary did not have any autonomous administrative or political institutions; in this respect its position was completely different from politically independent and culturally more homogeneous Portugal. But this northern region of Hungary had nevertheless long been seen as a special part of the Hungarian Kingdom and was occasionally referred to as the 'Slav Land', the 'land of the Slovaks', and the like. The Slovaks constituted the great majority of the population of this northern Hungarian region and it is acceptable to speak of 'Slovakia' in an ethnographic sense when referring to the period before 1918, the year when multinational Hungary collapsed and Slovakia became part of the new Czechoslovak Republic. This Slovak region became more important for Hungary as a whole, and for the Habsburg Monarchy of which Hungary became a part in the early sixteenth century, when the Ottoman armies conquered central Hungary after 1526 and Slovakia became a kind of frontier of Europe and of what remained of Royal Hungary against the Ottoman Empire. Most of Slovakia itself was not occupied by the Turks, but the country had to experience an endless series of Turkish raids into the territory and was often visited by central and western Europeans who wanted to see this frontier to the Islamic enemy, which also contained an important mining industry, with their own eyes. The difference between the Portuguese and the Slovak experience with the Islamic enemy was especially one of historical time. Whereas for Portugal the experience of an Islamic presence on or near its territory was definitively over by 1500 (on the territory of the Portuguese Kingdom itself this had, in contrast to Spain, already been the case since the thirteenth century), for Slovakia this experience was just about to begin right at that time. What Portugal and Slovakia share in common, however, is a historical consciousness in which Islam is seen as a major enemy in civilisational, territorial and religious terms. The question could be posed how far the

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[4]   David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, 2nd edn, Cambridge 2003, p. 69.
[5]   For an English-language history of Slovakia see for example Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A history of Slovakia: the struggle for survival*, New York 1996.

new European experience with Islam in the early twenty-first century is a factor reviving this old enemy image. But of course the image of Islam as 'the historical enemy' of Christian Europe is a general one all over the European continent.

Like in Portugal, the Catholic Church is a dominant institution in the history of Slovakia and there can be no doubt that it shaped many of the characteristic cultural traits of the country and its people that are still visible today. A difference however is that in Slovakia – and in the old Hungarian Kingdom as a whole – Protestantism survived as a 'secondary' religious and cultural factor of some historical importance. This gave a certain degree of pluralistic character to Slovak culture and society that is missing in the 'Catholic mono-culture' of Portugal. But on the other hand the Catholic Church was similarly a strong conservative factor in Slovakia, which may have had – in addition to political and other secular factors – an influence on the relative lack of social and economic (not to speak of cultural and political) modernisation that was perceptible in Slovakia and Hungary, indeed not unlike the situation in Portugal. Like in Portugal there were those (for example the great Habsburg Emperor Joseph II in the 1780s and groups of reformed-minded Catholics and Protestants both before and after that remarkable decade) who tried to carry through a programme of cultural and socio-economic modernisation. But like in Portugal their initiatives were only partly successful, although in some fields of culture, politics and society changes were introduced that had a lasting impact, e.g. educational renewal and a degree of 'anti-clericalism' in some circles who were determined to reduce the power and influence of the Catholic Church. Like Portugal, Slovakia continued to be characterised until the mid-nineteenth century by feudal- and medieval-like traits in the social, economic and cultural sphere. In the political sphere the situation was slightly different, with modern political, ideological and nationalistic ideas beginning to influence larger numbers of people and announcing the coming of the modern age of secular ideologies, democratisation and political mobilisation. During the first half of the nineteenth century attempts were made by a 'national-liberal' and reform-minded section of the Hungarian nobility to introduce a number of social and cultural reforms. But these initiatives were accompanied by a policy of attempted 'Magyarisation' (linguistic and national-cultural assimilation) of the non-Magyar (non-ethnic-Hungarian) population groups of Hungary, including the Slovaks, the Romanians, and other national groups with their own languages and 'national traditions'. This resulted in fierce nationality struggles in multinational Hungary and was probably one factor among many slowing down the political and economic progress of Hungary as a whole. By the mid-nineteenth century national conflict between the ethnic Hungarians and the other nations of Hungary had become the most significant feature of Hungary's and Slovakia's political and cultural scene. This complicated problem was a phenomenon that starkly distinguished Slovakia from Portugal, which could benefit at least in this regard from its pattern of greater cultural and national homogeneity.

In Portugal meanwhile a new 'liberal', ideologically modern, reformist and even partly republican political class had appeared on the scene that was not much unlike some of the Hungarian national-liberal reformers of the nineteenth century. Both the new Portuguese and the Hungarian liberal élite – and the Slovak national élite in its own way, too – were self-styled 'modern' political avant-gardes with a strong sense of the need for a progressive ideology pointing the way forward towards the future of their modernising nations. This also included linking the 'glorious past' of the nation with the hopefully equally glorious future. In this complex ideological and 'multicultural' context the Hungarian national-liberal avant-garde came into conflict with the emerging Slovak national intelligentsia that was creating its own historical myths about the great

Slav and Slovak past in an attempt to fight back against the nationalist myths of the Hungarians. The national ideology of both the Hungarians and the Slovaks can be compared with the national-liberal claims of the new Portuguese political class of the nineteenth century, which tried to redefine the glorious Portuguese past in a more contemporary, democratic and increasingly republican and anti-clerical way. The Portuguese anti-clerical and liberal section of the new political class rediscovered the great colonial past of the Portuguese nation in its own way and tried to fit this into its 'positivist' (secular and progressive) ideology of Portuguese 'regeneration', modernisation and republicanism.[6] At the same time a more conservative and Catholic stream within the Portuguese political landscape presented its own version of the Portuguese past as well, in which the historic task of spreading Christianity and Roman Catholicism played a major part in contrast to the secular, more economistic and 'scientific' ideology of the anti-clerical liberals, republicans and socialists. A similar ideological and cultural-political conflict between 'liberals' and 'Catholics' emerged in late nineteenth-century Upper Hungary and within the Slovak national movement. Also in Slovakia the twentieth century opened with 'cultural struggles' between progressive secularists and conservative Catholics, with both groups beginning to mobilise broader groups of the population also outside the middle and lower-middle classes. In a sense the entire 'intra-ethnic' political history of the Slovak nation in the twentieth century was a cultural and ideological struggle between 'national secularists', including patriotic liberals, democrats and socialists, on the one hand, and 'national conservatives', including Catholics, conservative Protestants and even a group of anti-democrats, on the other hand. Communism as an anti-democratic force on the left further helped to weaken the secular democratic camp. Many Slovak progressivists wanted political unity with the Czechs in order to isolate the Catholic and conservative national political camp; the Czechs were seen as a brother nation who could also help to culturally modernise relatively backward and conservative Slovakia. As against this, many Slovak Catholics and conservatives stressed the distinct national and more religious identity of the Slovaks while striving for Slovak political autonomy and fighting against the Czechoslovak programme of cultural modernisation and secularisation.

In Portugal the liberals and their allies succeeded in founding a republic in 1910, which tried to continue the project of modernising the country begun in the nineteenth century. But their weakness was shown by the incomplete success (though not the complete failure) of this project and by the fact that in 1926 the country had to experience another coup d'état (there had been many since the early nineteenth century) and the coming to power of a military and dictatorial regime with increasingly fascist or semi-fascist traits. This regime was led since 1928 by minister of finance António de Oliveira Salazar, who gradually increased his power and became the undisputed dictatorial leader of the country. In the 1920s and 1930s democratic Slovakia witnessed the rise of an authoritarian national-Catholic political movement as well, the Slovak People's Party led by Andrej Hlinka. In 1938 this movement took over the government of Slovakia and installed a semi-fascist or 'clerical-fascist' regime with strong Catholic and nationalist overtones

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[6]   See for example AbdoolKarim A. Vakil, 'Nationalising Cultural Politics: Representations of the Portuguese 'Discoveries' and the Rhetoric of Identitarianism, 1880-1926', pp. 33-52, and Alan Freeland, 'The People and the Poet: Portuguese National Identity and the Camões Tercentenary (1880)', pp. 53-66, both in Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith, eds., *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula (Competing and Constructing Identities)*, Berg 1996. See for various aspects and topics in the field of 19th- and early 20th-century liberalism, anti-clericalism and republicanism also the interesting work of António Ventura, *Estudos sobre história e cultura contemporâneas de Portugal*, Lisbon 2004.

not unlike its Portuguese contemporary counterpart. It would seem there are some interesting parallels between the Portuguese and Slovak experiences with nationalist and authoritarian political movements that were leaning on strong Catholic traditions and whose political culture and mentality was bordering on the ideology and practices of fascism. A difference was perhaps that the Slovak version of national-Catholic dictatorship was based on a strong political movement that had been really growing 'from below', while the Portuguese regime had come to power by a military coup d'état largely supported by sections of the political, social and military élite. On the other hand the Slovak regime was perhaps dependent on German support for its survival, while its Portuguese counterpart managed to stay in power without such outside assistance. In any case both countries seemed unable to develop a successful project of democratic modernisation (even apart form outside factors in the Slovak case) and were suffering from a legacy of problematic Catholic conservatism, hierarchical and authoritarian traditions, and relative weakness of the liberal and progressive political streams. It is not possible at this place to go into greater detail, but there may be a fruitful field of further historical, cultural and political comparison between the two countries especially with regard to their experience in the first half of the twentieth century. In addition there also appear to be certain interesting parallels between the historical evolution of both countries as far as the longer time-perspective is concerned, i.e. with regard to a historical period spanning several centuries. Our comparative historical survey must end at this point, however, and below only some additional observations on political developments in the twentieth century are offered, followed by a discussion of 'multicultural issues'. It is clear that the experiences of Portugal and Slovakia with various forms of dictatorship in the twentieth century must be a major topic. Also in this regard we may observe certain similarities as well as differences.

One difference between Portugal and Slovakia in the twentieth century was that Portugal could more or less decide its own fate without external intervention; this was among other things the result of its longstanding state independence and its peripheral geographic position. In Slovakia, located in the heart of central Europe and suffering from its old problem of national and political dependency, the situation was completely different. The country was part of greater Hungary until 1918, and thereafter became part of the new Czechoslovak State that was dominated by the Czechs. During the existence of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) Slovakia experienced a period of democracy, national-cultural progress, and some economic and social modernisation including a programme of land reform. At the same time Portugal entered a period of self-imposed dictatorship and of decline of political culture and liquidation of democratic freedoms. But during this period Slovakia had its problems too. The political antagonism between Slovak 'progressivists' and Slovak Catholics increasingly intensified and there were also tensions between Slovaks and Czechs. While democratic political culture in Czechoslovakia was consolidated and the German and Hungarian minorities could in many ways benefit from the democratic character of the state as well, there were also some other less promising tendencies both among part of the Slovaks and among some of the political groups representing the national minorities. The national minority issue, notably the Hungarian minority problem in Slovakia, had several unpleasant consequences. In Slovakia, where the tables had been turned in 1918 with the 'new Slovakia' now containing a Hungarian minority instead of the Slovaks being a minority nationality in greater Hungary, there was a considerable degree of mutual suspicion between Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians that was difficult to overcome. Hungary itself wanted revision of the post-1918 borders in central Europe and to re-incorporate the Hungarian minori-

ties now living in Slovakia, Romania and Serbia. All of this was potentially highly destabilising for the region, and in addition the increasingly anti-Czech Catholic Slovak political movement led by Hlinka strove for radical Slovak autonomy and, it seemed, for a political system that was more authoritarian and less democratic than the Czechoslovak Republic was. The wartime 'Slovak State' led by the Catholic priest Jozef Tiso from 1938-9 showed that for many Slovak Catholics a form of semi-fascism was not a problem as long as conservative 'Catholic' and 'national' values were honoured and maintained. To make matters worse, after the Second World War Slovakia had hardly time to recuperate from its war experience and to make a new start as a democratic nation. Now it was the communists who were determined to seize power in Slovakia and Czechoslovakia and to impose their version of dictatorship.

Although Portugal had been suffering under the regime of 'Catholic soldiers' and then of Salazar since 1926, the country had escaped the Second World War. But this was precisely the reason why its dictatorial regime – similar to the Franco regime in Spain – could survive for the incredibly long period of almost another thirty years. Although the Portuguese dictatorship ended fifteen years earlier (in 1974) than the communist regime in Slovakia and in the rest of Eastern Europe, it had begun more than twenty years before the final communist take-over in the East in 1948. In other words, Portugal's dictatorship (1926 – 1974: 48 years) lasted longer than the communist dictatorship in Slovakia (1948 – 1989: 41 years). Perhaps the Portuguese dictatorship was not a 'fascist' or a 'totalitarian' regime in the 'proper' sense of the word, as has been argued by some analysts, and perhaps it is necessary to distinguish between an 'authoritarian' regime (like the Portuguese one?) and a 'totalitarian' (communist or fascist) one. To make the issue even more confusing, it has also been argued by a prominent French analyst of the problem that the Portuguese regime was not really fascist (in the Italian or German sense of a serious ideology with mass mobilisation), but that it was none the less 'totalitarian', 'police-run' and a lot more.[7] Other analysts again might argue that it was in fact more (semi-) fascist than totalitarian, and perhaps the most important thing to note is that the Portuguese regime of 1926-1974 was highly oppressive, dictatorial, and intimidating even if it was not completely totalitarian, 'cultivating', for example, rather than suppressing rumours about its torture practices.[8]

The argument that the Portuguese regime was not totalitarian in the sense of liquidating all social and political structures of civil society, in contrast to the communist regime in Slovakia, may be tested by looking at the depth of the political, cultural, and socio-economic destruction caused by both dictatorial regimes. In the Portuguese case the degree of civic destruction would seem to have been less profound and long-lasting than in the case of communist Slovakia. The totalitarian character of the communist regime in the economic, social, and psychological sphere has had consequences that are still clearly visible in Slovak society today. The absence of small businesses in Slovakia, the atmosphere of apathy and passivity and of uncritical acceptance or fear of authority, the lack of sociocultural differentiation within mainstream society – these are all typical consequences of the recent totalitarian experience, although some of the causes of the weakness of Slovak civil society and political culture may have to be located even further back in history than just the relatively recent period of communism. It is true that in Portugal there is a considerable degree of civic and political indifference and of abstention in elections too, as

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[7]   Jacques Georgel, *Le Salazarisme: Histoire et Bilan 1926-1974*, Paris 1981, p. 302, quoted in David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, 2nd edn, Cambridge 2003, p. 164.

[8]   Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*, p. 168.

has been shown in a recent publication, but in the elections for the European Parliament in 2004 more than 60 per cent of the Portuguese electorate went to the polls,[9] as against less than 20 per cent in Slovakia. Indeed, Slovakia has the questionable honour of showing up the lowest percentage of voters in the European Election of all the EU nations both in 2004 and, again, in 2009. In Portugal the level of civic apathy, political indifference and 'social amorphism' (lack of social expressiveness and of sociocultural differentiation) is not as high as in Slovakia and the average observer feels that Portuguese civil society is more vibrant than Slovak society, where spontaneous civic initiatives are rare. Slovak society and the Slovak people thus give the impression of being more damaged and deformed by their historical experience than the Portuguese, even if also in Portugal certain social and institutional rigidities and a degree of social backwardness may be proof of the lasting effects of the long period of dictatorship.

Slovakia has to contend not only with its legacy of communist totalitarianism, but also with the problem of long-unfulfilled national aspirations and internal divisions over the meaning of its national identity. In Portugal the old divisions over national-liberal progressivism versus national-Catholic conservatism are still alive as well; they continue to be a factor in national politics even if the question has been toned down in recent decades. In addition a more general and inclusive sense of Portuguese nationalism is occasionally reasserted by rivalry and, perhaps, a degree of mutual antagonism with neighbouring Spain. But in Slovakia national feelings of an older ethnocultural type are kept alive probably much more strongly than could ever be the case in Portugal because of the constantly re-emerging tensions between Slovakia and its historical 'arch-enemy' Hungary, the older state that Slovakia was part of until 1918 and that is still mistrusted by many Slovaks. It sometimes seems as if this insecure sense of Slovak national identity produces a certain psychological instability that is further intensified by internal divisions between the Slovaks themselves. Those who tend to claim that they are the only true Slovak nationalists or protectors of the nation also tend to suggest that other Slovak political groups are not sufficiently patriotic or on their guard against the Hungarian 'threat'. Thus both the domestic Slovak national political scene and the problem of Slovak-Hungarian relations are factors slowing down the development of a more mature political culture and civil society in Slovakia. The 'national issue' in Slovakia and the legacy of communist totalitarianism – as expressed in a weak civil society, an immature political culture, and problems like clientelist and kleptocratic social tendencies – are a fatal combination making the consolidation of a civic and non-ethnic democracy (also among the Hungarian minority), and a stable European-type political spectrum, unusually difficult.[10] In comparison the post-dictatorial case of Portugal appears to be an easier problem to address in political, social, psychological and multiethnic terms. An important aspect of this problematic is the question of ethnic minorities in both countries.

Slovakia has a long-standing 'problem' with at least two minority groups within its borders. The first is the Hungarian minority (about 10 per cent of Slovakia's total population of approximately 5.5 million), some of the historical background and political ramifications of which has already been touched upon above. A second minority issue in Slovakia, though one of a rather different kind, is that of the 'Roma', a population group comprising perhaps a quarter of a mil-

9   António Reis, ed., *A Portrait of Portugal: Facts and Events*, Lisbon 2007, pp. 31-33.

10   See on these problems, for example, Pieter van Duin and Zuzana Poláčková, 'Distant Land in the Heart of Europe: Problems of Political Culture in Slovakia', *Central European Political Science Review*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (Winter 2001), pp. 138-50.

lion people or more (the precise number is unknown) and presenting a problem of social integration rather than national-cultural antagonism. It is interesting that Portugal has a Roma minority as well, and a comparative analysis of the details of the condition of both groups of Roma could be useful to improve our understanding of the issue. However, the size of the Portuguese Roma population is estimated at 25,000 to 30,000 people, which is equal to only one tenth of the Roma population of Slovakia (5 per cent or more of the Slovak population) and an insignificant fraction of less than one per cent of the total Portuguese population of about 10 million. But even so, the Roma minority is seen in Portugal as an issue and as an 'ethnic minority' which is 'socially and culturally different and disadvantaged'[11], a way of defining the problem which suggests both an aspect of ethnocultural difference (perhaps not necessarily a problem under all circumstances?) and one of social marginalisation (certainly a problem if the aim is to integrate people into mainstream society or the labour market). But in Portugal, in contrast to Slovakia, the major issue in the field of ethnic minorities is the position of the substantial and growing group of people from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa and, to a lesser degree, of those from Brazil and Asia. Some of these immigrants are well integrated or even have Portuguese citizenship, but a larger number tend to form a distinct and perhaps somewhat marginal population consisting of a number of quite diverse cultural, ethnic and social groups. Even for Portugal, with its longstanding contacts with the non-European world, the question of mass immigration from outside Europe is a relatively new phenomenon. But before we look into this topic in greater detail a word must be said about another aspect of migration, namely emigration and remigration, which also tells us something about Portuguese and Slovak attitudes.

What was not new for Portugal, in contrast to recent mass immigration, was the reverse phenomenon of large-scale emigration of impoverished Portuguese themselves. This development already started in the sixteenth century, continued in the eighteenth century and after, and only recently began to slow down with rising domestic prosperity levels following Portugal's democratic revolution and access to the EU. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a unique phase of European mass emigration took place which included large numbers of Portuguese as well who continued to emigrate to Brazil and North America; after the Second World War a substantial number of Portuguese moved to European countries like France, Germany and Switzerland. During the second and third quarters of the twentieth century, moreover, a perhaps even larger number went to the Portuguese colonies in Africa, especially to Angola. The Portuguese Diaspora came to constitute an international 'Lusophone' community that continued to cultivate Portuguese culture and national identity. In this regard the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history and behaviour of the Slovaks was very similar; they too tended to keep a great deal of their national culture abroad and to remain highly interested in developments at home. The Slovaks even have a 'Slovak World Congress' which regularly meets as a platform discussing Slovak interests. Both the Slovaks and the Portuguese, in other words, displayed a tendency of 'cultural persistence', of preserving their national culture, language and identity which sometimes counteracted against the other natural migrant tendency of assimilation to a new and alien environment like that of Canada or the United States, or of other European countries.[12] One result

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[11] António Reis, ed., *A Portrait of Portugal: Facts and Events*, Lisbon 2007, pp. 58-65 on immigrants and minorities.
[12] See for Portuguese emigration and cultural persistence M.B. Rocha-Trindade, 'A emigração, motor de relações culturais', in H. Fernandes, I. Castro Henriques, J. da Silva Horta, and S. Campos Matos, eds., *Nação e Identidades. Portugal, os Portugueses e os Outros*, Lisbon 2009, pp. 287-304; also Marion Kaplan, *The Portuguese. The Land and its People*,

of this was that many Portuguese and many Slovaks actually returned to their homeland at old age, in the manner of Gastarbeiter. When the Portuguese colonies in Africa became independent in 1974-1975 a rather extreme example of the phenomenon of remigration occurred: more than half a million Portuguese returned to Portugal from Angola, Mozambique and the other former Portuguese African territories, with another large number moving to South Africa.

Both Portugal and Slovakia thus have experience with mass emigration (and with emigrant cultural persistence) but only Portugal, not Slovakia, was confronted with the new phenomenon of mass immigration into Europe during the second half of the twentieth century. For Portugal, which first had to absorb the white African returnees in the 1970s, this development only seriously started in the 1980s, with the arrival of growing numbers of black African economic immigrants from former Portuguese Africa and economic immigrants from Brazil. By 1996 there were at least 110,000 Africans in Portugal, including Africans from Cape Verde, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, and more than 20,000 Brazilians among whom, however, there is a much larger proportion of skilled and qualified people, in contrast to the Africans. Their numbers continued to grow through the twenty-first century and in 2001-2002 some 170,000 new immigrant workers were legalised. After 2000, large numbers of East Europeans began to migrate to Portugal as well; there are more than 100,000 of them in the country, the largest group being Ukrainians. Then there are smaller numbers of foreign Chinese, Indians and other Asians, some 25,000 of them by 2006 (in addition there are more than 30,000 Indians, originally from the former Portuguese colony Goa, who are Portuguese citizens). In 2006 there were altogether about 500,000 foreigners in Portugal, about 5 per cent of the Portuguese population, but the real figure is actually higher because it does not include the category of illegal immigrants. The cultural and ethnic profile of the non-Portuguese population is very diverse. Half or more of all foreigners are Portuguese-speakers, including some 100,000 Brazilians and more than 150,000 Africans from Cape Verde, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and other African countries; of the non-Portuguese-speakers, especially significant are the large numbers of Ukrainians, Romanians and Moldavians. The number of Africans is actually larger than their share of the 'foreign' population, because 30,000 to 40,000 of them recently acquired Portuguese citizenship; the total number of people of African descent would therefore seem to be some 200,000. The group of 'Afro-Portuguese' citizens is said to have a sociocultural profile distinguishing them from more recently arrived African migrant labourers, being 'relatively well integrated and culturally similar' to the Portuguese. In so far as these Portuguese citizens of African descent are seen as an 'ethnic minority' – and of course they are visible as a 'racial' group – they are only one minority among many.[13]

Portugal indeed contains a large number of ethnic, social, cultural, religious and linguistic minorities who are not foreigners but Portuguese citizens. This shows that Portugal is a multicultural country not only in terms of receiving large numbers of immigrants, but also in terms of containing cultural and other minorities among its citizenry. The Roma minority has already been mentioned and it may be added that even the younger generation of Roma (like in Slovakia) remain stuck in a socially marginal position, being worse off in educational and professional terms than even the lower class of Africans. The other extreme, positively speaking, are the

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Harmondsworth 1991, p. 164, where a figure of 4 million Portuguese abroad is mentioned, including large numbers in South Africa, Venezuela, Canada and the United States. See António Reis, ed., *A Portrait of Portugal: Facts and Events*, Lisbon 2007, p. 60 for the mass wave of Portuguese returnees from Africa in the 1970s.

[13]   António Reis, ed., *A Portrait of Portugal: Facts and Events*, Lisbon 2007, pp. 58-65.

Portuguese Indians, of whom there are more than 30,000 and who are not different from the Portuguese mainstream population in social and economic terms. Many Indians are owners of small businesses and belong to the middle and lower middle classes, while the majority of their children have actually higher than average school results and often enter the commercial sector of the economy. But on the other hand they tend to be different in religious or cultural terms and to some extent in linguistic terms as well, while they seem to have a tendency to stick to themselves and to avoid socialising with other Portuguese citizens. In this respect the position and pattern of behaviour of the population of African descent is quite different, above all of those Africans who are fully integrated and who are Portuguese citizens but also of those who are more recent immigrants. Of course even the latter are usually Portuguese-speakers and the majority of them are Christians, but there is also a Muslim minority from Guinea-Bissau and a tendency among some of the West Africans to retain the use of African Creole languages. While the Africans are usually not much different from mainstream Portuguese society in cultural or linguistic terms, they are more different in terms of economic position and social conditions, while in addition there may also be an element of 'subcultural' difference as far as certain patterns of sociability and social and cultural behaviour are concerned. Nevertheless the trend seems to be that the second generation of Africans becomes more socially integrated through educational mobility, although a certain number of young Africans drop out of school and so block their chances of further social mobility and integration. As a rule, in terms of general sociability, the African population, both the Portuguese citizens among them and the 'foreigners', tend to interact with society in a greater number of ways than either the socially marginal and isolated Roma or the culturally somewhat marginal but economically successful Indians. This complex of groups and factors makes for interesting comparative research material. As far as the growing African population is concerned, it has been observed that their chances of further integration in Portuguese society are relatively good, although it has also been suggested that various consciously implemented social policies and forms of local political participation are indispensable additional instruments to achieve this aim, as is the willingness of society as a whole to grant Portuguese citizenship to a larger number of people, notably to the children of immigrants. Finally, the large group of recently arrived East Europeans in Portugal seems to be perceived by the Portuguese as possessing a large number of contrasting social and cultural characteristics as compared with themselves. This is especially the case with regard to social position and social behaviour as well as language and religion, but less so in terms of education or residence.[14] What this exactly means for the further development of the relations between the Portuguese and the East European immigrants remains as yet unclear. This question is also of some importance for the possible existence or emergence of stereotypes of 'East Europeans' in West and South European countries like Portugal.

If Portugal is mainly affected by the presence of ethnic minorities resulting from the relatively new phenomenon of mass immigration, Slovakia is above all trying to deal with its old problem of defining the position of the Hungarian minority and its other problem of trying to integrate its substantial Roma population. The differences between these two national constellations – the Portuguese one and the Slovak one – of multicultural issues may seem wide, but in many ways they are also problems that are now recognised as sharing a number of social and political features and as being common to Europe as a whole. The question of multicultural diversity in Europe's

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[14] Ibid.

individual 'nation-states', for the better or for the worse, is increasingly becoming an issue that is part of Europe itself as an emerging unity and as a platform of transnational and multicultural communication and problem-resolving.[15] Europe has to learn to live with cultural, ethnic and national diversity and in fact the continent itself is a perfect historical and present-day example of this diversity, a truth that was pushed somewhat into the background by the age of nationalism and the rising national state since the nineteenth century. Also the consciousness of belonging to Europe is something that has been growing in intensity in recent decades, and both Slovakia and Portugal have their own history in this regard as well.[16] There is perhaps another sense in which Portugal and Slovakia are comparable cases of somewhat special nations in Europe. Both countries indeed were 'peripheral' in Europe not only in a geographic sense but also in terms of twentieth-century political history and notably their rather problematic development of democratic political culture and civil society. Portugal is one of the oldest kingdoms in Europe dating back to the early twelfth century, but a more modern national identity and national consciousness only emerged in the seventeenth century during the struggle for independence against Spain and even then did not yet include an awareness of the urgent need for social and political modernisation. Slovakia was part of an even older, the Hungarian, Kingdom and the Slovak people are arguably an old ethnic and cultural nation even if they could not give expression to this in a 'political' sense and their own state must therefore be counted among the most recent creations of modern European history. In their own way both countries were in a somewhat isolated and peripheral position vis-á-vis Europe, even Portugal with its spectacular but rather self-contained colonial adventures. Portugal's relative isolation further increased at a later stage of European history and the country missed several opportunities to develop and modernise itself. The story of Slovakia, which also seemed destined to relative stagnation between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, is similar in a number of ways. By the twentieth century both countries had to pay the price for this and had to make an enormous effort to make up for their backwardness in political, economic and cultural terms. It would seem that both countries are keenly aware of the importance of the European framework for succeeding in this effort.

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[15] See for a Spanish or 'Iberian' perspective on this M. Samaniego Boneu, 'Nación y multiculturalismo', in H. Fernandes, I. Castro Henriques, J. da Silva Horta, and S. Campos Matos, eds., *Nação e Identidades. Portugal, os Portugueses e os Outros*, Lisbon 2009, pp. 413-424.

[16] For the Portuguese case see M.M. Tavares Ribeiro, 'Relações Portugal-Europa (séculos XIX e XX)', in H. Fernandes, I. Castro Henriques, J. da Silva Horta, and S. Campos Matos, eds., *Nação e Identidades. Portugal, os Portugueses e os Outros*, Lisbon 2009, pp. 395-411.