

## SUMMARY

### **For a Peasant, Land and the Republic. Slovak Agrarian Party Members in the 1<sup>st</sup> Half of the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Republic.**

Agrarian political movement represents a significant chapter of the Slovak history in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its beginnings date back to the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite several efforts to make it independent it remained part of an integrated Slovak political block before the World War I. It originated as a separate political party with the name National Republican Peasant Party only in 1919 under the new conditions of democratic Czechoslovakia. After unification with their Czech agrarian partners to the united Czechoslovak Republican Party of Peasants and Small Farmers it became the most influential centralist party in Slovakia since the parliamentary elections in 1925 and it kept this position until the end of the first Czechoslovak Republic.

The goal of the agrarian party in Slovakia was to attract with its political program the most numerous part of the Slovak population that was employed in agriculture. The party tried to improve material conditions of the population of countryside, in which middle peasant estate absented. The main mean to achieve this goal became the land reform. Its enactment and later its administration became the main point of the party's political agitation.

During the first years of the Czechoslovak Republic the agrarian party in Slovakia was a separate political subject. Because of different opinions about the orientation of the party on peasantry and about the Slovak autonomy, the union with the nationalist wing failed and in 1921 the Slovak National Party separated from the agrarian party again.

Slovak agrarians co-operated with their Czech agrarian partners already from the beginning of the republic and after the elections in 1920 they created common parliamentary club. The cooperation culminated with unification of Czech and Slovak agrarians to the united Czechoslovak party. Both sides enjoyed benefits of the unification. Czech agrarians extended their influence to agrarian Slovakia and thanks to it became the strongest party in Czechoslovakia and the Slovak wing of the new party could rely on support of the stronger partner in enforcing its requests on the statewide level. Despite of the fusion to the unified Czechoslovak party, Milan Hodža didn't abandon his project of cooperation with Slovak fractions of statewide parties and Slovak political subjects.

Position in the centre of the Czechoslovak party political spectrum enabled agrarians to seek allies on the left as well as on the right wing. They created not only the axis of the nationwide coalition cabinets, but also of the right-wing cabinets in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Great credit for the creation of this partnership belongs to Milan Hodža who became the clear leader of the Slovak agrarians after 1922. He played a key role in a discussion and convinced Hlinka's Slovak People's party to join the government of the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1927, too.

The work also tries to answer the question why the party which declared itself a defender of the interests of the largest group of the Slovak population didn't manage to become the best supported political party in Slovakia. Religion still played a significant role during elections. Majority of Slovak Catholics voted for the clerical

Hlinka's Slovak People's Party which tried to enforce the Slovak autonomy in Czechoslovakia. Agrarians had a significant support in regions with the high number of Lutheran population.

Czechoslovak orientation and the alliance with Czech agrarians allowed their Slovak partners to obtain seats in the Czechoslovak governments. As a minister of agriculture in the years 1922 - 1926 Hodža enforced many important demands for the development of Slovak agriculture.

The work consists of five chapters with different extent. The first chapter deals with basic ideas of agrarian political ideology. It contains a brief sketch about the formation of the Slovak agrarian political movement before 1918. The following chapter deals with the beginnings of the agrarian party in Slovakia after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, continues with the unsuccessful effort to create a strong nationwide political power and ends with the unification to the Czechoslovak agrarian party in 1922.

The chapters 3 and 4 focus on activities of Slovak agrarians in the Czechoslovak agrarian party. The 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter concentrates on enlarging of the administrative structure of the party in Slovakia and on the office of the main secretariat in Bratislava with its boss František Seda. It was able to maintain some level of autonomy also after the unification with the Czech partners. The 4<sup>th</sup> chapter deals with Hodža's participation in creation of the first right-wing government of Czechoslovakia and his role in convincing Hlinka's Slovak People's Party to enter the cabinet and in passing a new regional administration law for Slovakia. Except those problems, the author analyses Hodža's position on Czechoslovak political scene, in the Czechoslovak agrarian party and also the unsuccessful efforts of his Slovak party opponents to threaten his position in Slovakia.

The last chapter concentrates on party's affiliated political organizations and institutions in Slovakia. They played an important role in the party's successes in the first Czechoslovak Republic. The work deals with the development of the party until 1929 which was one of principal milestones of the first Czechoslovak Republic. It is often called "the end of its golden era". Just two days after the parliamentary elections in this year came the collapse at the New York stock market. It became the first evident demonstration of the great depression that influenced political and economic life in Czechoslovakia in the next years. Generation change among the leaders of the agrarian party and also in its Slovak wing started, too.