

Reconciliatory Space: A Geographic Perspective on Resolving Ethnic Conflict: A Case Study of the Slovak Republic

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It takes but one glance at a map of contemporary Europe, with its vast collage of nation-state territories decorated in an array of colors, to begin understanding why the continent has been an historical hotbed of ethnic tension. With the recession of 40 years of Soviet -- more accurately Russian -- domination in Central Europe, the continent has seen the formation of 18 new nation-states from what had been eight communist ruled dictatorships. The extreme and rapid transformation in political borders and state systems has had its effect on more than just Central Europe alone. The world, and more specifically Western Europe, have been deeply affected -- socially, politically, and economically.

The ongoing and perpetual postmodern crisis in the Balkans serves as an example of the contemporary problem of how the West can deal, or more exactly, how it can fail to deal, with the new fledgling states. However, if history continues to repeat itself, the West will fail to practice any newly gained elements of reconciliation it has learned in future crises from the now disturbing international experience referred to as the Yugoslav Paradox.

The problems of national identity and conflict are not restrained to the underbelly of Europe alone. As the world frets and debates on how best to resolve, or at the very least, postpone, the conflicts in former-Yugoslavia, tensions continue to stir in other parts of Europe. Events such as the Dniesters in Moldavia declaring independence, the Slovaks separating "peacefully" from the Czechs, the Russians of the Crimean Peninsula desiring to cede from the Ukraine, and the democratic government of Romania forcefully shutting down Magyar schools, signify an ongoing trend throughout all of contemporary Central Europe -- the reemergence of extremely nationalist policies and suffrages through the intolerance of new democracies.

The violence taking place in Croatia, Bosnia, and Yugoslavia -- though shrouded in a fog of historical animosities and being labeled as the historic powder keg of Europe -- is anything but an historical crisis alone. The bloodshed that has occurred, and continues to occur, stems not from deeds done in the past between Slav nations, but from the contemporary problems and mistrust being facilitated between the ethnic groups today. Hungary's former Foreign Minister, Geza Jeszenszky, summed up the current conflicts to Hungary's south with his poignant

observation that, "The war in Yugoslavia is not about historical atrocities, but rather, a majority nationality *bullying* its ethnic minorities into seeking autonomy -- through war and revenge if needed" (Personal discussion, October 1997).¹ This problem of "bullying" is not due to historic animosity and political intolerance alone -- the source of ethnic tension in East-Central Europe is also inherently geographic.

Though scarcely gaining the attention of the Western media, the Slovak Republic is in the midst of an ethnic crisis of its own. On January 1, 1993, the Slovak nation gained independence from the Czech-Slovak state. Unfortunately, the democratic government in Slovakia has been slow to recognize that its new state is not comprised solely of Slovaks. For with Slovakia's independence, the approximately 650,000 ethnic-Hungarians residing in southern Slovakia have been offered little by virtue of new freedom. Rather, the immortal enemy of Slovak past has become the beneficiary of today's Slovak politicians' instrumental rhetoric and nationalist scape-goating. In a similar fashion to what occurred in the former-Yugoslavia, ethnic tension has actually been fostered by the new democracy in Slovakia as a means of political stability for the state. The ramifications of this often overt policy of discrimination and intolerance by democratically elected governments in Slovakia have the potential of dire consequence for the rest of Europe.

Similar to how the conflict in the Balkans was first evaluated, the Slovak Republic's persecution of its ethnic-Hungarians -- those speaking Hungarian as their native tongue -- has, for the most part, been evaluated simplistically and generically. Common to all conflicts where a minority is persecuted by a nationalist government, the media and Western governments have espoused that the conflict in Slovakia is "historical", facilitated by "undemocratic" political figures, and brought about due to a "difference in language and culture".

Though certainly having a fundamental impact on the situation, these three elements -- history, politics, and language -- are simply facilitative tools in ensuring the conflict's continuation. To begin with, historical differences

¹The "bully" Minister Jeszenszky was referring to was the Serb nation. Serbs were quick to take nearly complete control of the political process after Tito's death. Some argue that the lack of any political autonomy as such, coupled with unfair representation, drove the Slovenes and Croats to favor national agendas of their own -- leading to declarations of independence and civil war.

are only elements that help to fuel Slovak politicians' incitement of ethnic mistrust. Historically, as will be shown, both Slovaks and Hungarians were serfs ruled by an elitist nobility that spoke Latin. Thus, any element of primordial nationalism resting on ethnic-language is dismantled. Nationalism in the Carpathians did not surface as such until the late 18 Century, along with the movement toward liberalism -- disavowing itself of primordialism. Indeed, Slovak and Magyar nationalism was constructed around language, and this is still witnessable today by observing nationalist politicians' use of linguistic difference as a tool to identify a particular group, and potential adversary, within a state. Finally, perhaps the most dangerous mistake in generically analyzing the contemporary Slovak-Magyar conflict is that of unabashedly placing sole blame on the politicians and political processes of Slovakia, and on that note, proclaiming that democratic reforms have failed to take place. No analysis could be more misconstrued than this popular one quipped by numerous Western politicians as a panacea to inquiries pertaining to the topic of ethnic intolerance. Opportunistic politicians willing to use nationalism and race as a campaign strategy exist in nearly every modern democracy -- not just in those of Central Europe. The difference between the Slovak Republic's democracy with the well established liberal democracies to the West is one of age and experience.

Often discussed as being pivotal, none of the above mentioned three factors in conflict conflagration help us to identify and define a primary reason for the given ethnic-dispute -- thereby also failing to offer any feasible theories on how best to regulate, dissolve, and reconcile grievances between the Slovaks and Hungarians. However, it can be deduced that since history, linguistics, and political processes are three individual elements to the ethnic conflict in Slovakia, by nature they need a broader spectrum within which to work together in facilitating the conflict. This primary element, or forum of interaction for the three identified factors, is geographic space -- the space for conflict. By identifying a geographic element's role in stimulating the conflict, potential solutions shall arise to resolving the conflict spatially -- making possible the creation of *reconciliatory space*.

The essential geographic element in *contemporary* Magyar-Slovak conflict creation is that of the state -- namely, the Slovak Republic. It is important to note a difference between geographic and political esotericisms concerning the definition of the word "state". The geography that Slovakia covers, and the population that its borders encompass, are of concern in the geographic spectrum, not necessarily the processes of government institutions -- which are more closely associated with the political factor of conflict. For currently, it is within this

space that the Hungarians and Slovaks in question must confront each other.² The Slovak Republic is a "sovereign" entity not only politically, but geographically.

Debatably, as pertaining to geography, the statist system of political organization is inherently linked to ethnic conflict. There are various factors of why this is so, and this paper shall not foray into the arena of geographic thought as concerns this topic.³ However, there are alternative political spatial arrangements currently in existence that exemplify potential remedy to the Magyar-Slovak conflict.

The European Union's expansion into East-Central Europe over the next ten years poses the greatest chance Europe has yet had to resolve ethnic conflict in the Carpathians by providing three geographic factors: a political hegemony in which states are not the sole actors in policy and decision making; cultural diversity, economic expansion, and a larger forum than the state of Slovakia in which to resolve the ethnic disputes; and finally, the "space needed for reconciliation (Lederach, 1997)" through the free movement of people, information, goods, services, and political ideas. Combined with the initial three factors of history, linguistics, and political policy, the geographic element of *space for conflict regulation, resolution, and reconciliation* helps provide several potential solutions to solving the problem of nationalism in Slovakia today.

First Interactions

Since the beginning of civilization in Europe, the Carpathians have always been an area of ethnic migration, diversity, and conflict. Before any of the current residents settled the region, the Celts, Goths, and Lombards all occupied and left – or were eventually assimilated by a more powerful group settling the region. The Romans dominated the Trans-Danubia portion of the Basin, but never did venture north into modern day Slovakia. On his way to pillaging Europe from Asia, the infamous Hun leader, Attila, led his tribes across the Danube in 377 AD. These Asian invaders utilized the area for 75 years as a base of operations from which to raid Western Europe --

²To be certain, there are areas outside of the state of Slovakia in which the two ethnic groups have voiced and debated their opinions and beliefs -- Internet chat rooms providing one radical example, the Hague a more conventional one. However, the area of Magyar-Slovak tension debated, hence the conflict in question, takes place enmasse, and on a daily basis, in Slovakia itself.

³Several offhand reasons: unequal distribution of resources; national diaspora; demographic disadvantages; et cetera.

including the sacking of Gaul in 451 (History II, 1999). Attila died in 453, however, and for reasons still unclear today, the Hun tribes disappeared with him (History II, 1999). Years later when the *Hungarians* arrived on horseback the chroniclers incorrectly surmised that the Huns had returned, and the name of Magyar was forever recognized by Latin-based languages as "*Hun-garian*".⁴

Around the year 600, the Slavs settled across the region and formed their first political entity in an apparent attempt to defend themselves against the new conquistadors from Asia -- the Avars (History II, 1999). The Samo Empire is mentioned in writing for the first time in 623, and in 631 they defeated the Franks -- who were attempting to solidify their defenses against Avar incursions -- and gained autonomy from both the Franks and Avars (History II, 1999). In 665, however, the Samo Empire disappeared with the death of its leader, Prince Samo (History II, 1999). The Slavs became pawns between the Franks and Avars until Charlemagne, with a concentrated effort utilizing many Slav recruits, finally beat the Avars in 803 (History II, 1999). The Avar population was assimilated by the Slavs. Having been the buffer pawns between West Europe and Asia, the Slav populations were too depleted to mount a serious challenge to a third incursion of Asiatic peoples -- the Magyars.

However, there were several decades of stability and productive feudalism in the early Ninth Century. In 833 the principality of Moravia attacked and defeated the principality of Nitra (History III, 1999).⁵ This created the largest Slav state up to that date. The intra-fighting between Slav principalities spread the Slavs further south into the Carpathian Basin. Prince Pribina, formerly of Nitra, founded the principality of Balaton and had success in Christianizing the populace in the region (History III, 1999).

Before the Magyars and Slavs of the Carpathians had even run into one another, they were working for different means. Around the time of 850, Prince Pribina attempted to establish an alliance with the Bulgarians in putting an end to the Franks' aggressiveness on his territory. Meanwhile, in Asia, the Hungarians were recruited by the Byzantine Empire to attack the Bulgarians from the north (Farkas, K., 1997). It is during the battles for Bulgaria

⁴It is interesting to note, however, that the word for "Hungarian" in Slovak, and most Slavic languages, is derived from the Hungarian language and similar to the word "Magyar", whereas in nearly all Latin based languages the prefix "Hun" is allotted to the Magyars.

⁵Nitra is now an electoral borough in central Slovakia. Moravia is located in the western reaches of the Czech Republic.

that the Hungarian tribes discovered the basin they would decide to make their permanent home.

When the Hungarians descended from the steppes of Asia and began to make their appearance in the Carpathians -- around the year 894 AD -- Europe shuddered. The original seven Magyar tribes were quite literally homeless -- having been chased out of their most recent homeland (between the Volga and Dnieper Rivers) by the Pechenegs.⁶ The Magyar tribes swarmed down into the Carpathian Basin to settle for good once their battles were finished with the Bulgarians to the south. Incredibly adept at horsemanship, Hungarians were often hired as mercenaries by neighboring tribes and feudal-monarchs. They went so far as modern-day France, where today a church still stands with the inscription above its door, "Oh God, protect us from the arrows of the Magyars" (Farkas, K., 1997).

The fierce tribes of Magyars eventually settled down in the breadbasket of Central Europe. Geographically speaking, this area was as blessed an area for natural resources in Europe as any. The basin is laden with natural hot springs, one of continental Europe's largest freshwater lakes (outside of Finland), three major rivers (the Tisza, Danube, and Drava), and the northern hills (contemporary southern Slovakia) that later turned out to contain repositories of gold, silver, and copper.

Of course, there had been people in this region when the Hungarians arrived, and the Asiatic visitors were quick to begin a policy of assimilation. There are many folk legends as to how the Hungarians acquired the Carpathian Basin from the Moravian and Balaton Principalities, but the consensus today is that Magyar saturation during the waning years of Moravia-Nitra's power over the region was sufficient enough to take the land without battle. Perhaps, also, the Magyars' speed in quickly setting up a feudal monarchy helped put the land firmly under their control.

⁶In a twist of political intrigue, the Pechenegs had been recruited by the Bulgarians to attack the Magyars as the Magyars were used by the Byzantines to attack the Bulgarians. This tendency of tribes to be mercenaries, for and against each other, shifted the Asian tribes into Europe in a near full circle. In the end, the Slavs who had been attempting to align with the Bulgarians were rejected by Pope Pious and went to the Byzantines for recognition. The Magyars, who were mostly pagans, ended up disenfranchising themselves from the Byzantines and gaining the recognition of the Holy Roman Empire.

Originally set-up in an Asiatic system of power sharing, the Magyar tribes had a leadership consisting of two princes. One held the sacral role of the pagan tribes, while the other led the military and held real political power (Lazar, 1998). For one-hundred years, the Hungarians did not venture from their new homeland as such, solidifying control over the entire basin -- including Trans-Danubia in the western portion of the basin (including the Balaton Principality). Crowned Prince Geza, in power from 972-997, eventually began to implement policies of settling the populace of nomadic herdsman into some form of a feudal state. Geza's son, Christianized Stephen, took power in 997, and was crowned King of Hungary in the year 1000. Pope Sylvester II sent the crown for coronation; thus, establishing and linking Hungary's developmental ties to Western Europe, as opposed to Eastern, under the Orthodox church.

King Stephen I made for a dynamic first leader. To begin with, he maniacally pursued the conversion of his people to Christianity. He ordered churches built in every tenth village, and ruthlessly crushed his pagan opposition (Farkas, K. 1997). On the other hand, and ironically today, he was debatably one of the most tolerant leaders to ever rule the Carpathians as pertaining to his policies on ethnic diversity. Rather than eradicate or persecute those on his lands that were not of Magyar origin, he actually invited foreign peoples in from Transylvania and Moravia to settle the basin. When King Stephen declared that "a country unified in language and customs is fragile and weak," an historic precedent was set for the next five-hundred years (B Anderson, 1991).⁷ Incredibly, his pro-immigration policy rings similar to pro-diversity statements in liberal democracies today, and it preempted any form of nationalism in the Carpathians by hundreds of years.

The Kingdom of Hungary reigned supreme over the Central European region for the next five-hundred years, and an easily identifiable process of state evolution is readily apparent. After settling and laying claim to the basin, the Kingdom ascended with Moravia's decline and soon encompassed Transylvania, much of Dalmatia, and most of contemporary Slovakia. In 1222, the first evolution toward a modern state of Hungary took place when the *Golden Bull* was signed by King Andrew II (Lazar, 1998). This magna carta, as it were, established the nobility as a

⁷ The importance of multidiversity was to remain powerfully entwined with the Hungarian monarchs that followed. Not until the development of Hungarian nationalism (in the late 18 Century) did the monarchy begin to reconsider Saint Stephen's statement. The monarchical policy of inviting different tribes to settle the lands was similar to George Washington's establishment of the standard two, Presidential term limits being the most prudently tolerable -- monarchs being against immigration were the exception, not the rule, until the invention of Hungarian nationalism.

powerful force, able to reject the King's wishes when in disagreement with their own. Hungary's first real test at state survival from outside forces came several decades after its semi-liberalization. The Mongol invasion of 1241 is memorable not so much for the ferocity with which the Mongols sacked, pillaged, raped, and decimated the populace, but for its succinctness. Within a year of their first attacks on Hungary, the Mongol forces which had easily pushed to the Danube with little resistance, and were threatening to sack all of Europe, disappeared unexpectedly (Brooks, 1998).⁸ Luckily, for both the Hungarians and Europe, they would never return.

Hungary, though Catholic since Saint Stephen's reign as the first monarch, increasingly asserted its independence from the Papacy and the rest of Europe. After participating in the help of staging several crusades, and enduring the chaos of pillaging and murder of its populace that ensued, Hungary refused to follow the Papacy's demands unconditionally (Lazar, 1998). Even though its independent spirit often created much tension between itself and the leaders of the Holy Roman Empire, because of its independent stature, the Kingdom of Hungary was more capable of adopting its own sovereign policies in times of need. This in turn, helped Hungary become the dominant kingdom of East-Central Europe by the 1300s.

However, Hungary's influence would eventually be spread not by Hungarian national monarchs per se, but by foreign rulers claiming the Hungarian monarchy. In a strange situation, Andrew III of Hungary was still alive and well when Charles the II of Naples sent his twelve year-old grandson, Charles Robert, to lay claim to the Hungarian throne (Lazar, 1998). Charles (Robert) the First was coronated in 1308, signifying the first time that a Western power penetrated the Carpathian Basin politically (Farkas, K., 1997). This was not necessarily a bad thing for the region, however. In 1335, for example, an economic summit was held in Hungary's capital of Visegrad, with representatives attending from as far away as Lithuania (Farkas, K., 1997; Lazar, 1998). Essentially, this summit turned out to be a fetal common market directed against the powers in Vienna.

Charles Robert's son, Louis the Great (1342-1382), continued with asserting Hungary's influence over Central Europe by establishing -- through diplomacy and conquest -- a massive political hegemony over the entire region. Eventually, Louis was elected King of Poland, uniting Hungary and Poland in a powerful dual-monarchy (Farkas,

⁸Today, however, the reason for the Tatars quick disappearance is well known. Upon hearing news of the Supreme Khan's death back in Mongolia, Batu Khan -- leader of "Golden Horde's" European forces -- turned his troops around and headed back to Asia in hopes to lay claim to the throne.

1997; Lazar, 1998). He led many successful raids into Lithuania and Venice, as well. The Hungarian Empire stretched to three seas -- the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black.

By the end of the 1400s, coinciding with the time of the classical feudal-economy's demise throughout all of Europe, Hungary was superbly wealthy and liberal compared to most kingdoms -- supplying nearly 70% of all the gold, silver and copper in Europe (Farkas, K., 1997). Much of this was due to an accidental monarch, Matthias (1458-1490), who having been abducted as a baby, returned to be elected by the nobility to the throne and guide Hungary through its most productive period in history. Matthias began to implement the institutions and processes of a modern state, setting up a new judicial system and a very detailed and strict taxation process (Farkas, K., 1997). He gained complete control of the army from the nobility by hiring his own personal "Black Army", and banning the nobility from having any of their own. His stringent monetary policies helped Hungarian territory flourish economically and culturally during these times of the renaissance. One significant failure lurks over all of the successful reign of King Matthias, however; Matthias failed to strategically embrace or fight the Turks making their way up through the Balkans.

It is crucial to understand that the Turkish incursion into Europe is still a relevant factor in European politics today -- the Bosnian Muslims offering an example of how this is so. Already influenced greatly by the Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) Churches, the Turks brought a new spectrum of religion to the Carpathians. When King Matthias died in 1490, his army was disbanded by the nobility unwilling to continue paying the exorbitant amount of taxes it cost to maintain an army that only the monarch had control over. Unfortunately, since the nobility were not allowed to have a standing army of their own, Hungary lacked a defensive force with which to fight the Turks who continued migrating northward. With only futile resistance, including several famous battles in Nandorfehervar (Belgrade) and a town in the southern plains called Mohacs, the Turks eventually walked into Buda and seized the majority of the Carpathian Basin in successive campaigns. King Szapolyi took over the throne in 1526, after the Hungarians had just lost thousands of conscripted soldiers and mercenaries in the historic battle of Mohacs (Farkas, K., 1997). He arrived too late to be effective in stopping the onslaught. Szapolyi was the last *Hungarian*

national king -- the Hapsburgs would rule for the next four-centuries.⁹ The monarchy collapsed. Transylvania splintered from Hungary and became a Turkish puppet state. The Hapsburgs in Vienna laid claim to Hungary, but in reality controlled nothing but contemporary Slovakia.

Contrary to what images of Turkish occupation may conjure, life under Turkish rule actually changed little, or even improved, for most of the population. Hungarian nobility had fled from most areas, and those remaining commanded minimal power. The Turks were not inclined to impose their political ways and religious beliefs on the populace. After taking control of a city, the Turks would simply expel non-Turks -- a policy of segregation.¹⁰ For 150 years, the Turkish forces remained entrenched on Hungarian soil, with no European power able to garner up the strength, or support, needed to muscle the Asians out. Part of the reason for this, of course, was that the territory of Hungary had lost its significance to the European market with exploration in the "*New World*" (Farkas, K., 1997). Hungary's gold and silver mines were exhausted. Under Turkish rule, however, Hungary experienced a new renaissance of sorts, with Asiatic architecture and culture permeating the cities and still readily visible today (e.g., Turkish baths, mosques, and minarets).

Eventually, the European powers realized that the Ottoman Empire had hit its zenith and was in political recession. In 1686, the combined forces of various Christian armies regained Buda Castle and soon after most of Trans-Danubia. The former Turkish lands were annexed by the Hapsburg Monarchy, and Transylvania, which had retained independence throughout Ottoman residency, soon suffered the same result. Unfortunately, the Hapsburgs did not show enough tact to treat the turmoiled people of the Carpathian Basin as though they were the rightful heirs to the throne -- this policy may have worked in not alienating the nobles. Instead, Vienna began to dictate terms and ultimatums to their new territories.

⁹It is of crucial importance to note, however, that the occupation of the Hungarian crown by the Hapsburgs predated any true realization of contemporary Magyar nationalism. Hungarian nationalism, as an entire group, formed during the Hapsburg reign.

¹⁰For example, today outside the city walls of Pecs, Hungary, the original homes of those Hungarians transferred outside of the city still survive and are in use. Until approximately 20 years ago, the Turkish sewer system established for this ostracized community was still utilized, and it is still observable today. Inside of the city walls, several mosques and a minaret still remain, standing next to a 1000 year-old Catholic Cathedral, attesting to Turkish conquest and modernisation of the city. The Hungarian residents were not terminated, nor converted, just moved into the surrounding hills.

The Hapsburg Empire

When discussing ethnic conflict in Central Europe today, and the Magyar-Slovak conflict in particular, too much attention is focused on the suffrages that arose during enlightenment, and a dangerous amount of emphasis is placed on the perspective that the independence movements and suffrages brought the Hapsburg Monarchy to a collapse. An alternative and more politically relevant perspective demonstrates that the Hapsburg Empire was the cause of, not merely a victim of, contemporary nationalism throughout the Central European region. The Hapsburgs were the last powerful political unit to assert complete control and, for the most part stability, across not only Central Europe but the Balkans, as well. This economic and political zone, or space, was far more integrated than the lands of Nineteenth Century Germany, for example. Unfortunately, unity came at a heavy price. It was this very hegemonic control that the Hapsburgs exerted on the various linguistic populaces and former independent kingdoms that led to the rise of nationalist and discontented spirits. The Hungarian nobility, for its part, did little to help the situation in the territories under their control-- including in Slovakia.¹¹

The Hapsburg Empire was a conservative monarchy and very slow to adopt liberal measures. This meant that for some of the Empire's massive number of nobility -- much higher than the European average at the time -- fewer rights existed than had before Turkish conquest. With the rise of liberalism across Europe, the petty-nobility began to demand more from their barons and sovereign. What eventually fueled peasant and petty-nobility sentiments -- and that would destabilize the monarchy throughout the Nineteenth Century -- was not nationalism but class difference.

This disenchantment with Vienna turned into armed revolution by the Hungarian nobility in 1848. However, the nobility knew that on their own they would not be able to reform the monarchy to their favor. A tool, or element, of unity was needed in order to get the serfs to back the nobility in its movement. The nobility united with the serfs by utilizing Hungarian vernacular language as the connecting device between the classes.

¹¹The terminology of "*Hungarian nobility*" should be given careful credence. For, as it were, the "*Hungarian nobility*" was not solely comprised of Hungarian nationals. Previous to the rise of nationalism, "Hungarian" meant nobility of the Kingdom of Hungary. Serfs were hardly considered Hungarians; therefore, the Hungarian vernacular had nothing to do with being Hungarian. The nobility of Hungary spoke Latin, French, or German. By the time the Ottomans overran the Basin, there was a large proportion of Slav nationals who were "*Hungarian nobility*".

Language as an Instrumentalist Tool

Today, the issue of language is as much at the center of nationalism as it has ever been. It is often utilized by nationalist societies and politicians as being an integral part of culture, a primordial facet that is threatened by globalization, or in the case of the Hungarian-Slovaks, lack of use and knowledge. This is, of course, a malicious twisting of the facts.

Contrary to the rhetoric espoused by Slovak politicians today, language is not a primordial element around which nationalism naturally occurs. Vernacular language's importance, and more importantly the political role that it plays, was a construction of nationalist instrumentalists.¹² The rise of Hungarian and Slovak nationalisms in the Nineteenth Century needed language as an identifying element. In an area so overrun with different ethnic groups (including Germans, Romanians, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) language served as the link for an 'imagined community' of ethnicity (B Anderson, 1991).

After several nationalist uprisings by the Hungarians (including one in 1848, which helped abolish serfdom but was finally squashed by Russian troops), the territory of Hungary finally achieved dual-monarchy status with Austria in 1867.¹³ Significantly, no other nation within the Hapsburg realm achieved semi-independent status, even though the Slovaks, Bohemians, Croats, and Romanians all aspired to -- they had no historical kingdoms to back their claims of statehood up with, as the Hungarians had. Finally, though, with Hungarian nationalism appeased by Vienna, industrialization was able to begin throughout the empire.

Hungary began to flourish, and unfortunately, so did ethnic intolerance within its territory. For the most part, Hungary's domain of the empire was consistent with what it had been before the Turkish invasion -- including

¹²In the case of Nineteenth Century Hungary, which officially included Slovak lands, the nobility were the instrumentalists utilizing ethnic identity as a source of power against the Monarchy in Vienna.

¹³What is significant about the 1848 revolution is the fact that the Hungarian nobility had the chance to sack Vienna, and therefore declare complete independence from the monarchy. The Hapsburg Empire was in disarray, and the Monarch had fled to Innsbruck. The Hungarian nobility decided not to seize the capital, however, because they recognized Hungary as a sovereign state within the monarchy and felt that marching to Vienna would make the revolution appear a war between states. Such mentality turned out to be fruitless, however, because Russian forces eventually came in and crushed the new fledgling Magyar government. With a promise that there would be no capital punishment, the Hungarians surrendered their state to Russian troops in 1849. The Russians turned the leaders of the revolution over to the Hapsburgs, and they were systematically executed in Arad not long after.

Slovakia, much of Transylvania, and northern Dalmatia (modern-day Croatia). In these areas, but specifically in Slovak areas, the Hungarian Parliament began implementing a policy of "Magyarisation" (B Anderson, 1991; History V, 1999).¹⁴

Magyarisation, as it was referred to, was an overreaching forceful attempt to assimilate the other cultures on the Hungarian Kingdom's territory by forcing every subject of the kingdom to speak and use Hungarian instead of vernacular language. Due to the fact that ethnic-Hungarians only comprised two-thirds of the population, five-million people remained to be subjected to discrimination in every aspect of public life. This policy of assimilation would turn to haunt the Hungarians at the conclusion of the First World War -- when no nation under the former yoke of Hungarian government desired to stay in union with their old persecutors.¹⁵ Hence, in the name of linguistic purity, the Hungarians alienated a third of the state's populace and ended up losing two-thirds of the state's territory.

Today, in a twist of fate, the Slovak Republic proclaims that language is a necessary and primary element of state culture. Slovak nationalists point out that the "Hungarians" attempted to assimilate the Slovaks at the end of the last Century, and that they will attempt to do so again if restrictions are not placed on the use of the Hungarian language. They view the Hungarians as a threat due to their vast difference in language and, by default, culture.

Ironically, this attitude by the majority party in the Slovak Parliament is no different than that of the Hungarian Parliament in the late 1800s. The Hungarian Parliament of yesteryear felt that the Hungarian language was threatened -- hence Magyarisation took place. The Hungarians began treating those that did not speak Hungarian as second class citizens -- exactly what has happened to Hungarians in Slovakia since 1993. The Hungarians blamed the Slavs for deserting the Hungarian nation during the Turkish conquests. The Slovak Government of the 1990s is

¹⁴The Hungarian Parliament was not an overly liberal institution considering that only five-percent of the population could vote for representation.

¹⁵It is the consensus of many specialists in the field of ethnic conflict and nationalism that persecution and discrimination in the name of one identified group molds other ostracized groups into new nationalisms (Anderson, B., 1991; McGarry & O'Leary, 1997). One example of this happening in the 1990s is with the Bosnian Muslims. Prior to the breakup of Communist Yugoslavia, there was no national identity as a group. However, due to instrumentalist political use of religious difference in formatting "genocidal tendencies and destructive obedience (Sabini & Silver, 1993)" amongst both the Serb (Orthodox) and Croat (Catholic) populaces, a national identity has been fostered and created around the notion of Moslem ethnic identity.

blaming the Hungarians for persecution in the past, and not forwarding Slovak interests under the old dual-monarchy. So, why and where does vernacular language actually fit into this?

Politically speaking, it is much easier to blame a generic group of contemporary persons for deeds done in the past than it is to seriously scold and seek retribution from a deceased monarch-state -- Austria-Hungary. For, even though it was not the Hungarian populace who enforced "Magyarisation" at the end of the Nineteenth Century -- with only five-percent of the populace, including Slovaks, allowed to vote -- it was *their* government. Thus, for any political liability to be feasible, there is a need for a temporal element to link a contemporary group with the enemy of the past. Instrumentalist politicians in the Slovak Republic can hardly look for "monarchists" to take the blame. Too few seniors remain, and the link is not inherently angering or real enough to the average pre-millennial Slovak.

On the other hand, a linguistic link to past persecution solves two things. First, it easily identifies a set group of people and constantly reinforces the reality of their difference from the Slovak. In Slovakia the language difference between Hungarians and Slovaks is easily recognizable and the two languages are extremely incompatible with one another. The easily recognizable facet of difference in language permeates everyday life in Slovakia and is unavoidably reinforced through group interaction.¹⁶ Secondly, the fact that Hungarian is spoken *on Slovak space* helps instrumentalists incite fear in the Slovak populace that their space is endangered by the tormentors of the past - never mind that past torment came from a Monarchy, not a nationality. Hence, language identifies an adversary -- an adversary which is guilty for "national" atrocities committed against the Slovaks in the past through association of culture. The identified adversary is seen as threatening because of its occupancy of contemporary Slovak state space. With this easy formula, Slovak politicians have been able to garner electoral support by linking an adversary of the past with non-Slovaks today -- using bad political policies of a now deceased state government (the Hungary of 1867) as an excuse to discriminate.

Before jumping into the contemporary conflict, which stems from the Treaty of Trianon in 1919, it is crucial that the terminology of "guilt by association" be driven home. The previous territorial dominance by the Hungarian

¹⁶Though, it should be noted, that approximately 90% of Hungarians speak Slovak well, and if people of both Slovak and Hungarian tongue are to communicate with one another, it is invariably in Slovak (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997).

throne, and more accurately the Hungarian nobility, is a most conducive factor in understanding the nationalist politicians' rationale of today. Generally speaking, all citizens residing in Slovakia during Hungarian rule were treated as second-class subjects to the throne -- excluding the nobility. It did not matter what language one spoke -- the nobility generally spoke Latin or German. The ancestors of the Hungarians living in Slovakia today suffered the same persecution as the ancestors of Slovaks living in Slovakia today; commoners from both linguistic and ethnic groups were nothing more than recently freed serfs in the 1800s. The reason that Hungarian speaking people still reside in Slovakia is not due to "lebensraum" or "imperialism", but rather, "temporal coincidences" which found Hungarians and Slovaks intermixing in the same region. The contemporary Hungarian-Slovaks *are not*, and in no way logically can be, the cause of Hungarian domination of the past. The Hungarians of Slovakia, like the Slovaks, are where they are today because of various variables from the past. Instrumentalists, however, use what Benedict Anderson coined as "temporal coincidences" to link contemporary groups to those of the past (1991). It is this "linking" that is being implemented in the Slovak Republic today through the element of linguistics.

The link is easily established not only by history, but by actual linguistic difference. The use of linguistic difference is not always as easily exploitable as it is in Slovakia. For example, the Czech and Slovak split in 1993 had little to do with language. Overall, the split between the two Slavic states was political and excuses of different pasts and cultural beliefs predominated the reasoning. The Czech and Slovak languages were too similar to utilize linguistic difference as a decent excuse for splitting the states -- though some still attempted to try to use this as an excuse.

Hungarian and Slovak, on the other hand, are different. The potency in language difference could not be any more severe -- the two have differences going back to the very foundation their languages. Hungarian is a Finno-Ugric language that originated in Asia. Its closest relatives in Europe are Finnish and Estonian. The Hungarian language's background is in stark contrast to a majority of the various languages in Europe -- containing roots in the Indo-European language group. The Slavs belong to the Indo-European group.

Aftermath of a War to End All Wars:

The Treaty of Trianon and the Growth of Contemporary Magyar-Slovak Conflict

The Treaty of Trianon, for the most part neglected by Western history books, is arguably the most important treaty of the century. For it was with this treaty that contemporary Central Europe, and the Balkans, began to take shape and ferment at the conclusion of World War One. Czechoslovakia was invented, as was the Kingdom of South Slavs (a.k.a., Yugoslavia), and Romania was allotted Transylvania -- an ethnically and linguistically divided region. Most of the territory for these new states came from the former territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. In all, Hungary lost roughly two-thirds of its territory and two-fifths of its population was placed behind new, and neighboring, states' borders (B Anderson, 1991; Chaszar, 1978; Lazar, 1968). Indeed the Treaty of Trianon, penned in 1918, is the root of today's contemporary ethnic conflict throughout Central Europe. It was this document that created Europe's largest ethnic diaspora -- excluding Russian minorities -- with three-and-a-half-million ethnic-Hungarians.¹⁷

The Treaty of Trianon, the most despised of documents in Hungarian history, had absolutely no Hungarian government input or advice during its inception. Rather, the victors of the First Great War sat in Paris, and with representatives of the Czech, Slovak, Romanian, and South-Slav parties, decided the fate of the former dual-monarchy. The Hungarians were not even invited to send a delegation to the meetings (Chaszar, 1978). It was eventually decided by France and Britain, with the United States' blessing, that even though the portion of land just north of the Danube River was 90% ethnically Hungarian, the area should be awarded to the new Czech-Slovak state. The reasons behind this decision had nothing to do with Wilson's 14-points and the right to self-determination. Rather, strategic location of an ally, and its ability to defend itself in case of Hungarian, Austrian or German resurgence, played the key role in appropriating approximately 700,000 linguistically Hungarian people to a Slav

dominated state in the north. Unable to do anything about the situation, Hungary surrendered 62,937 square kilometers (22% of pre-war Hungary's territory) to Slovakia, of which, only 48% of the population was of Slovak

¹⁷ According to the Hungarian Ministry of Minorities in Budapest, Hungary, a detailed breakdown of the Hungarian diaspora would be as follows: Romania, 2,100,000; Slovakia, 710,000; Serbia, 450,000; Ukraine, 222,000; Austria, 70,000; and Croatia, 15,000. Also, approximately 130,000 Central European Jewish persons, who linguistically spoke Hungarian, have migrated to Israel since its inception as a state.

ethnicity (Chaszar, 1978).

To this day, an easily identifiable ethnic-border exists between the Hungarians and Slovaks just north of the international border between the two respected nation-states. It roughly corresponds with the natural geography of where the Carpathian foothills meet the Carpathian Basin (Chaszar, 1978; Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997). Just south of this natural border lies another -- the Danube River. By awarding the lands north of the Danube River to Slovakia -- for military security against Hungary -- the European powers after World War One displayed an historic ineptness in devising new borders. For had the line been placed twenty to thirty kilometers to the north of where it was, most Hungarian-Slovaks would have remained entirely Hungarian.

Following the concessions, creation of new states, and restructuring of borders the new, and relatively small, state of Hungary plunged into economic and political instability. The worst inflation in world history, far exceeding that of inter-war Germany's, stifled economic growth and helped mold the Hungarian population into sympathetic nationalists. Between the Treaty of Trianon's penning and the Vienna Awards Treaty (1939), Hungary utilized every political means in an attempt to rectify the, ethnically unstable, political borders with neighboring Czechoslovakia. The British and French would have nothing to do with intervening in the dispute, due to the fact that they were the creators of Czechoslovakia to begin with. The League of Nations was not strong, nor respected, enough to correct or mediate the treaty. Hence, for twenty years no solutions were created in resolving the ethnic anxiety building up along the international border. In the end, an economically dilapidated and politically frustrated Hungary had but one direction to turn to in an attempt to unify itself with its lost minorities -- fascist Italy and Hitler's Germany.

Between the World Wars, Central Europe was a region of brewing national sentiment. Hungary saw a marked rise in nationalism (Chaszar, 1978). Czechoslovakia had begun the process of legitimizing itself as a new state by addressing its various and numerous minority communities with a policy of coercive assimilation (McGarry & O'Leary, 1997). Though tensions mounted between the two Central European states, neither utilized military force, due to Czechoslovak treaties with the British and French. Any incursion upon Czechoslovak sovereignty would have led to Franco and Anglo involvement. Hungary remained relentless, however, in its pursuit to change the borders

through diplomacy. Hungary continually stressed two claims: the right to govern Hungarians (determined by those people speaking the Hungarian language), and the right of self-determination for the populations residing in the contested territories where neither state, Czechoslovakia or Hungary, could claim an ethnic majority (Chaszar, 1978). Neither of these claims were given true consideration in Prague, because it was believed and accepted that the southern portion of Slovakia would, given the chance, overwhelmingly support cession to Hungary (Chaszar, 1978). Of course, the reluctance of Prague to address the numerous minority questions facing the fledgling republic would eventually tear Czechoslovakia apart at the seams.

Until 1938, it looked as though Hungarian protests over the disputed territory would never be given forum in the international community. However, Mussolini suddenly took keen interest in the dispute during Hungarian and Italian talks on a policy of containment for Yugoslavia, and the Duce offered to promote Hungarian claims at a meeting with Germany, Britain and France (Chaszar, 1978). Following demands for a redrawing of its international borders from Poland, Germany, and a Slovak separatist movement, the Czechoslovak government decided to attempt to settle the dispute with Hungary without outside mediation. Delegations from both states met in Komarom, Hungary, on October 9, 1938 (Chaszar, 1978).

The delegations disagreed and bickered excessively in Komarom. Most of the debate centered around autonomy versus cession of land. The Slovaks desired to provide the Hungarian communities local autonomy within Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian delegation demanded that the 13 towns and 830 villages with more than 50% ethnic-Hungarian populations be ceded to Hungary (Chaszar, 1978). Furthermore, Hungary aspired for a vote on state-affiliation in the areas where neither Hungarians nor Slovaks held a majority of the population -- primarily in the valleys between the hills and mountains (Chaszar, 1978). Using a world renowned Cartographer, Count Teleki, the Hungarians drew a new border on a map, ceding 12,316 square kilometers and 907,278 people to Hungary.¹⁸ After several proposals and counter-proposals, the Hungarian prime minister called the delegates back to Budapest due to

¹⁸The demographic data used in the negotiations was acquired from the 1910 Hapsburg Census, because Hungary did not trust the 1930 Slovak numbers. However, it was accepted as fact in both states that the southern portion of Slovakia was dominated ethnically by Hungarians, with the Slovak numbers conceding that much of the territory still maintained an 80% or more Hungarian ratio of the population. Hence, even while Hungary argued its case with the Slovak delegation using old Hapsburg numbers, there were no complaints by the Slovaks. According to the 1910 Census, then, the desired acquisition of the Hungarian delegation would have included the following demographic composition: Magyar, 90.2% (818,401); Slovak, 5.7% (61,373); German, 2.2% (19,641). [Source: Chaszar, 1978.]

"an unbridgeable abyss" (Chaszar, 1978). Had the delegation remained for another 24 hours, it is likely that Hungary would have been offered not only most of what they demanded but, also, Ruthenia in Eastern Slovakia (Chaszar, 1978).

After some tense politicking, Italian Foreign Secretary Ciano brought the two sides back together. The Germans had befriended the Slovak nationalists, and therefore, Slovakia agreed to international arbitration believing that they would fair better than Hungary (Chaszar, 1978). However, by this time Hungary and Italy had become very cordial in their international relations, and Italy vowed that Hungary would receive what it desired from the deal. An agreement was arranged previous to the German and Italian decision on which state was to retain which land. Not too surprisingly, it took but one day for the Germans and Italians to decide that Hungary should be granted control over southern Slovakia, excluding Ruthenia (Chaszar, 1978). Great Britain and France endorsed the decision, and it was accepted internationally (Chaszar, 1978). "Northern Hungary" was back in Hungary's hands -- until the conclusion of the Second World War, at least.

World War Two's Aftermath

For the most part, at the end of the Second World War Czechoslovakia was reestablished along the same borders as those from before the war, with the exception of Ruthenia which was annexed by the Ukraine and therefore fell into Soviet possession. The anger and animosity ethnic-Slovaks felt over Hungary's territorial acquisitions from fraudulent arbitration before the war did not take long to surface. Ethnic intolerance against Hungarians was not only rampant, it was encouraged by the reestablished Czechoslovak government. Hungarians were deprived of their right to citizenship under a principle of "collective guilt" (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997; Plichtova, 1993). All Hungarian schools were closed. New publications in Hungarian were forbidden, including newspapers (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997). Hungarians had their pensions withdrawn, and any civil servants that spoke Hungarian were fired from their positions (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997).

The former President of Czechoslovakia, Eduard Benes, came back to head the state once again. An instrumentalist, Benes extolled revenge upon the minorities -- specifically the Hungarians -- to help reestablish the state's legitimacy (Chaszar, 1978; McGarry & O'Leary, 1997). Initially, Benes aspired to expel the Hungarians from

Slovakia altogether, but the Allied Powers balked at this idea of "ethnic cleansing" (McGarry & O'Leary, 1997; Plichtova, 1993). By 1948, however, under pressure from the Czechoslovak government's demands, the Allied Powers pressured Hungary into agreeing to a population exchange -- 73,000 Hungarians were sent from Slovakia to Hungary, and in return, 71,000 Hungarian citizens were expelled to Slovakia from Hungary (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997).

Slovak animosity and revenge did not subside with this population transfer, however. Benes continued his ethnic cleansing and measures of assimilation by sending 50,000 ethnic-Hungarians to labor camps in Moravia -- part of the Czech and far from Southern Slovakia (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997; Plichtova, 1993). The Slovak government confiscated all property and possessions of these people (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997). Also, it claimed much land from the Hungarians illegally (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997); today these land seizures are being contested in the courts of the Slovak Republic (Cent. Eur. Online, 1999). In another display of ethnic expulsion, President Benes deported 32,000 ethnic-Hungarians to Hungary who had settled Slovakia after the November 1938 Vienna Awards (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997).

Finally, Slovakia's State Parliament wasted no time in letting the Hungarian minorities remaining realize that they would be better suited living somewhere other than in Slovakia. The process of "Slovakisation" began. Under the pro-Slovakisation resolutions, Hungarians ceased to exist in Slovakia. The ridiculous notion, and official government explanation, became that the Hungarian speaking populace of Slovakia had been assimilated by Hungarian domination in the past (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997). Utilizing procedures completely mimicking "Magyarisation" under the Hungarian monarchy of the Nineteenth Century, the opportunity arose for Slovakia to settle its Magyar minority problems once and for all. The similarity between the "pro-Magyarisation" ways of the Kingdom of Hungary, the "pro-Slovakisation" of Czechoslovakia in the 1940s, and the recent emergence of "Slovakia for Slovaks" in the contemporary Slovak Republic, is that all of these political acts of instrumentalism have been based around linguistic difference.

In the 1940s, "Slovakisation" meant having Hungarian property confiscated by the government (e.g., churches, publishing houses, et cetera). The *Benes Decree*, a political measure in the "Slovakisation" process, forced 400,000 Hungarians to sign a statement announcing that they recognized themselves to be of Slovak ethnic origin (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997). Of these signers, only 200,000 were recognized as legitimate -- the other half were

forced to deal with continued government discrimination (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997).

Though the Communists were fairly quick to secure, and then seize for good measure, political power, the few years of terror after World War Two left their destructive mark on the ethnology of the population. In the 1920s, officially 650,597 Hungarians resided in Slovakia, but by 1961, only 518,783 remained (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997). In reality, the communist puppet regime in Czechoslovakia, announcing that internationalism was the way of the future, did little to suppress nationalism (Jeszenszky, 1996). Just because "class conflict" was brought to the spotlight did not mean that ethnic conflict disappeared -- suppression only promoted passive aggressiveness. The communists making up the Communist Party in Slovakia were still, for the most part, Slovaks. The Party declared the minority question "solved" by muzzling any protests about poor ethnic relations and by depriving minorities of private property to utilize in any campaign of protest (Jeszenszky, 1996). In the end, the Communist Party had to become more nationalist than communist in order to hold the state of Czechoslovakia together. This meant renewed discrimination against Hungarians.¹⁹

Temporally speaking, communism came and went relatively quickly in Slovakia. However, it is crucial to note that its authoritarian influence comprises half of Slovakia's state history.²⁰ The new democracies, sprouting from the collapse of the Iron Curtain, became new tools for central authoritarian leaders and institutions to maintain the power they had under the old order. Throughout the region, former communists soon proclaimed themselves "socialist" or "nationalists" (e.g., Yugoslavia's Milosevic, Croatia's Tujdman, Slovakia's Meciar). In general, the new governments formed around conservative political parties, and the few liberal political parties were often rendered powerless due to their radical ideas at transformation. The installation of Fareed Zakaria's contemporary "illiberal democracies" had

¹⁹This turn to nationalism by the Communist Party is common in many states. In Czechoslovakia, national appeasement by the Party rose significantly after the Revolution of 1968. In China, the Maoists essentially seized control of the government by uniting the peasantry behind a "united China for the Chinese" policy and not Marxist ideology (Fairbank, 1983; Kress, class notes). In current times, the Chinese Communist Party has espoused the "one China" policy to unite the populace behind its annexation of Hong Kong and aspirations for Taiwan. Also interesting to note, when communist regimes collapsed throughout Central and Eastern Europe, certain "communist" politicians quickly metamorphasized into "nationalist" leaders. This suggests that only a change of the political facade takes place in transforming states, and the tool of nationalism does not disappear under communism - it is simply not instrumentally valid in an "international" order.

²⁰Slovakia did not exist as an independent, or semi-independent, entity until the Treaty of Trianon. From 1918 until January 1, 1993, Slovakia was politically associated with the Czech -- excluding a brief spell as a German backed fascist state during World War Two. There is no Slovak State history before 1918.

begun (Zakaria, 1997).

Democracy Fostering Ethnic Intolerance:

Contemporary Slovakia's Creation of an "Illiberal Democracy"

The world often views extreme nationalism and ethnic conflict resulting from national tensions as the product of history and political instrumentalism. However, there is another key factor aside from these and the geographic one. In order to implement bureaucratic discrimination and ethnic tension, it is the populace that must be convinced of the sincerity of the threat of an adversary and carry out the extreme forms of nationalist intolerance incited by the instrumentalists (Hamilton & Kelman, 1993). The gravest mistake made in Western analysis of the conflagration of ethnic tension is that upon its occurrence, it is claimed that the state has failed to achieve democratic principles.²¹ In his article *The Rise of Illiberal Democracies*, Fareed Zakaria describes that the West's preoccupation on establishing democracies around the world and assuming that only good will follow is not only an ignorant policy but, also, has the potential to induce more conflict than it eliminates (1997). The Slovak *Republic*, since its inception as a sovereign state in 1993, provides a prime example of this happening. For after its independence from the Czech and transformation into a parliamentary-democracy, Slovakia has seen more political turmoil and authoritarianism than other transforming states in Central Europe.

Democracy's definition according to *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* is "government by the people, either directly or through elected representatives; rule by the ruled; (or) majority rule" (1972). There is no mention in the definition or analysis of democracy about constitutional liberalism -- another political ideology closely associated with democracy in the West, but not every where. If a majority rules, and the majority happens to be intolerant, racist, chauvinist and indeed pro-authoritarianism, then a democratic government that *functions correctly* should demonstrate more authoritarian and centrist policies than a liberal-constitutional based democracy. The fact that such governments exist within the realm of democracies does not disqualify the intolerant states from being democratic --

²¹For example, the rhetoric against Milosevic in Yugoslavia is that he is a dictator; yet, he has been repeatedly re-elected in fair elections. As a matter of fact, there were demonstrations in 1996 that nearly threw him out of office because of his failure to annex the Serbian portions of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Similar to why Anwar Sadat was assassinated -- for making peace -- he had 100,000 nationalist students in the streets calling for his resignation (Zakaria, 1997).

as American politicians have been espousing about Milosevic during the current Kosovo crisis.

The belief that equality and liberty associated with constitutionalism are inherently linked with democracy is incorrect -- both developed separately and explicitly (Zakaria, 1997). Mature *liberal* democracies (e.g., the United States, France, United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany) can usually regulate ethnic conflict without violence, but this is because their democracies have grown with an indoctrination of constitutional-liberalism. Elections in states without such a background will most often result in victory for instrumentalist politicians (e.g., as happened in Yugoslavia, Croatia, Romania, Belarus, portions of Russia, and the Slovak Republic after the disintegration of Communism). It is one thing for the West to promote democracy -- the people's right to rule themselves -- but quite another for the West to foolishly believe that democracies will necessarily foster peace through equality.

In a mature liberal democracy, defense matrixes have been established -- commonly referred to as "checks and balances" -- against any intolerant usurpation by radical forces (e.g., strict adherence to unalienable rights by a succession of governments; an impartial judicial system; and trust given by a majority of society to the democratic institutions that be); whereas Slovakia's democracy is still young and fledgling. The Slovak Republic is held together by untested, unpracticed, and often foreign and abnormal, to the common Slovak, processes and institutions. As will be discussed, time alone can resolve the situation of illiberal tendencies gaining momentum in Slovakia's six year-old democracy. To simply denounce Slovakia as being undemocratic is not only a highly inaccurate statement, it does nothing to solve the conflict within Slovakia itself.

Hence, upon reviewing the situation in the Slovak Republic it should come as no surprise to the states of Western Europe that the majority of Slovaks tend to vote for instrumentalist politicians utilizing history and linguistics as the basis for a new Slovak nationalism. The word new, or contemporary, is important in defining the nationalist movement of today. Even though historical nationalist movements of the Slovaks are used to promote current nationalism, there is no relation. As already mentioned, under the monarchy, it was not Hungarians -- as defined by language -- that were the persecutors of Slovaks, but Hungarian (State) nobility. The nationalist movements of yesteryear were as much about getting rid of the yoke of aristocratic hegemony over political power as they were about the self-determination of a nation. Contemporary Slovak nationalism has little to do with self-

determination of the Slovaks either; for the first time in history, they actually have a recognized state. The nationalism stems from politicians finding an easy and successful way of maintaining power within a democracy -- by creating and identifying an *instate* threat to sovereignty.

Slovakia's political troubles as a state began before it even officially gained independence on January 1, 1993. In what is now generally regarded as an assassination, the Slovak President-elect, Minister Dubcek, died in a traffic accident on a highway between Prague and Bratislava when his chauffeur driven Mercedes' brakes gave out. Ironically, the chauffeur, a former employee and long-time friend of Prime Minister-elect, Vladimir Meciar, from the days of the Communist Party's secret police force, suffered no injuries (Frank, 1998; Furlong, 1999). Hence, the former Communist Party member, Meciar, assumed both the roles of Prime Minister and "acting" President several months later when Bratislava and Prague separated. If ever there was an instrumentalist politician able, and willing, to stir up trouble for personal gain, it was he.

However, Meciar is a man of democratic principle. In 1994, only one year after the state's independence, Meciar relinquished both of his dominant positions -- not without political reason, however. For, the President of Slovakia is in charge of appointing the Prime Minister and as acting President, Meciar did so -- a political peon who would remain in office for less than five months. Then, however, Meciar's political party apparatus, the *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HDZS)*, forced President Michal Kovac to reappoint Meciar as Prime Minister.²² Thus, until September 1998, the Prime Minister of 1993 was out of the office for but five months in 1994. With the HDZS's backing, and the electoral support he needed, Prime Minister Meciar began to centralise his hold on political power.

Of course, in order for a democratic populace to allow a politician more power than he is entitled to, and to adore him for it, it is necessary to have an inherent state enemy. Meciar wasted no time in claiming the 650,000 members of the Hungarian minority, 11% of the population, as his political tool. Political discrimination and

²²The term "forced" is not aggressive enough, perhaps. The Slovak Secret Police force, under Meciar's control and direction, kidnapped President Kovac's son in an attempt to coerce him to their whim. They also branded him a national traitor for not blindly adhering to the *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia's (HDZS)* political agenda. Today, Meciar's Secret Police force chairman has been indicted for the kidnapping, and many assume that Meciar will eventually wind up in jail for his crimes. Political rectification of crimes done under the Meciar regime are slow to be fixed, however, because the previous Parliament passed numerous immunity laws in an effort to protect themselves in case of an electoral loss.

harassment was implemented quickly and fiercely. Legislation was passed that attacked Hungarian language use. With the Parliament under his political party's control, Meciar began to shape the democracy of the Slovak Republic to his liking.

The list of corruption that Meciar engaged in is too long to go into detail in this paper. Not only did Prime Minister Meciar crack down on the press corps, with the International Press Association claiming that Slovakia lacked a "free press", but he also saw that the liberalisation of the Slovak economy benefited himself and his political cronies (Hungarians in Slovakia, 1997). Numerous bidding procedures were bypassed, or deleted from the regulations altogether, and some estimates illustrate 80% of Slovakia's economic value being given away under the Meciar regime. The Secret Police force was used not only to kidnap the President's son, but also to keep an eye and ear on all opposition delegates in Parliament -- bugging and harassment of MPs was common. Electoral districts were restructured in a manner that assured no districts had a Hungarian majority. Finally, the latest Slovak Government reports have indicated that through the Secret Police force, Meciar recruited the Mafioso to explode bombs and commit assassinations in the Republic of Hungary (Cent. Eur. Online, 1999). If this government release proves to be true -- the HZDS vehemently denies any such involvement with the Hungarian Mafia in terrorist acts -- Meciar's instrumentalism will prove to have international consequences.

Nowhere, however, did Meciar prove his intolerant, authoritarian ways more than in his policies toward the Hungarian communities of southern Slovakia. Essentially, Meciar's path to power was the same as Milosevic's in Yugoslavia to the south. Due to the demise of the communists as the significant party in Slovak politics, he created a nationalist party under the guise of being for a "democratic Slovakia". Utilizing the inherent difficult economic times that came with political and socio-economic transformation, he insisted on Slovakia's independence from the Czech.²³ Then, using any means necessary, he wrestled political power away from all oppositional forces, calling them "enemies of the state" (Slvk. Prime Min., 1998). With control over the media, political processes, and police force solidified, the HZDS began implementing anti-Magyar propaganda and lies.

²³It is worth noting that the breakup of Czechoslovakia was unquestionably and solely a desire of the political elite. A majority of both Czech and Slovak politicians were for the breakup -- providing a growth in political power due to a more confined, ethnically solid, state. However, in polls taken up until the night of the separation, December 31, 1992, the Czechoslovak population overwhelmingly supported having the two states stay together in a union.

In numerous ways, the Hungarian minority's *constitutional rights* were not only ignored but tread upon. For example, laws were overwhelmingly passed denying Hungarians the right to address themselves officially by their Hungarian names. Nothing Meciar and his HZDS Party (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) did, however, could possibly come close to being as illiberal and intolerant as the *Official Slovak State Language Law* of 1996.

Meciar realized that in order to instill a politically empowering fear amongst the Slovak populace, something important to a majority of Slovaks must be threatened. The element he found was language. By attacking the Hungarian language and by declaring it as a threat to "Slovak culture and way of life", rhetorical repetitiveness found support amongst concerned Slovak citizens, and the HZDS had no trouble in passing the *Slovak State Language Law*. The law was an act of terrorism against all minorities. To summarize its implications, the law bans and restricts, to an extreme extent, use of the Hungarian language in the following settings: with medical personnel; in schools; in public; in government buildings; in court; on the radio or television; on signs; in privately owned businesses; in places of worship; with police officers; with government officials; with bus drivers, et cetera.²⁴ Refutation of the law by both individuals and businesses results in excessive fines.²⁵

There are several problems with the language law that illustrate its pure, and solely, instrumentalist origins. To begin with, the law goes against the Slovak Republic's Constitution (1993) in several areas. The Constitution insists that minorities have a right to education in their native tongue (Constitution, 1999; Slvk St Lang Law, 1996). Also according to the same founding document of the Slovak Republic, in communities with more than 20% minority populations both the minority and Slovak language are to have equal status (Constitution, 1999; Hungarian in Slovakia, 1997). The language law strips this right away and mentions that an elusive "future law will regulate minority languages" (Slvk St Lang Law, 1996). This legal condition of a "future law" was inserted numerous times

²⁴For a more comprehensive report on the linguistic terrorism that the *Slovak State Language Law* (1996) wrought, see: Oas, Ian. *The Slovak Republic's Language Law and Its Implications*. Academic Report for Janus Pannonius University, 1997: 1-22.

²⁵For example, to air a children's television programme in Hungarian without first airing it in Slovak *will* result in a fine equal to half that of jeopardizing Slovakia's nuclear security. To have Hungarian signage larger than Slovak signage outside of a place of business, or on a restaurant menu, will result in a fine multiple that of desecration of a Slovak flag. To speak with a Slovak police officer in Hungarian is to risk receiving a ticket.

throughout the language law as a means of escaping criticism, not only of the law's unconstitutionality but, of the law's apparent transgression against several international treaties.

The language law, still in effect today, quickly became an international issue due to the fact that it breaks several acts of the Hungarian-Slovak Basic Treaty and, also, the European Convention on Minority Rights (ECMR), both of which the Slovak Republic signed. The ECMR treaty states quite articulately that an inherent link exists between "linguistic rights and minority rights" (Slvk St Lang Law, 1996; Plichtova, 1993). Of course, as previously stated, a problem of "unconstitutionality" is not a *problem* at all in a democracy that does not rest its faith on the constitution as much as on its leadership or on an elusively defined, dynamic "nation" (Zakaria, 1997). However, international isolation and furor over the breaking of treaties eventually does stimulate political problems within a state. Meciar gained much support from his promotion, and the *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia's* passing, of the intolerant language law of 1996. In an ironic twist of fate, however, the language law's fruition also proved to implement the leader's own downfall.

The Slovak Republic Today: 1997-Present

Incredibly, Slovakia seems destined to take one-step backward for every two-steps forward. The most significant element in Meciar losing his grip on power in the elections of September 1998 was his loss of control over the hypocritical aspirations of Slovaks at large. While building a nation-state revolving around his sole leadership, Meciar also had to play to the *state* populace's longing to belong to Europe -- more accurately, the European Union. Politically, the situation became one of lose-lose for the HZDS and Meciar.

The Slovak State Language Law was officially condemned by states throughout Europe and, also, the United States and Canada. To make matters worse for Meciar, Slovakia was refused first round ascension status into the European Union due to its "discrimination of the Hungarian minority" and "failure to prove itself a functioning democracy" (Cent Eur Online, 1999; Slovakia Fails, 1999).²⁶ NATO passed Slovakia on its initial list of recruits, as well

²⁶However, it should be noted that according to Fareed Zakaria's hypothesis, which Slovakia seems to fall in line with, Slovakia is democratic. The only difference between Slovakia and its neighboring states, also undergoing political and economic transformation, was that Slovakia was far more illiberal and less constitutional. The Slovak

-- hoping to stay away from more inter-organizational disputes similar to those between Greece and Turkey. In every poll taken in Slovakia, a vast majority of the population -- Slovak and Magyar alike -- desire to be part of the Union. Rather than relent on the persecution and instrumental use of the Hungarian minority in an attempt to appease European cynicism of Slovakia's democratic principles, Meciar decided to continue with his policy of instrumentalism, declaring sovereignty over minority affairs within the state of Slovakia. Finally, he made the fatal mistake of placing sole blame on the European Union for Slovakia's failure to achieve ascension status (Slvk Opp., 1998).

Throughout the year of 1998, accusations of corruption in the Meciar regime were repeatedly confirmed by fraudulent sales of Slovak state companies to Meciar cronies and relatives. The European Union began to lambaste Meciar for being a detriment to Slovakia at large. As the citizens of the Slovak Republic experienced worsening unemployment (hovering around 14%), rising prices, and felt the pressures of international isolation, they were forced to watch all of their neighbors' -- excluding the former Soviet Republic of Ukraine's -- standards of living rise. Too late, the HZDS Party discovered that, though economic hardship has the potential to solidify support within a state's borders behind a nationalist movement (McGarry & O'Leary, 1997), eventually the populace will realize that a corrupt political regime is to blame for stagnant development and not an ill-defined, unaccepting Europe.

Meciar found his only ally in the east with President Yelstin in Russia. Meanwhile, the Slovak populace grew tired of slow economic transformation coupled with international isolation and peered longingly toward the Europeans' Europe of the west. Pan-Slavism, always a hefty political tool in the Central European and Balkan region, turned out to be an untenable political ideology for Meciar due to the fact that he had been at the front of Slovak and Czech separation in 1993. By aligning himself with Russia, several months before the election, and facing imminent encirclement from newly admitted NATO member states, he lost much needed support from Slovaks now wearing *Levis* jeans, eating *Little Caesar's Pizza*, and shopping in British department stores.

The political burdens that Meciar and his party imposed in the name of protecting the "nation" from the Hungarian threat eventually became nothing more than persecution of all citizens. To restrict personal freedom over a segment of society, the rights of society at large must be somewhat compromised. Meciar's secret police force and

populace elected politicians that believed Hungarians should not have equal rights. There is nothing "undemocratic" about these politicians utilizing this support to strip rights away from a certain segment of the populace.

political allies began to suspect anyone and everyone who was not supportive of the HZDS Party of being "enemies of the state" (Slvk Pres. Blasts, 1998). This political centralisation of Meciar's making represents Slovakia's last attempt to *assimilate* the Hungarian populace through forceful means. In the elections on 25 September 1998, enough of the populace was alienated with Meciar's ways that his party was narrowly ousted from the government in the parliament (Balazs, E., 1998).²⁷ Much of this was due to an 84% voter turnout (Balazs, E., 1998). Though the HZDS still received the most votes, and therefore seats in Parliament, at 43, a new government was formed by combining the seats of numerous, and various, parties united in their disliking of Meciar's ways (Balazs, E., 1998).²⁸ One of the parties was the Hungarian Coalition Party, which received nine-percent of the total votes and 15 seats in the 150 seat Parliament (Danko & Nicholson, 1998).

With the recent election's changing of the guard, as it were, one can only speculate on the future of political instrumentalism in Slovakia. The head of the *Slovak Nationalist Party* (9% of the electoral vote) was recently quoted on the Slovak radio stating that, "To learn in Hungarian? No, no way! We will get in our tanks and we will

flatten Budapest. (Cen Eur Online, 1999, March 9)" The Hungarian Coalition Party has the potential to become equally instrumentalist in garnering support for itself. However, over all, the Parliament seems to be stabilizing and heading toward the direction of establishing a liberal democracy, in which justice reigns for everybody.

²⁷Several months before the election, Peter Toth, a journalist for the opposition newspaper *SME* noted: "The next election is crucial for [the] politicians. It will decide who goes to jail -- the government or the opposition. (Slvk Opp., 1998)" Essentially, his prediction has proven true. Many of Meciar's cabinet ministers are now behind bars awaiting trial. The head of the secret police has been arrested and charged with working with elements of the Mafia in the Republic of Hungary in promoting a bombing campaign designed to scare the European Union away from accepting Hungary in the next round of ascension (Balazs, E., 1999, March 11). Also, Meciar himself may stand trial for kidnapping former-President Kovac's son. Had the *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia* (HZDS) won the past election, it was very likely that most opposition leaders were going to be arrested under several laws passed before the election making it illegal to "[disseminate] false information against the government" (Nicholson, 1998). The *HZDS* had been using these laws to bring charges against anyone speaking against, or in opposition to, the Party.

²⁸The coalition has 93 out of 150 seats -- a combination of the *Slovak Democratic Coalition Party*, *Party of the Democratic Left*, *Party of Civic Understanding*, and the *Hungarian Coalition Party*. However, by April 1999, the coalition was fracturing over Hungarian minority rights, and it may not stay together for much longer. The Hungarian Coalition Party desires a return of lands seized after the Second World War by the *Benes Decree* and the past process of *collective guilt*. Several of the coalition parties have balked at this ultimatum.

Space for Reconciliation

In composing the first chapter of a book they edited, *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*, John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary outline "a taxonomy of the macro-political forms of ethnic conflict regulation" (1993).²⁹ The authors begin by dividing the eight observed methods of regulation into two separate groups of four: methods of *eliminating* differences and methods for *managing* differences (McGarry & O'Leary, 1993). Methods of eliminating differences include: *genocide*; forced mass *population transfers*; *partition* and/or secession (also self-determination); and *integration*, a.k.a., assimilation (McGarry & O'Leary, 1993). The methods of managing differences group contains: *hegemonic control*; *arbitration*; *cantonisation/federalisation*; and *consociationalism/* power sharing (McGarry & O'Leary, 1993). Going on, McGarry & O'Leary briefly describe each of the eight methods of regulation and how politicians utilize them as "strategies for conflict regulation *within a given state*" (1993). Using their outline as a guideline to the political factor of the Slovak-Magyar conflict, then, nearly every form of conflict regulation has been attempted by the political establishments controlling the land that is now Slovakia.

Beginning with the Hapsburgs, who were ruling while concepts of ethnic and national identity began to take shape in Europe, political power was held over the entire Central European region through a form of hegemonic control (McGarry & O'Leary 23). Relatively speaking, this form of regulation worked well and is a very common political policy in multiethnic states. By nature, this policy is coercive. It involves making revolt along ethnic lines unthinkable or impossible. In general, it is crucial that the state leadership and power have control of all available apparatus and not let any such functions become based on ethnicity (e.g., the military, police force, and political parties).³⁰ When implementing its hegemonic control well, the Hapsburg Empire was a world power, and economically -- though eventually falling behind in industrialization -- quite a viable territory of resources and productivity.

In 1867, however, the royal family attempted to appease Magyar nationalism -- a movement, as already

²⁹"Regulation" of conflict is defined as covering both a conflict's termination and its subsequent management.

³⁰A contemporary exemplar of what happens in a state deteriorating out of carefully balanced hegemonic control is the former-Yugoslavia. President Tito held the state together through a careful balance of powers between all ethnicities, but within ten years after his death, the Serbs controlled the military, Croatia the economy, and Slovenia the tourist industry. Ethnic chaos soon followed.

mentioned, based around vernacular language -- by reorganizing the Empire into a dual-state monarchy (Anderson, B., 1991; Lazar, 1968). The *power-sharing* technique proposed by Vienna meant that the Hapsburgs surrendered a large portion of their power over domestic affairs. However, it also halted the Hungarian independence movement by offering the nobility self-government and autonomy in areas that only concerned the Hungarian territory anyway.

The form of *consociationalism* allotted to the Hungarian Parliament, and creating the *Austro-Hungarian Empire*, in turn gave Hungary its first opportunity to instrumentally use its political sovereignty in hopes of *assimilating* and *integrating* the non-Magyar speaking peoples residing on historic Hungarian territory (B Anderson, 1991; McGarry & O'Leary, 1993). Four-hundred years previous the Hungarian Kingdom had been pro-ethnic diversity, but with the rise of nationalism based around language, the political importance of national sovereignty became an utmost concern to nobility and a heated electoral topic in (the extremely limited) parliament itself. For the most part, partial Magyar sovereignty within the Empire meant persecuting the Slovak nationals and the beginnings of the *assimilation* process known as "Magyarisation".

After the dual-monarchy's defeat in the First World War, *partition* and *succession* were arbitrarily commenced with under the pretense of *self-determination* (e.g., the creation of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Transylvania's cession to Romania, and the establishment of the territorially compact nation-states of Austria and Hungary). Unfortunately, the dictated political borders were drawn less for ethnic-homogeneity than geo-strategy, and many ethnic enclaves -- namely Hungarian ones -- were created.³¹ As the postmodern world of the 1990s has begun to demonstrate at a blitzing pace, however, in the end, "self-determination is indeterminate" (McGarry & O'Leary, 1993).

Nationalist sentiment began to brew afresh in Hungary, and the Vienna Awards Treaty of 1938 was yet another attempt at *arbitration* along ethnic lines (McGarry & O'Leary, 1993) -- this time including both states involved and not just the Slovaks. At the conclusion of the Second World War, though, the temperate mindset of conflict control that had gained precedence before the war was revenged with a viscous policy of *conflict*

³¹ Another interesting facet of the Treaty of Trianon is that the borders drawn by the allies at the Czechs', Slovaks', and Yugoslavs' insistence were primarily based on language -- including Yugoslavia's internal borders. Hence, even in the early Twentieth Century, the assertion that language is linked to ethnicity was visualized as a fact.

elimination. Slovakia's government used forced migration, population transfers, and the stripping of citizenship (more commonly referred to as "Slovakisation") in an effort to eliminate the conflict from its territory all together. This form of *assimilation*, though, did nothing but alienate the Magyar minority and build up its mistrust with the Slovak state -- a lack of faith in the state-government that still exists today. Not only was *assimilation* forced upon the ethnic-Hungarians of Slovakia, but massive *population transfers* were used to disperse and get rid of the Hungarians as a concentrated group on Slovak territory.

And so today, 80 years after the invention of the Slovak political entity at the Treaty of Paris, and only six years after the utilization of *self-determinism* created the first independent Slovak state in history, it should come as no surprise that the Slovaks have garnered a political policy of assimilation in order to eliminate the potential for any ethnic usurpation by the Magyars. And of course, by looking at history and realizing that it is oft to repeat itself, it is of no surprise that this policy has been failing miserably. Luckily, the Hungarian-Slovaks are not demanding, nor even hinting for, succession away from Slovakia.³² Otherwise, the crisis could become international, with Hungary's involvement.

The reason conflict exists in Slovakia today, as pertaining to the Hungarian minority, is due to the Hungarian communities' insistence of equal language rights and their aspiration for *semi-autonomy* (Stoll, 1998, Jan 9). Semi-autonomy is an identified form of conflict regulation that has not been attempted yet, but due to the fact that none of the methods for conflict elimination or control has worked up to this point, it is doubtful that this would provide a cure-all on its own. For example, *genocide* has not been utilized either, but it is impossible to see this method of conflict elimination as working. Also, these days it would be more difficult to attempt such a method of conflict elimination since the Western powers are beginning to wary of unconditionally recognizing state sovereignties (e.g., Kosovo and Iraq). However, there is no assurance that in the future genocide will not be utilized and promoted by the Slovak State as a desperate means to eliminate the conflict that semi-autonomy for Hungarians may create.

³² However, there are calls from some Hungarian politicians for regional autonomy within the Slovak Republic. Autonomous provincial movements have the potential to ignite conflict and bring about international involvement as has been witnessed in the former autonomous Yugoslav province of Kosovo.

There is one key oversight to the above stated political theory on conflict regulation, however, and that is that these methods have only been analyzed on the state-level of political space. The curse of a world dominated by statist-diplomacy is that too often political science, and the social sciences in general, miss the broader spectrum of spatial adaptability available in the world political system today. It is impossible to solve the "national" problem of the Carpathians through statist-political views alone. This impossibility is not negated whether we speak of nation-states versus constitutional-states, or democracies versus authoritarian dictatorships, because in the end the propensity of scape-goating a minority within a state's limited borders is a reality.

For in contemporary Slovakia, the Slovak communities constitute the majority of the population, and they will continue to do so no matter what the *state of Slovakia* does. It is no surprise that instrumentalism has found its niche with the massive political, social, and economic infrastructure changes taking place in Slovakia since 1989 -- not the least of which with the creation of its sole sovereignty in 1993. Nor should the Hungarian minority's situation of being the target of much political hostility be considered unusual due to the fact that, generally, nationalism and ethnic intolerance rise in acceptance during times of economic hardship and political instability.³³ The politicians espousing the nationalist rhetoric are still part of a democracy, and if continuously elected, they illustrate not a "lack of democratic principles" but, rather, an image of society's frustrations at large. This is what democracy is -- representation of the population. No where in democratic principles is there insurance that the population will desire moderate and liberal, tolerant and empathetic political figures in the government. In Slovakia, the electorate continuously states its *openness to discrimination* of Hungarians.

Therefore, it is crucial that a new approach be taken in attempting to prevent the spread of ethnic conflict and the breakout of violence throughout Central Europe, but more specifically, between Slovakia and its Hungarians. A new "geographic" solution is needed -- and already exists.

Academics in the discipline of international relations continue to opine that a need exists to resolve conflict through other means than the "statist" approach alone. Yet even today, aside from some recognition of "national" groups without territorial control of a homeland (e.g., the Kurds, Palestinians, Roma, and the Inuit) a majority of

³³Hitler's Germany is a classic example of economic hardship helping foster ethnic mistrust and tensions, but modern-day Indonesia and Malaysia, with riots against the ethnic-Chinese populations, demonstrate the cataclysmic social effect of economic importance in fueling conflict.

conflicts are dealt with through statist diplomacy. The ramifications of preaching a new geography to conflict resolution, but at the same time failing to practice it, are severe.

State borders are inventions. Slovakia provides a prime example of this. No concept of Slovak statehood existed before 1918, and even then, it was created in a union with a new Czech State by states hundreds of kilometers away (Britain and France) -- not regional politicians. States are invented by politicians, inherently instrumentalist in practice, as a means of marking territorial and political control. Some animal species urinate their territorial claims on geographic features around them; humans have decided to draw maps and, for the most part, blindly adhere to the lines that political power and force regulate. Hence, being far more than just a political scientific theory of institutions, organizations, a hierarchy of power and economic allocator, a state is a geographic entity -- or figment of geographic imagination. In order to change the political aspects of a state, there is an inherent need to broaden the generally conservative element of political space within which political intolerance operates. Broadening the political geographic horizons of the statist system to something else is exactly what the European Union has been attempting to do -- quite successfully. The space for Magyar-Slovak conflict regulation, resolution, and reconciliation lies in the European Union's expansion.

In any type of geography, two crucial factors exist: time and space. The political differences between the European Union and Slovakia owe much to different cultural perspectives of these two geographic factors. Nowhere do the cultural differences between European Union member states and Slovakia differ more sharply than in the geographic-temporal element. For a grand future without borders is what concerns the European Union, whereas the Slovaks now have available a historically forbidden statehood.

A generic and quick review of the differences between the two political entities' -- Slovakia and the European Union -- perspectives on time helps to demonstrate the clash that is taking place. The European Union is definitely the forward looking entity, having laid out numerous series of long-term political goals and objectives over the past decades (e.g., open borders, member-state expansion, economic union, currency union, and a more unified defense industry). As the Union hurdles each objective on the way to creating a European Superpower, optimism grows, and though hitting an economic slump in recent years, faith in a greater Europe concept continues to bloom

as politicians bury undesirable facts in rhetoric. The Union has slowly, but surely, been removing nationalist symbolism from member-states -- national currencies being one such example. Through all of this, the reforms and achievement of long-term, cooperative goals have slowly begun to superimpose a new, and less passionate, "European identity" over the national and state identities of the populace.

On the opposite side, Slovakia having finally freed itself of hegemonic Soviet domination, is fixed on looking back in time at a past of little national or state success and much lost opportunity. Though the past is of little relevance today, especially with the rapid pace at which the postmodern world has accelerated change, the populace of Slovakia is taught to be bitter. Never given an opportunity to have a state with the nation, Slovaks are still keen on the nation-state concept. Democratic reforms and the parliament, created in 1993, have only provided the opportunity for a pessimistic and downtrodden populace to provide support to politicians promoting a nationalist government -- a self-sufficient Slovakia for Slovaks.

Of course, there are several inherent dangers with Slovakia's choice to base its contemporary politicism on a missed nationalist ideology of the past. The instrumentalism of nationalist politicians such as Meciar will, at best, create a fledgling, barely sufficient, isolated state of intolerance, whose international opinions will not be given credence by other states in the world. Its economy would remain stagnant in development as the rest of Europe begins molding into an economically united superpower (e.g., North Korea surrounded by Asian Tigers). On the other hand, the worst case scenario involving a continuation down the path that the HZDS has established would create a Slovakia isolated by the international community (not by choice), in economic collapse, social disrepair, and lacking a legitimate internal political process. Also, most likely, the instrumentalist state would possess an intolerable society -- a society incapable of easily reforming back to integration with European standards of humanity and social acceptability (e.g., when the Serbs of contemporary Yugoslavia support ethnic cleansing to the point of NATO bombardment).

Ironically, with such a vast difference in political aspiration between the European Union and Slovakia existing today, rather than hold back its influence, it is crucial that the European Union expand into Slovakia immediately. The space for reconciliation is the key factor to geographic resolution of Magyar-Slovak conflict. Slovak

territorial sovereignty is the stumbling block to resolution; European territorial sovereignty could prove to be the spatial panacea.

A Theory of Reconciliation: a 'Neo-Medievalist' Approach

In his book, *Building Peace*, John Paul Lederach outlines a vague process to establishing peace in areas of "identity conflict".³⁴ According to his work, reconciliation of ethnic conflict must work on three assumptions. First, that the relationship between conflicting nations is not only the basis of a conflict but also the solution (Lederach, 1997). Secondly, he argues that *encountering* and, even more crucially, *acknowledging the past* are important for all sides of a conflict (1997). Rather than see a conflict in terms of black and white -- by default excluding at least one side's viewpoints when recounting the history of a particular conflict -- a "*space*" needs to be provided for both sides to review and acknowledge their angers and fears from the past. Finally, the third assumption is that any reconciliation requires that we look outside mainstream political traditions and discourse if *innovation* is to take place (Lederach, 1997). Lederach surmises that "reconciliation represents a place ... where concerns about both the past and future can meet" (1997).

Though Lederach's work was written with internal civil wars in mind, its relevance to the Magyar-Slovak tensions should not be overlooked. For, to use a broader scaled perspective, the contemporary Magyar-Slovak conflict in Slovakia itself, and between the Slovak Republic and Hungary in general, is an internal conflict -- a *European conflict*.

³⁴John Paul Lederach is a practicing conflict mediator who has field experience in training and supporting peace-building in Colombia, Somalia, The Philippines, Nicaragua, and Northern Ireland. He is well published, and has worked extensively with the United Nations. He is currently the director of Eastern Mennonite University's Conflict Transformation Program, and has conducted numerous field research projects (John Paul Lederach, 1997).

European Union expansion into Central Europe, and more specifically Slovakia and Hungary, will not only strengthen the regional economies, but it shall provide, as Lederach put it, "the creation of the social space where both truth and forgiveness are validated and joined together (27)" to begin the process of reconciliation. As a supranational entity, the European Union will provide the space and forum for intra, and inter, state conflicts to be heard -- as it already has for many Western European conflicts (e.g., the Basques and Catalonians).

The European Union, and more importantly the space that it encompasses, is shrouded with treaties recognizing minority rights, language rights, national rights, and political rights -- the space within which to solve the conflict outside of state borders. In the European Union, the Slovak policy of keeping language rights at the lowest level tolerated by the international community will cease to be an issue when political borders, and with them linguistic borders, are open between all member-states. A lack of borders allows three types of freedom and diffusion: people, goods and services, and information. Without the "international borders" between Hungary and Slovakia, travelling will become more frequent between minorities and the states of their relatives and ancestors. Hungarians living in Kassa, Slovakia, will be able to visit relatives in Miskolc, Hungary, and Slovaks in Esztergom, Hungary, will be able to travel to Bratislava, Slovakia, without hassle. This newly created interaction will increase trust and reduce fear of Magyar takeover in Slovakia, as the idea of a European Union member-state attacking another is realized to be ludicrous.

In his seminal work, *The Anarchical Society*, Hedley Bull put forth an abundant account of the world political systems used thus far in history and proposed several potential new systems for the future. One such system was that called "new (or neo-) medievalism" (Bull, 1995). Though originally composed during the 1970s in the midst of the Cold War and during the earlier years of the European Community's ascension into a powerful organization, the "new medievalism" that Bull defines is extremely valuable when compared to where and what the European Union is today. Essentially, he describes such a system as having multiple levels of authority, no one level (for example the state) having sole authority over another. The state of France might have to compromise its sovereignty by sharing some power with regional governments within the state (e.g., southern France and Normandy) and with larger, external governments (e.g., the European Union in Brussels, Belgium), and even furthermore, with the United Nations. This dispersal of political power also has the tendency to disperse political

loyalty and create interdependence, and therefore, it has the potential to reduce conflict along ethnic lines.³⁵

The European Union, having already achieved a sense of this "neo-medievalism" in the western portion of the continent, now stands poised on a new horizon.³⁶ With reason, numerous politicians from various states within the Union are skeptical of expansion over the Carpathians. They use historical examples of differences between the cultures and value systems; they admonish the fact that East-Central Europe is a grain and livestock belt that may seriously damage the agriculture industry of Western Europe. However, economic prudence, not historical revision, demands that the European Union continue its expansion eastward, and there is absolutely no doubt amongst the Union members of further expansion. Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia, and Cyprus have all been invited to join the Union, after fulfilling a plethora of economic and political requirements, within the next decade. Support amongst the populace in these countries to join the Union is overwhelming. Hence, it becomes evident that the belief of economic potential, in principle, overrides a need for definitive national sovereignty.

Due to high support in Slovakia from both the populace and new government for ascension into the Union, and the European Union's already dictated outline of what needs to be done by the Slovak government if it hopes to join the first batch of Central European states, the question of Slovakia's joining the Union is not a question of whether it will happen but more of when will it happen. With this in mind, and having already stated the importance of Union expansion into both Slovakia and Hungary as soon as possible, the question of key importance remains:

What will happen when the European Union expands?

The European Union will provide the space required for the conflict to be resolved, or at least in which to be

³⁵The reason for Hedley Bull's terming this system "neo-medieval" is that it contains numerous qualities similar to the world system existing during medieval times. In the Middle Ages, all power was derived from God. State sovereignty did not exist as such, only as much as a monarch being allotted certain territories by the Pope or Holy Roman Emperor to administrate. Meanwhile, as in Hungary, the monarch had to answer to the nobility beneath him in the hierarchy, and without the nobility's support, as numerous Magyar kings discovered, there was no power. A vast array of political allegiances held sway over where power was held, and generally, it diluted power throughout all levels of hierarchy.

³⁶Examples of this achievement of various levels of power and sovereignty are prevalent nearly every week as the European Court of Justice hears disputes between actors from various states (Eur. Comm., 1987), the Council of Ministers acts on recommendations from the European Commission (Eur. Comm., 1987), and millions of Europeans cross sovereign territory without border checks. Chilean Senator Pinochet's extradition from Britain to Spain, for example, has been partially dealt with in European courts.

regulated. The space established, and the conflict regulated, the process of reconciliation may begin to be facilitated over time.³⁷ Not only will reconciliation be more easily accomplished in this space, but also, with the diffusion of political power across a variety of spectrums within the Union, reconciliation will be possible on all levels of society - - rather than just on the *statist* and diplomatic level that has historically failed. Without this space, conflict resolution cannot take place. For within a *democratic state*, there is always the potential for a majority group to bully a minority through the electoral process. Instrumentalists may arise at any time to wreak havoc across the political and ethnic landscape. However, within the European Union political authority and rights are represented in the space of Europe as a whole and not within small parceled electoral borders failing to achieve correlation with ethnic lines. Each state has its neo-sovereignty, but people residing within a state, who may be disgruntled with what they feel is injustice by the state, have a larger arena within which to protest.

Hopefully, with the new government attempting to correct the ills of the Meciar era through justice and reform, Slovakia will soon be accepted in the ascension talks for the European Union. The alternative for the Magyar-Slovak conflict still festering today is of little glee. The 11% of the population in Slovakia that is Hungarian and being discriminated against, and that will continue suffering discrimination if the European Union does not to engage Slovakia, will most certainly then seek *semi-autonomy* -- one of two political methods of conflict resolution not yet attempted in the dispute. As the landscape of contemporary Kosovo demonstrates, a search for autonomy may only lead to ethnic violence and *genocidal tendencies* in an isolated and disenfranchised Slovak populace -- the only

³⁷Important to note is that the European Union provides more than just a political and economic space. To begin with, it provides an institutional space in which new avenues of justice, policy making, and political aspirations are provided in conjunction with the traditional methods of a statist system. This is important because one does not need state recognition to have recognition in the Union -- only group organization. Also, within the space of the European Union, no one nationality has a majority. "The danger of oppression in a democracy comes from the majority of the community," United States President Madison once noted, and as pertaining to ethnic conflict, a political space lacking a majority benefits impartiality in judging and regulating internal disputes.

Of equal importance is the geographic element of time. Animosity between groups -- though generally being of temporal coincidence and taught by peers, rather than being of an empirically learned nature -- is not dropped at the whim of "anti-instrumentalist" politicians that may arrive on the scene. Using the age old saying, "Trust is earned," ethnic conflict not only needs space in which to be resolved, but also time. Up to this point in history, Europe has never had a space as large and stable as the European Union in which to achieve the time needed for reconciliation between ethnic groups coping with learned animosities. Hence, it is fortuitous to pay head to the European Union's eventual expansion into Central Europe as not only being of a political or economic consequence, but indeed mostly an element of *geographic* significance -- an extremely stable element of both space and time.

other untried political resolution (McGarry & O'Leary, 1997; Sabini & Silver, 1993).

Therefore, with all political attempts and panaceas discarded, the *geography of space for ethnic conflict resolution and reconciliation* must take precedence in shaping any future attempts at conflict cessation between the Slovaks and the Hungarians. The contemporary conflict stems from the mistake of political geographic ignorance *early in this century* and the continued reiteration of, and concentration on, biased histories and temporal coincidences of the distant past. The Slovak-Magyar conflict must be remedied by competent geographic insight in the next millennia.

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