

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-07793-4 - The Slovak Dilemma  
Eugen Steiner  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The Slovak Dilemma

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-07793-4 - The Slovak Dilemma  
Eugen Steiner  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

*Published for the Centre for International Studies,  
London School of Economics and Political Science*

---

### *Editorial Board*

Dr Coral Bell	Professor L. B. Schapiro
Professor G. L. Goodwin	Mr D. C. Watt
Professor J. B. Joll	Mr P. Windsor
Professor P. J. de la F. Wiles	

The Centre for International Studies at the London School of Economics was established in 1967 with the aid of a grant from the Ford Foundation. Its aim is to promote research and advanced training on a multi-disciplinary basis in the general field of International Studies, particular emphasis being given initially to contemporary China, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the relationship between these areas and the outside world. To this end the Centre offers research fellowships and studentships and, in collaboration with other bodies (such as the Social Science Research Council), sponsors research projects and seminars.

The Centre is undertaking a series of publications in International Studies, of which this volume is the second.

Whilst the Editorial Board accepts responsibility for recommending the inclusion of a volume in the series, the author is alone responsible for the views and opinions expressed.

### ALSO IN THIS SERIES

BLIT: The Origins of Polish Socialism

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-07793-4 - The Slovak Dilemma  
Eugen Steiner  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# THE SLOVAK DILEMMA

EUGEN STEINER

CAMBRIDGE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS · 1973

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-07793-4 - The Slovak Dilemma  
Eugen Steiner  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521200509](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521200509)

© Cambridge University Press 1973

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1973  
This digitally printed version 2008

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-20050-9 hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-07793-4 paperback

## CONTENTS

---

	Preface	<i>page</i> vii
	Introduction	1
1	The Slovaks as a Nation	6
2	The First Czechoslovak Republic	17
3	Slovakia: 1918–38	27
4	After Munich	34
5	The National Policy of the Czechoslovak Communist Party	41
6	The Struggle in Exile	48
7	The Slovak National Uprising	60
8	After the Liberation	77
9	The Road to February	84
10	The Dark Fifties	93
11	The Impact of the Twentieth Congress	105
12	The Revolt of the Slovak Intellectuals	112
13	The Historical Argument	122
14	The Economic Argument	129
15	The Debate Continues	139
16	Before the Storm	144
17	The Open Clash	154
18	The Beginning of the Revolution	164
19	The New Communist Manifesto	170
20	The Slovak Response	177
21	The Aftermath of the Invasion	186
22	The Federal Republic	197
23	Husák's New Role	203
24	Epilogue	213
	Bibliography	217
	Maps	222
	Index	225

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-07793-4 - The Slovak Dilemma  
Eugen Steiner  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## PREFACE

---

Twice in my life I have had to leave my native country: in the spring of 1939 when Hitler's soldiers marched into Czechoslovakia, and in the summer of 1968 when Brezhnev's soldiers did the same. In both cases I have chosen exile as a Jew, as a Communist and as a Slovak. But the reasons for going into exile were not quite the same each time. Perhaps on the second occasion I should have left out Communism because, when the Warsaw Pact armies decided to impose their political ideas on my country by force, I knew that once again my belief in Communism had been shaken.

The first eight months of 1968 in Czechoslovakia had raised in many of us the hope that after all it might be possible to combine justice and equality with freedom – without which Communism cannot be Communism. 1968 was more than an experiment. Although in the life of a nation eight months is not a long time, it is perhaps long enough to reshape the political ideas of an individual. Even if it was only an experiment, I believe that it did not fail. It was because it worked that it had to be prevented from succeeding. The Czechoslovak socialist laboratory had to be smashed by a hostile rival who thought, perhaps, that his laboratory was a better one. In 1968 my friends and I felt that we were on the way to being reconverted to the faith which we had lost. The Prague Spring was not a dream. It had already become reality. But, whether dream or reality, it was shattered by brute force.

Three decades ago I came to Britain with the Czechoslovak forces fighting on the side of the Allies against Hitler. When I was discharged from the Army my government gave me a grant to go to the London School of Economics and Political Science, where I read sociology as an undergraduate and later as a research student. When I returned to my native Slovakia in 1948 I soon discovered that Stalin's concept of socialism did not embrace sociology. I knew that I could not pursue my work in the social sciences. I took up instead the 'safer' career of journalism. Soon the Czech and Slovak executors of Stalin's will stopped me from my activities as a propagandist of Marxism–Leninism. I was not trusted. Only after the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party was I again able to work

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-07793-4 - The Slovak Dilemma  
Eugen Steiner  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

viii *Preface*

as a journalist. Times have changed but not to the extent that we expected after those hopeful days following Khrushchev's 'revelations'. They were not revelations to me and my friends, most of whom had experienced Stalinism at first hand, either in prison or through other forms of persecution. For twenty years I lived in Gottwald's, Zápotocký's, Novotný's and for a very short time, Dubček's Czechoslovakia. In my native Slovakia I witnessed at first hand what the system meant to the Slovak people – to the working class and peasants and to the working intelligentsia, as the party phraseology goes. As a Slovak journalist, I could watch from very close quarters, the main participants in the Slovak act of the Czechoslovak drama which often was, and has again been turned into a tragedy. I was in personal contact with many leading Slovaks.

When I found myself by the end of August 1968 in Britain once more, this time not as a soldier in an army fighting against those who had invaded my country but as a bewildered and confused Slovak journalist, I was fortunate enough to enjoy again the hospitality of the London School of Economics, where I was a Visiting Fellow of the Centre for International Studies. I have done my best to repay the LSE by working on a subject which is of the deepest interest to me and which I felt had been neglected by Western research. In most works on Czechoslovakia, including the recent very able accounts of the Dubček era very little interest, if any, has been shown in Slovakia's particular problems.

As far as I know, this book is the only one dealing with this subject to be published in Britain in recent years. It is in part history; and in part it is a more direct description of events, based on my personal experience. The second half of the book has all the defects, and perhaps one or two of the virtues, of this more direct kind of approach. In the second part the reader will find fewer references to sources than in the first, more historical, chapters of the book. Throughout however I have drawn extensively on the works of modern Slovak and Czech historians, political writers and economists, many of whom contributed to the downfall of Novotný. I am not in full agreement with all their conclusions but I am indebted to their work. I have made use of documentary materials, for example those in the Archives of the Institute of History of the Slovak Communist Party, to which, unfortunately, I no longer have access.

It is a sad reflection on the nature of the present régime in still occupied Czechoslovakia that the progressive writers and journalists, so often mentioned in my book, have been prevented from

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-07793-4 - The Slovak Dilemma  
Eugen Steiner  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Preface* ix

continuing their work. All have lost their jobs – and some are languishing in Husák's jails.

I am grateful to the London School of Economics and Political Science for the hospitality and financial help which have enabled me to produce this book. In particular, I should like to thank Professor Geoffrey Goodwin, Professor Leonard Schapiro, Mr Philip Windsor and Mr Adam Roberts, all of the LSE, who read the manuscript and helped me with substantial suggestions. And last, but not least, I am most grateful to Miss Margaret Vallance and to Mr Richard Taylor, who were very helpful in putting my Slovak English into English English.

*December 1972*

EUGEN STEINER