

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**THE BRITISH VIEW OF THE SLOVAK NATIONAL UPRISING
THROUGH THE EYES OF THE WINDPROOF MISSION**

Bachelor Thesis

Eva Krajňáková

Bratislava, August 2012

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**THE BRITISH VIEW OF THE SLOVAK NATIONAL UPRISING
THROUGH THE EYES OF THE WINDPROOF MISSION**

Bachelor Thesis

Thesis Author: Eva Krajňáková

Title: British View of the Slovak National Uprising through the Eyes of the Windproof Mission

Name of University: Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

Thesis Advisor: Mgr. Miroslav Michela, PhD.

Committee: Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD., prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc., Samuel Abrahám, PhD (Chairman of Committee), Mgr. Miroslav Michela, PhD.

Place, year, number of pages: Bratislava, 2012,

Academic Degree: Bachelor of Science (abbrev. Bc.)

Declaration of Originality

I declare that this Bachelor Thesis “British View of the Slovak National Uprising through the Eyes of the Windproof Mission” is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

Bratislava, 31 July, 2012

Signature: _____

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my tutor Dr. Miroslav Michela for all his advices and encouragement he provided me with while writing this Bachelor Thesis. My special thanks go to Prof. Vilém Prečan for all the recommendations I received from him in our correspondence.

Thesis Author: Eva Krajňáková

Title: British View of the Slovak National Uprising through the Eyes of the Windproof Mission

Name of University: Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

Thesis Advisor: Mgr. Miroslav Michela, PhD.

Committee: Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD., prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc., Samuel Abrahám, PhD (Chairman of Committee), Mgr. Miroslav Michela, PhD.

Place, year, number of pages: Bratislava, 2012,

Academic Degree: Bachelor of Science (abbrev. Bc.)

Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with the fate of the British intelligence mission Windproof and their experiences in Slovakia during the Slovak National Uprising. In order to write about this theme I focused my research on the documents of the Special Operations Executive directly in the National Archives in London. Critical analysis of these documents combined with the analysis of the materials of the British Foreign Office as found in the secondary sources – in a literature of prominent historians, provides the reader with a British view of this important historical event. The first chapter of the thesis gives an overview of the literature on the topic of the Slovak National Uprising, the second chapter describes the most important events that led to the breakout of the Uprising and the third chapter deals with the fate of the SOE Mission Windproof itself.

Experiences of the agents of the Windproof Mission that operated in the Slovak territory from 18 September 1944 offer a unique perspective of the Uprising because they offer the view of the Western officers through their personal experience. Three of four members of the Mission were acquainted with the attitude of the civil inhabitants towards the Uprising; they also experienced partisan activity, and the relations between the partisans and with the 1st Czechoslovak Army. The Mission witnessed the determination of the Army, especially its commander General Ján Golian, but also inability to stand against the German attacks, since the Golian's troops were mostly reservists and permanent staffs from schools and they did not possess adequate weapons. The reason why they lacked not only anti-tank weapons but lots of soldiers were not even provided with rifles is that the aid from the Allies was not adequate. The deliveries from the Soviet Union were irregular and the

material was often of not very high quality. The potential aid from the United States and especially from Great Britain depended on the Soviet permission since Slovakia was in the sphere of influence of this power. The fact that the approval was never given froze almost all the activities of the Western Allies. Despite the insistence of the Special Operations Executive officers as well as of their American colleagues from the Office of Strategic Services the aid from the West was very limited and therefore was not sufficient. The Soviet silence disabled the possibility of the success of the CFI aided by the West and produced a victory directed by Stalin and brought by the Red Army.

Autor práce: Eva Krajňáková

Názov práce: British View of the Slovak National Uprising through the Eyes of the Windproof Mission

Názov vysokej školy: Bratislavská medzinárodná škola liberálnych štúdií

Meno školiteľa: Mgr. Miroslav Michela, PhD.

Komisia pre obhajoby: Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD., prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc., Samuel Abrahám, PhD., Mgr. Miroslav Michela, PhD.

Predseda komisie: Samuel Abrahám, PhD.

Miesto, rok, rozsah práce: Bratislava, 2012,

Stupeň odbornej kvalifikácie: Bakalár (Bc.)

Abstrakt

Témou tejto bakalárskej práce sú skúsenosti a postrehy britskej misie Windproof, ktorá pôsobila na Slovensku počas Slovenského národného povstania. Pri písaní tejto práce som vychádzala zo štúdia materiálov Úradu pre špeciálne operácie (SOE), ktoré som uskutočnila priamo v britských National Archives v Londýne. Kritická analýza týchto dokumentov v kombinácii so štúdiom materiálov britského Ministerstva zahraničných vecí (Foreign Office) prostredníctvom literatúry prominentných historikov ponúka britský pohľad na túto dôležitú historickú udalosť. Prvá kapitola tejto práce oboznamuje s literatúrou týkajúcou sa SNP, druhá kapitola sa zaoberá udalosťami, ktoré viedli k vypuknutiu Povstania a v tretej kapitole je opísaný osud misie SOE Windproof.

Skúsenosti členov misie Windproof, ktorá na Slovensku pôsobila od 18. septembra ponúkajú unikátnu perspektívu Povstania, keďže ponúkajú pohľad západných vojakov prostredníctvom osobnej skúsenosti. Traja zo štyroch členov misie mali osobnú skúsenosť s pohľadom civilného obyvateľstva na Povstanie, taktiež s aktivitami partizánov a sledovali vzťahy medzi týmito a 1. československou armádou. Boli svedkami odhodlania armády, predovšetkým jej veliteľa generála Jána Goliana, ale taktiež aj neschopnosti ustáť nemecké útoky, keďže Golianovi vojaci boli prevažne záložníci a zamestnanci škôl a nemali k dispozícii ani adekvátne zbrane. Dôvodom, prečo im chýbali nielen protitankové zbrane, ale množstvo vojakov nemalo ani len pušky, bolo, že pomoc Povstaniu zo strany spojencov nebola adekvátna. Dodávky zo Sovietskeho zväzu boli nepravidelné a materiál sa často nevyznačoval vysokou kvalitou. Potenciálna pomoc zo Spojených štátov a predovšetkým Veľkej Británie závisela od povolenia Sovietskeho zväzu, keďže Slovensko sa nachádzalo v sfére vplyvu tejto mocnosti. Skutočnosť, že k sovietskemu súhlasu nikdy nedošlo, zmrazila takmer všetky aktivity západných Spojencov. Napriek naliehaniu

dôstojníkov Úradu pre špeciálne operácie a ich amerických kolegov z Úradu strategických služieb (OSS) pomoc zo Západu bola veľmi limitovaná a teda nedostatočná. Sovietske mlčanie neumožnilo úspech 1. Československej armády podporovanej západnou pomocou, a zariadilo víťazstvo v réžii Jozefa Stalina nastolené Červenou armádou.

Table of Contents

Abstract	v
Abstrakt	vii
Introduction.....	10
1.1 Methodology	10
1.2 The historiography of the Slovak National Uprising.....	12
2. The Historical Context of the Uprising	20
2.1 Hitler’s interest in Czechoslovakia	20
2.2 The Slovak political scene	21
2.3 Split-up of Czechoslovakia	22
2.4 Resistance against the regime	23
2.5 Preparations of the Uprising and its breakout	24
2.6 The Western vs. the Soviet Attitude towards the Uprising.....	27
3. Windproof Mission	31
3.1 The aim of the Mission	31
3.2 Windproof on General situation in Slovakia.....	33
3.3 Windproof on the Army	34
3.4 Windproof on partisans.....	37
3.5 Windproof experiencing desperate situation	39
3.6 Attack on the Anglo – American Mission	41
3.7 The death in the Mauthausen camp	43
4. Conclusion	47
5. Zhrnutie	49
Resources	53

Introduction

...I was actually the only officer of the expedition with who the General talked. It was therefore me whom he thanked for the deliveries we brought with us. My honesty was stronger than my patriotism, however, and I made it clear to him that these stores were of American origin and that the British share in them is limited to a little medical equipment. (HS 4/54)

These were the words of Col. Threlfall of British World War II organization Special Operations Executive who visited the Slovak territory in October 1944. After a brief conversation with General Ján Golian he was impressed by General's calmness and determination even in very bad conditions, while the German troops were approaching the territory of the Slovak National Uprising and 15 000 of Golian's men were unarmed due to lack of weapons. The deliveries from the Soviet Union were not sufficient to provide all the troops with adequate arms and the aid of the Western Allies was limited to a significant degree since it was conditioned by the Soviet approval to interfere in what Stalin viewed his sphere of influence. The Soviet approval was never given and therefore the American and especially the British aid were very modest. The Americans delivered to the 24 tonnes of weapons to the Slovak territory (Prečan, 1994, p. 96), the Brits delivered 5000 doses of antitetanus serum and 20 000 pieces of bandage (Stanislav, 2004, p. 32).

The way this paralysation was viewed by agents of the SOE Mission Windproof who experienced it themselves and how they perceived the attitude of the participants and of the Slovak people in general will be seen in the following sections of this thesis. The room will be given also to their opinions about the fate of the Uprising had sufficient aid been provided.

1.1 Methodology

This bachelor thesis deals with a topic of the British view of the Slovak National Uprising from the point of view of a British Military Mission Windproof that operated in Slovakia from 18 September 1944. The Slovak National Uprising itself is almost 70 years after this event a theme worth studying. The main reason is that the Slovak memory regarding the Uprising has gone through many difficulties. "A significant reason for the peripetias was conscious and intentional 'modification' of

history according to current political needs and many-sided handling of half-truths, even untruths about the resistance and the Uprising...” (Zemko, 2009, p. 1). The quality of the relevance of the literature about the Uprising differs and its accuracy depends on various factors, such as the period they were written in, on the political opinion of the author as well as on the country of origin of the material. The materials that have still not been thoroughly analyzed are sources from Great Britain. Vilém Prečan and Edita Ivaničková dedicated a part of their work to British materials, especially those issued by Foreign Office, but as Prečan points out, the whole material has not been published yet, even though he encouraged such publication but “nobody is willing to do so” (personal correspondence, 16 June 2012). Owing to this, I am very glad that my thesis can partly contribute to the research of the British sources due to the fact that I visited their National Archives when I participated in Erasmus programme in London. The initiative to do so came from my father who pointed out that the documents of the Special Operations Executive are stored there and that they had not been studied in detail yet. Since the materials were produced by eye witnesses who were present in Slovakia almost during the whole duration of the Uprising I found it a source of valuable material that can contribute to the general knowledge of the Uprising.

I used a historical method with a strong emphasis on the analysis of primary sources from the British National Archives. These are documents of Special Operations Executive, namely the files: HS 4/40, HS 4/41, HS 4/54 and 4/246. They include messages of the mission Windproof, messages of the military base in Bari and messages from the military base in London and also reports by Slovak participants of the Uprising. Further there are transcripts of the testimonies of the survivors of the Mission and of a translator from the concentration camp where the Commander of the Mission found his death also with other British and American officers and two civilians.

Except this, I focused on the research by Vilém Prečan and Edita Ivaničková whose work, among other themes, aims also at the relations between Czechoslovakia and Great Britain. At the same time, Prečan is a prominent authority in the sphere of the Slovak National Uprising. Both of them include in the analysis of documents of the British Foreign Office in their literature. Through the analysis of the FO and the SOE sources it is clear that the Slovak National Uprising required not only Soviet aid but also American and British one but did not get it, and this caused its failure. Deeper

analysis explains that the reason why adequate aid was not delivered was brought about by the Soviet diplomatic passivity in dealing with the British political circles as well as by their insufficient aid that did not fulfil what had been promised. This thesis aims to show that the Uprising would have lasted longer and maybe would even been successful had the Soviet Union really wished such success.

1.2 The historiography of the Slovak National Uprising

Due to its political character, the Slovak National Uprising always triggered various, sometimes completely opposing reactions, that very often accorded with the ideological orientation of authors. The most significant misinterpretations and lies were introduced in totalitarian regimes, both during the era of the first Slovak Republic and later under the rule of the Communist party. However, also during a short period of people's democracy in Czechoslovakia between the years 1945 and 1948 the proper historical research was not conducted and the successes in this field that began in the 60s had to wait until the fall of the regime to be concluded. However even today, there is much work awaiting historians in order to explain the events of the autumn 1944, since the question of the democratic/civic and the Communist branch of the uprising is still open.

Historian Milan Zemko summed up the main difficulties of the historiography of the uprising in his work *Les monuments du Soulevement national slovaque et péripéties de la mémoire historique* that was published only in French but for the purposes of this thesis Dr. Zemko provided me in cooperation with Dr. Michela with a Slovak version (Zemko, 2009). His work is inspired by Jozef Jablonický's crucial work on the topic, *Glosses about the historiography of the Slovak National Uprising [Glosy o historiografii SNP]* As Zemko points out, different opinions on the Uprising arose right after its outbreak on 29 August 1944, since one group of people supported the Uprising and its aims, while another group viewed it as a resistance against their own state which they perceived as the highest national value. The literature that was published after the Second World War had a form of memoirs of participants of the Uprising and of politicians. The analysis of the character of the Uprising was almost absent, and even when it was present, its quality was not very high, it was rather schematic. It was taken for granted that the resistance was conducted in order to bring re-establishment of the Czechoslovak state and democracy, for moral re-birth after the collaboration of the Slovak Republic with Nazi Germany, for new international

orientation of Czechoslovakia targeted more on Slavic countries, for new political alignment without hypertrophied faction and for a more just society (Zemko, 2009, p. 3).

The Slovak national uprising was conducted by both civic and Communist branch but with the rising power of the Communist party its representatives kept insulting the democrats and after the so called Victorious February, they were able to dictate what the official “truth” about the Uprising should be. The aims of the Uprising were interpreted only in Communist fashion, dictated by the officials of the Communist party. Further, political leadership dictated whether to write about certain participants in a positive or in a negative way, or even whether to mention them or to erase them from the history. As Jozef Jablonický puts it:

Tragic background of the historiography was sanctioning and persecution of the participants of the resistance and the Uprising towards the end of the 40s and in the 50s. The most hideous accusations, forced confessions, false witness etc. were a part of the prosecution-police directed explanation of history.” (Jablonický, 1994, p. 15)

The director of the official “factography” of the Uprising was the Communist party and its executive was a historian Miloš Gosoriovský. In his work democratic bourgeois parts of the Uprising were portrayed as those that were doing machinations during the Uprising.

Therefore at first those who were repressed were the leaders of the civic branch of the Uprising and officers of the rising army, but later also Communist functionaries, among them leading personalities of the resistance. Ladislav Novomeský, Karol Šmidke and even the creator of future canon of the Slovak National Uprising Gustáv Husák. These three were viewed as bourgeois nationalists who were fighting against the future progressive development in Czechoslovakia during the Uprising. and they were either casted out of political life or even imprisoned.

The first positive wave of historic work developed after the 22nd congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in the year 1961. The conference dealt with Stalin’s cult of personality and crimes of that period. In Czechoslovakia, growing dissatisfaction with economy was accompanied by dissatisfaction of intellectual circles that criticized political paralysis and neglecting of older problems, among them a question of interpretation of anti-fascist resistance and activities of its main protagonists. Therefore a special commission was create, and its task was to deal with

crimes of Communism. The consequence was that the most compromised functionaries had to leave and the Communists who had been sentenced in political trials for constructed crimes were rehabilitated. Among others, also historians worked in the rehabilitation commissions and their research brought results that differed from the official historiography. From the year 1963 various works were published. The most influential were three of them: a book by a former political prisoner Gustáv Husák, a monograph by a collective of Slovak and Czech historians about the resistance and a voluminous anthology of documents regarding the Slovak national uprising by historian Vilém Prečan. These books formulated a new or partly renewed view of the Uprising, especially regarding the activities of the Communist participants. But Zemko points out that that the question of the meaning of the uprising remained almost untouched – it was still understood as the beginning of the post-war development towards the “final victory of working people” (Zemko, 2009, p 8).

Especially the Husák’s book became a paradigm for the interpretation of the events and the actors of the Uprising, and this was so until the fall of the Communist regime in 1989. As Jozef Jablonický puts it:

A fatal mistake of many historians was that since the year 1964 they had been combining a re-birth and scientism of the historiography of the Slovak national uprising with Husák’s book. Sobriety was coming gradually, slowly and not in the same degree. (Jablonický, 1994, p. 55)

The research of professional historians in the second half of the 1960s confirmed that the role of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in Moscow had been exaggerated but still, the leading role of the Communist Party remained.

Towards the end of the 1960 Jozef Jablonický published a book *Uprising without Myths [Povstanie bez legend]* where he studied activities of civic resisting groups without their glorification, condemnation or accusation with a political, “class” undertone.

After the fertile 60s there was a cold shower brought by normalization that dictated the historians that all the pieces of work regarding the Uprising had to be in accordance with Husák’s *Testimony about the Slovak National Uprising [Svedectvo o SNP]*. The most prominent historian of this period was Viliam Plevza whose brochure

Revolutionary heritage of the Slovak National Uprising [Revolučný odkaz SNP] was published in 1974. Jablonický reacts on this book:

Shortcomings of the Slovak National Uprising are masked with soaring poetic phrases and the credit of one very often mentioned participant is glorified. [...]. Gustáv Husák, according to Plevza's opinion, led the preparations of the Uprising, together with other members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. And where was Ján Golian? (Ibid, pp. 92 - 93)

Plevza exaggerated the role of the Communist Party on expense of the pro-democratic, civic groups and gave untrue information about the relationship between the Slovak Communist Party and the army. "At the time of preparations of the Uprising, the leadership of the Communist Party did a great deal of work in the army" (Jablonický, 1994, p. 93).

A process of normalisation prevented certain historians from the opportunity to involve in professional historical research. Even those who remained working at departments of history of academies and universities and dealt with the uprising faced radical editing of their works so everything that was published stuck to the official line. Of course, it resulted in decline of the quality of published works and of conferences of scientists. Again, the main editing affected the passages speaking about the Golian's army, and partisan groups led mostly by Soviet officers were praised on its expense. No one could question the status of civic groups in the uprising that was stated as subaltern to the Communist resistance. And no one could question the relationship of the Soviet political and military relationship even though the research conducted in the 60s showed its significant incoherence in the attitude towards the preparations of the Uprising.

With the era of normalization, the authors that were active in the 60s were prosecuted, among them Prečan and Jablonický. However, "generally speaking the prosecution of Slovak authors was milder than that of their Czech colleagues." (Jablonický, 1994, p. 89)

The most dramatic turning point in the sphere of the historiography of the Slovak National Uprising was brought by the revolution in the year 1989 that brought pluralistic democracy. Historians could conduct the research freely without any interventions of the political leadership and there was room for expression of variety of opinions on the Slovak Republic (1939 – 1945), the anti-fascist resistance and the Uprising. "Since November 1989 the long concealed and neglected chapters of the

uprising have been reminded; especially the democratic/civic resistance” (Jablonický, 1994, p. 142).

On the other hand, literature by exile authors who were mostly critical about the Uprising or even sympathising with the Slovak Republic (1939 – 1945) was published as well. These historians criticized the Uprising for standing against the Slovak independence, no matter how formal, that was carried out under the influence of Germany. Another criticism of such authors was that the uprising brought the War to the Slovak territory and led to losses of lives and material casualties. As Zemko points out, these exile authors did not have any answer to the question of how could Slovakia be spared any military operations since it was in the operational sphere of the Red Army and Germans were not going to surrender it without fight. (Zemko, 2009, p. 11) Another important issue that the advocates of the Slovak State ignore is the political, ethical and criminal responsibility of the leaders of this state for the collaboration with Nazis and with its consequences in the form of deportation of Jews, depredation of the Slovak economy for Germany, and so on. (Ibid)

Most well-known authors who live abroad and who have written critical books about the Uprising in exile are František Vnuk and Milan Stanislav Ďurica for whom it was a highly negative event, and while pointing at the negatives of the Uprising only, they never raise any criticism of the first Slovak Republic and the crimes that were conducted by the Tiso regime.

Condemnable deeds (even crimes) that were contrary to the character of the Uprising really occurred on the territory of the Uprising. It is a part of the attitude of Vnuk and his followers to pick only the negatives. If one thinks that Vnuk would write about crimes of Nazis and POHG¹, they are mistaken. (Jablonický, 1994, p. 143)

In order to demonstrate Vnuk’s opinion regarding the Uprising, a quotation from his book *Incredible Conspiracy [Neuveriteľné sprisahanie]* that was only with a few corrections republished in the year 1994 (the first edition was published in 1964), as cited by Jablonický: “For Slovakia it meant a catastrophe; there was only one bigger catastrophe than this one, and that was the year 907 when the Great Moravian Empire perished under united pressure of Hungarian-German-Czech tribes” (Jablonický, 1994, p. 148).

¹ Task Forces of Hlinka Guard (Pohotovostné oddiely Hlinkovej gardy)

A passionate debate about the character and value of the Uprising is still alive. Not only there is a dispute concerning the contribution of the democratic and Communist branches of the uprising but there are even voices that condemn the beginning of the uprising as “dies ater” (the day of evil). As the same-named conference on 26 August 1993 showed, these people celebrate the regime of Jozef Tiso and in order to defame the uprising they use “primitive anti-communism. Malignant are especially their attacks on partisans. They skilfully use bad experiences of citizens with red totality that has its roots already at the time of the Uprising” (Jablonický, 1994, p. 148).

The present day authors do not only pursue to come up with a more accurate view on the civic branch of the resistance, but they are also critical of the negatives of the Communist branch. A young author who presents a very critical opinion of Communists, the Soviet attitude towards the uprising and the role of partisans is Martin Lacko. In his book *The Slovak National Uprising 1944 [Slovenské národné povstanie 1944]*, he stresses the terror that some of them conducted towards the population, their destruction of various communications that would have otherwise helped the Uprising and also he stresses the Partisan linkage to the Soviet leadership for which, as he quotes Vilém Prečan, “the victory was not a victory if it wasn’t their production” (Lacko, 2008, p. 195).

One of many advantages of the democratic political system is that historians have an opportunity to study the materials of the Western countries. The most prominent historians who studied the British materials are already mentioned Vilém Prečan and Edita Ivaničková whose focus was on the resources of the British Foreign Office. The conclusion of the thesis is based not only on the primary sources of the SOE that I researched in the British National Archives but it also corresponds with the research by Prečan and Ivaničková who conclude that one of the main reasons why the Uprising was not successful was that the Soviet political and military leadership did not support the Uprising which led also to the fact that the Western Allies did not provide sufficient aid and therefore the Goliath’s was left almost alone in their pursuit.

In 2009, Vilém Prečan listed the array of spheres that still needs to be researched at the conference dedicated to the 65th anniversary of the Uprising. Among other practical tasks such as the necessity to question the already existing texts regarding the uprising, Prečan pointed out that foreign documents need to be studied properly. The main problem is with the Soviet documents since a significant portion

of these materials, such as Stalin's fund, deciphered messages between the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and Soviet embassies in other countries and the scripts of the Molotov's secretariat dealing with Czechoslovak agenda during the Uprising are not available. But he adds: "even the materials that we, as it were, already possess have not been published in Slovak language" (Prečan, 2009, p. 27). As he points out the dispatches about the communication with Karol Šmidke and Mikuláš Ferjenčík in Moscow in August 1944 were published in Russian journals already in 1995 but have been neglected in our literature. As he concluded the situation with British and American materials is very similar, they still have not been studied thoroughly.

An important topic that Prečan brought up is the question of personal motivations: "I see still open the most important questions regarding the sentiments, mentality of people, the motives for the joining partisan groups, reactions on mobilization, the way how they accepted the revolt, to name some of them" (Prečan, 2009, p. 28).

Prečan concluded his speech with the cardinal problems that still need to be thoroughly researched and all of them are connected with Soviets: the activities of the partisan groups, Carpathian-Dukla operation and the Soviet endeavour to have the exclusive status in Slovakia.

"The activity of the partisan groups and their diversionary actions after 20 August 1944 were without doubt the reason why it was decided [by Hitler] that a military contingent would be ordered to Slovakia to pacify the country" (Prečan, 2009, p. 29). But he adds: "I don't think it was the purpose of the Soviet side to provoke the German occupation" (Prečan, 2009, p. 29).

Concerning the Carpathian-Dukla operation, Prečan states that a Soviet operation directed towards Slovakia was planned by the General Staff of the Red Army to start on 28 August, 1944, however the first real discussion in Stalin's presence concerning the aid to the Uprising was carried out only at night from 1 to the 2 September after general Píka announced that the Czechoslovak Government in London had called upon the Uprising via broadcast. As he concludes:

Regarding the Carpathian-Dukla operation itself, it is possible to upbraid the Soviet handling of troops only for the fact that the 2nd Czechoslovak Parachute Brigade was not delivered to Slovakia after the breakout of the

Uprising as soon as possible, but it was used in ground battles where it was decimated and only after a regrouping they started to deliver it after 27 September to the territory of the Uprising. (Prečan, 2009, p. 32)

The third criticism concerning the Soviet Union is their diplomatic attitude towards the uprising and their lack of communication with British political circles that could not react adequately.

This bachelor thesis among other themes reacts also on Prečan's criticism of the Soviet attitude in connection with the attitude of the Western Allies. As he says comparing the Warsaw Uprising to the Slovak National Uprising: "In the first case the Soviets did not do anything and prevented others from helping the uprising against the Germans. In the second case they did little and too late and due to their stubborn silence on all requests they reduced possibilities of the Western aid" (Prečan, 1994, p. 98).

2. The Historical Context of the Uprising

2.1 Hitler's interest in Czechoslovakia

The fate of Czechoslovakia was to a very significant degree directed by Adolf Hitler for whose interests this country was very attractive. He needed a partner that would have a strategic position on the route eastwards, and Czechoslovakia also offered an industrial potential for the German army. A German minority that lived in the territory of Czechoslovakia, enabled Hitler to interfere in Czechoslovak internal relations. This minority served Hitler as an excuse for approximation of the German army towards Czechoslovakia since the leader of the Sudeten Germans Konrad Henlein described the situation of this minority as intolerable.

In 1937, Germany prepared a plan of attack on Czechoslovakia named Fall Grün. As the head of Wehrmacht's Oberkommando Wilhelm Keitel explains the goal of the operation was "to destroy enemy armed forces and to lead the troops of Wehrmacht into the territory of Bohemia and Moravia, liquidate the threat of attack from rear, exclude Bohemia from the war during the campaign on the west and to strip Russian military air force of their main operational base in Czechoslovakia" (Marjinová, 2010, pp. 253 - 254).

However, as the year 1938 showed, the military operation was not necessary and Germany was able to gain Czechoslovak territory by the means of diplomacy on 29 October when a conference in Munich took place. Here Adolf Hitler seconded by Benito Mussolini stated his request for a western territory of Czechoslovakia habituated by Germans to be added to the Third Reich. Czechoslovak representation did not have a word in this decision process, but a representative of France, Prime Minister Édouard Daladier, was present and this gave some hopes to Czechoslovakia, since these two countries were allies because Slovakia was a part of Little Entente. Despite their cooperation, Édouard Daladier and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain did not protect Czechoslovak interests at the Munich conference. They were both led by the policy of appeasement that believed that by doing territorial concessions in favour of Germany, the war would be avoided. Therefore Czechoslovakia was sacrificed.

The Munich conference was followed by Vienna Award on 2 November 1938 when Czechoslovakia was stripped of a territory in the south of Slovakia that was

added to Hungary and a part of northern Slovakia was added to Poland. After these territorial make-ups Czechoslovakia lost industrially and agriculturally most important areas and what was left was a non-vital, weak organism.

Germany did not forget to menace that objections from the West were not welcomed. “Germany definitely considers this part of Europe its sphere of interest” and he expressed hope that France and Great Britain would accept it with “principal reverence”. “It would be good if Great Britain and the rest of the world finally accepted it” (Marjinová, 2010, p. 259).

Hitler’s appetite was not satisfied by the Munich Treaty and the Vienna Award and therefore he continued in destruction of Czechoslovakia, but this time he focused on internal dissolution. That was enabled since there were slowly growing tensions on the Slovak political scene. Slovak population was formally represented by the only existing political party Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana – Strana slovenskej národnej jednoty (HSLĽS – SSNJ)² that was becoming still more and more radical. And this political development was observed also by GB. British Foreign Office was observing the situation in Czechoslovakia through mediation of their Ambassador in Prague and from December 1938 by consul in Bratislava Peter Pares (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 210).

2.2 The Slovak political scene

The FO was able to create their opinion also thanks to the research of British journalist Michael Winch whose report the FO was provided with in the middle of January 1939. Among other issues he observed the tendencies within HSLĽS - SSNJ. As he concluded, there were two branches within the party that would be determining the fate of Slovakia. So called intermediate stream represented by Jozef Tiso “was in the economical sphere prepared to cooperate with anyone” and willing to copy the German system only to the degree that the Slovak and political life would remain untouched (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 211). According to Winch, the most radical circle was around Karol Sidor and Ferdinand Ďuranský. As he stated these people “would not raise significant objections if Slovakia – in case it does not get what it wishes for – cut all the remaining bonds with Czechs and became an entity similar to Luxemburg under German protection.” He also added that this branch was not aware of “potential

² Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party – Party of the Slovak National Unity

danger of its policy led to its logical end” (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 211).

Pares reacted on the attitude of the Slovak political circles to the German minority. Ivaničková cites “Practically every legal request of “Deutsche Partei is fulfilled”, but Slovaks haven’t been given any significant privilege for their friendship towards Germany. (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 211) He mentioned rising influence of Carpathian Germans and also German advisers in various spheres such as culture, education and sport.

Prague decided to react on separatist tendencies of the autonomous Governments of Slovakia and Carpathian Ukraine radically in order to prevent the split-up of the country. Martial law was declared in the Slovak territory, Tiso and a few other Slovak ministers were suspended from their office. Army and police took over governmental buildings, stations of armed representatives of HSEŠ and Guardists, and arrested 200 representatives (Marjinová, 2010, p. 266). Germany’s reaction was even more radical; they provided Guardists with weapons and armed SS men were ordered to ensure order in Slovak streets.

Under the influence of these events Tiso asked for audience in Berlin where Hitler informed him that he was prepared to ensure the future independence of Slovakia if the Slovak representation declared independence. Otherwise Slovak territory would be divided between Germany, Hungary and Poland.

2.3 Split-up of Czechoslovakia

On 14 March the situation was discussed in the Slovak Parliament and despite protests from several members the politicians decided to support so called independence. The satellite character of the Slovak Republic was confirmed on 23 March when Slovakia signed Treaty of protective relations between German Reich and the Slovak state. Among other requirements, the treaty dictated Slovakia to lead its foreign policy in approximation with Germany.

The world saw the full content of the treaty on 1 September 1939 when Slovakia accompanied Germany in its attack on Poland and therefore can be counted among the initiators of the Second World War. In a material of the FO from 8 September, GB stated that they were to deal with Slovakia as with an enemy territory in cases of trading with an enemy, contraband, censorship, etc. In case of necessity, the FO was prepared to declare war against Slovakia (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 217). However on 12 September claimed: “We are not in war with Slovakia and Slovaks are

not enemy nation” (Ivaničková, 2002, pp. 174 - 175). Britain’s awareness of approximation of Slovak foreign policy to Germany was reassured in the year 1941 when Slovakia declared war against the UK and the USA. Answer of British diplomacy made its position clear – there was no answer at all. (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 219)

There were not many reasons to hope that Slovakia would change its position. The first laws against Jews were issued already in 1939 and the judicial persecution culminated with the issuing of the Jewish Code on 9 September 1941 was in some respect even stricter than its German model. Even a German newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* celebrated Slovak zeal in an article from December 1941 stating that the Jewish Code was “preliminary the last step in the consolidation of the Jewish question [...] However, this Jewish Code is a model for the rest of the south-eastern Europe due to its consistence and thoroughness” (Mlynárik, 2005, p. 139).

However, there were some indications of a different position among the Slovaks in London. Already in 1938 Edvard Beneš and some of his ministers left the country for London also with a part of the Czechoslovak army. Its aviators excelled in the battle of Britain in the year 1940. Therefore Edvard Beneš willed that he and his co-operators would be considered a legitimate Czechoslovak Exile Government. Britain acknowledged the Czechoslovak Exile Government in the summer 1940 and indirectly promised to re-establish Czechoslovakia after the war (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 218). As Vilém Prečan points out “in the British political circles there was a feeling of injustice towards Czechoslovakia and an awareness that it has to be redressed even on the expense of unusual concessions” (Prečan, 1994, p. 39).

In the eyes of Great Britain it seemed that resistance against the Nazis could not be expected in Slovakia. Frank Roberts of FO alleged on 11 October 1940: “As long as the Germans are masters of the central Europe we can’t expect much from the current Slovak leaders. On the other hand, the victory of the Allies would surely mean that Slovaks would gladly bind their fate with Czechs again” (Ivaničková, 1996, p. 219).

2.4 Resistance against the regime

However, there was dissatisfaction among certain strata of society already in 1938. In spite of the fact that there was curiosity and expectations for the future development, many citizens, especially of evangelical confession “felt nostalgia for

former Czechoslovak Republic with its democratic atmosphere and public order. They did not approve with the direction of the regime, with attacks on Czechs, exaggerated nationalism, almost chauvinism, and one-sided orientation on Hitler's Germany" (Lacko, 2008, p. 21). Later, a portion of the population felt aversion against persecution of Jewish citizen, corruption connected to Aryanisation and rage of Hlinka's Guardists.

Growing resistance had both democratic/civic and Communist character. The former was linked to the Czechoslovak Exile Government led by Edvard Beneš. However, there were also different opinions about the character the post-war republic of Czechs and Slovaks, whether it would be centralized or autonomous. Regarding activities of civic resisting groups, these were focused mostly on conspiracy and illegal escorting of persons across borders.

Another line of resistance was represented by Communists who were strongly bound by their ideology. The Communist Party existed illegally since the year 1939. Along with the main aim of the Slovak Communist party, to create a classless society, there was also a wish to add the Slovak territory to the Soviet Union as one of its republics. This is clear from the intraparty document *On the Development and Situation in Slovakia [O vývoji a situácii na Slovensku]* that was delivered to the Soviet Union in August by a Communist representative Karol Šmidke: "We want to be a part of the Soviet Union" (Jablonický, 2004, p. 140).

A turning point that was important not only for the Slovak resistance but also for the future of the whole of Europe took place in 1943 when troops of Wehrmacht were defeated by the Red Army at Stalingrad and Kursk and when Italy left the coalition with Germany. From now on it was clear that Germany would lose the war. This fact led to a re-activation of groups of resistance that already existed in Slovakia but there was no real cooperation between the Communist and non-Communist groups was created. At the same time, the change of the military situation was also an impulse of activation of various opportunists who wanted to change their coats in time.

2.5 Preparations of the Uprising and its breakout

The following year brought concrete preparations of an uprising. There were two plans of armed resistance, one of them was coined within the government itself in the person of Minister of Defence Ferdinand Čatloš and another, more important one was coined by the civic resistance movement represented by a part of the regular

Slovak Army that was attached to the Czechoslovak Exile Government in London. Both plans counted on the Soviet Army that was pushing Wehrmacht troops westwards. Therefore it was necessary to contact the Soviet political leadership in order to coin the future uprising.

Čatloš created his plan of armed resistance already at the beginning of year 1944, partly with unaware cooperation of German leadership that gave him approval to create two divisions in Eastern Slovakia. The two divisions were at first under the command of Colonel Rudolf Pilfousek, later under General Augustín Malár. It is estimated that at the time of the outbreak of the Uprising Malár's army consisted of more than 35 000 troops (Lacko, 2008, p. 45). The plan was that at the moment when the Soviet Army occupied Krakow the Malár's divisions were to attack German armoured corps and later Hungarian reservists. Regarding the post-war situation, Čatloš wanted to preserve the Slovak independence.

Another version of the uprising was prepared by a Slovak Army Lieut. Colonel and later General Ján Golian. His army that later operated in the Uprising called themselves the First Czechoslovak Army.³ The army was politically subjected to the Czechoslovak Exile Government and later also to illegal Slovak National Council. Golian's plan was that the Eastern-Slovak divisions were to open Carpathian notches for the Red Army after this occupied Krakow. In fact, this uprising had two variations – an ideal one and a crisis one. According to the first one, the 1st Czechoslovak Army was to operate in accordance with Soviets, to enable the Red Army to enter North-Eastern Slovakia and this operation was to be accompanied also by political coup and was to lead to the declaration of war against Germany. The second variation planned to declare the Uprising as a reaction on German occupation of Slovakia which really happened later.

In August 1944 both Čatloš's and Golian's representatives flew to Moscow to cooperate their activities with the Red Army. This was conducted in a chaotic way when two delegations flew to Moscow with a difference of two days. On 2 August a representative of Golian's Headquarters Lieutenant Ján Korecký flew to Moscow carrying Golian's plan of the Uprising. On 4 August, a plane provided by Ferdinand Čatloš and piloted by Major Mikuláš Lisický flew to Moscow with representatives of the Slovak National Council – a democrat Mikuláš Ferjenčík and a Communist Karol

³ In the documents of the SOE the Army led by General Golian is always referred to as the "Czechoslovak Forces of the interior" (CFI)

Šmidke who was well known in Russian diplomatic circles as agent of NKVD⁴. Along with Golian's plan, this delegation carried also the Čatloš's memorandum and Gustáv Husák's report of the V. Illegal Leadership of the Communist party *On development and situation in Slovakia*. Each document suggested a different after-war organization of borders, Čatloš demanded independency of Slovakia, Golian asked for Czechoslovakia and Husák willed Soviet Slovakia.

The Soviet reaction on these two visits was very unusual; both delegations were isolated and treated almost as captured enemies. Korecký says: "...the interrogation lasted from 2 am until 8 am on 6 August. A Soviet Colonel did not interrogate me as a parliamentarian but as a captive" (Jablonický, 2004, p. 135). However, he was immediately enabled to meet the Czechoslovak military mission.

The way the delegation of Ferjenčík, Lisický and Šmidke was welcomed was even much less friendly. At first, they were interrogated by a political Commissar of the 4th Ukrainian front, later by a General of NKVD whom they acquainted with the plan of the Uprising and with a request to stop Partisan activity temporarily since their attacks on German civilians kept provoking Germany. Not only the Soviet circles did not give any answer, they even did not allow Ferjenčík and Šmidke to contact Golian. Only a lucky coincidence enabled Ferjenčík contact London on 24 August. The incidentally long visit to Moscow did not produce any results. The Soviet side did not promise any aid, and in fact did not even provide them with real negotiations but the real state of affairs was covered by a delivery of smaller amount of weapons that Soviets landed on the airport Tri Duby.

The above mentioned facts show that there was no coordination of activities with the Red Army settled at the time of the breakout of the Uprising on 29 August 1944. The armed resistance had to be carried out according to the defensive plan due to the German occupation as a reaction on partisan activities. The first partisans were present in the territory of Slovakia already in June 1944, but at that time these units were not able to fight and needed to be organized. Towards the end of July, the first group that was formed and trained by the Partisan Headquarters in Kiev was parachuted to Slovakia (Jablonický, 1990, p. 66). In August it was followed by other groups that were either parachuted or that marched to Slovakia and an intensive partisan activity began. As Jablonický points out, they oriented mostly on damage of

⁴ NKVD – The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnuternnikh Del)

communications and appropriation of military material. They did not attack on Slovak soldiers but they raided on military objects or objects guarded by soldiers (Jablonický, 1990, p. 89). On the other hand, some of them attacked also civilians. For example, at the beginning of August they shot an inn-keeper (Ibid, p. 70). In some cases they conducted so called partisan trials at which they sentenced and executed people without a prosecutor or attorney, as in the case of four policemen who were punished this way for cruel behaviour to an injured partisan (Ibid, p. 74). Their activities provoked not only the Slovak political representatives but also Germany. Their attention was a threat for the future Uprising and therefore Golian contacted the Exile government in order to stop their activities (Ibid, p. 86). However, the situation did not change, because partisans were subordinated to the Headquarters in Kiev. The last deed that triggered the occupation was an attack of 40 members of the Slovak army on an SS military mission accommodate in Slovak barracks. The attack was demanded by a Partisan leader Veličko “who wanted the SS officers dead or alive” (Ibid, p. 172).

The Golian’s Headquarters had a strong will to cooperate with the Western Allies. Since the Czechoslovak Exile Government was seated in London, “Great Britain was confronted with interests, plans, and intensions of this Government more than any other country of the anti-Hitler coalition” (Prečan, 1994, p. 39). But the Soviet Union remained the major player that determined the faith of the Uprising, not only due to the position of its army, but also because they were in a position to dictate conditions, since the successful end of the war highly depended on them. Another reason why Great Britain hesitated to react on the Slovak requests was a shocking response of the Soviet Union on attempts of the USA and GB to help the Warsaw Uprising that started at the beginning of August. Therefore the Soviet attitude was the main factor that determined the fate of the Uprising.

2.6 The Western vs. the Soviet Attitude towards the Uprising

The already described Soviet attitude explains why Golian’s Headquarters wanted to cooperate with Great Britain. However, GB was very cautious in providing the aid since they had a very negative experience with the Soviet attitude after the Western allies had tried to help the Warsaw Uprising.

The Polish Uprising showed who had the deceiving word in the central Europe. “There were no doubts that the Soviets were to dictate their own solutions in this area and there was no force to prevent them from that” (Prečan, 1994, p. 40). As

he concludes, GB was trying to avoid conflicts with the USSR and to respect what they viewed as legitimate Soviet interests.

Although the Polish-Soviet treaty about cooperation was signed at the end of July 1941, Stalin was not interested in Poland as in a partner but he was interested in the Polish territory. The Soviet Union did not rely on some post-war negotiations but their policy was to gain the territories liberated by the Red Army (Segeš, 2009). Therefore Stalin wanted the Polish territory to be liberated by his army, and not by the rebels themselves. Therefore he did not provide aid to them, even though the Warsaw Uprising depended on the foreign help. Due to this, the Uprising that was planned to last only 3-4 days took several months due to a serious lack of weapons (Ukielski, 2009). Not only did Stalin not order his army that was on the other side of Visla to provide any aid, he even forbade providing the territory on his side of the front as a stopover of the Ally planes dropping supplies on Warsaw territory.

This was a cold shower for the Western Allies. As Prečan points out, the British diplomacy was deeply shattered by enemy Soviet attitude to the Polish uprising and by their obstructions that disabled the aid to Warsaw from the West but they believed that the relationship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was better than the relationship between the latter and Poland and therefore they supposed that Soviets would provide aid to the country that was in their operational sphere. “British worried that they might trigger Soviet suspicion by their initiative” (Prečan, 1994, p. 86).

So in spite of the fact that the Czechoslovak Government was negotiating possibilities of aid to a future, non-specified uprising in the Czechoslovak territory with representatives of the SOE, British War Office and the Council of Imperial Defence since June 1943 there were no satisfying results (Prečan, 1994, p. 81).

However, on British side there was a strong will to help the Slovak resistance but their politeness was even stronger and therefore they contacted Moscow in order to discuss every step regarding the aid to Slovakia with them. Already in July 1944 the Czechoslovak side asked the SOE to send 32 tonnes of weapons to Golian’s army. Documents of the FO show that GB ordered its ambassador in Moscow Clark Kerr to discuss this issue with the Soviet side (Prečan, 1994, p. 83). Soviet answer was that in order to react on the subject they at first needed to explore the situation of the divisions in Eastern Slovakia. No matter how logic this sounds, after this, there were no answers to British questions at all. Prečan sums it up: “Exploration of the anti-German revolt of the two Slovak divisions that was a precondition of Soviet approval

to send weapons to Slovakia took so long that there was nothing to explore anymore” (Prečan, 1994, p. 83).

British diplomatic circles were aware that in order to win the war, they needed the Red Army and they wanted to make sure they would not make any step that would trigger Stalin’s anger. “The highest imperative was to preserve and to elaborate on British-Soviet ally relations, as one of the ways to ensure safety of Britain in Europe, and its interests in the Western part of the continent” (Prečan, 1994, p. 80). Because of that the discussions about the fate of the Slovak Uprising had to take into account also the diplomatic character of the whole situation.

A desperate situation in Slovakia after the premature outbreak of the Uprising led to a step of the Czechoslovak Exile Government to ask the Governments of GB, USA and USSR to send supplies to Slovakia, bomb military targets and communications in Slovakia and to give the Golian’s Army belligerent status. Reacting on this FO made a standpoint that they sent to the Chiefs of Staff and to the SOE. The résumé regarding the aid was that Slovakia was in the Soviet operational sphere and that any aid had to come from their side. Every British act was to be carried in accordance with the Soviet side, belligerent status would be given only if USSR would be willing to do so as well. They gathered that dropping supplies should be provided by Soviets because it was easier for them. American Chiefs of Staff came to a similar conclusion (Prečan, 1994, p. 87).

The diplomatic smoothing was pending until the fall of the uprising and almost no aid was provided. Neither Brits nor Americans were eager to act without Soviet approval. Despite this, the American side was more active. On 7 August they entitled the rising army a belligerent status, the OSS ordered to Banská Bystrica two intelligence groups and together with the OSS personnel also 24 tonnes of anti-tank weapons were delivered (Prečan, 1994, p. 89).

Due to the fact that the British did not want to seem less willing to help than Americans and due to the pressure from the SOE they delivered sortie on 18 September but unlike the original plan, this was not military but medical material.

While the British diplomacy was still very fair and polite in dealing with the Soviets, it did not work vice-versa. They did not bother to inform GB that the Soviet diplomacy had already given belligerent status to Golian’s army despite constant asking from London.

The only moment when Brits got fed up with the Soviet ignorance was on 7

October when Lt. Col. Threlfall of SOE flew to Tri Duby in one of American Flying Fortresses – B 17 from Bari which flew to Slovakia in order to bring stranded American airmen. The details of this visit are provided in the following chapter.

The overall aid to the Uprising came from the USSR, the US and GB. The Soviet Union provided the Uprising with 120 tonnes of mostly light, infantry weapons between 5 September and 19 October. In comparison the American flying fortresses landed in Slovakia only twice – on 17 September and on 7 October and they provided Slovaks with 24 tonnes of weapons, but very useful ones since these were anti-tank weapons and ammunition. Further, a regiment with 22 planes and in the last week of September finally 2nd Czechoslovak Parachute Brigade consisting of 1739 soldiers with 248 tonnes of weapons and material were delivered from the USSR. Prečan points out that even though the Uprising was given 22 planes from the Soviet Union, 27 much more modern planes of German production on which Slovak personnel flew to the Soviet Union on 31 August 1944 were never returned. Furthermore, the Soviet deliveries were late and irregular and their explanation for that was bad weather. But Prečan cites an FO document from 4 October 1944 in which Nichols informed Roberts about secret appendix of a report by a member of the Czechoslovak governmental delegation for liberated territory František Uhlíř to Privy Council in London. He informed them that he had witnessed a Soviet officer responsible for air transport to Slovakia indicating completely different data about weather conditions in Banská Bystrica in September than a Czechoslovak officer who had just arrived from Slovak territory (Prečan, 1994, p. 96).

What was stated so far shows that the Soviet attitude towards the Uprising was harmful. Their partisans provoked a premature breakout of the revolt without sufficient preparation; coordination with the Red Army was missing because of lack of communication from the Soviet side and their silence and half-truths in dealing with the West prevented any aid from them even though there was a strong will to do so. In the following chapter the readers will be provided with experiences, observations and opinions of the Windproof mission which was in the centre of the Uprising from the 18th of September. The chapter will support the opinion that the uprising could have been successful with a sufficient Ally aid.

3. Windproof Mission

3.1 The aim of the Windproof Mission

As Jim Downs points out, on the side of American and British intelligence agencies Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Special Operations Executive (SOE), there was a strong will to provide aid to the Slovak uprising. What ruined their attempts were strategic and diplomatic considerations. Brits needed their planes in Italy but mainly they needed Stalin's good mood in the later development of the war (Downs, 2009). The will of the intelligence services to help Slovaks can be seen very well on the fate of the OSS Mission Dawes, but also SOE mission Windproof whose experiences are the topic of this chapter. Even though Windproof was created in order to infiltrate into Hungary and to try to trigger resistance against pro-Nazi regime there, at the end the survivors of the Mission became the valuable witnesses of the situation in Slovakia during and after the Uprising and also a prove of a much sounder will to help the Uprising on the side of the Western Allies than on the side of the Soviets.

Windproof Mission consisted of Major John Sehmer, who was the leader of the unit, 2/Lt. A. Daniels, 2/Lt. Stefan Zenopian and a wireless operator Sgt. G.T. Davies. As an after-war report by Lt. Zenopian explains: "the Mission was formed in August 1944 with the object of getting to Hungary through Slovakia to persuade the Hungarian Army to fight against the Germans" (HS 4/41). The unit was also ordered to gather intelligence about political, economic and financial situation in Hungary and also to judge an effect of the ally propaganda.

Windproof landed in the territory of Slovakia on 18 September 1944 and the following day they were greeted by the Golian's Army in a very enthusiastic way, since they were very happy to see interest of the West. During the first interview General Golian expressed wish for the Mission to stay in Slovakia. Even while still attempting to fulfil their original task, Major Sehmer found their presence in Slovakia to be a good opportunity to collect some valuable intelligence also there. On 30 September he wrote to Bari:

For reasons of prestige, collection of very excellent intelligence available about the country, Hungary and the Germans, collection of intelligence about the Russians, about the political and military situation in Moravia and Bohemia when CFI move in, I consider it of absolutely first class importance that a Mission should remain here. (HS 4/40)

While the Mission was still attempting to get to Hungary, Golian instructed his men to help them achieve this goal. The mission was also given a Slovak interpreter Margita Kocková who stayed with them until the end. However, as Sehmer informs, the unit as a whole was prevented from getting to Hungary due to the fact that the Arrow Crosses took over and therefore it was not possible to contact Horthy anymore. (HS 4/40) So the only member of the unit that crossed the Hungarian border and stayed there was Daniels. His experiences in Hungary are covered in a report from 29 March 1945, stored in a file HS 4/246. The activities of Daniels in this country were very limited because he could not obtain documents and he had difficulties hiding from Germans, since there were a lot of Gestapo raids on private houses that were sheltering agents, partisans, and Jewish deserters. Daniels got caught on 16 October 1944, after trying to contact a contact person that had been arrested right in front of his eyes. Despite attempting to run away, he was caught and jailed in Barracks Prison in Ipolysag⁵. Daniels was interrogated several times, and the interrogators even assumed he was a Hungarian Jew, since he spoke Hungarian very well. According to his testimony, despite torturing that took approximately 5 hours, he denied any contacts in Hungary and did not give any names. He only said that he arrived in some village in Slovakia and that he was commanded by a British Major called Taylor, and he did not even mention existence of the other two British agents. He was then sent to a prison in Budapest where interrogations and torturing continued. On 8 November Daniels was sent to a Polish prison camp. After a few attempts he managed to run away with a help of a Polish civilian who handed Daniels to a priest. He was then taken to a safe house that belonged to his Excellency Schandl, the former Secretary of State for Agriculture and he was being helped by a Polish priest who promised to prepare documents for him. He came out of hiding on 11 February after Soviets liberated Budapest. He let everybody know he was a British officer and he even placed a British flag on the house in order to obtain protection for himself and also for the inhabitants of the house. Daniels had to ask a Russian officer for permission to stay in the country until the arrival of British Mission. As he recalled: “The Russians were not satisfied and suspected me as a German spy...” (HS 4/246). Despite interrogations he was treated fairly well but he was not allowed to leave the house or

⁵ Previously Slovak city Šahy that was added to the Hungarian territory even before the signature of the Vienna Award

to speak to anyone. He later learned that “Lieut. Gordon was responsible for me, and he told them he knew me and vouched that I was a British officer.” (Ibid) After meeting British Mission and being interrogated also by them, Daniels finally left for Bari where he landed on 18 March 1944.

The day before the Windproof’s arrival, also an American Mission Dawes had landed in Slovakia. The O.S.S. group was led by Captain Holt Green and consisted of six members. On 7 October they were followed by fourteen more OSS officers. Later three other British officers arrived in Slovakia – Lieutenant Robert Willis, Jack Wilson and Keith Hensen. Another SOE Mission Amsterdam that consisted of Jewish members operated in Slovakia as well. (Stanislav, 2004, pp. 30 - 32) The British and the American missions cooperated since they had met; they were a source of hope for the 1. Czechoslovak Army, they voluntarily risked and some of them lost their lives in order to help the Slovak National Uprising.

The reports that Sehmer and his men were sending to London as well as the reports that Zenopian, Daniels and Davies provided after the war are the sources of valuable information that describes the situation during the Uprising through the eyes of observers from the West.

3.2 Windproof on the general situation in Slovakia

In Sehmer’s report from the beginning of October 1944, he gives a detailed account of the general conditions that he witnessed in the territory of the Uprising, as well as on military conditions. The governing of this area was carried out jointly by the Army and the National Council but, Dr. Beneš and his Government were considered the only true Government. Windproof was informed that the main tasks of the Army were to clear Slovakia of Germans, to liberate the Protectorate and to reoccupy the territories lost to Hungary. (HS 4/40)

As they observed, the Army administrated the territory under their control very effectively and the life went on as usual. For example, they ran their own trains, collected taxes, and printed newspapers. In Banská Bystrica 5 newspapers with different political leanings were published. (Ibid) Plurality of opinions was proved also by the opinions about President Tiso. In spite of the fact that the Tiso’s regime was supported also by intellectuals, Sehmer’s experience was that positive feelings to Tiso characterized mostly people with lower education. “From observations up to now I would say that the peasants and soldiery look on Father Tisza (sic) as an unwilling

collaborator, in fact his photograph may still be seen in houses and schools; whilst the higher ranking officers consider him a Quisling” (Ibid).

According to his observations, the war had little effect on the areas held by Slovak forces. “Apart from a shortage of leather good clothing material and petrol, and the absence of tea, there is no shortage of anything. Food is excellent and beer both light and dark is both good and abundant” (Ibid). He also added that there was enough food there to stand a siege unless Zvolen fell. Despite the petrol shortage, essential supplies were maintained because nearly all the heavy transport was converted to wood gas burning. Sehmer gives also information on financial situation. A factory worker earned approximately 1 700 crowns a month while a kilo of bread cost 2,8 crowns.

However, in the areas occupied by Germans the situation was much worse. Sehmer was informed that in these areas Germans were reported to be carrying out usual atrocities, machine gunning children and women from tanks, and it was alleged they had dropped typhus ampoules on Vrútky.

3.3 Windproof on the Army

The relations between the British mission and the Golian’s Army were from the beginning very good. The Army wished that the presence of Windproof would help them express how necessary the Western aid was since they were lacking weapons. They treated Windproof as an official mission to Slovakia and tried to accommodate them in every way. Slovak officer Major Ján Stanek and three of his men were even arrested with a part of the Anglo-American Mission during their arrest on 26 December 1944. In their reports Windproof focused on the description of the shortcomings of the Army, especially on the lack of proper weapons and stressed how crucial it was to deliver them.

Due to the fact that the best troops, Malár’s divisions, got cut off in Eastern Slovakia, those left were mostly reservists, permanent staffs from schools and garrison troops. They did not have much experience with active service and due to this they “incline to be a bit unsteady when they see a German tank or armoured car.” Another serious problem was that the Rising Army was “woefully short of heavy weapons, particularly anti-tank guns” (HS 4/40) and there was often not enough petrol

for their planes. Besides these, there was also shortage of rifles, LMGs⁶, SMGs⁷ and A/T rifles⁸ and therefore there was a large number of unarmed men. At this point Sehmer informs that there seem no arms coming from Russians and “it is greatly hoped that the British will supply these. Is there any chance?” (Ibid).

Windproof witnessed also activities of the army in the sphere of propaganda. These consisted of distribution of leaflets over the German lines and it was crowned by a small success.

When Sehmer was writing this report (on 4 October) the third and fourth line of defence was being built by the German civilians from Handlová who were used this way (Ibid).

The Mission was a witness of a significant tension between the Army and the partisans. In a letter dated on 6 October, Sehmer recalls several examples of discord between the two units. He points out that the Army reacted with fury on the arrest of War minister Čatloš by partisans. Partisans also refused to return Army deserters to their ranks back to the Army. Partisans were also reluctant to obey orders of regular officers “even when ordered to do so by the partisan mission attached to the Army headquarters” (HS 4/41). There was also a sound difference between the manners of the regular troops and partisan forces: “Whilst Army officers are held strictly responsible for the maintenance of good discipline and lack of looting amongst their troops, the Partisans have a habit of taking what they want at the point of a gun and no one dares to stop them” (HS 4/40).

The Windproof group was of opinion that the problem of disaccord between the Army and the partisans could have been effectively solved if the partisans were sent behind the German lines but the Army was not able to give such orders, it could happen only with the approval of the Soviet Union that would command the partisans through the GOC in Kiev.

On 6 October the general situation was serious because the area where the mission was stationed was under attack from four sides: Osada, Kremnica, Spišská Nová Ves, and Zvolen was being threatened. Sehmer summed it up: “Situation desperate for the Army here unless the Czech Brigade arrives” (HS 4/40).

⁶ LMG – Light machine gun

⁷ SMG – Submachine gun

⁸ A/T Rifle – Anti-tank rifle

The Slovak hopes rose when Lt. Col. Threlfall from the SOE visited the rising territory on 7 October. His experiences from this short but important visit can be found in a report stored he produced afterwards that is stored in the file HS 4/54. He flew to Tri Duby in one of the American Fortresses B - 17 from Bari which flew to Slovakia in order to bring stranded American airmen. At the same time Americans took it as an opportunity to provide Slovaks with supplies. Threlfall talked for approximately 30 minutes with Golian who “expressed the warmest pleasure at the arrival of a British officer on Czechoslovak soil”. (HS 4/54). Content of their discussion can be found in Threlfall’s report that he produced after the visit.

Golian informed him about the current strength of his forces: 20 Battalions of Infantry, 22 Troops of Artillery armed with 88 mm guns, and with 10 and 7 cm mountain guns. He had also just received a Battalion of 700 Czechoslovaks from the Soviet Union who were the first instalment of the promised brigade. Another supply from the Soviets was 24 fighter aircraft manned by Czechoslovaks but since these were sent without proper petrol and oil they were not of great use. The Army did not have any tanks and 15 000 men were with no weapons at all. Compared to this, the Germans had about 4 Divisions fighting against the Slovaks, Divisional Headquarters at Poprad and Spišská Nová Ves, where there was also an aerodrome, a barracks and a railway junction.

Threlfall also gathered that the Soviet aid that had been provided to the Uprising was not sufficient and that the rising army was given less than had been promised. “Although nothing embarrassing was said, it was perfectly obvious that the Slovaks were most dissatisfied with Russian help, and several remarks were made about ‘paper deliveries’” (Ibid). Golian stressed serious shortage of weapons and begged Threlfall to send them more.

From their conversation it was clear how much Golian was inclined to the west and he “was at pains” to make it clear he was not under Russian control even though there were a considerable number of Russian officers at his headquarters and also Russian-officered partisan bands in his territory. He was delighted to get the supply, especially bazookas and he asked Threlfall for more weapons for his unarmed men. Also he made it clear how desperately bombing was need as soon as possible, “in a week it might be too late” (Ibid).

Threlfall was impressed by Golian who was putting up as “stiff resistance as he can with deplorably short supplies” and who showed a “clear and dispassionate view of the military situation” (Ibid).

After the visit Threlfall sent to London a clear recommendation:

Speaking personally, my inclination would be to send him everything one can without respecting too closely the agreement which may have been that the Russians alone should supply the rising. It seems to me that if for any reason Russians are not in a position to let the Slovaks have as much as they need we should step into the breach. The material is being used against the Germans and I think that is deciding factor (Ibid).

This note explains the reality of the Ally attitude towards the Uprising. The diplomatic dealings between the Soviet Union and Great Britain that were frozen due to the silence of the former paralyzed military operations that were desperately needed. Great Britain had the material that Golian required and SOE officers that were directly in the territory of the Uprising, either Windproof or Threlfall, suggested intervening since the Soviet Union was not acting adequately.

Another problem was that skilled soldiers died in high numbers in Carpathian-Dukla operation and those left were not the fruit of the army. The lack of weapons combined with the lack of well-trained personnel was becoming more serious as German army; better-trained and better equipped was approaching. In the report from 6 December Windproof complained that the army behaved disgracefully and they witnessed “15 000 men ran without showing any fight, threw away arms and uniform and went home. An honourable exception were the troops of Major Stanek” (HS 4/40).

3.4 Windproof on partisans

The relationship between the Windproof Mission and the partisan groups is mentioned in various messages that the unit was sending to London, in the report personally by Sehmer and in Zenopian’s post-war reports.

The information about the partisans that the Windproof sent to London was not only experienced by them personally but they also described the opinions that the Slovaks shared with them. General Golian showed anxiety that he wished the country to be controlled by the Czechoslovak Government and not by the Partisan bands as the report summarizing Windproof messages from 25 September states (HS 4/40). For the regular Army the cooperation with Partisans was very complicated due to the fact that they often carried out unauthorized raids into Hungary. Another criticism

considering Partisan behaviour was that they did not always obeyed orders and sometimes ran away. However even their commanders did not show much excellence, they themselves were considered “undisciplined and ignorant swashbucklers” (Ibid). But as the report adds, they were completely different from regular Russian officers to whom they could not be compared.

The report from 16 October dealt with the arrivals of partisans groups who consist mostly of Russians and have only few Slovaks among them as their guides. These groups focused on raids into Hungarian villages and as the report states, when they found out about Daniels presence in Ipolysag⁹ they were not pleased by that. “They do not make things easier for us.” (Ibid)

Major Sehmer dedicated one and a half pages of his report from 6 October to the partisans. His report described cohesion between the Golian’s army and the partisan groups. The Soviet partisan movement had significant control over the situation in Slovakia since “all partisan forces in Slovakia are commanded by a Russian Lt-Col who comes directly under command of GOC in Kiev” (Ibid). One Partisan mission was also attached to the headquarters of General Golian and CFI Col. was their liaison officer.

Sehmer accredited Partisans typical faults that characterize irregular, ill-trained troops. “No fire control, a desire to put down a small arms barrage from 2000 yards, disinclination to stand their ground against an attack, inability to work to a plan or a timetable and an intense desire to avoid artillery fire” (Ibid). Due to this regular officers tended to ridicule them, but in their defence Sehmer stated that Partisans were used in the wrong way. Instead of putting them in the line with Regular soldiers with a command to hold it, Sehmer in his report suggests to send them behind Germans lines as soon as possible. However, Zenopian’s experience with the Army and the partisans differs, as we learn in an interview he gave on 20 April 1945, in his opinion the partisans were as fighters greatly superior to the Regular troops. He heard of several cases when the soldiers ran away “as soon as they saw Germans” (HS 4/246) and Partisans were those who held their positions.

Speaking about the Partisan behaviour, Sehmer notes: „The Partisans are, I am sorry to say, behaving very badly.” Not only were they strutting about all the time without having done anything to earn it but also the people were afraid of their

⁹ Šahy

excesses. On the other hand “it should be noted that it is only a small portion of them that behave outrageously but this tendency is spreading.” He adds: “The other day they decimated a party of 150 civilians, local peasants, who were working on a defence line” (HS 4/40). Especially the Russian Partisans were extremely good fighters and their officers were efficient. But also Zenopian in an interview from 20 April 1945 adds that the Partisan manners were not kosher: “The Partisans tended to swagger about the liberated towns and annoy the population” (HS 4/246).

Speaking about the political inclinations of the Partisans, Sehmer in a report from 6 October states that only their leaders and commissars were ardent communists “but the majority of the rank and file are not.” They have a great regard for the Russians and a great admiration for the Red Army and a great hatred of the Germans but are only simple folks who don’t really have sound political leanings” (HS 4/40).

As he added partisans, including their leaders, were delighted to see British and American officers and were cooperative.

From what Zenopian observed, the relationship between the regular troops and partisans was not satisfactory and he saw the main problem in “lack of coordination between the orders sent from Moscow to Partisans and from the Czechoslovak Government to the Slovak Regular forces” (HS 4/246). Sehmer expected that the whole area would fail and that the CFI would be forced to escape to the woods. That would mean that the CFI would lose its ascendancy over the partisans (HS 4/40).

3.5 Windproof experiencing desperate situation

While Windproof operated in Slovakia, their activities were not limited only to gathering intelligence, but they were also actively trying to persuade their leadership in London how important it was to supply the Uprising with weapons. A message from 23 October describes a desperate situation when the Mission was cut off in Slavošovce, together with 250 soldiers, 250 partisans and 400 men without arms: “Unless help comes we cannot hold out. Can you help us and send at once 50 Brens, one hundred Stens, 300 German rifles, 10 bazookas? Fully realize difficulties but situation here desperate” (HS 4/40). Along with these, the group desperately needed also every-day things such as boots, coats, winter pants and gloves and they kept asking to be sent not only to themselves but also for Dymko’s partisan group they were staying with since the end of October. After an exchange of messages between

Bari and London considering whether or not GB is authorized to send more than only medical sorties, the final information was it was not possible to send the sortie due to weather conditions. After a few days of danger, the group got to a safe area and on 4 November Windproof sent a message: "Perfect weather, hope plane tomorrow." (Ibid) Despite this, the usual answer was given - the sortie was ready but the weather did not allow delivering it. (Ibid)

Despite this, the group did not forget to continue in their pursuit to help the Uprising. They stated that the Slovak morale was getting bad after 3 months of war and that the soldiers were returning home. As the message from 5 November shows, this was partly due to leaflets that were calling Slovaks return home with arms reversed and promising extermination of all bandits. Therefore, Windproof asked London for counter-leaflets to be dropped in the Slovak territory (HS 4/40). Their awareness of the duties and determination to help Slovaks in the crisis is seen also in their reaction on the capture and trial Golian and Viest were put on. Windproof wrote to SOE on 24 November: "Can BBC broadcast threat to Tiso? Have sent three hundred dollars to Major Kocka in Bratislava to try to organise escape" (Ibid).

During these dramatic events Windproof's charging dynamo broke down so the only way to contact Bari was to walk down to a village which was extremely dangerous since all the villages were occupied by Germans. "For God sake, send a charger. Risking lives working from occupied villages is not amusing" (HS 4/40). So Sehmer sent a message informing Bari they would only be able to listen to the messages and not send them and he also asked them to send the plane blind. Every clear night the unit Windproof was waiting for a plane to come at the pre-arranged time and signals. With no positive results. As Zenopian stated in an interview to American Military Unit on 3 March 1945: "We could not understand why the planes did not come, as I know definitely from 16 December to the day of capture on 26 December, the weather was perfect both day and night" (HS 4/246). One can only ask whether also this had something to do with Soviet information about weather conditions.

On 3 November the Mission arrived in Polomka and stayed with Dymko's partisan group in a small hut in a village 3 hours' walk north of Polomka in the height of 1500 metres, protected by the density of forests. When the Mission was informed about the whereabouts of the American Mission and Sehmer decided to bring them to the house where they were staying since he thought it was a safer place. While he was

looking for them, Dymko's group moved to another, larger house 2 hours north of the former one where also other Partisan groups were staying and the Windproof Mission joined them while the Americans stayed in the smaller house.

On 24 of December in the evening, all the American and British agents met in the small house in order to celebrate Christmas together. They had a Thanksgiving service, sang Christmas carols and held a two minutes' silence for their missing friends.

3.6 Attack on the Anglo-American Mission

This was the last time the Mission was together. Zenopian, Davies, Sgt. Steve Čatloš and Pte. Kenneth Dunlevy of the American Mission left for the large house. An interpreter for the Americans Mária Gulovichová, and a Stanek's soldier went with them. On 26 of December this group was "given a warning from below that the Germans were coming from the direction of Polomka" (HS 4/246) and advised that they should leave. From a vantage point they could see Vlasov's men and Zenopian is certain there were also German officers among them. He describes the sequence of events:

A Slovak lieutenant of the Partisan group, who was taking care of British house, decided to go with his commissar and meet them, and as this pair approached the group of Germans, they shouted that they wanted to talk to the pair. We were watching from a high point and saw the lieutenant send his commissar to shake hand with the leader of the group. This commissar received a word that everybody should give themselves up. [...] in a short time the commissar disappeared from the scene and the Germans started shooting. (HS 4/246)

This memory accords with the account of Ján Stanislav who says that the attack on the Anglo-American Mission was led by confidants. (Stanislav, 2004, p. 30) After a gun battle between the Germans and the partisans, all the inhabitants left the house. Zenopian, Davies, Čatloš, Dunlevy and Gulovichová went to Slavošovce. While marching they met the Dymko's partisan group again and decided to stay with them. They went to a forester's house and at night on 26 December they decided not

to light the signal fire since they did not find it safe. Sad paradox is that this night the planes came.

On 27 December the only survivor of the attacked house, a Stanek's man Pavel Kameneský of the 2nd Czechoslovak Brigade joined them after being informed by the partisans where the Anglo-American group was. He provided them with the testimony of what had happened in the small house on 26 December.

Kameneský stated that on 26 December at 08.00 as the inhabitants of the house were getting dressed and eating breakfast their house was fired upon from all directions by many machine guns without any warning. Kameneský gives more detailed information about the attacking force; he says it consisted of 200 Germans, 250 Ukrainians of the Vlasov unit and 50 Hlinka's Guardists. During the attack he received a bullet in his hip and being injured he jumped out of a window and escaped. From safe distance he watched the whole party, including Sehmer, Kocková and another SOE agent Willis, and Americans Green and Gaul being marched away in the direction of Polomka by Hlinka Guardists and German officers. The party was given approximately 10 minutes to get dressed; all of them put on their uniforms and left (4/246). As Davies's post-war report adds, among the captured group was also a journalist Joe Morton, American photographer Nelson Perris, Sgt. Horvath, Major Stanek and a soldier of the Czechoslovak Brigade (HS 4/246).

Zenopian gave money to a forester to hide and feed Kameneský and the group consisting of Zenopian, Davies, Čatloš, Dunlevy, another Stanek's soldier, Gulovichová and several Partisans moved, since they were informed that the Germans were going to clear the mountains of all the Partisans in the area. However, on the way the party reduced to Zenopian, Davies, Dunlevy, a Slovak soldier, Mária Gulovichová and two partisans.

On 23 January they reached Rumanian lines and the next day they were interviewed by General Drapomer commanding the 4th Rumanian Army. They were handed to the Soviets who interrogated them several times and decided that the party would stay there until they got an answer from Moscow. Later the Soviets even took their revolvers away and, as Zenopian states, he was given his revolver only a month later when he was leaving for Bucharest on 23 February. (HS 4/246)

Towards the end of February the whole group of survivors moved over to Lošonc where the whole party had to go to hospital since they were all in very bad physical condition, suffered from skin irritation, fatigue and lack of vitamins.

However, Zenopian did not get any treatment because he had to go to Neves to the HQ of the Armies of the 2nd Ukrainian front the next day. After being interrogated also there, Zenopian was informed that Moscow decided that he, Davies, Čatloš and Dunlevy of OSS would proceed to Bucharest to the British Military Mission. Others still needed medical treatment, so Zenopian was the first one to go to Bucharest. As Zenopian's post-war report concludes, here he reported to the British Mission immediately. However, the last paragraph of Zenopian's report is missing (HS 4/246).

3.7 The death in the Mauthausen camp

The faith of the other Anglo-American group accompanied by Major Sehmer is known thanks to the testimony of the interpreter of their interrogation Werner Müller. However, since Sehmer was of German origin and spoke German, Müller was not present during his interrogations.

The group that had been captured on 26 was taken to the Mauthausen camp where they were interrogated and executed. Müller recalled that the results of the interrogations were "requested in the Führer's headquarters and were considered to be very important" (HS 4/246). The interrogations were carried out by Untersturmführer Heinrich Arndt, Strurbannführer Dr. Manfred Schoeneseiffen, Criminal Commissar Walter Habecker at the RSHA¹⁰ in Berlin and Dr. Hans Wilhelm Thost from the section Amt VI. Here, a part of the group was able to experience more human way of interrogations led by Arendt, but the case was completely contrary with those who were interrogated by Habecker who, as Müller recalls, tortured and beat them personally" (Ibid). While Arndt's interrogations were carried in fair mood, Habecker showed bestiality typical for concentration camps. He interrogated the prisoners with a commandant of the Mauthausen camp whose name Müller could not recall. However, Jim Downs who studied also O.S.S. materials states that his name was Franz Ziereis. As Downs points out, he was an extremely cruel person who liked to torture the prisoners. He enjoyed shooting prisoners on a courtyard for fun and once he allowed his 12-year-old son do the same. (Downs, 2004, p. 178) His cruelty can be seen also through Müller's eyes who described his interrogations. "The Kommandant threatened them, vituperated and humiliated them and ordered their torture by his men" (HS 4/246). Müller states that Arndt's interrogations that he attended were carried out without any difficulties and prisoners were provided with mineral water

¹⁰ RSHA – Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office)

and cigarettes. As far as he knows, Margaret Kocková was lucky to experience this dealing.

However, many of the Anglo-Americans including Sehmer and Green ended up with Habecker and the Kommandant Ziereis. Müller was not present at the initial interrogations of these but later witnessed their torturing. Captain Green was heavily beaten by a stick, and no medical treatment was given to him until Müller intervened. Another one whom Habecker requested was a British agent of another mission, Willis because he was of Jewish origin. According to Müller, Willis had hardly time to answer the questions between the beats he received. Habecker acquainted Ziereis with his method of torturing when the prisoners were hanged on chains attached to their wrists. The interrogations were targeted at the purposes of their presence in Slovakia and their training. Habecker's cruelty was demonstrated by the fact that even if the prisoners were willing to speak the truth, he insisted on hanging them first, until they were completely broken, often crying. Müller recalled that one of the American agents was thirsty after the torture, so they gave him a glass of water, which he was not able to hold due to the wounds conducted on his hands.

What the higher German circles were most interested in were the details about the OSS Mission. However, these interrogations were never finished. On 24 January in the morning the interrogations started once more, but during the lunch break Müller was unexpectedly called to return immediately in order to inform the agents they would be moved to prisoners of war camp. All of them were forced to sign a sheet of paper that was, according to Habecker, stating that they were aware of the fact that the guards in the camp were allowed to use their weapons if any of them tried to escape. However, the paper with this statement was used only to cover another blank paper they all signed. All of them were made take off their uniforms and put on prisoners' clothes. Despite this, they were not meant to be sent to any camp. During the lunch time the SS officer received a telegram which ordered immediate execution of the prisoners. Müller did not see where the telegram came from but since he testified that the orders to interrogate them came from the Führer's Headquarters it is highly probable that the order to execute them came from the same source. The last moment that Müller saw the group of eleven members of the American Mission, four British agents including Sehmer, a civilian interpreter Margita Kocková and an American journalist of Associated Press Joe Morton was when they were entering a basement of the building. Arndt commented on the whole situation: "They will die an easier death

than anyone could wish for” (Ibid). The Kommandant Zieris and some 4 other men were absent for some 20 minutes. Müller did not witness the execution and supposes they were not shot because he did not hear any noise. However, Downs says that an SS officer Altfuldisch witnessed the execution of the prisoners who were shot by a carabine (Downs, 2004, p. 203).

There had not been any trial and they were probably executed following an order from higher quarters. The prisoners were not told about their fate. They have never been questioned except during their interrogations and never had any possibility to speak in their defence. (HS 4/246)

The Ziereis’s comment after he had returned from the basement illustrates his cruelty: “I am glad to be rid of them. They were here too long. I need the cells and I might need some of their things for my men, especially the shoes” (Ibid).

3.8 Zenopian’s post-war reflection on the Allied aid

A report from the interview with Zenopian that took place on 17 April 1945 deals with his opinions on the failure of the Uprising and on the Allied aid. Zenopian’s opinion regarding the failure of the uprising and the rapid disintegration of the Slovak forces was not caused by the sympathy to the Tiso regime or the Germans, but by inability to stand up to German troops. Zenopian argues that he experienced several occasions when even representatives of Tiso’s regime helped the insurgents.

The mayor of Polomka charged the battery of Zenopian’s W/T set, brought meat from the peasants and sent it to their hiding place, changed gold into Slovak currency for them and on one occasion let them have bath in his house when the Germans were in the village. The mayor of Rejdová changed money for the party and gave them food. (HS 4/246)

“With more Allied help and Allied supplies and leadership Zenopian thinks that they could have put up a good show” (Ibid). Zenopian is of an opinion that with the Western or the Soviet aid the uprising could have definitely kept going on. Especially heavy weapons were needed. Since the Slovak troops were very exalted at the arrival of the Allied help, he was sure that:

If the British personnel had been dropped in greater numbers to assist the rising, Zenopian is convinced that the Slovaks would have not packed up, and that all they required was further encouragement in physical form. (Ibid)

Even though it is not possible to know for sure whether the Uprising would have been successful, it follows from what was stated that the proper aid would have surely prolonged the fight. Not only weapons but also trained personnel were needed, since the lack of professionals was one of the problems of the Uprising. Again, it is clear how harmful the silence of the Soviet diplomacy was. Due to Stalin's attitude all the British attempts to intervene were halted and the rising forces were left with inadequate and insufficient Soviet aid.

4. Conclusion

This bachelor thesis presents the experiences and observations of the officers of the Windproof Mission who operated in Slovakia from 18 September 1944. Since the task of SOE agents was to gather intelligence about the Axis powers and to support resistance in the occupied countries, after Windproof had been prevented from getting to Hungary, they focused on the Slovak National Uprising. Their reports are a valuable testimony of the course of the Uprising and about the Army and partisans since the agents were in a close contact with them. Therefore they saw the determination of General Golian and his troops, but also the shortcomings of the Army that consisted mostly of reservists and permanent staffs from schools and that lacked proper weapons. They also witnessed the tension between the Army and partisans. There was a lack of coordination between their activities and the latter very often conducted unauthorized raids. As Windproof witnessed, the Soviet partisan movement had a significant control over the partisans in Slovakia, since they were under control of the Headquarters in Kiev. However, this was not appreciated by Golian who wished the country was not controlled by the partisan bands but by the Czechoslovak Government.

A significant part of the thesis is dedicated to the problem of the Allied aid. The thesis contrasts the attitude of Great Britain and the Soviet Union in a sphere of diplomacy with its actual impact on the Slovak National Uprising. The impact was fully realized by the Windproof officers who were asking their superiors for weapons to be sent to the Slovak territory, but whose requests did not produce any results. Their experience demonstrates the harming effect of the long diplomatic dealings that were caused by the Soviet silence. Great Britain was ready to deliver military material, but all the activities were halted since the British aid was conditioned by the Soviet approval. Stalin never gave any answer to British offers and by doing so he prevented their intervention in Slovakia. On the other hand, the material aid provided by the Soviet Union was irregular and the weapons were often not in a good condition. It is not possible to know whether the Uprising would have been successful if the proper Allied aid was delivered but the Windproof's observations show that the resisting forces were in such desperate need of weapons and qualified personnel that their delivery would have surely prolonged the fight.

The core of the Allied aid problem was the attitude of the Soviet Union. It was due to the partisan activity that the Uprising broke out without proper preparation. It was the Soviet military leadership that did not react on the plan of the Uprising when it was presented to them and that did not use the soldiers of the 2nd Czechoslovak Brigade in a proper way. And finally it was the Soviet diplomacy that did not react on the offers from the Western Allies who were eager to send the material that the Slovak National Uprising desperately needed.

In order to analyze the reasons of the Soviet attitude – of their diplomacy, of the military leadership and of their partisan Commissars, all the Soviet archive materials are needed. Without them, it is only possible to speculate on the basis of circumstantial evidence why the Soviet aid was limited and irregular and why the Soviet diplomacy was either ignoring the British diplomacy or even lying to them. However, the evidence that is available so far suggests that the success of the Uprising was not in interest of Stalin who wanted the victory in Slovakia brought by the Red Army in order to later introduce the Communist regime in the country easily. Therefore his behavior, either by means of the silence of the diplomacy regarding the Western aid to the Slovak National Uprising, or by means of destructive deeds of some of the partisans under the leadership of the Soviet Commissars, was conducted to this end. In order to confirm these presumptions, a proper research of the crucial Soviet materials is necessary in the future, but whether it will happen is unlikely since there has not been a will to do so in the last nearly 70 years.

5. Zhrnutie

Cieľom mojej bakalárskej práce „The British View of the Slovak National Uprising through the Eyes of the Windproof Mission“ je prispieť k objasneniu britského pohľadu na Slovenské národné povstanie (SNP), keďže táto oblasť ešte nie je v slovenskej historiografii dostatočne preskúmaná. Svoj výskum som zamerala na materiály britského Úradu pre špeciálne operácie (SOE), ktoré sa nachádzajú v britských National Archives v Kew v Londýne a pozostávajú z hlásení členov misie Windproof, ktorá pôsobila na Slovensku od 18. Septembra 1944 a ktorých pohľad na celkovú situáciu je veľmi cenný, keďže po celý čas svojho pobytu prichádzali do styku s povstaleckou armádou Jána Goliana, s partizánmi a rovnako aj s civilným obyvateľstvom. Okrem týchto primárnych zdrojov opieram svoju prácu predovšetkým o výskum odborníkov na SNP Viléma Prečana a Jozefa Jablonického a odborníčky na diplomatické vzťahy medzi Československom a Veľkou Britániou Edity Ivaničkovej.

Mojou snahou pri písaní bolo priniesť čo pokiaľ možno čo najkorektnejší pohľad, keďže politický charakter SNP od začiatku budil protichodné reakcie, a tieto reakcie sa odzrkadlili a doteraz odzrkadľujú v prácach mnohých historikov. Už v čase tohto ozbrojeného vystúpenia ho časť verejnosti podporovala, kým ďalšia ho zatracovala ako vzoprenie sa vlastnému štátu. Prvé knižné práce zaoberajúce sa touto témou vznikli v povojnovom období, od opätovného vzniku ČSR do roku 1948. Ich autormi neboli historici, ale predovšetkým účastníci Povstania, takže ich charakter bol predovšetkým memoárový. Avšak výpovedná hodnota diel, ktoré nastúpili po „Vítazanom februári“ bola podstatne nižšia, keďže bola silne podfarbená ideológiou Komunistickej strany. Demokratická zložka odboja bola maximálne zatlačená do úzadia, vyzdvihovaná bola jedine úloha Komunistickej strany, sovietska pomoc a partizánske oddiely. Nielen občianski participanti, ale aj samotní komunisti boli v tomto čase perzekvovaní, okrem iných aj Gustáv Husák. Toto obdobie vystriedala podstatne slobodnejšia atmosféra, ktorá pomaly prichádzala od konca 50. rokov a prejavila sa predovšetkým v 60. rokoch. V tomto období boli vydané prelomové diela Viléma Prečana a Jozefa Jablonického, ktoré neboli poznačené straníckou ideológiou a ktoré dopriali demokratickému odboju zaslúženú poklonu a ponúkli triezvejší pohľad na komunistickú zložku, ktorej úloha v Povstaní bola redukovanejšia a poukázali aj na jej negatíva. Tento pozitívny trend v historických kruhoch násilne prerušila normalizácia, ktorá nastúpila začiatkom 70. rokov. Historici aktívni v 60.

rokochoch nesmeli ďalej publikovať, prišli o svoje miesta, a kedysi zaznávaný Gustáv Husák sa stal kánonom pre výklad dejín SNP. Korektný výskum bol opäť zatienený ideológiou a tento stav trval až do pádu režimu v roku 1989. S atmosférou plurality názorov však nedostali slovo len autori, ktorých umlčala normalizácia a občianski predstavitelia odboja, ale aj exiloví autori obhajujúci Slovenskú republiku 1939 - 1945 a zatracujúci SNP ako „zradu voči vlastnému štátu, ktorá priniesla vojnu na slovenské územie“. Tieto diela sa vyznačujú tým, že napriek tomu, že ich autormi sú často historici, chýba im akákoľvek korektný náhľad, predovšetkým, čo sa zločinov počas Slovenskej republiky 1939 – 1945 týka. Napriek tomuto negatívne javu, ktorý sa ukázal po roku 1989 sú v posledných rokoch aktívni mladí historici, ktorí sa snažia nadväzovať na prelomové práce 60. rokov. V ich dielach je heroická hodnota Komunistickej strany, partizánov a Sovietskeho Zväzu spochybňovaná a dôraz je kladený na demokratický odkaz SNP, ktorý bol od začiatku prítomný.

Táto bakalárska práca má ambíciu pridať sa k druhu prác, ktoré svojím, pokiaľ možno čo najkorektnejším, pohľadom zdôrazňujú demokratický charakter SNP. O tomto poslaní Povstania svedčia aj výpovede členov misie Windproof, ktorí mali možnosť zažiť tento ozbrojený zápas a zhodnotiť jeho pozitíva a negatíva a ktorí sa osobne ocitli v centre konfliktu diplomatických záujmov Západu a ZSSR. Konflikt vyvstal zo skutočnosti, že Jozef Stalin si nárokoval na Slovensko ako na sféru svojho vplyvu a západní Spojenci sa neopovažovali o neautorizovaný zásah v tejto oblasti, predovšetkým po trpkkej skúsenosti pri snahe o pomoc Varšavskému povstaniu. Keďže Československá exilová vláda sídlila v Londýne, prirodzene sa s prosbami o pomoc obracala na britskú vládu, ktorá prejavila vôľu doručiť zbrane na povstalecké územie, lenže si najskôr pýtala povolenie sovietskej diplomacie, ktorá na otázky nereagovala a jej mlčanie trvalo počas celého trvania Povstania. Dokonca aj údaje o poveternostných podmienkach, ktoré ZSSR poskytovalo Západu sa nie vždy zhodovali so skutočnosťou. Tým pádom bolo britská pomoc zredukovaná na malú dodávku zdravotníckeho materiálu, aj to predovšetkým preto, že USA bez informovania sovietskej strany pristáli na Slovenku dva razy a dodali 24 ton zbraní, a VB nechcela pôsobiť menej ochotne. Diplomatické a rovnako aj strategické dôvody, keďže západní spojenci potrebovali svoje lietadlá v Taliansku, rozhodli o tom, že VB ani USA vo väčšej miere Povstaniu nepomohli, hoci dôstojníci ich rozvedok, amerického Úradu strategických služieb (OSS) a britského SOE chceli SNP podporiť.

SOE získavalo informácie o dianí na Slovensku prostredníctvom svojej misie Windproof, ktorá pristála na Slovensku 18.9.1944.

Napriek tomu, že cieľom misie Windproof, ktorá pozostávala zo štyroch britských agentov, bolo infiltrovať sa do Maďarska, traja z jej členov zostali na Slovensku až do januára 1945 a prežili si útrapy vojny, ktoré pre ich veliteľa majora Sehmera vyvrcholili popravou v tábore Mauthausen. Z celkového počtu štyroch agentov jedine podporučík A. Daniels pôsobil v Maďarsku, ďalší traja: major John Sehmer, poručík Stefan Zenopian a seržant G.T. Davies, ktorí zostali z dôvodu zmeny politickej situácie v Maďarsku na slovenskom povstaleckom území, sa stali zdrojom užitočných informácií o účastníkoch SNP a rovnako aj o postoji civilného obyvateľstva. Misia Windproof vypožorovala silné inklinácie Generála Goliana a jeho vojska k západu a k Československej exilovej vláde Dr. Beneša. Komunistické nálady pozorovali jedine u určitých vrstiev partizánstva, predovšetkým u veliteľstva, z ktorých výrazná väčšina pochádzala zo Sovietskeho zväzu. Ostatných partizánov vnímali britskí agenti ako jednoduchých ľudí bez politických inklinácií, ktorí veľmi obdivovali Červenú armádu a nenávideli Nemcov. Podobne naivne si vysvetľovali aj pohnútky obyvateľstva vedúce k podpore Tisovho režimu. Množstvo Slovákov, s ktorými sa stretli malo vo svojom dome zarámovanú fotografiu „otca Tisa“. Aj napriek tomu dokonca aj niektorí predstavitelia Tisovho štátneho aparátu pomáhali povstalcom a rovnako aj britským agentom. Demokratický, pro-československý a gentlemanský charakter povstaleckej armády narušal fakt, že tieto vojská neboli výkvetom slovenskej armády, keďže sa skladali predovšetkým záložníci a zamestnanci škôl. Práve z tohto dôvodu nie vždy dokázali ustáť nemecký útok a v niektorých prípadoch dokonca utkali z boja. V porovnaní s nimi boli partizánske vojská vycvičené podstatne lepšie a výrazne dôslednejšie v plnení rozkazov. Keď však Briti hodnotili ich správanie, s poľutovaním museli zhodnotiť, že v mnohých prípadoch bolo podstatne horšie ako správanie vojakov, ktorý sa zodpovedali vojenskému veleniu, kým partizánske jednotky si mohli robiť čo sa im zachcelo, často plienili dediny a Sehmer sa dokonca vyjadril, že obyvateľstvo by ocenilo, keby videlo partizánske jednotky odchádzať. Z pozorovania Windproof a z toho, čo vyplynulo z návštevy pplk. Henry Threlfalla, bolo zrejmé, že veľkým problémom povstaleckej armády bol nedostatok materiálu, predovšetkým protitankových zbraní, ktoré by mohli efektívne čeliť nemeckým vojskám. Pod tento nedostatok sa podpísalo meškanie a nedostatok dodávok zo Sovietskeho zväzu a rovnako aj jeho nízka kvalita.

Československá exilová vláda naliehala na Veľkú Britániu a rovnako aj na USA s prosbami o materiálnu pomoc. Príchod pplk. Threlfalla vzpružil ducha povstaleckej armády, ktorá sa nádejala, že zo západu príde vytúžená pomoc, keďže v čase jeho návštevy bolo až 15 000 vojakov nevyzbrojených. V takýchto podmienkach mohlo byť Povstanie len ťažko úspešné a Zenopian z Windproof tvrdí, že by určite povstalci mohli vydržať dlhšie, keby mali adekvátny materiál, predovšetkým protitankové zbrane.

Osudy členov Windproof boli poznamenané vývojom politickej situácie v Maďarsku, kde sa 15. októbra dostala k moci Strana Šípových krížov. Len jeden z nich, Daniels, uspel v prechode na maďarské územie, ostatní členovia zostali na Slovensku a názor ich veliteľa Johna Sehmera bol že ich pobyt na Slovensku mohol byť zo spravodajského hľadiska veľmi užitočný. Po páde Povstania sa traja dôstojníci spolu so slovenskou tlmočnicou Margitou Kockovou pridali k partizánskej skupine veliteľa Dymka. Spoločne sa usadili v dome vzdialenom približne tri hodiny na sever od Polomky. Keďže na slovenskom území sa nachádzala aj misia Dawes americkej OSS, Sehmer jej členov doviedol do tohto domu. Briti spolu s Dymkovou skupinou ho prenechali Američanom a presunuli sa do domu dve hodiny odtiaľ. Priateľské vzťahy oboch misií potvrdila aj skutočnosť, že spolu strávili Vianoce, pri spomienkach na svojich padlých priateľov. 26. decembra sa Zenopian s Daviesom a časťou americkej misie odišli s cieľom presunúť sa druhého domu, čo im zachránilo život, keďže v ranných hodinách zaútočili predstavitelia Hlinkovej gardy, spolu s nemeckými dôstojníkmi na americký dom a zajali jeho obyvateľov, utiecť sa podarilo len jednému zranenému vojakovi 2. Československej brigády Kameneskému, ktorý informoval Zenopianovu skupinu o udalostiach útoku. Kým tejto skupine sa podarilo prekročiť rumunské hranice a dostať sa bezpečne na vojenskú základňu v Bari, druhú časť britských a amerických dôstojníkov vrátane majora Sehmera previezli do tábora Mauthausen, kde boli po sériách vypočúvaní, ktoré v určitých prípadoch zahŕňali kruté mučenie, popravení.

Skúsenosť britskej misie je cennou, pretože ponúka pohľad Západu, ktorý však nie je založený na postojoch diplomatov, ale na osobnej, ťažkej skúsenosti, na Slovenské národné povstanie. Pri opisoch tejto udalosti boli mnohí autori nútení či už z tendenčnosti, politickej viery alebo politického názoru primäť písať aj uvádzať aj informácie, ktoré sa nezakladali na pravde. Keďže takéto motívy u členov misie Windproof neboli, ich svedectvo ponúka aj určitý odstup.

Resources

Archive Resources

The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom:

Registered Files:

HS 4/40 Special Operations Executive: Czechoslovakia: Windproof Part I – July – Dec. 1944

HS 4/41 Special Operations Executive: Czechoslovakia: Windproof Part 2 - 1945

HS 4/54 Special Operations Executive: Czechoslovakia: Slovak Rising and Windproof/Platinum etc.

HS 4/246 Special Operations Executive: Windproof Mission: Reports by G.T. Davies, Lt. V.S. Zenopian, Lt. A Daniels and Werner Müller 1944-1945

Works Cited

Downs, J. (2009). Allied aid to the Uprising. *Slovenské národné povstanie 1944, súčasť antifašistickej rezistencie v rokoch druhej svetovej vojny*. Bratislava: Veda, Vydavateľstvo SAV.

Downs, J. (2004). *Druhá svetová vojna: Tragédia OSS na Slovensku*. Magnet Press, Slovakia.

Ivaničková, E. (1996). Zahraničnopolitická orientácia Slovenska v dokumentoch britskej Foreign Office (1939 - 1941). *Historický časopis* 44, 207 - 220.

Ivaničková, E. (2002). Slovensko a slovenská otázka vo vojnových plánoch Veľkej Británie 1939 - 1945. *Slovensko vo vojnách a konfliktoch v 20. storočí* (pp. 172 - 180). Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav.

Jablonický, J. (1994). *Glosy o historiografii SNP*. Bratislava: NVK International, spol. s r.o.

Jablonický, J. (1990). *Povstanie bez legend*. Bratislava: Obzor

Jablonický, J. (2004). *Samizdat o odboji*. Bratislava: Kalligram.

Lacko, M. (2008). *Slovenské národné povstanie 1944*. Bratislava: SLOVART.

Marjinová, V. (2010). Kto a ako delil Československo v marci 1939. In N. A. Naročnickaja, V.M. Falin. *Partitúra druhej svetovej vojny. Kto a kedy začal vojnu?* (pp. 252 - 273). Praha: Ottovo nakladatelství, s.r.o.

Krajňáková: The British View of the Slovak National Uprising through the Eyes of the Windproof Mission

Mlynárik, J. (2005). *Dejiny Židů na Slovensku*. Praha: Academia, nakladatelství Akademie věd ČR.

Prečan, V. (1994). *V kradeném čase*. Brno: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR Praha.

Prečan, V. (2009). Poznámky k historiografii Povstania a jej úlohám. In M. S. kolektív, *Kolaborácia a odboj na Slovensku a v krajinách nemeckej sféry vplyvu v rokoch 1939 - 1945, príloha 65. výročie SNP - Minulosť, súčasnosť a budúcnosť historiografie odboja a SNP* (pp. 17 - 32). Banská Bystrica: Múzeum Slovenského národného povstania.

Segeš, D. (2009). Medzinárodné aspekty Varšavského povstania. *Varšavské povstanie a Slovenské národné povstanie - paralely a rozdiely* (pp. 44 - 52). Banská Bystrica: Múzeum SNP.

Stanislav, J. (2004). Mocnosti protifašistickej koalície a ozbrojený zápas v SNP. *Humanistické tradície v literárnom odkaze Slovenského národného povstania* (pp. 18 - 42). Banská Bystrica: Štátna vedecká knižnica .

Ukielski, P. (2009). Varšavské povstanie a Slovenské národné povstanie - podobnosti a rozdiely. Náčrt problému. *Varšavské povstanie a Slovenské národné povstanie - paralely a rozdiely* (pp. 7 - 18). Banská Bystrica: Múzeum SNP.

Zemko, M. (2009). Les monuments du Soulevement national slovaque et péripéties de la mémoire historique. In A. Marés, *Lieux de mémoire en europe centrale* (pp. 95 - 108). Paris: Institute d'études slaves.

