

Slovak World Congress (SWC) and Canadian Slovak League (CSL)



Berlin
March 13,
1939

Created and led by Nazi collaborators and their allies—the Toronto-based SWC and CSL—enjoyed many decades of Cold-War support from the Canadian government and corporate media, which shared their toxic, anti-Red social phobia

The day after he met Hitler, Jozef Tiso declared a “free” Slovakia. President Tiso’s Nazi regime deported about 75,000 Jews to death camps.

While Tiso was executed for war crimes, two of his top cronies, Jozef Kirschbaum and Ferdinand Durcansky, escaped their trials. Given safe haven by Canada’s Liberal government, they helped to found and lead both the SWC and CSL.

position until 1988¹³ when two Canadian journalists finally exposed his Nazi past.¹⁴

While Tiso was executed for war crimes in 1947 by Czechoslovakia’s elected communist government, the SWC and CSL hailed him as a national hero. On the 50th anniversary of his death, CSL Toronto held a Sunday church event to honour him. Jozef Kirschbaum gave the commemorative speech. The CSL raised funds to help buy Tiso’s home for use as a museum to exalt his memory. Involved in that project were various leaders including CSL president Stephen Kovacic,¹⁵ who represented the CSL at ABN-Canada’s 1986 conference. (See p.63.) At that event featuring CIA-backed Nicaraguan and Afghan terror groups, as well as many others created and led by Nazi collaborators, the CSL’s Kovacic said:

It is my honour, by this presentation to join the common fight of the enslaved nations in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe and to give any possible support to achieve our common goal...¹⁶

War crimes of SWC leaders

In the late 1930s, as a law student and Hlinka Party organizer at Bratislava University, Kirschbaum edited its antisemitic/anti-Marxist publications. He also led the Hlinka Guard’s “elite detachment” of thugs on campus, the “Academic Guard” (1938-40). After leading attacks on Jews by this band of SS-like “Brown Shirts,” Kirschbaum met Adolph Eichmann. Hitler had sent Eichmann to Slovakia in late 1938 to help orchestrate the Tiso regime’s role in the Holocaust.¹⁷

In 1938-39, Kirschbaum met the Nazi elite, including: Hitler, Hermann Göring, Heinrich Himmler, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Werner Göttsche and Edmund Vesse Meyer.¹⁸ Kirschbaum was the Hlinka Party Sec. Gen. (1939-40), a Slovak diplomat in Rome (1941-42) and its Charge d’Affairs in Switzerland (1942-45).¹⁹ He served the American Slovak League and the CSL in Bern where the UN International Refugee Organization “was convinced ... to accept as refugees [to the US and Canada] Slovak exiles linked to the wartime Slovak state, who fled the communists in 1945.”²⁰

Kirschbaum’s career was aided by his friend and law prof, Ferdinand Durcansky, who led the Slovak delegations to meet Hitler that created Nazi Slovakia. The UN listed Durcansky as a Category A war criminal in 1946 and, in 1947, he was sentenced to death in absentia by Czechoslovakia’s elected communist government.²¹ Like Kirschbaum, Durcansky was key to creating the SWC and was “one of its main members.”²²

guided individuals of the Slovak regime.”⁷

Such myths of Nazi Slovakian innocence have long been spread by key Canadian academics. As a history professor in Montreal and Toronto, and co-founder of the University of Ottawa’s Chair in Slovak History, Kirschbaum himself led the cover up.

His effort to shape Slovak historical memory is continued by his son Stanislav, a prof. at York University. A graduate of Canada’s National Defense College, Stanislav is highly respected in some circles as an expert on communism and Central European “security issues.”⁸ Since the 1960s, his work has cleansed Slovakia’s role in genocide and honoured his father’s collaboration with Tiso’s fascist regime. His 1983 book, *Slovak Politics*, was subtitled *Essays on Slovak History in Honour of Joseph M. Kirschbaum*.

Both father and son had Slovak history texts published by the SWC. And both worked with its Canadian affiliate, the CSL. In 1962, when Jozef edited CSL’s pro-Tiso organ, *Kanadsky Slovak*, Canadian Jewish groups urged the RCMP to investigate his Nazi past and extradite him.⁹ His son has chaired *Kanadsky Slovak*’s editorial committee since 2010¹⁰ when it ran an article by his father. Recalling Jozef’s “pleasant memories” of the 1930s, it used a photo of him with Father Andrej Hlinka, the priest/banker who founded the Hlinka Party. “We were a tolerant, friendly generation,” Jozef wrote, “many [were] nationally conscious and willing to put their knowledge and strength into the service of the nation and the church.”¹¹

In a Slovak history text dedicated to his father, Stanislav said Jozef Kirschbaum cofounded SWC and gave it “intellectual and organizational leadership.”¹² In 1970, at its preparatory meeting in New York, the elder Kirschbaum became SWC’s executive vice president. Once affirmed at the SWC’s first assembly in Toronto (1971), he kept this

The Slovak World Congress (SWC) was founded in Toronto in 1971 by former officials of the Nazi puppet state of “Independent” Slovakia (1939-45). Affiliated with the profascist Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN),¹ the SWC was “composed of Nazi collaborationists and their progeny,” said journalist Jack Anderson. The SWC, he said, was “the Slovakian chapter” of the World AntiCommunist League.² (See p.48.) Active in the CIA-backed “Captive Nations” movement, SWC covered up wartime Slovakia’s subservience to the Nazis and supported the Black Ribbon Day movement.³ (See pp.24-26.)

Chief among the SWC’s Nazi collaborators was Jozef Kirschbaum who fled to Canada in 1948 after being sentenced to ten years in a Czechoslovak prison, plus ten in a labour camp.⁴ Kirschbaum was key to the Hlinka-Party regime of Catholic priest, Jozef Tiso. As Slovakia’s president, Tiso enforced Nazi-like laws that deprived Jews of their jobs, possessions and rights. Tiso’s regime also sent 75,000 of Slovakia’s 90,000 Jews to Nazi death camps.⁵ Sharing the Nazi’s hatred for Judeo-Bolshevism, Tiso’s regime vowed to “fight against the Marxist-Jewish ideology of disorganization and violence.”⁶

Sheltered by Canada til his death in 2001, Kirschbaum led the SWC and its affiliate, the Canadian Slovak League (CSL). For decades they whitewashed Slovak fascism and hid their movement’s obeisance to Nazism. Forty years after WWII, the SWC finally issued a statement on the Holocaust at its 1987 assembly in Toronto (attended by PM Brian Mulroney and Ontario Premier Bill Davis). Denying the Tiso regime’s role in decimating Slovak Jewry, it pushed the myth that this genocide was the fault of “mis-

“Secret” US government files, declassified by the 1998 Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, reveal Durcansky’s work with the Nazis and CIA.²³ A 1959 document calling him “an outspoken opponent against Communism and a reliable member of Western ideals,” said they had “no derogatory information” about him.²⁴ A 1954 document however detailed how in 1939, Durcansky “placed himself at disposal of Hitler” by sending forced labourers to Germany, surrendering factories and mineral resources to the Nazis, and allowing them to build army bases in Slovakia for the Operation-Barbarossa invasion of the USSR. After joining the Hlinka Party in 1927, he created “fascist, antisemitic” Nazi-funded publications (1936-38) and led the Hlinka Guard. While his cabinet posts included Justice, Health, Transportation and Public Works, he rose to be Nazi Slovakia’s Foreign Minister and Deputy PM. Durcansky also owned drug factories in Slovakia, and later in Argentina. In 1945, the Nazis seized 150 kgs of morphine that he was taking out of Slovakia.²⁵

Nazi apologists in the Cold War

After WWII, Durcansky and other fascists moved to Rome and worked to “seize power in Slovakia with Durcansky as premiere.” In 1947, a commission of Czechoslovak’s communist government, which was democratically elected in 1946, exposed Durcansky’s coup plot.²⁶ In response, the communist government began to purge fascist conspirators, and mobilized a massive groundswell of public support for a counter coup that consolidated their power in 1948.

Durcansky, like Eichmann, used Vatican networks to escape to Argentina. Then, with help from UK intelligence, Durcansky went to Toronto (1950-51). Although he later worked for the ABN in Britain and Germany, Durcansky gave “antisemitic speeches in Canada well into the 1970s” for the SWC. He also “travelled freely in and out of Canada, despite the fact that the government was fully aware of his war crimes.”²⁷

While in Germany, Durcansky was ABN chairman and advised the CIA’s “Upswing” program (1952-58).²⁸ Upswing was the US-led spy agency in West Germany,²⁹ centred around the CIA’s “Gehlen Org.” Its first leader (1946-56) was Maj.Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, who led West Germany’s BND spy agency (1956-68). During WWII, he ran the Nazi network of fascist East European armies (1942-45).³⁰ It was united in 1943 by Stepan Bandera’s Ukrainian nationalists and later became the ABN. (See p.48.)

In 1963, the German-Slovakian Society celebrated the 25th anniversary of Ti-

so’s regime. Durcansky, then-president of the ABN Peoples’ Council, was their main speaker in Munich and Stuttgart.³¹ When founded in 1967, Durcansky was on the European Freedom Council (EFC) Information Cttee. This ABN/OUN(B) front promoted armed attacks inside the USSR. EFC leaders included ABN president Yaroslav Stetsko.³² Durcansky also attended CSL events, like its 1969 convention banquet, where he sat at its “head table.”³³

Jozef Kirschbaum’s SWC-publications concealed the ties of Slovak nationalists with Nazis and the CIA. One collected talks from the conference he organised for the SWC’s founding event in Toronto (1971).³⁴ Durcansky’s talk called for creating a Slovak state along “ethnogenetical” lines.³⁵ Kirschbaum also organized a conference at the SWC’s 1975 congress in Rome which the ABN praised as a “very well organized,” “brilliant symposium.”³⁶

“The leadership of the SWC never dissociated itself from the Tiso regime, and its complicity in the Holocaust” said Tomas Sniegon in 2014.³⁷ This Swedish historian said Canada’s billionaire “Uranium King,” Stefan Roman, who helped Kirschbaum settle in Canada, “was the main political force behind” SWC’s creation, “its first president [1970-88] and main financial supporter.”³⁸

In 1987, Roman’s “generous support ... set up” Black Ribbon Day [BRD] “committees in London, Munich, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Paris and Vienna,” said the BRD German-Estonian founder Markus Hess.³⁹

In 1945, Roman had coauthored a petition to oppose the arrest of Tiso and other Slovak leaders.⁴⁰ Soon after launching SWC in 1971, Roman lauded Tiso as “a man who confirmed his love to the nation by the highest sacrifice.”⁴¹ By the mid 1980s, as SWC president, Roman received “repeated appeals” from the National Holocaust Survivors Assoc. and its Slovak branch, to get the SWC “to condemn the pro-Nazi puppet regime in Slovakia.” The SWC refused.⁴²

An apologist for Nazi Slovakia til his 1988 death, Roman was made a Knight Commander, Order of St. Gregory, by Pope John XXIII (1963). He also received the Order of Canada from Gov. Gen. Sauvé (1987) and posthumously the highest “state honour” by Slovak Pres. Michal Kováč, the Order of the 1st Class White Double Cross (1995).⁴³

Another SWC cofounder was Josef Mikus, a “known anti-Semite”⁴⁴ who represented the SWC in the World AntiCommunist League.⁴⁵ During WWII, Mikus was a diplomat to Rome for Nazi Slovakia. In post-war Czechoslovakia, after being briefly arrested for “ideological” reasons, he moved

to Washington, DC, where he taught history and worked for the US State Department.⁴⁶

Catholic priest/academic Milan Durica was a lifetime SWC member who served on its Advisory Board.⁴⁷ In 1997 the Slovak Academia of Sciences criticized his EU-funded, Slovak history text. They were outraged that he depicted Tiso’s regime as “saviours of the Jewish population” who ensured “daily life in the Jewish work camps” was filled with “gaiety and happiness.”⁴⁸ Durica, who said Kirschbaum was “a man with a clean record as a Slovak patriot,”⁴⁹ supported the movement to canonize Tiso as a saint.⁵⁰

John Hvasta was the Slovak delegate to the ABN’s US chapter (1966)⁵¹ and Gen. Secretary of the SWC’s American Council (1981).⁵² After WWII he worked for the US consulate in Prague and was sentenced to 25 years for espionage. After escaping prison he fled to the US, studied filmmaking and became an anticommunist propagandist. During his long PR career, Hvasta promoted far-right Ukrainian ethnonationalism⁵³ and the KKK. US Federal Elections Commission documents show that Hvasta’s PR firm was paid to provide a mailing list to “the 1988 Presidential Campaign of former Ku Klux Klan leader and white supremacist David Duke.”⁵⁴ (In 2005, Duke received a PhD from a private Ukrainian university that is “a center of antisemitic teaching.”⁵⁵)

Canadian government support

In 1948-49, Canada’s Liberal government brought in 1,500 Slovaks, including convicted war criminals. Officials, said historian Jan Raska, “were keen to resettle anti-communist refugees from Czechoslovakia who would further legitimize the state’s opposition towards Communism.”⁵⁶ “[P]olitical refugees who espoused anti-Soviet and anti-communist sentiments,” he said, were supported by vote-seeking officials who warned the public of the impending threat posed by domestic Communist sympathizers and Soviet agents to the country’s predominantly Christian, democratic, and middle class values.

Their shared social phobias led to “increasing collaboration between Canadian officials and Czech and Slovak anti-communist refugees,”⁵⁷ even though authorities knew they included top Nazi collaborators. A case in point was Karol Sidor, “founder and first commander of the pro-Nazi, paramilitary Hlinka Guard” who was fascist Slovakia’s “premier and minister of the interior” in 1939.⁵⁸ Before the war, as a Hlinka Party politician, Sidor demanded “that Slovakia and Carpatho-Rus be ‘cleansed’ of their Jews, because they are communists.”⁵⁹ Sidor was later Tiso’s ambassador to the Vatican