



After Hitler, Before Stalin: Catholics, Communists, and Democrats in Slovakia, 1945-1948 (Pitt Russian East European)

James Ramon Felak

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After Hitler, Before Stalin examines the crucial postwar period in Slovakia, following Nazi occupation and ending with the Communist coup of February 1948. Centering his work around the major political role of the Catholic Church and its leaders, James Ramon Felak offers a fascinating study of the interrelationship of Slovak Catholics, Democrats, and Communists. He provides an in-depth examination of Communist policies toward Catholics and their strategies to court Catholic voters, and he chronicles the variety of political stances Catholics maintained during Slovakia's political turmoil.

Felak opens by providing a background on pre-war and wartime Slovak politics, notably the rise of Slovak Catholic nationalism and Slovakia's alignment with Nazi Germany during World War II. He then describes the union formed in the famed "April Agreement" of 1946 between the Democratic Party and Catholics that guaranteed a landslide victory for the Democrats and insured a position for Catholics in the new regime. Felak views other major political events of the period, including: the 1947 Czechoslovak war crimes trial of Father Jozef Tiso; education policy; the treatment of the Hungarian minority; the trumped-up "anti-state conspiracy" movement led by police in the Fall of 1947; and the subsequent Communist putsch.

Through extensive research in Slovak national archives, including those of the Democratic and Communist parties, *After Hitler, Before Stalin* assembles a comprehensive study of the predominant political forces and events of this tumultuous period and the complex motivations behind them.

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