

The Moonshaft

by Antonin T. Horak

(This article was published in March 1965 in NSS News)

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an article by the author from his own journal. Antonin T. Horak was a captain in the Slovak Uprising during World War II, and he tells of his discovery of a strange „moon shaft“ in a cave in Czechoslovakia. Dr. Horak is a linguist who is now a U. S. Citizen living in Pueblo, Colorado and he hopes to persuade speleologists to study his moonshaft further and learn its true nature. The illustrations were traced from sketches that he made 20 years ago in the cave, which is located near the villages of Plavnica and Lubocna, at about 49,20 N, 20,70 E. The journal was written on the spot and starts when Dr. Horak and two of his wounded soldiers were found by a peasant and rescued from capture.

October 23, 1944.

Early yesterday, Sunday, October 22nd, Slavek found us in a trench and hid us in this grotto. Today at nightfall he and his daughter Hanka came with food and medicine. We had no eaten since Friday, and all we had had before, during last two battles, was maize bread and not enough of that. Our commissary had been on its last legs anyway; the supply carriers had been dispersed by confusion and the enemy.

Saturday afternoon the remnants of our battalion (184 men and officers, a quarter wounded, 16 stretcher cases) were retreating through the snow of the north slope. My company was the rear guard. At dawn Sunday, the two 70 mm guns opened up at us from close range - about 300 m. Having held our position for 12 hours, I ordered a gradual breakup of the skirmish and slip-off. But in our left trench someone became careless, and that drew 2 direct hits - shells, two wounded. Arriving there I bumped into the enemy, caught a bayonet and bullet with my left palm and blow on my head, which put me out. Without my fur cap it might be fractured.

I came to when someone was pulling me from the trench, a tall peasant. He packed snow on my hand, and grinned. Then this rough and ready Samaritan grabbed Jurek, stripped off his pants, yanked the long sliver of steel from his thigh, and planted him bare-bottomed and gasping into a heap of snow. Martin, with a slash across and into his belly was tenderly bandaged. Building a stretcher the peasant introduced himself as Slavek, a sheepman, owner of the pastures hereabouts. With Slavek hauling and guiding, it took us four hours to reach this

cranny.

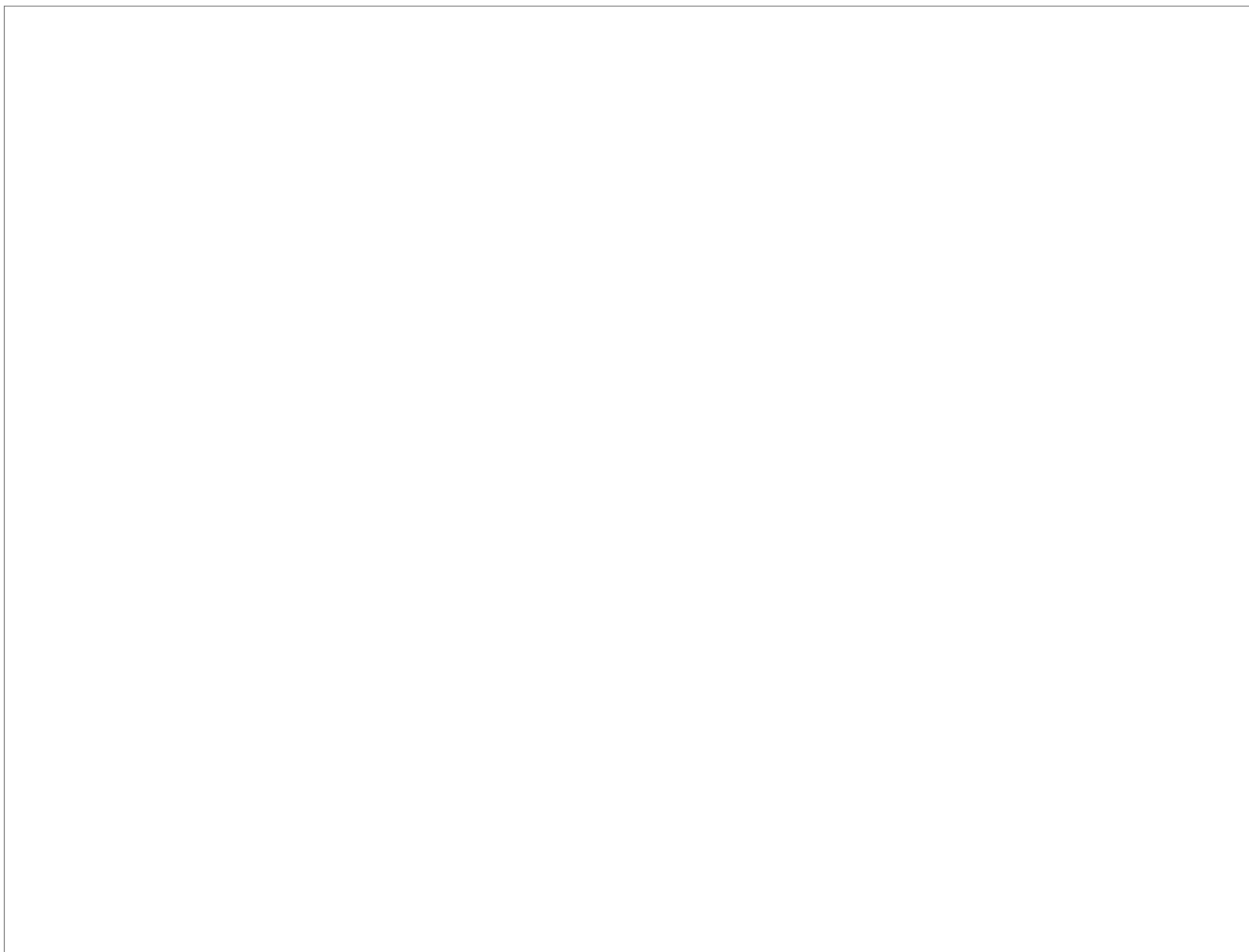
Slavek moved rocks in the cranny and opened a cleft, the entrance to this roomy grotto. Placing Martin in the niche, we were astonished to see Slavek become ceremonious: he crossed himself, each of us, the grotto, and, with a deep bow, its back wall, where a hole came to my attention.

About to leave us, Slavek went through the same holy rites, and begged me not to go further into his cave. I accompanied him to fetch pine boughs, and he told me that only once, with his father and grandfather, had he been in this cave; that it is a huge maze, full of pits which they never wanted to fathom, pockets of poisonous air, and "certainly haunted". I was back in the grotto with my men at about midnight, exhausted, head very painful, soothed it with snow. Martin was unconscious, Jurek feverish. For breakfast-lunch-dinner he and I had hot water, and, thank God, I had my pipe. I placed warm stones around Martin, and Jurek got the first watch.

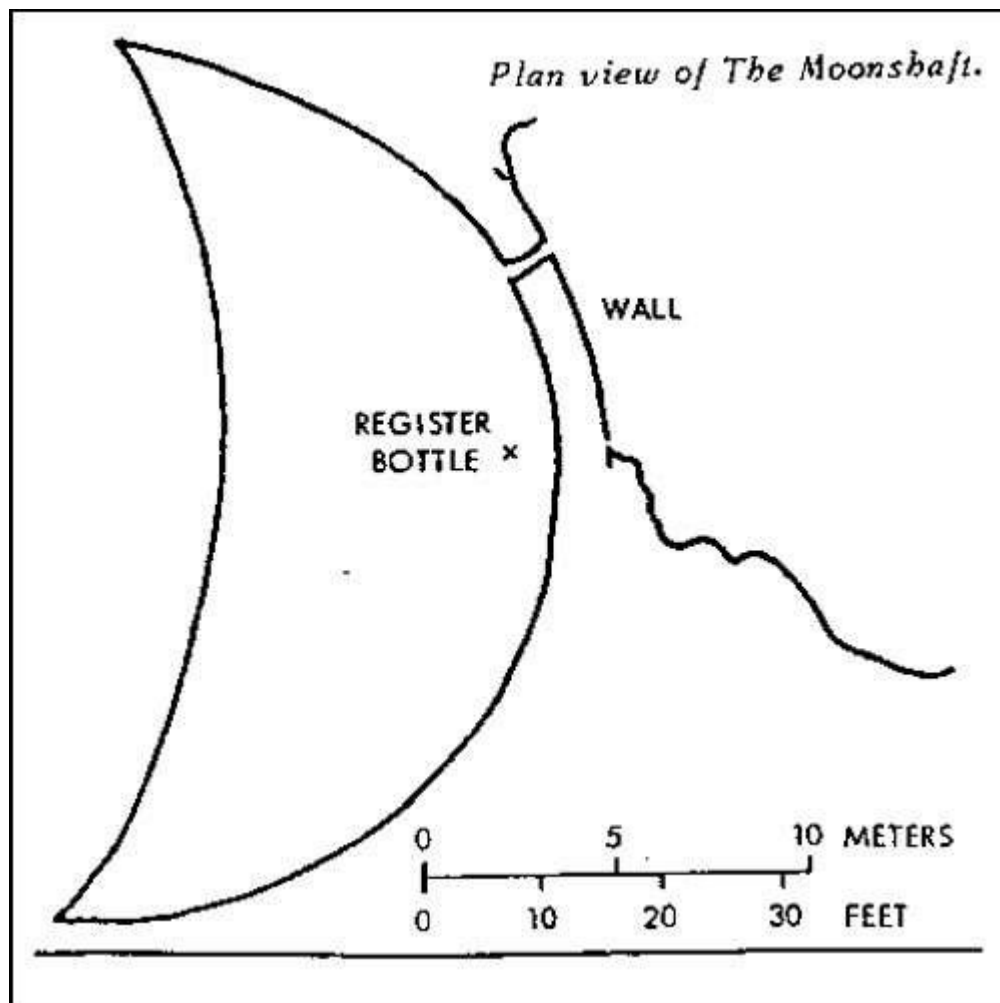
Miserable night. Martin at time conscious; I gave him 3 aspirins and hot water to sip with drops of Slivovitz. Jurek hobbled hungrily around the two German helmets in which he boiled water to which I added 10 drops of Slivovitz, our breakfast. With this deluge of snow, avalanches imminent, and enemy skiers roaming, Slavek may not be able to get through to us with food for days to come. And neither should I try hunting and track up the landscape while I have two immobilized men on my hands. But here we have this cave which Slavek knows only partially; it may have more than this known entrance, and it may contain hibernating animals. These possibilities I mulled over while Jurek was chewing pine bark, and, as expected, he implored me to go poaching into Slavek's cave and promised to keep mum. And I was not only starved but equally eager to find out what makes self assured Slavek scared enough to invoke the Deities. I started my cave tour with rifle, lantern, torches, pick. After a not too devious nor dangerous walk and some squeezings, always taking the easiest and marking side passages, I came, after about 1 1/2 hours, into a long, level passage, and its end upon a barrel-sized hole.

Crawling through and still kneeling, I froze in amazement - there stands something like a large, black silo, framed in white. Regaining breath I thought that this is a bizarre, natural wall or curtain of black salt, or ice, or lava. But I became perplexed, then awestruck when I saw it is a glass-smooth flank of seemingly man-made structure which reaches into the rocks on all sides. Beautifully, cylindrically curved it indicates a huge body with a diameter of about 25 meters. Where this structure and the rocks meet, large stalagmites and stalactites form that glittering white frame. The wall is uniformly blue-blackish, its material seems to combine properties of steel, flint, rubber - the pick made no marks and bounced off vigorously. Even the thought of a tower-sized artifact; embedded in rock in the middle of an obscure mountain, in a wild region where not even legend knows about ruins, mining, industry; overgrown with age-old

cave deposits, is bewildering - the fact is appalling.



Page of Horak's diary



Not immediately discernible, a crack in the wall appears from below, about 20 to 25 cm wide, tapers off and disappears into the cave's ceiling, 2 to 5 cm wide. Its insides, right and left are pitch black and have fist sized, sharp valleys and crests. The crack's bottom is rather smooth trough of yellow limestone, and drops very steeply (about 60 degrees) into the wall. I threw a lighted torch through; it fell and extinguished with loud cracklings and hissings as if a white hot ploughshare were dropped into a bucket.

Driven to explore, and believing me thin enough to get through this upside down keyhole, I went in. Wriggling sideways, injured hand and head below and steeply downward, nearly standing on my head, cramped, though my right arm with the lamp could move in the extended crack above me, the crush got the better of me and I had to get out, back, quickly. And that became a struggle. When out and breath regained, I was too fascinated by the whole riddle and determined to get at it. For the day I had enough and had to think about tactics.

I was in camp at about 4 p.m. Jurek had washed Martin, kept him between warm stones, and I gave him three aspirins and hot water with Slivovitz to sip. I

explained to Jurek that the hunt in the cave requires much smoke, poles, and rope. Thank god, Slavek and Hanka did come with provisions. When they left I accompanied them to fetch torch boughs, was back in camp at about 2 a.m., dead tired, but finally we had eaten - Jurek too much - and I got the 2nd watch.

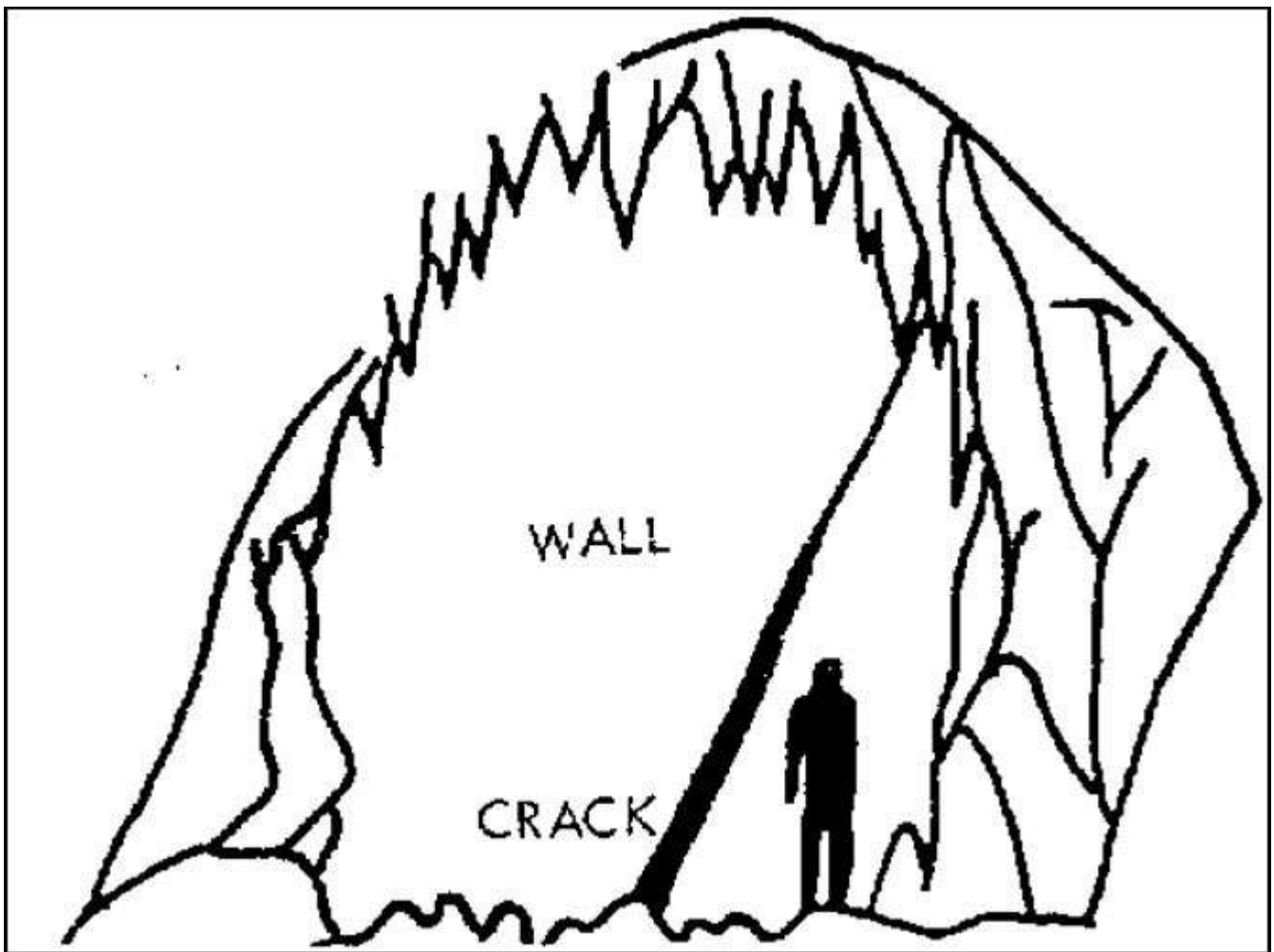
October 24, 1944.

Peaceful night; Martin sipped fever-tea with honey; hope we can pull him through. Jurek`s posterior is not even swollen, but my head still is. I cut our belts, braided 8 meters of solid rope. At 10 p.m. was at the wall; anchored the rope over a stick across the crack, and keeping it slung over my shoulder, forced myself again into the grim maw. Like yesterday, the lamp, this time carbide, was on a stick ahead within the jaw above. When it came through and down it swung freely over some void into which I could not see, and there was again rushing as if from agitated waters. And, unable to turn, I feared a water-filled pit ahead and to end in it - literally - in a headstand.

I wriggled upward, back again; my clothes caught on the protrusions, descended on my shoulders and head, and formed a plug. The resulting struggle nearly caused me to be burned alive. When out and on my feet, I was shaking from exhaustion, and had lurid visions.

There are no loose stones about the wall and so I hacked stalagmites into short rolls and bowled them through the crack. They rolled on, causing enormous echoes, and knocked to a standstill, indicating a solid floor and room to turn. I launched the unlit torches after the stones, undressed, keeping the shirt only, and went after the stones and torches. Already acquainted with the meanest fangs in the crack, I came through with only few cuts, dropped a little, rolled down an incline and was stopped by a wall which felt familiar, satiny smooth like the front wall.

My lamp was still burning next to me, but here were confusing sounds. Lighting like torches, I saw that I was in spacious, curved, black shaft formed by cliff-like walls which intersect and form a crescent-shaped, nearly vertical tunnel, rather shaft. I cannot describe the somberness and the endless whisperings, rustlings and roaring sounds, abnormal echoes from my breathing and movements. The floor is the incline over which I rolled in, a solid lime "pavement".



All the lights together did not reach the ceiling or where these walls end or meet. The horizontal distance between the apexes of the concave backside of the front wall and the convex back wall is about 25 meters. To explore further I needed more light and my pick, which does not fit through the crack and must be taken apart.

I left jubilant, in a sort of enchantment mixed with determination to explore this large structure, which I believe is unique, singular.

This time with my head up, with no clothes to ensnare and burn me, I was through the crack fairly unscathed, dressed, smoked a pipe, and was underway to my men. I tried to catch some bats, but caught none. Jurek was boiling potatoes and mutton and therefore inclined to excuse my bad huntsmanship; he even appreciated its hardships when he had to grease the scratches on my back, and my shirt.

Martin had a crumb of bread with honeyed fevertea. After 6 p.m. I went for a new load of torches, was back at about 10 p.m. Jurek got both watches.

October 25, 1944.

We had a good night. Martin seems to mend. Am glad that Jurek`s thigh is not yet well enough for him to want to go with me poaching for bats. It is better that he knows nothing about the cave's secret.

I went directly to the wall, undressed like yesterday, smeared muttonfat over me, slid my things through the crack and went in, feet first. Extending the carbide lamp upon a double pole, with four torches burning, still the upper ends of the cliffs remain in the dark. I fired two bullets up, parallel to the walls. The report caused roars, as from an express train, but no impact was visible. Then I fired one bullet on each wall, aiming some 15 meters upward from me, got large blue green sparks and such sounds that I had to hold my ears between my knees, and flames danced wildly.

Assembling the pick caused more uproars. I probed the „pavement“, and started digging where the lime is thin, in the horns of the crescent. At right is dry loam; at left I came, at about half a meter, upon a pocket of enamel from the teeth of some large animal; took one canine and one molar, replaced the rest. Digging on nearby, the back-wall has, at about 1 1/2 m below the pavement, a vertical, finely fluted, undulating pattern. It seemed warmer than the smooth surface. I tried with lip and ear, and believe the impression is correct. In the middle the pavement is too thick for a trench-pick.

When the torches were extinguished, and I was in a freezing sweat, I left the „moonshaft“, dressed and went where the bats are, and bagged seven. Jurek stuffed them with bread and herbs and they became exquisite „pigeons“.

Slavek and Olga, his other daughter, came about dusk with hay, straw, a sheep's fleece, more medicinal herbs - selfheal and stonecrop - and seeds from the Iris, an excellent coffee substitute. I accompanied him, fetched pine torches, two long poles, and was back at about midnight. Martin got the last aspirins, honey-water; and Jurek both watches.

October 26, 1944.

It was a good night. I went into the moonshaft to continue experimenting. On my longest assembly of poles the carbide lamp did not light the upper end of these cliffs. I fired above the lighted area; the bullet struck huge sparks and made deafening echoes. Then horizontally at the back wall with similar effects - sparks, roarings, no splinters, but a half finger long welt which gave a pungent smell. After that I continued in my digging in the left moon horn and saw that the wavy pattern extends downward; but in the right horn I found no such pattern.

I left the moonshaft to probe the front wall and its surroundings. Next to the

stalactites are some enamel-like flecks, which, scraped, yield a powder too fine to be collected without glue, which I will try to boil from our pigeon's claws. I wished to obtain a sample of a peculiar material of the walls, but even firing two bullets into the crack, upon the protrusions and hitting them, I received only ricochets, a blast of thunder, welts, and the same pungent smell.

Returning to camp I caught some bats and we again had "pigeons". I ordered Jurek to carefully remove any trace of them, and kept the claws. The Slaveks arrived as usual at nightfall bringing this time a quarter of a deer, 1/2 kilogram of salt, and a tin of carbide. Jurek took both watches.

October 27, 1944.

Martin died, slept into death. Jurek knows his kin, took charge of his belongings, including his wallet with 643 crowns, watch with chain and my certificate. Now we are free and ready to leave and rejoin our battalion which is somewhere east of Kosice. With his stick Jurek can march some 10 kilometers daily, and have to move carefully anyway. We will start tomorrow.

At 10 a.m. I was in the cave probing passages for a way around behind the moonshaft; looked also for ice and poisonous air about which Slavek has spoken, and found none, though there may be some. Then I slipped into the moonshaft to sketch, dig, and ponder, and returned to camp at about 4 p.m. I ordered Jurek to prepare our packs, clean the weapons, boil food for seven days, and have ready what we will not need to be returned to Slaveks. He and both girls, if as the family had sensed that Martin died, came and we carried him into the dwarf pines to the trench where he had received his mortal wound, took turns to dig his grave, prayed, and buried him in a blanket. Slavek is to set up a good cross next spring for which I gave him 150 crowns. Slavek briefed me as best he could about the enemy eastward from here. Jurek and I were back in our grotto at midnight, and he took both watches; he can sleep most of the day tomorrow.

October 28, 1944.

Restful night, good breakfast. Cut my name, etc., on a leather strip, and together with the golden back of my watch rolled and inserted both engravings into a glass bottle, plugged it with a pebble and ball of clay mixed with charcoal, and deposited this record in the moonshaft, on the top of the ashes of my torches. It may stay there for a long time, possibly until the structure is completely hidden behind its curtain of stalactites and stalagmites. Slavek has no son to tell him about his cave-mystery; his womenfolk don't know about it, and anyway daughters usually marry to other villages. In a few decades nobody will know, If I do not back and have the structure explored.

I sat there by my fire speculating: what is this structure, with walls 2 meters thick and a shape that I cannot imagine of any purpose known nowadays? How far

does it reach into the rocks? Is there more behind the moonshaft? Which incident or who put it into this mountain? Is it a fossilized man-made object? Is there truth in legends, like Plato's, about long-lost civilizations with magic technologies which our rationale cannot grasp nor believe?

I am a sober, academically trained person but must admit that here, between these blacks, satiny, mathematically-curved cliffs I do feel as if in the grip of an exceedingly strange and grim power. I can understand that simple but intelligent and practical men like Slavek and his forebears sense here witchery, conceal it, ever made known, it would attract armies of tourists, and commercialization which would probably ruin their nature-bound trade and honest life. If and when I came back it will be with a team of secrecy-bound experts: geologist, metallurgist, cave expert; and if the object is of true importance for the advancement of knowledge and proper civilization, will to have to be found to respect the Slavek`s interests.

On my way back to camp I burrowed and hid the crawl holes which lead towards the wall; the cave may have entrances which Slavek does not know, and some chance discoverer may start blasting "for treasure" before a scientific team can get there. I was in camp after 3 p.m., and about 5 all three Slaveks arrived, bringing some hard-boiled eggs. Jurek asked permission to talk privately with Slavek, and then Hanka was carefully sounded out by her father whether she

would accept Jurek as her husband. She cried and laughed, Jurek gave her his photograph and golden watch which his father had brought from America; Jurek is a well-to do carpenter in Bratislava. I am invited to the wedding and will try to come. To make sure, I gave Hanka a letter to a befriended jeweler and commanded her to get the nicest set of Bohemian garnets as a wedding present. The Slaveks had brought their family Bible, and I made some entries.

With the hardy Slovak handshakes, we shouldered our weapons and packs and went. When we entered the pines and turned we saw Slavek concealing his cave and the girls sweeping away our tracks. The moon was bright and the snow glittered.

October 30, 1944.

We moved during the dark hours only and along the timber line. During daylight, camping snugly below a fine pinetree, were alarmed by the sound of infantry fire; approaching to investigate we observed a strong group of skirmishing with a ski party of Wehrmacht and Polish Blue Police (fascists). The fascists went soon, and, joining the insurgents we were their guests for a whole day. They were a mixed group of Hechaluts, ZOB, DROR, from the Rzeszow region in adjacent Poland, who had helped in our Uprising and were now on their way back - through immense snow - to their usual sectors between Cracow and Przemyśl. Their physician was Rachel W. the widow of a murdered Jewish doctor; she knew and told us about the exploits of the famous Jesia Fryman Banda against the Nazis; and fed us two fine, hot meals. When these valiant Jewish fighters were marching on northward, we had to go southward, towards Kosice, which we reached on our 6th day; and there receiving directions we could proceed to join our battalion which was awaiting the next offensive of the Red Army to join it until to the end of the war.

In the very last days of World War II, on my way towards Bohemia, I revisited the place. The Slaveks lived temporarily at Zdar. I visited Martin's grave and looked at the cave entrance. I have taken the animal teeth I had collected to the curator of paleontology at Uzhorod, and he classified them as adult cave bear, *Ursus spaeleus*. Thereupon I speculated: the crack is too small; the lump of limestone and stalagmites in front of the crack would not let any debris through; this bear seems to have fallen into the moonshaft, which may have had a connection to the surface.

In correspondence dealing with plans for the publications of this journal, Dr. George W. Moore suggested that the moonshaft might have been dissolved from a steeply dipping limestone layer between curved parallel sheets of chert. I am skeptical. All the inner surfaces of the moonshaft are composed of the same material. Also, such an hypothesis does not explain the peculiar, exactly parallel, finely grooved pattern on the back surface (or wall) of the left horn.

On my last visit to the place, I examined the mountainside above the cave and found no sinkholes or pits, the assumed connections toward the moonshaft. But on these very steep slopes in the Tatra Mountains, rock-slides could have obliterated or filled in any such connections.

Did anyone tried to investigate this story and locate this Moonshaft after the second World War?

On [The Wealthy Adventurer's University](#), Mike Collins writes:

Whilst investigating this story I made contact with an Archeological Geologist based in the US, after reviewing information which I had sent to him, he emailed me with an astounding statement. He believed the structure was between 300 and 310 million years old! This story was indeed becoming stranger by the hour, I also discovered some otherwise unknown facts. For instance, it is a matter of record that Heinrich Himmler had sent several scientific expeditions into the Tatra's looking for a legendary "Moonshaft" and that in the middle to late 70's after Antonin's (Tony's) death, members of his family had been approached by the KGB with a view to obtaining the diary. Neither of these ventures was successful. In the 60's a man by the name of Ted Phillips was introduced to Tony and was fascinated by the story, an expedition was put together but was hastily canceled when the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968.

If this moonshaft is really that old, that means that humans (Homo sapiens) did not built it, because humans are only about two millions years old.