

HUNGARIANS IN SLOVAKIA

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Table of Contents

In Lieu of an Introduction	1
1. Historical Background	2
2. Demographics	5
2.1 Territorial Distribution	6
2.2 Age Composition	7
3. Political representation	8
4. Legal status	11
4.1 Historical background	11
4.2 Current legal conditions	14
5. Economic Situation	16
6. Education	17
7. Culture	19
8. Religion	20
9. Environmental issues	21
10. Prospects	22
Appendix	24

1. Historical Background

The present hardships and aspirations of the Hungarian national community in Slovakia can best be depicted and analyzed in a historical context. This section provides an outline of the main historical events and circumstances that have contributed to current nationality issues.

The multi-national state of Czechoslovakia was founded at the end of World War I and composed of certain territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: the provinces of the Czech Kingdom (the Czech Lands, Moravia and part of Silesia) and the northern part of Hungary. The founders sought the approval of Western decision-makers for the creation of the until then non-existent state by referring to the principle of the self-determination of the "Czechoslovakian nation". The new state of Czechoslovakia, however, was a multi-national state, in which the Czechs had a definitive role but comprised nearly two-thirds of the population only with the help of the Slovaks.

Czechoslovakia had already assumed responsibility for protecting the rights of its minorities in the Treaty of Saint Germain en Laye of September 1919, prior to the signing of the peace treaty that ended World War I. The Czechoslovakian state, however, did not respect these rights in practice. It began its attempts to assimilate the national communities by refusing them citizenship; enacting agricultural reform that included the redistribution of Hungarian-owned land to resettled Slovaks, Moravians and Czechs; settling legionaries and reducing industry on the territories inhabited by them; placing restrictions on the language law and nationality schools; prohibiting the establishment of institutions for nationality higher education; hindering the validation of diplomas; and manipulating census data.

The ownership of private property, the churches and the civil democratic character of the state provided the national communities with some means for political, economic and cultural self-organization. National communities, however, did not possess equal rights, and attempts for their assimilation were not ceased.

Between September 1919 and December 1920, more than 100,000 ethnic Hungarians fled or moved from Czechoslovakia to Hungary, and over 16,000 ethnic Hungarians were denied Czechoslovakian citizenship. According to the first official Czechoslovak census in 1921, in addition to ethnic Czechs and Slovaks who comprised nearly two-thirds of the total population of Czechoslovakia, the population included more than 3 million ethnic Germans (compared to the two million ethnic Slovaks); 850,000 ethnic Hungarians; almost half-million Ruthenians; nearly 200,000 Jews and 100,000 ethnic Poles.

The Czechoslovakian state's disregard for the rights of national communities -- including the ethnic Germans -- provided Hitler with additional justification for his expansionist plans. France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy signed the Munich agreement in September 1938, and, as a result, the Sudeten German territories of Czechoslovakia were annexed to Germany.

Czechoslovakian-Hungarian negotiations regarding the settlement of the Hungarian minority issue began after the above occurrences. After three rounds of negotiations, the Czechoslovakian proposal of October 22, 1938 would have returned 11,300 square kilometres and a population of 740 thousand -- 680 thousand of which were ethnic Hungarians -- to Hungary. Because this proposal did not include reannexation of the large cities located along the linguistic border, Hungary appealed to the Vienna Court of Arbitration, which declared that 12,109 square kilometres and a population of 869 thousand (including 752 thousand -- 86.5 percent -- Hungarians) be returned to Hungary.

After World War II, the Northern Hungarian population once again became a minority in a renewed Czechoslovakia, including the territories it received at Trianon with the exception of the region of Sub-Carpathia and some other smaller territories.

The new Czechoslovakian state accused both the German and Hungarian ethnic groups of collective guilt and condemned them to deportation, which was prevented by the Potsdam Peace negotiations. Nevertheless, attempts to attain a pure Slavic nation-state resulted in a drastic decline in the Hungarian population of Slovakia between 1945 and 1949. This demographic change was achieved by stripping other nationalities of Czechoslovakian citizenship and overtaking their private property; deporting them to the Czech Lands; and carrying out population exchange and coerced Slovakization. The aim of these policies was to completely eliminate the ethnic Hungarian population. In the course of these policies, 32 thousand people were expelled; 69 thousand were resettled as a result of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian population exchange; 6 thousand fled; 42 thousand were deported to the Czech Lands, and 327 thousand were "re-Slovakicized."

After the communists took power in February 1948, it was no longer in the interest of the Soviet Union to maintain tension between the two "people's democracies" of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and the Czechoslovakian state gradually ceased to openly deprive ethnic Hungarians of their rights. The first schools established in the republic years were returned to the ethnic Hungarians, and they were allowed to establish their only cultural and social organization, the CSEMADOK. But, in keeping with the ideology of proletarian internationalism, the totalitarian state quietly continued to assimilate the ethnic Hungarian population and dissolve the ethnic structure of the territories populated by them (for example, on the basis of the administrative division in 1960, they gerrymandered the districts so that only two districts with Hungarian majorities existed).

The Hungarians were hopeful that the Prague Spring of 1968 would resolve their constitutional legal status and grant them equality. The Hungarians supported

democratization through the CSEMADOK, the only social organization they were permitted to establish. The Hungarians were rewarded for their support with the adoption of a constitutional law regarding the legal status of the nationalities (144/1968). This was the first nationality law adopted after World War II, but it was limited by the system in which it was born and was never implemented.

During the period of "normalization" initiated by Husak after the Soviet invasion, this constitutional law proved to be ineffective in the framework of the state socialist system; it allowed the already scarce Hungarian institutional system to be depleted to a minimum, the number of schools to be drastically diminished and teacher training to significantly decrease.

The Committee for the Protection of the Rights of the Hungarian Minority in Czechoslovakia was established in 1978 to fight political and nationality oppression. Its activities, which were illegal in that system, focused primarily on the protection of the Hungarian school network. Its spokesman Miklós Duray, signatory of the Charter 77, was twice imprisoned for a total of almost two years for his activities in the Committee.

The Hungarian intelligentsia and writers began their protest in 1988-89 and were soon joined by a broader spectrum of the ethnic Hungarian population in their fight for democracy and minority rights.

Ethnic Hungarians participated in the political struggle and organized into political parties, through which they won parliamentary representation in both the 1990 and 1992 parliamentary elections. Ethnic Hungarians also won a significant number of positions in the local elections.

Despite the positive and democratic changes, there has been no breakthrough in the realm of minority rights. The Slovak political arena is dominated by radical nationalism, hatred of foreigners, anti-semitism, national exclusivism and superiority, ethnocracy, and fabrication of an anti-minority enemy image.

2. Demographics

The ethnic composition of Slovakia has changed significantly since the establishment of the state of Czechoslovakia. Despite a decline in the ethnic Hungarian population, ethnic Hungarians still comprise a majority not only on the continuous strip along the border of southern Slovakia as a whole, but also in many of the particular townships. A gradual increase in the average age of the ethnic Hungarian population reflects growing despair brought on by the deterioration of the economic, social, cultural and political/legal conditions.

According to 1991 census figures, 96.6 percent of the Hungarian population of Czechoslovakia lives in Slovakia, and 3.4 percent is dispersed throughout the Czech Republic.

Preliminary 1991 census data shows that the population of Czechoslovakia numbers 15,567,666. This includes 8,426,070 Czechs, 4,819,948 Slovaks, 1,360,155 Moravians, 45,223 Silesians, 586,884 Hungarians, 114,116 Gypsies, 61,642 Polish, 53,418 Germans, 18,648 Ruthenians, 20,654 Ukrainians, 30,236 other and 30,772 unknown nationalities.

According to final 1991 census data, the Slovak population numbered 5,274,335 of which 4,519,328 (85.68%) were Slovak, 567,296 (10.75%) Hungarian, 75,802 (1.43%) Gypsies, 52,884 (1.00%) Czechs, 17,197 (0.32%) Ruthenians, 13,281 (0.25%) Ukrainians, 6,037 (0.11%) Moravians, 5,414 (0.10%) Germans, 2,659 (0.05%) Poles, 405 (0.00%) Silesians and 14,032 (0.26%) other and unknown nationalities. According to data regarding native language, there are 608,221 (11.53%) in Slovakia.

The current number of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia is a result of past policies of intimidation, exclusion, deportation, resettlement and assimilation.

Before December 1920, over 100 thousand Hungarians fled or moved to Hungary from the territory of present Slovakia. Approximately 100 thousand Jews who had previously identified themselves to be Hungarian were no longer identified as Hungarian, and more than 16 thousand inhabitants of Hungarian nationality were refused Czechoslovakian citizenship. All of this, along with a slow assimilationist process, led to the drastic decline in the number of Hungarians (see *Figure 6*).

After World War II, a newly organized Czechoslovak state aimed to create a pure Slavic nation-state. As a result, between 1945 and 1949 the number of Hungarians in Slovakia drastically decreased. Thirty-two thousand people were expelled, 69 thousand were resettled in the Hungarian-Czechoslovak population exchange program, 6 thousand fled, 44 thousand were deported to the Czech Lands, and 327 thousand re-Slovakicized (for those who declared themselves to be Slovak could regain their citizenship and keep their

private property).

Between 1950 and 1960, the recorded number of Hungarians in Slovakia increased mainly because less people were afraid of declaring their ethnic identity; the fear of 1945-49 had somewhat dissolved. Since 1960, the proportion of ethnic Hungarians to ethnic Slovaks has continuously decreased.

2.1 Territorial Distribution

Ninety-nine percent of the Hungarians of Slovakia live in 13 districts and 2 large cities in Southern Slovakia. The settlements populated by ethnic Hungarians compose an almost continuous linguistic territory in Southern Slovakia, from Bratislava (Pozsony) to the Slovakian-Ukrainian border. (There are two short breaks in the linguistic zone: in the Nagykürtös/Velky Krtis district and in the area of Kassa/Kosice and Töketerebes/Trebisov.) Linguistic territory includes those settlements where the ethnic Hungarian population comprises at least 10 percent of the population.

The area of the linguistic territory has significantly decreased since 1918. The largest decrease occurred in the latter half of the 1940's; the area has not changed significantly since the 1950's.

Outside of the linguistic territory, there are 28 townships whose population includes over 100 ethnic Hungarians (less than 10 percent of the population of the settlement):

There are more than 100 ethnic Hungarian inhabitants in 551 cities and townships in Slovakia. The inhabitants of these locations include 99.3 percent of the total ethnic Hungarian population of Slovakia.

The population proportion of ethnic Hungarians exceeds 10 percent in 523 townships. A total of 92.2 percent of the Hungarians of Slovakia live in such settlements. Of the total combined population in these settlements, 61.7 percent is ethnic Hungarian.

The population proportion of ethnic Hungarians exceeds 50 percent in 435 of the 551 townships. Over 440 thousand ethnic Hungarians live in these settlements. Of their total combined population, 78.3 percent is ethnic Hungarian (see *Table 3* and *Figure 7* in the Appendix for more detailed information on population distribution).

There are at least 1,000 ethnic Hungarian inhabitants in 27 locations that qualify as cities. The ethnic Hungarian population comprises a majority in 13 of these cities. Ethnic Hungarians comprise a relative majority in one city (Szepsi/Moldava nad Bodvou).

More than 10,000 Hungarians inhabit 5 cities: Komárom/Komarno (23,753), Pozsony/Bratislava (19,505), Dunaszerdahely/Dunajská Streda (19,447), Érsekújvár/Nové

Zámky (13,287) and Kassa/Kosice (10,128).

The following are cities with a majority Hungarian population: Somorja/Samorín, Dunaszerdahely/Dunajská Streda, Nagymegyer/Calovo, Gúta/Kolárovo, Komárom/Komarno, Párkány/Stúrovo, Zselíz/Zeliezovce, Ipolyság/Sahy, Fülek/Filakovo, Tornalja/Safárikovo, Királyhelmec/Kráľovský Chlmec, Nagykapos/Velké Kapusany, Tiszacsernyő/Cierna nad Tisou.

The number and proportion of Hungarians in the majority of Hungarian-inhabited districts continues to decline.

2.2 Age Composition

The average age of the ethnic Hungarian population is gradually increasing.

While the proportion of children (0-14 years) is declining (from 27.8 percent of 21.8 percent), the proportion of adults (15-59) is increasing (from 55.5 percent to 62.0 percent). The proportion of the elderly (over 60) is not changing in any significant way.

The number of Hungarian children between 0-14 years has decreased by 10,307 between 1970 and 1980. (See *Figure 1*)

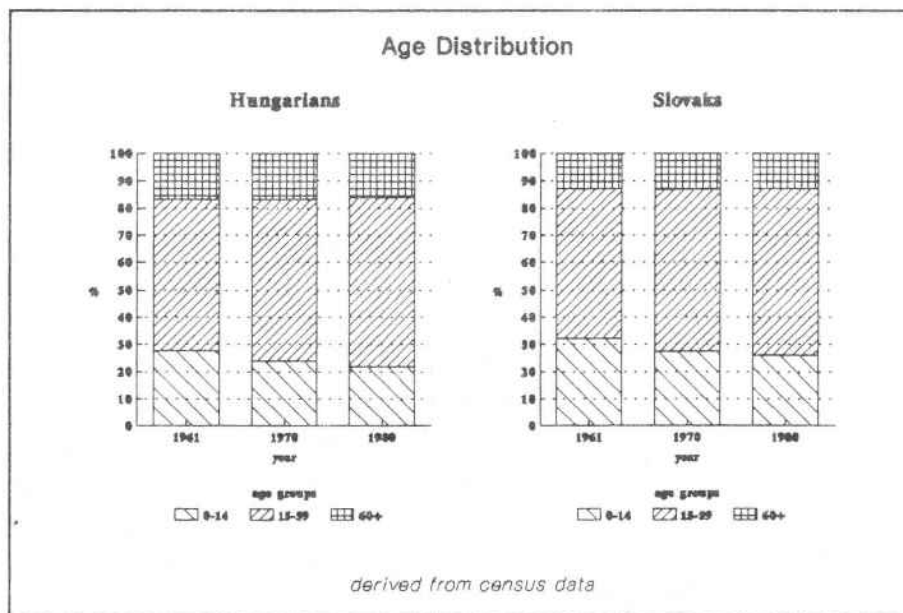


Figure 1

3. Political representation

Following the changes of November 1989, the Hungarians of Slovakia -- after more than half a century of forced stagnation -- reorganized themselves into a political community and reestablished their political movements and parties. The political parties founded by the ethnic Hungarians of Slovakia all promote the establishment of a democratic rule of law, a market economy, and guarantees for the equal legal status, right to identity, and establishment of self-rule in the spheres of education and culture for ethnic and national communities.

The *Coexistence Political Movement* (Coexistence) was established in February 1990 and advocates democracy and the rights of national communities. Functioning on the federal level in the whole of Czechoslovakia, Coexistence is the most significant political party of Hungarians in Slovakia both in its organization and local representation. Coexistence raises a voice for the rights of all national communities in Slovakia and has Polish and Ukrainian representatives in parliament.

It participated in the first free parliamentary elections in coalition with the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement and won seats in both the Federal and Slovak parliaments as an opposition coalition.

In the parliamentary election of 1992, Coexistence formed a three-member coalition with the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement and the Hungarian People's Party. Having reached the 7 percent minimum required for representation, it again won seats both to the Federal Assembly and well as the Slovak National Council, where it is in opposition. Eight out of the twelve coalition representatives in Prague and 9 out of the 14 representatives in Pozsony/Bratislava represent Coexistence, with a total of 17 parliamentary representatives. (There are 300 total seats in Prague and 150 in Bratislava). There is one ethnic Pole representing Coexistence.

The *Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement* (HCDM) was established in March 1990 and professes the values of Christian Democracy. It ran in coalition with Coexistence in both the 1990 and 1992 elections, and sits in parliament as a member of the opposition. Regarding local chapters and the number of local representatives, the HCDM is the second most significant movement of the Hungarians of Slovakia. Presently, it is represented by 9 members of parliament (4 in Prague and 5 in Bratislava). The HCDM functions only in the Slovak Republic.

The *Independent Hungarian Initiative* was established on November 18, 1989 and became a political party, the *Hungarian Citizens Party* (HCP), in January 1992. It defines itself as a liberal party. It participated in the first free parliamentary elections on the list of the Slovakian Public Against Violence movement and gained representation in both the

Federal and Slovak parliaments. It was a member of the Slovak government coalition between 1990 and 1992. The HCP ran separate lists in the parliamentary elections of June 1992, but not having attained the 7 percent minimum, it did not gain representation in parliament. This party also functions in Slovakia.

The *Hungarian Peoples Party* was established in December 1991. The basic elements of its program include the establishment of a democratic rule of law, the promotion of Christian values, national reconciliation, and establishment of a market economy that is sensitive to social issues. It ran in coalition with Coexistence and the HCDM in the 1992 parliamentary elections. Being a young party, it is not represented either on the local or parliamentary levels.

In the last three years, the Hungarian political parties of Slovakia have all represented the development of a democratic rule of law, transition to market economy, speeding up of economic reform, and establishment of guarantees for human and minority rights. They have often tipped the scale in favour of constitutionalism and stability.

Political parties established by ethnic Hungarians also uniformly advocate guarantees for educational and cultural autonomy and the right to identity.

Table 1 on the next page illustrates the political parties and movements of the Hungarian minority, in light of the elections.

PARTY/ MOVEMENT	ELECTIONS			
	Slovak Nat'l Council ²		Local - Nov.1990 ³	
	1990	1992	mayors	local reps.
Hungarian Civic Party ⁴ (IHI)		70,689 <u>2.29%</u>	27 <u>1.0%</u>	482 <u>1.3%</u>
Coexistence	292,636 <u>8.66%</u>	228,885 <u>7.42%</u>	102 <u>3.7%</u>	2,416 <u>6.3%</u>
Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement			35 <u>1.3%</u>	1,153 <u>3.0%</u>
Hungarian Peoples Party ⁵	-		-	-

Table 1: Political Representation of the Hungarians of Slovakia: 1990 and 1992 Elections

² Elections to the two chambers of the Federal Assembly (Nations Chamber and Peoples Chamber) and to the Slovak National Council took place in 1990 and June 1992. This table only includes data regarding the number and proportion of votes won to the Slovak National Council.

³ Local elections were held in November 1990. The table includes the number and proportion of votes won by the mayors and local representatives of certain political parties.

⁴ The number of votes received by the Independent Hungarian Initiative in June 1990 cannot be determined, for it ran in coalition with the Public Against Violence which won a relative victory to the Slovak National Council with 991,285 (29.34%) votes.

⁵ The Hungarian Peoples Party has participated in only one election so far. It ran in the 1992 parliamentary elections in coalition with Coexistence and the HCDM.

4. Legal status

For over seventy years since the establishment of the Czechoslovakian state, the legal status of national communities has remained unresolved. After November 1989, the fundamentally positive changes with respect to general human rights, rights to freedom, and economic transitions were not accompanied by significant changes in the relations between minority groups and state authorities regarding minority rights.

4.1 Historical background

The location of the borders of the Czechoslovakian state were influenced by the World War I victors and drawn in consideration of historical, economic, strategic, and transportation factors. Reference was also made to the self-determination of the "Czechoslovakian nation". The inhabitants of the territory, however, had no say in the matter; no referendum was allowed. But despite repeated declarations asserting the need to consider ethnic composition in establishing the borders, and despite a clearly distinguishable Hungarian linguistic territory, a new multi-national state was created from the ethnically diverse Austro-Hungarian empire. Over one-third of the population of this new state was neither Czech nor Slovak.

The rights of the "Czechoslovakian" population were enumerated both in the Treaty of Saint Germain en Laye signed on September 10, 1919 and the Peace Treaty of Trianon signed on June 4, 1920. Recognition of the independence of Czechoslovakia, however, did not depend upon the state authorities' respect for the rights of the population of that state.

Both the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic (No.121/1920) and the Language Law (122/1920) adopted the minority protection clauses enumerated in the Treaty of Saint Germain en Laye. But this did not hinder the state from legally discriminating against the Hungarian minority. The discriminatory practices of the Czechoslovakian state included adoption of the executive order of the language law (No.17/1926), the agricultural reform law, refusal of citizenship, shutting down universities and colleges, limitations on Hungarian-language schools, and hindering the nostrification of diplomas. Despite these legal obstacles, the civil democratic political system of the first Republic made it possible for the Hungarians to organize themselves politically, economically and culturally.

Developments in the 1930's, the spread of fascism and Czechoslovakia's mistreatment of its national communities provided Hitler with justification to use Czechoslovakia's violation of the right to self-determination as a cover for his expansionist political goals. France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy signed the Munich agreement in September

1938, and, as a result, the Sudeten German territories of Czechoslovakia were annexed to Germany. A solution to the Hungarian minority question was attempted on November 2, 1938, when the Vienna Court of Arbitration annexed 12,109 square kilometres -- including a population of 869 which included 752 thousand Hungarians (86.5 percent) - - back to Hungary.

Following the Second World War, the new Czechoslovakia was reestablished within its previous, Trianon borders. The northern Hungarians once again became a minority and were exposed to renewed efforts of the Czechoslovakian authorities to create a pure Slavic nation-state. The Czechoslovakian government program included the stripping all Germans and Hungarians (approximately 4 million people) of Czechoslovakian citizenship.

The Czechoslovakian government divested its Hungarian inhabitants of all of their rights and human dignity for four years. During this period, the decrees of President Benes deprived the Hungarian of their citizenship (33/1945), their private property (108/1946), their cultural and interest protecting groups (81/1945), and their schools (Slovak National Council Decree No.6/1944). They also prohibited the use of the Hungarian language.

After the attempts of the Czechoslovakian government to deport the ethnic Hungarians (similar to its attempts with the Sudeten Germans) failed at the Potsdam Conference, Czechoslovakian authorities strove to eliminate the Hungarian minority through

- a) *expelling* of the ethnic Hungarian population,
- b) *forced resettlement* to Czechoslovakia,
- c) *population exchange* with Hungary and
- d) *re-Slovakization*.

The first anti-Hungarian proceedings taken by the state authorities after World War II was the *expelling* of 32,000 ethnic Hungarians between May and June of 1945. These proceedings were carried out in various phases that primarily aimed to expel ethnic Hungarians of Bratislava, ethnic Hungarian public servants, and those ethnic Hungarians who settled in the reannexed area of northern Hungary between 1938 and 1945.

Presidential decree 88/1945 of October 1, 1945 adopted by President Benes provided the legal foundation for the *forced resettlement*, according to which all males between the ages of 16 and 55 and women between the ages of 18 and 45 could be forced to work in Czechoslovakia. Forceful deportation of Hungarian families began with the directive promulgated on November 4, 1945 by the Slovak Settlement Office. Forceful resettlement was carried out with military force, and, as a result, 42,000 Hungarians were deported to the Czech Lands.

The *population exchange* agreement between Hungary and Czechoslovakia was signed on February 17, 1946, after the Potsdam Conference rejected the Czechoslovakian initiative to deport 200,000 Hungarians. The agreement was based on the false Czechoslovakian

propaganda according to which the number of Slovaks that live in Hungary is the same as the number of Hungarians inhabiting Czechoslovakia. While the Hungarians (primarily the intelligentsia and the property owners) were resettled as a result of the agreement, Slovaks from Hungary could, *by their own free will*, resettle in Czechoslovakia and receive property. As a result, between April 17, 1947 and June 10, 1948 73,273 Slovaks arrived in Czechoslovakia and 75,000 Hungarians were forced to leave Czechoslovakia.

Re-Slovakization was begun with a governmental decree adopted in June 1946. This decree allowed the heads of Hungarian families to deny their nationality in front of a reslovakization committee. If the Hungarians declared themselves to be Slovaks and vowed, along with their families, to "return to their nation", they could regain their citizenship and keep their property. Re-Slovakization was organized by the government between June 17 and July 1, 1947 and, as a result, 327,000 Hungarians were re-Slovakized.

Although ethnic Hungarians were no longer openly accused of collective guilt and their open persecution was ceased in 1948-49 -- mainly as a result of changed international conditions -- its political, economic, cultural and moral consequences are still widely felt today.

In the analysis of the legal status of the Hungarians of Czechoslovakia, reference to constitutional regulation is of special significance.

The Czechoslovakian constitution adopted after the Communists took power in May 1948 does not mention the rights of minorities. The first postwar mention of the Hungarian population was the July 1956 Bill. Article 2 of this Bill guarantees "agreeable conditions for the economic and cultural life of the population of Hungarian and Ukrainian nationality."

According to article 25 of the July 1960 constitution (No.100/1960), "the state guarantees every possibility and means for the native language education and cultural development of citizens of Hungarian, Ukrainian and Polish nationality."

From the perspective of the post-1945 legal status of national communities, the first significant constitutional regulation was adopted in 1968 (Constitutional Law No. No.144/1968). The regulation, reflecting the limitations and contradictions of the single party system, recognized the Hungarian, German, Polish and Ukrainian (Ruthenian) nations as state-forming nations that complement the Czech and Slovak nations. Moreover, it established the nationalities' "a) right to culture in their own language, b) right to multi-faceted cultural development, c) right to use their own language in official matters, d) right to association in nationality cultural-social organizations, e) right to press and information in their own language." These rights, however, remained on paper; they were never implemented. The institutional system of the minorities was destroyed under the "normalization" conditions of the Husak era.

4.2 Current legal conditions

The Hungarians of Slovakia expected the democratic changes following November 1989 to bring about a democratic rule of law, the development of a well-functioning market economy, and the guarantee of human and minority rights. The fundamentally positive changes with respect to general human rights, rights to freedom, and economic transitions, however, were not accompanied by significant changes in the relations between minority groups and state authorities regarding minority rights.

In January 1991, the Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia adopted a Bill of Fundamental Rights and Liberties that includes only limited guarantees for the rights of persons belonging to minorities. After the adoption of this bill, the state defined itself as a dual nation-state.

In October 1990, the Slovak Republic adopted a discriminatory language law which safeguards the majority language from the minority languages and does not ensure the right of the national communities to use their native language in official matters. The language law resulted in the displacement of bilingual signs, especially on those settlements where the minority group is in a numerical minority; the restriction of the use of the native language; and rejection of the replacement of the original townships' names, despite valid local referendums that voted for the change.

Regarding definitive legislation concerning rehabilitation, restitution, compensation, and land retribution, the cutoff date was set at February 25, 1948 -- the day the communists took power -- whereas the ethnic Hungarians had been deprived of all their rights and property **before** that date. Presidential decrees, laws and orders passed between 1945 and 1948 and based on accusing the ethnic Hungarians of collective guilt had already deprived them of all of their rights and property. The fact that no ethnic Hungarian can reclaim property or possessions demonstrates the state's continued, hidden consideration of ethnic Hungarians to be collectively guilty. This places the already disadvantaged Hungarian population in an even more disadvantageous situation in a market economy.

The state has made no effort to clear the legal and moral consequences of its past condemnation of the Hungarians of Slovakia as collectively guilty. The Slovak National Council, however, did formally apologize to the Jewish and German populations of Slovakia, who were almost completely deported during and after World War II. The selective character of the apology leads us to conclude that it is not done out of principle, but is administered according to 1) the degree to which a previously accused minority has been eliminated and 2) the present influence of the minority's mother country.

The declaration regarding the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic was proclaimed after the June 1992 parliamentary elections, and the Slovak Constitution was adopted on September 1, 1992. Both documents were born of a nation-state perspective that rejected

the suggestions of the coalition of Hungarian representatives aiming to strengthen the civic principle, the equality of minorities under law, the guarantee to identity and internal self-determination, and the guarantee of parliamentary democracy:

- a) The constitution does not guarantee national communities the right to preserve and protect their identity and it does not provide guarantees against their assimilation.
- b) The constitution does not fully guarantee the right to association. National communities are permitted to establish only nationality associations, making it possible for the state to abolish the political parties established by national communities at any time.
- c) The constitution does not guarantee national communities the right to establish schools in the native language and does not rule out the elimination of those that already exist.
- d) The constitution introduces the concept of *state-language* instead of *official language*. It does not provide guarantees for the official use of the language of minorities, but projects further expected restrictions of the right of national communities to use their native language.
- e) The minority rights section of the constitution mirrors the government's lack of trust of the minorities by establishing that the practice of these rights cannot threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic. This clause leaves room for arbitrary interpretation and contains no legal guarantee that prohibits the authorities from taking advantage of it.
- f) By failing to guarantee the right of minorities and persons belonging to minorities to a homeland, to identity and to self-rule, the constitution has degraded minorities to the level of second-class citizens.

5. Economic Situation

The overwhelmingly agricultural territories inhabited by ethnic Hungarians have remained far less developed than the other territories of Slovakia due to unproportionately low investment and low industrial development in that area.

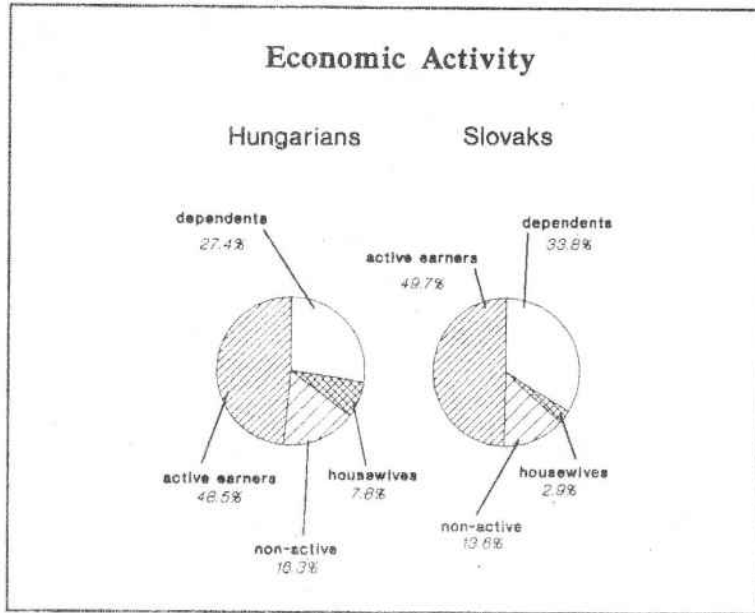


Figure 2

Hungarian population exceeds 10 percent.

Ethnic Hungarian presence in the branches of economic activity and national economy is less advantageous than that of the Slovak population. This is due in large part to the differences in settlement patterns -- the proportion of Hungarians that live in villages is larger -- and the lack of sufficient jobs in agriculture. According to May 1992 figures, the proportion of unemployed is 14.9 percent as opposed to the Slovak average of 11.3 percent in those districts where the ethnic

The distribution of ethnic Hungarians and Slovaks regarding economic activity and national economy according to 1980 census data is depicted in *Figures 2 and 3*.

6. Education

Attempts by the government to assimilate the ethnic Hungarian population have been most clearly manifested in attempts to tear down the Hungarian language school network. The process of democratization since November 1989 has not resulted in a breakthrough in the nationality education policy of the government.

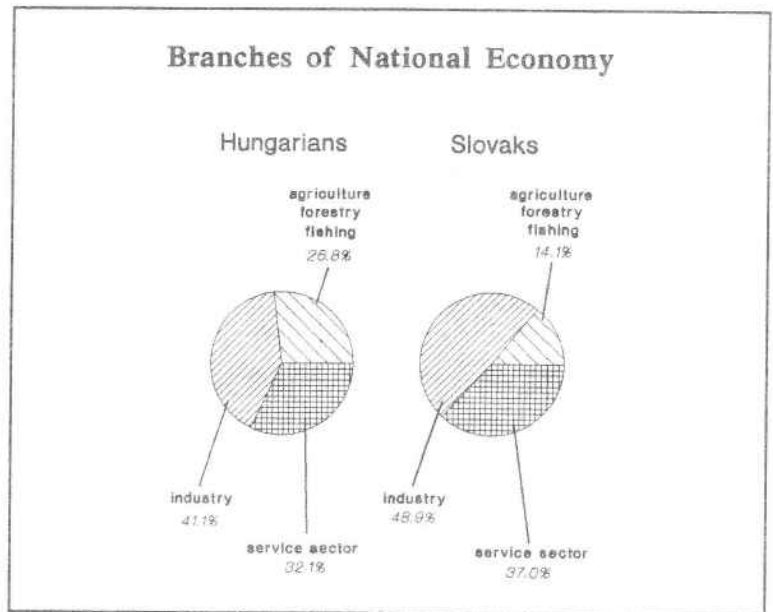


Figure 3

The state authorities shut down the Hungarian-language schools that functioned during the first Republic of Czechoslovakia in 1945. Hungarian-language classes were reestablished only in the autumn 1948.

The foundations of the present network of Hungarian-language schools (kindergartens, elementary schools, secondary schools, trade high schools, trade institutes, etc.) evolved in the 1950's. Educational reorganization that included the combining of small schools and the placing of Slovakian and Hungarian-language schools of the same settlement under single direction has had negative consequences for the structure of Hungarian-language schools. As a result, the number of Hungarian-language elementary schools has decreased, as has the proportion of classes and students.

Hungarian language secondary schools experienced the same transition, though at a different time.

The number and proportion of ethnic Hungarian students attending Slovak-language elementary and high schools is gradually increasing. The number and proportion of Hungarian students at the college and university level is twice or five times lower than the Slovak average.

Table 2 portrays the number of Hungarian language schools, classes and students in 1991:

TYPE OF SCHOOL									
	KINDERGARTEN			ELEMENTARY SCHOOL			HIGH SCHOOL		
	TOTAL	HUNG	%	TOTAL	HUNG	%	TOTAL	HUNG	%
schools	4024	345	8.6	2356	257	10.9	126	10	7.9
classes	9292	695	7.4	28339	2071	7.3	1686	138	8.2
students	216256	14970	6.9	720326	64693	9.0	54518	4856	8.9

Table 2: Hungarian Language Schools, Classes and Students (1991)

In the years following World War II, policies that have weighed heavily on the Hungarians of Slovakia have permanently influenced the average education level of the Hungarian ethnic group. By the end of the 1940's, the resettlements, deportations, exchange of populations, and "re-Slovakization" have almost completely eliminated the ethnic Hungarian intelligentsia. There were significant differences between the education levels of Slovak and Hungarian nationality students even in 1980 (see Figure 4).

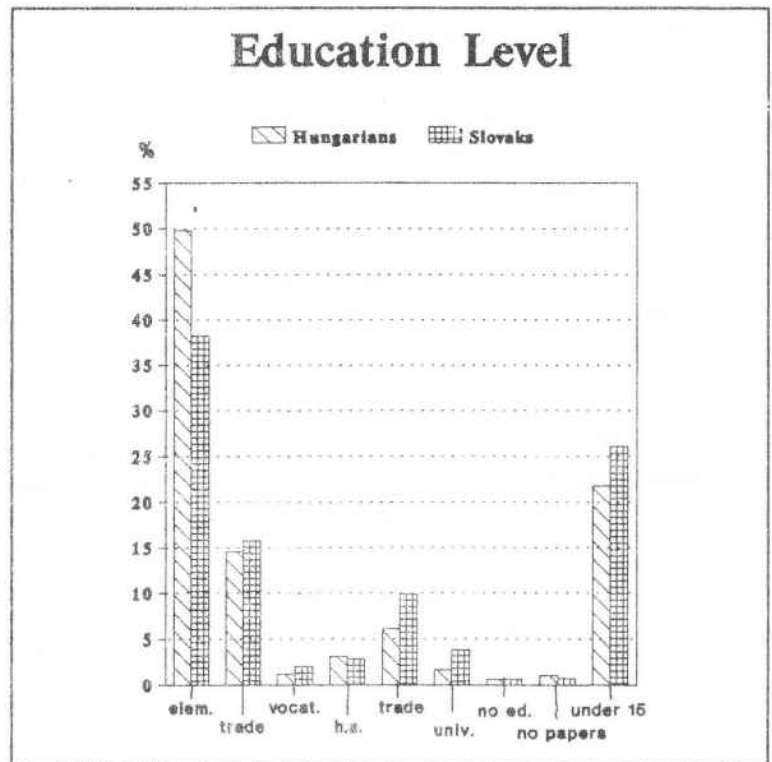


Figure 4

The democratic changes following November 1989 have failed to lead to a breakthrough in the nationality education policy of the government. To this day, the government has not accepted the principle of self-determination in education; there is no respective legal or institutional guarantee for the protection and development of native language education for national communities. The authorities have also refused to allow the establishment of a higher educational institution that would train Hungarian-language teachers.

7. Culture

Although the cultural institutional system of the Hungarians of Slovakia has pluralized in the months following the changes of November 1989, the institutional structure remains insufficient due to lack of material resources and the lack of recognition of the ethnic group's right to cultural autonomy.

Before November 1989, the only permitted cultural and social organization was the CSEMADOK (Democratic Association of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia), established in 1949 and currently including 90 thousand members. After November 1989, other cultural associations, organizations and groups have been established.

Whereas before November 1989 there was only one book publisher, the Madách, today there are numerous other small publishers (Hont, Pannónia, Gazda, Kalligram, DhPress, Glória, Nap, and others).

Currently, there are two daily newspapers (Új Szó, Szabad Újság), many magazines and journals (Barátnő, Cserkész, Hét, Hifi, Irodalmi Szemle, Jó Gazda, Nap, Nő, Kaligram, Keleti Napló, Remény, Tábortűz, Tücsök) and various regional periodicals.

The institutional structure of Hungarian-language drama and theatre is provided by the Jókai Theatre and the Thália Theatre of Kassa.

The Hungarian section of the Slovak Radio provides 40 hours of broadcast in Hungarian per week; however, the media with the most influence, the Slovak Television, only broadcasts 20-40 minutes of Hungarian language program per week, which does not even satisfy the most basic needs of the Hungarian ethnic group. Current Hungarian-language broadcast schedules continue to be interrupted and altered from time to time.

There are no institutional structures or necessary material and legal conditions that allow for the establishment of a Hungarian-language library, archives, museum, and minority research institute.

8. Religion

According to 1991 census data of Slovakia, 9.7 percent of the population does not claim any religious affiliation and 17.5 percent is of unknown religious affiliation. A total of 63.7 percent of the population is Catholic, and the rest is Protestant. Estimates show that the religious affiliation of the Hungarians of Slovakia reflect a similar picture, except for the fact that the proportion of Protestants is higher among ethnic Hungarians. Close to three-fourths of the Hungarian population of Slovakia is Christian: two-thirds to three-fourths Catholic and one-fourth to one-third Protestant, primarily Reformed.

A decisive majority of Hungarian Catholics belong to the Church provinces of Nagyszombat/Trnava, Kassa/Kosice and Rozsnyó/Roznava. There are approximately 240 Hungarian Catholic parishes but no ethnic Hungarian bishop. The most serious difficulty, however, is presented by the lack of Hungarian priests. Many of the currently ordained priests continue to grow older, and the problem of the lack of training for Hungarian priests remains unresolved.

The Reformed church is decisively Hungarian. The most significant problem faced by the Reformed church is the absence of replacement for elderly pastors and the effects of decades-old Church persecution. There are a few thousand Evangelical Hungarians in Slovakia.

9. Environmental issues

Two of the largest current energy investments of Slovakia -- the Bös/Gabcikovo hydroelectric plant and the Mohi/Mochovce atomic energy plant -- have a direct negative effect on the environment and endanger the ethnic structure of Hungarian settlements.

The Gabcikovo hydroelectric plant endangers the largest grouping of Hungarians in the area called the Csallóköz. Hungary and Czechoslovakia signed the contract regarding construction of the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros dam project in 1977. According to this project, the hydroelectric power plant would involve the construction of a channel 30 kilometres long, 18 metres high and 250 metres wide on Czechoslovak territory. The Danube would be redirected to flow along the protruding dam that would stretch along the most fertile flatlands of the region. This project is being carried out without the approval or agreement of the directly affected population; in fact, authorities even failed to consult the population of the area. As early as the 1980's, environmental movements in Hungary have organized demonstrations against the building of the Nagymaros section. This struggle had become one of the symbols of the struggle against the single party system, and the democratic opposition was successful in halting the Hungarian construction.

The November 1989 elections in Czechoslovakia signified hope that the Czechoslovakian half would also halt construction and that a mutual solution would be found. The citizens of the area participated in mass demonstrations against continuation of the project. A citizen initiative was born (Eurochain), and international activities were organized with the World Wild Fund in order to protect environmental views and the interests of the population of the area.

Following a short recess, the Slovakian government continues one-sided construction of the dam project and has used force to put down peaceful demonstrations. The government has also ignored letters of protest by 58 mayors who have asked that the government seriously consider environmental perspectives and the interests of the inhabitants of the area. Certain nationalist forces in Slovakia have come to consider the project to be a national symbol. Construction to redirect the Danube -- the natural border between Hungary and Slovakia -- and complete the Gabcikovo dam as soon as possible is currently being conducted at a high pace.

Those concerned fear that in addition to causing international legal and security problems, the dam project will lead to environmental damages (pollution of drinking water, destruction of the agricultural ecosystem) that will force the population of the area (mainly ethnic Hungarian) to leave their homes and search for employment elsewhere. The most homogeneous group of ethnic Hungarians will be completely diluted. With regard to the construction of the atomic energy plant of Mohi, the ethnic composition of the territory was altered due to the settlement of workers.

10. Prospects

These are trying years for the Hungarians of Slovakia. This national community is witness to the creation of a new state in which attempts to attain Slovak national exclusivity play a definitive role. In their strive for independence and search for their own identity and sovereignty, presently dominating Slovak political parties contradict themselves when they speak of freedom, equality in law, self-determination and respect for difference when addressing the Czechs, but at the same time are unable to tolerate or recognize their own minorities' right to difference and to preserve, develop and pass on their own identity.

The representatives of the Hungarian-founded political parties of Slovakia consider democracy, a market economy, and the guarantee for fundamental human rights and liberties to be the essential pillars for the securing of minority rights. The demographic and territorial distribution data repeated below, however, secure the concrete, factual foundations for the recognition of the right to identity and autonomy (primarily in the fields of education, culture, information and language use) of minorities.

According to 1991 census data, there are 435 settlements in Slovakia with a majority Hungarian population. Their total population is 561,908. A total of 78.3 percent of the population -- 440,143 citizens -- are Hungarian. This number comprises 77.7 percent of the total ethnic Hungarian population of Slovakia. The number of Slovaks that inhabit settlements with a majority Hungarian population is 111,055 or 19 percent of the population of these settlements.

Inasmuch as the linguistic territory is defined by having at least a 10 percent ethnic Hungarian population, we can state that there are 523 settlements that belong to the Hungarian linguistic territory⁶. With few exceptions, these settlements form a zone whose total population is 846,649. A total of 522,408 -- 61.7 percent -- are ethnic Hungarian. The number of ethnic Slovaks inhabiting this zone is 306,599, or 36.2 percent. **A total of 92.2 percent of the Hungarian minority inhabits this zone.**

Based on the above, the foundations of a long-term solution include 1) legal guarantees for the jurisdiction and resources of local self-governments, based on the principle underlying the European Charter on Local Self-Governments (1985), 2) constitutional and legal guarantees for the right to autonomy in education, culture and the media; the right to use the native language; and the demarcation of the linguistic zone and legal guarantee of bilingualism, and 3) recognition of the self-governmental, legal jurisdiction of the natural organizations of the regions and their consideration in the administrative division

⁶ This number would be larger were we to consider data regarding native language. According to 1991 census data on native language, 40,925 more individuals identified themselves as native speakers of Hungarian than as of Hungarian nationality.

of the district.

In order that the situation of the Hungarians of Slovakia be improved through peaceful means and their human and minority rights be respected, the Slovak political arena must be dominated by a conscious, political effort to replace assimilationist politics with integrationist politics, to establish a democratic rule of law that respects ethnic diversity, and to codify and implement international guarantees regarding national minority rights.

Appendix

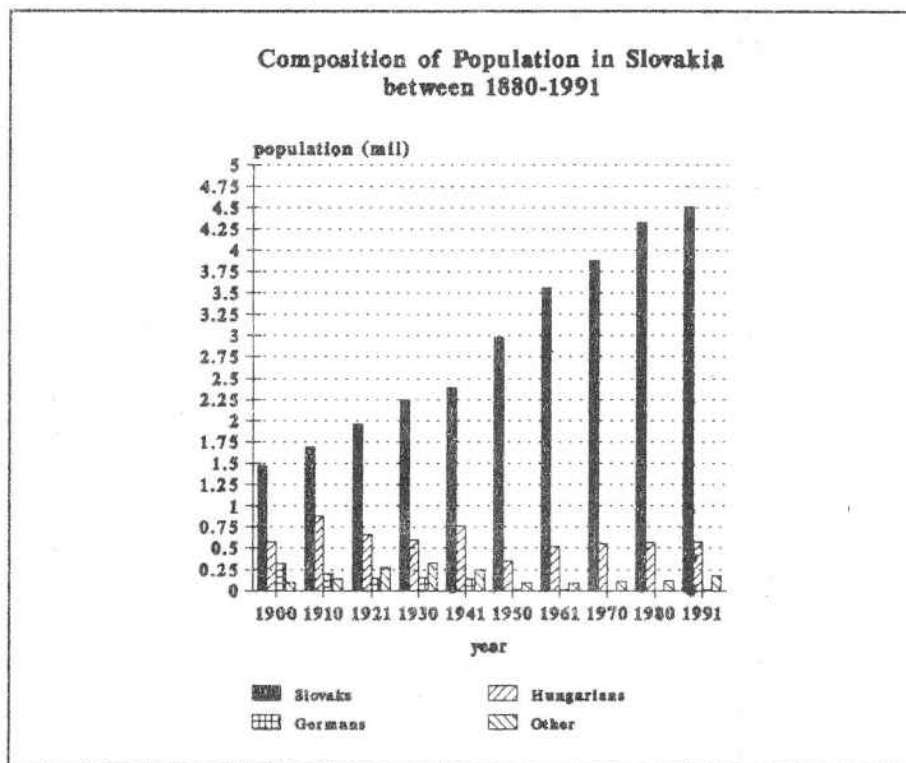


Figure 5

*Note: The "other" category in Figure 5 includes Czechs, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Jews, Gypsies and others.

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF SLOVAKIA							
	Slovak	Czech	Hung.	German	Ruthen.	Jewish	Other
1900	59.6%		23.1%	12.8%	3.3%		1.2%
1921	65.1%	2.4%	21.7%	4.8%	3.0%	2.5%	0.3%
1950	86.6%	1.2%	10.3%	0.1%	1.4% ⁷		0.4%
1961	85.3%	1.1%	12.4%	0.1%	0.9%		0.2%
1991	85.6%	1.0%	10.8%	0.1%	0.6%		1.9% ⁸

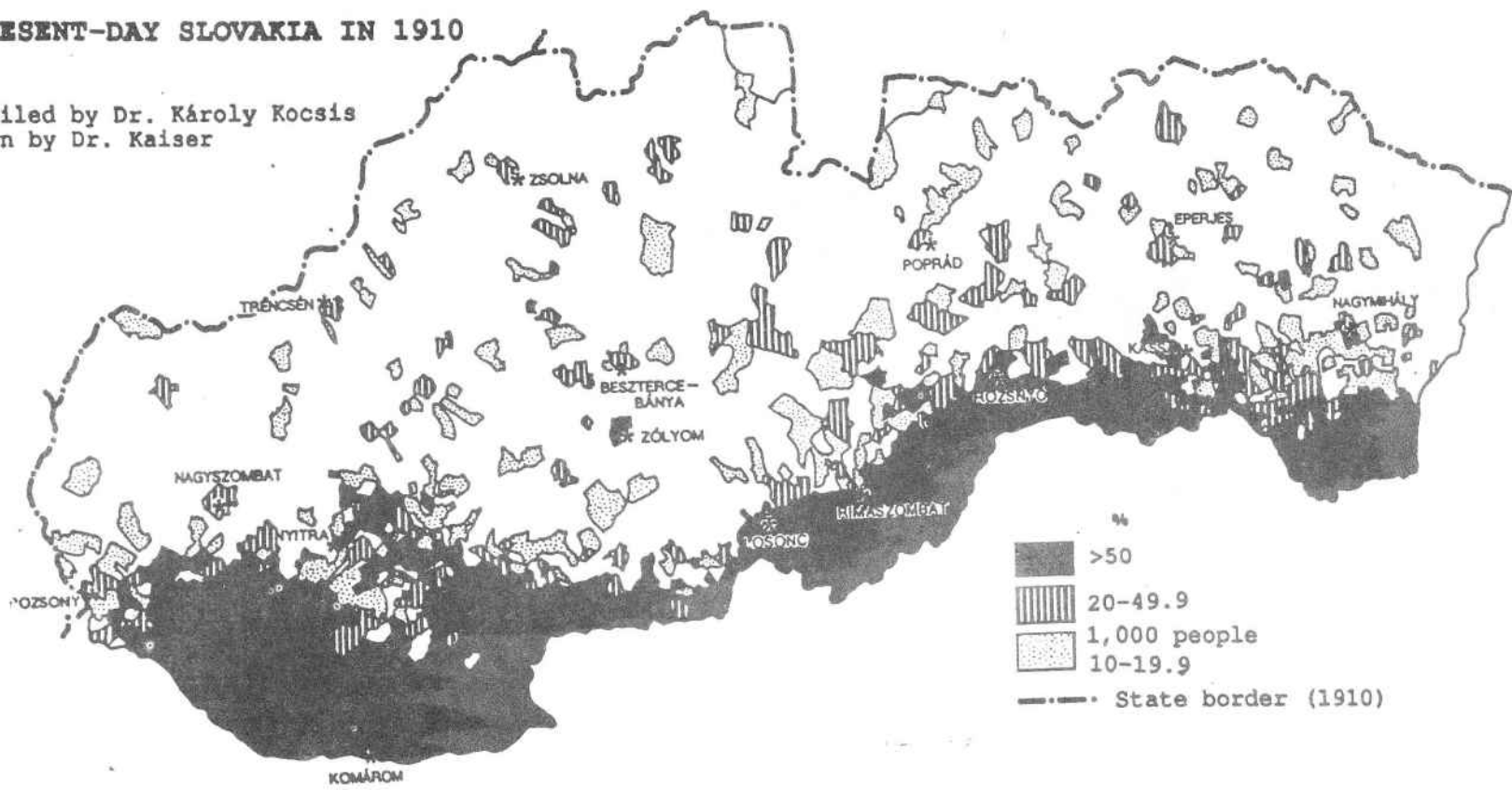
Table 3: Ethnic Composition of the Population of Slovakia (based on census data)

⁷ Census data regarding Ruthenians includes ethnic Ukrainians in the years 1950, 1961 and 1991.

⁸ This figure includes Gypsies (1.5%).

DISTRIBUTION OF HUNGARIANS IN
PRESENT-DAY SLOVAKIA IN 1910

Compiled by Dr. Károly Kocsis
Drawn by Dr. Kaiser



DISTRIBUTION OF HUNGARIANS IN SLOVAKIA
(1991)

Compiled by Dr. Károly Kocsis
Drawn by Dr. Kaiser

