

SLOVAKS IN HUNGARIAN STATISTICS BEFORE AND AFTER 1918*

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As is generally known, any investigation of the nationality structure in multinational historical Hungary has to cope with many problems associated with the fact that the goal of official Hungarian statistics has not been to give an objective report of the state and development of nations and nationalities living in the country. They have strongly been influenced by political aspects and the assimilation trends of Hungarian government policy. We have to look at these statistical figures from a critical perspective and to judge them in the wider context of the situation of the day. While the historiography of the neighbours of Hungary approaches them carefully and with certain objections, in Hungary, the unilateral statistics are even today understood as a fundamental and a reliable source of information about the nationality composition of the former Hungarian state during the period of dualism. This logically leads to different conclusions. Since the differences are considerable, it will be worth concentrating on the analysis of Hungarian statistics both in historical Hungary and in Hungary after 1918. We shall also use concrete examples to show that the statistical evidence of the nationality structure of former and post-war Hungary is unreliable.

The statistical analysis of the ethnic structure of historical Hungary was officially started in the second half of last century. By then, the nationality composition of the State had been examined by individuals, who had drawn on a variety of criteria and different materials. These explorations show that at the beginning of the eighteenth century when the Turkish plundering had come to an end, the number of Slovaks reported to lived in former Hungary was about 405,000 which represented 15.8 per cent of the total number of inhabitants. Towards the end of the century, their number increased to 1,320,000 (16.5 per cent). In the middle of

* Up to 1918, Hungary was a multinational state. Ethnic nations living there – with the exception of the ruling Magyars – have two separate names for the historical and present-day Hungary as well as for its inhabitants. Since there is only one name for both historical and present-day Hungary in English, we use two terms to distinguish historical/former Hungary from present-day Hungary. As for the population, we use the term Hungarian in historical sense, i.e. for any inhabitant of historical Hungary (both Magyars and non-Magyars) in contrast to Magyars; the latter term applies to those inhabitants of the country whose ethnic identity was/is Magyar.

last century, the Austrian Government took the first official population census throughout the realm; 1,759,000 inhabitants, i.e. 15.2 per cent of the population of Hungary, declared their nationality to be Slovak.

The population censuses and the nationality composition have been taken regularly every ten years since 1880 up to the fall of historical Hungary by the Statistical Office in Budapest, i.e. in 1880, 1890, 1900, and 1910. The relative numbers of Slovaks decreased according to these data to 1900 and since then a decline in absolute numbers has also been observed (see the table).

Year	Slovaks	%	Magyars	%	Increase - Decrease	
					Slovaks	Magyars
1880	1,864,529	11.9	6,445,487	41.2	-	-
1890	1,910,279	11.0	7,426,730	42.2	+ 45,750	+ 981,243
1900	2,008,744	10.5	8,679,014	45.4	+ 98,465	+ 1,252,284
1910	1,967,970	9.4	10,050,575	48.1	- 40,774	+ 1,371,561

The period of the thirty years (1880-1910) saw the Slovak population increase by only 103,441 (more than 5 per cent) and the growth of Magyar population by as many as 3,605,088 (56 per cent), which also strengthened their relative predominance from 41.2 per cent to 48.1 per cent. In Slovakia an exceptional increase in the number of the members of Magyar nationality was reported: according to the 1850 Austrian census, the number of Magyars was 250,000 but sixty years later, in 1910, the number increased by 643,000, i.e. by 265 per cent.

A question may be posed as to what were the reasons for a rapid decline in the number of Slovaks and other nationalities in historical Hungary in contrast to an immense growth of Magyar population. Can this be explained in a natural way, for instance by significant ethnic changes, migration, by Magyar population explosion or by a higher death rate of non-Magyar nations and nationalities in former Hungary? We have not encountered anything like that. Magyar literature offers different arguments. It speaks of the vitality of the Magyar race and culture; thanks to their abilities, the members of this race succeeded in assimilating "uncultural" nationalities within the State. It was also reported that emigration affected non-Magyar nations and nationalities more strongly than the Magyars. A negative factor in the case of Slovaks was reported to be the integration of the Slovaks from the Lower-Land into Magyar community as well as the North-South migration of the Slovaks which also contributed to the assimilation of the Slovak people. The predominance of Magyar birth rate over other nationalities was another argument of the Magyar population increase. This, however, does not sound convincing in the case of Slavic nationalities who are known for their high birth rate. This reasoning had also been supported by Hungarian statistics which showed that in the period from 1906 to 1910, the live births per one thousand in-

habitants represented 41.8 per cent for Ruthenians, 41.3 per cent for Serbians, 39.7 per cent for Slovaks, 38.7 per cent for Croats, while in the case of Magyars it was only 36.1 per cent. Scotus Viator also casts doubt on Magyar arguments from 1896–1900 by displaying concrete results.

Magyar reasoning is unilateral, tendentious and not very trustworthy and therefore it does not answer the question of the enormous population growth of Magyars in historical Hungary during dualism. The real cause should be sought in other factors which not only strongly affected the political situation within the State but they also had a great hold on people's declaration of their nationality to be Magyar.

Firstly, the period from the Austro-Hungarian Compromise up to the breakdown of historical Hungary is in Magyar society characterized by constructing a fiction of a homogeneous Magyar nation; statistical research focused on this issue and examined the assimilation process of non-Magyar nationalities. We also have to realize that those statistics were formed in the period of intolerant Magyar chauvinism and declaration of extraordinary abilities of the Magyar people able to absorb all non-Magyar nationalities and nations in a short time and to re-construct multinational historical Hungary into a one-nation 30-million Magyar state. This implies that the aim of Hungarian statistics was not to find out the real state of the Magyar nation and nationalities living in historical Hungary but to observe how were the Magyars continuously increasing in number and how their "natural strength" gradually subjugated "uncultural" and "undeveloped" non-Magyar nationalities.

The main criterion for declaring one's nationality affiliation was mother tongue which was interpreted in a special way. The mother tongue should not have necessarily been identical with the language spoken by one's mother, the fact particularly emphasized in official instructions of 1890. If a child spoke a language different from that spoken by its parents it should have been recorded. From 1900 onwards, mother tongue was interpreted in official instructions as a "language perceived by a particular person as his/her own and liked by him/her most and mastered best". This meant that there was no longer any sense in using mother tongue as a criterion of nationality affiliation since the statistics permitted to take for Magyars also those who, although speaking Magyar, were not Magyars. This was mainly true of non-Magyars who spoke both languages; but in the atmosphere of nationalist zeal they would have risked too much had they declared the Magyar language is not dear to them and they do not like communicating in it.

Young Slovaks found themselves in a still worse situation; because of insufficient instruction in mother tongue at elementary schools, they quickly acquired the Magyar language and culture, and given up cultivating and using the Slovak language. After some time they spoke better Magyar than their mother tongue. They thus fulfilled the criterion according to which their mother tongue was not

Slovak but Magyar. The following example illustrates the pressure to which the non-Magyar young people were exposed. In 1910, a class-teacher, collecting the statistical data about pupils, instead of asking the individuals what was their mother tongue, ended his lesson with words: Suggesting he believed and expected that there would be nobody to whom the Magyar language would not be congenial.

In their efforts to report as high a number of Magyars as possible, Hungarian government bodies, social organizations as well as influential individuals used various ways and forms of oppression to be imposed on the members of non-Magyar nationalities. They were most successful with persons working in public administration and local governments and with all those who were dependent on Magyar landlords and entrepreneurs. These persons declared Magyar as their mother tongue not only as a manifestation of their loyalty to the state but also in the interest of their very existence. The Magyars were thus found even in purely Slovak regions and in the towns with Slovak surroundings. For instance, in 1910 there were 1,735 Magyars in Ružomberok, 306 in Čadca, 2,997 in Trenčín and 1,440 in Piešťany.

Some local representatives were too ardent and the knowledge of Magyar was regarded by them to be sufficient reason for – as the official 1890 report admits – “recording as Magyars that part of inhabitants who spoke Magyar, though their mother tongue was different”. Many deceptions were practiced on not too conscious Slovaks who believed in the incorrect interpretation and understood Hungarian citizenship (Hungarian = Magyar) as their Magyar affiliation. In 1880, all inhabitants of a Gemer village Šivetice had been enrolled as Magyars because their pastor had explained them that since they had lived in Hungary, they were Hungarians. Ten years later, when a new pastor arrived, all the inhabitants of the village were registered as Slovaks. Frequently whole Slovak villages were declared by the wilful decision of an ardent notary, a teacher, an organ player or a landlord to be purely Magyar for the purposes of census.

If necessary, conscious falsification of the statistical data was exercised. As Niederle reported, in order to achieve a decline in the number of Slovaks, at least 20,000 Slovaks disappeared from the 1910 census in Nógrád (Novohrad) and Pest-Pilis districts. The case Nyíregyháza documents how evidently and quickly the Slovaks were disappearing from Hungarian statistics. The town is known to have been founded by the Slovak Lower-Land colonists and in 1869 half of the inhabitants still declared their nationality to be Slovak. When Magyars started to be fabricated by Hungarian statistics, a rapid decrease in the number of Slovaks began. In 1880, 38.2 per cent of the people living in the town declared Slovak as their mother tongue but in 1910 it was only 405 persons, i.e. 1.1 per cent of the inhabitants. As a matter of fact, the number of Slovaks did not decrease since the Slovak language was still spoken in the town and was also used in the church. In Hungarian statistics we often meet sudden unfounded jumps and shifts in the item

titled "mother tongue", which can merely be accounted for by encroachments on the data evidently made in favour of the Magyars.

We should not forget that the choice of mother tongue was also influenced by Magyar chief ideology which was, on the one hand, disparaging and insulting non-Magyar nationalities, as we know from the particular cases concerning Slovaks (*tót nem ember* – Slovaks are no human beings); on the other hand, it glorified the positive traits of the Magyar race, their cultural mission in Hungary, aristocratic and chivalrous Magyar spirit. This brought to light the fact that Slovaks, through the "process of national awakening" and affiliating themselves with the Magyar nation, would lose nothing; quite the reverse, they would profit from and would just fulfil their patriotic duties imposed by the Hungarian state.

Schools in historical Hungary played a special part in mother tongue conversion. The objectives of the school system were to teach the Slovak children Magyar in early childhood and to denationalize them. The number of elementary schools where some attention was paid to mother tongue was constantly decreasing in the Slovak milieu (1,716 in 1880 dropped to 241 in 1906). Only a small percentage of Slovak children were allowed to go to schools run by Church or by governmental authorities where the Slovak language was taught in a limited degree. Other children had to attend Magyar schools even in purely Slovak districts (in Trenčín district with less than 3 per cent of Magyars at the beginning of the 20th century, there were 280 Hungarian elementary schools in 1908, while only 77 schools were available for Slovak children). An important intervention with the schooling was an order of 1902 according to which instruction in the Magyar language should have been 17–24 hours per week. Apponyi's school acts adopted in 1907 went even further and virtually excluded Slovak from elementary schools. Most attention was devoted to the Magyar language acquisition and pupils who used their mother tongue were punished. According to the government interpretation, Slovak children had soon satisfied the criterion of the change of their mother tongue and were then registered as Magyars.

The constantly increasing and ruthless coercion of the Magyar governmental bodies in the sphere of denationalization led to remarkable results as early as towards the end of the last century. O. Jászi, the well-known Magyar sociologist, estimated that 2,800,000 members of non-Magyar nationalities in historical Hungary were turned into Magyars between 1787 and 1900; among them, according to the Slovak demographer J. Svetoň, 400,000 Slovaks. The Magyar historian P. Hanák admits that 300,000 Slovaks were Magyarized during the thirty years, from 1880 to 1910. According to official statistics, we meet Magyars everywhere: in the Slovak milieu, in Slovak towns and their surroundings. The greatest losses were felt in the Lower Lands, in ethnic border region and Magyarization rapidly continued also in towns. The 1910 census was a real success of Magyarization. Magyar ruling circles were anxious to reach Magyar predominance over non-Magyars in the State, particularly in the period when there was much talk of

a franchise reform. There should be a Magyar majority in future Hungarian parliament. When the new statistical data obtained under coercion, by falsification and unfair methods in 1910 showed that the Magyars represented 53.1 per cent (without Croatia), the Magyars rejoiced over successful Magyarization and prognoses were expressed about early fulfilment of a vision of a united Magyar nation and about the assimilation force of the Magyar race and culture. It was believed that Magyarization dealt a death blow to national struggles, Pan-Slavism, and Daco-Romanism, of which the Magyar government circles were always afraid.

Speaking of Magyarization, it should be emphasized that the enormous increase in the number of Magyars did not correspond to the real state since it had been achieved either under pressure or by statistical machinations. The Magyars could have been fabricated on a sheet of paper but the truth was different. The process of Magyarization of non-Magyar nationalities was much more complicated than the official statistics show. Assimilation is a complex mechanism not advancing at great speed. Foreign language acquisition does not mean giving up one's national identity. It was also valid for Slovaks, who were deeply rooted in the common people. The assimilation took therefore chiefly place in educated strata, in towns, in Magyar milieu, where Magyar education and social pressure might have been enforced and where the dependence of an individual upon government bodies was greater. These unreliable, tendentious and unilateral 1910 statistics accepted in Trianon Hungary are used even today as a basis for drawing conclusions about the spread and the number of Magyars in former Hungary. Unfortunately, these statistics served as the starting point for settling the new frontiers between Slovakia and Hungary in 1938.

At the end of this part we cannot avoid answering the question what was the real number of Slovaks in former Hungary before World War I and whether there is any possibility to obtain impartial results in a web of untrustworthy Hungarian statistics. The statistical data on that part of population who declared, in addition to the Magyar language, a knowledge of Slovak might also help. There is no doubt that those people were Slovaks who figured as the so-called statistical Magyars. Their numbers grew in proportion to the increasing assimilation pressure (in 1880 – 219,404, 1890 – 268,743, and 1910 – 547,802). How did these Magyars learn Slovak? They were not taught the language at schools and did not need it since they could have made themselves understood anywhere in Magyar. Their haughtiness and pride in the Magyar language kept them from learning “a humble and uncultured language” of the Slovak people. They showed contempt of the Slovak language, considering its use beneath their dignity. Such people whose mother tongue was Slovak but could not declare it for various reasons belonged to statistical Magyars. Consequently, if we add to the official number of the Slovaks of 1910, i.e. to 1,946,357, the Slovak-speaking Magyars, we approach the real number of Slovaks. According to this estimate the number of Slovaks living in former Hungary before its breakdown was two and a half million.

The end of former Hungary did not resolve the nationality issue in post-war Hungary because, according to official statistics, there remained 10.4 per cent of non-Magyar nationalities within the country including Slovaks. How many of them really remained in Hungary? We again face a difficult problem. The official statistics of 1920 states that according to mother tongue 141,882 people declared their Slovak affiliation; the number was deliberately distorted, artificially reduced, and, since it contradicted other data, strong objections might be raised. After the breakdown of multinational state, Magyar Government policy wanted to present post-war Hungary as an ethnic state, the number of nationalities being negligible; there was no longer any threat from that side. The real situation of the remaining non-Magyar nationalities within the country was therefore purposefully reduced and concealed and decision was made to assimilate them as soon as possible.

To gain a more real estimate of the number of Slovaks in Hungary, we again have to help ourselves by using unofficial data and arguments. If the Director of the Hungarian Statistical Office A. Kovács argued that 86 per cent of Slovaks were attached to the Czecho-Slovak Republic, then the number of those who stayed in Hungary is very low, especially if we take into account other official data published in 1920 showing that 399,170 inhabitants of Hungary had a good command of the Slovak language. The argument that they were predominantly Magyars is absurd and illogical. The Magyars did not need to learn Slovak and emigrants who came from Czecho-Slovakia were not interested in declaring Slovak as their mother tongue which they despised and had not used it even in Slovakia.

Even the Prime Minister of Hungary P. Teleki cast doubt on the 1920 official census concerning the number of Slovaks. In 1921, in his negotiations with E. Beneš, he admitted to a 200,000 Slovak minority in Hungary. By and large, the number of Slovaks who remained in Hungary after the war was higher than 400,000. This figure was well documented from several sides. In 1919, the Czecho-Slovak delegation at the Paris Peace Conference reported the number of Slovaks living in Hungary to be 450,000. Similarly Hrdlička, who had fled to Czecho-Slovakia to avoid persecution, mentioned in his memorandum of 1922 a more than 400,000 Slovak minority. In 1921, W. Koch, the German ambassador to Prague, also threw doubt on Hungarian official statistics about Slovaks stating that approx. 400,000 Slovaks lived in Hungary making up 4.5 per cent of population.

As far as unreliability and imprecision of Hungarian statistics are concerned, no change was recorded during the inter-war period. The preceding trend not only continued but was also improving. The separation of Slovaks from the centre of the Slovak national life, the end of the influx from the North and the spread and weakness of the Slovak minority in Magyar milieu were reported to be the main reasons for a continuous decline in the number of Slovaks in Hungary.

These factors might influence the decrease but could not be essential and decisive. The real cause of the decrease should be searched for in the forced assimilation and in the conscious falsification of the statistical data which did not agree with the real state. Although A. Kovács, the Director of Central Hungarian Statistical Office avoids the word assimilation in his confidential paper and speaks exclusively of a spread of Slovaks, their integration with Magyars and the numerical loss, he openly confesses forgery of the statistical data. He wrote that census commissaries "tried, because of their unawareness or incorrect interpretation of patriotism, to raise the number of Magyars in many foreign nationalities without their knowledge or tried to persuade them that their mother tongue was Magyar". This took place in fifty villages. In other place he reported that falsification was chiefly done by teachers and registrars of births, marriages, and deaths. His note that the nationality structure of a village might often be decided by a simple factor, for instance, a new priest, a new notary or a new teacher who acts as "a nationality agitator" is interesting.

The 1930 population census can serve as a typical example of the unscrupulous falsification of the statistical data in Hungary. Coercive denationalization together with the absence of fundamental minority rights, enforcement of the Magyar language and directive integration of non-Magyar minorities into Magyar community as well as Magyar chauvinistic attitudes towards nationalities had even outstripped official statistical data. According to the expected natural increase, Hungarian statistical data signalized throughout the 1920s that the number of Slovaks would amount to 150,080 in 1930. The outcome was shocking. Statistical prophecy failed: the number of Slovaks classed according to their mother tongue fell by 45,000, i.e. to 104,819. Hungarian statistical office tried hard to correct forgery and deceptions on declaring Slovak as mother tongue. A. Kovács confessed the original data of census commissaries to be lower by 12,646, a figure which seemed exaggerated even to the statistical office and according to which the number of Slovaks would decline to 92,000 and which the world public opinion would hardly accept as a justifiable fact. He therefore considered it necessary to intervene and control exaggerated eagerness and patriotism which might evoke a reverse effect.

In Trianon Hungary, a decline was observed not only in the absolute number of Slovaks but also in those who spoke Slovak. It was a consequence of both the strong assimilation pressure which discouraged bilingual Slovaks from declaring a knowledge of Slovak and the strong Magyarization efforts which were most markedly reflected in school policy and in non-mastering the Slovak language. In the 1930s, as much as 46.5 per cent of the Slovak children in kindergartens spoke Magyar. It was still more marked in the young people between 15 and 24 years: 97 per cent of them had a good command of Magyar. According to A. Kovács' prognosis of 1936, the Slovaks living in Hungary were definitely sentenced to extinction. "It is certain," he wrote, "that if the number of Slovaks in diminished

Hungary decreases at such a speed, they will vanish in several decades almost without trace as in Nyíregyháza." He concluded: "... it is probably regrettable from human or ethnic perspective but this process cannot be reversed." The Slovaks should have been sacrificed to the Leviathan of Magyarization.

Towards the end of the thirties Hungary underwent significant changes. Declared during twenty years, revision took on a concrete shape and Hungarian statistics was put at its disposal. Since harsh criticism from abroad concentrated on untenable Hungarian statistical results of 1910, official policy in new occupied territories in 1938–1939 tried hard to prove that the last Hungarian population census reflected the real status of nationality composition and therefore the Magyar territorial revision was justifiable. The manipulation with the statistical data was easier after the Dictate of Munich when international conditions changed in favour of Hungary. There was no criticism from abroad to be afraid of in Budapest nor did they have to take into account the attitudes of the neighbouring states where Magyar minorities lived. It was as if time had stopped for Magyar policy which went back to the period before World War I. In the occupied territory of southern and eastern Slovakia annexed to Hungary through the Vienna Arbitration after November 1938 and during the occupation of Ruthenia (nowadays Carpatho-Ukraine) in March 1939, Magyar policy returned to the idea of a St. Stephen's Empire with all its attributes. According to the population census taken by the Magyar Government in the annexed area of southern Slovakia at the end of 1938 and under military dictatorship there were 116,213 inhabitants whose mother tongue was Slovak. Additional 20,449 people came in March 1939 from eastern Slovakia and Ruthenia. Those data were obtained under exceptional conditions and under political oppression and they have to be taken with reserve. If we take into account that part of the Slovak population had to emigrate from the occupied southern Slovakia, the Czechoslovak statistics for 1930 showed 272,145 Slovaks without natural 8-year population increase. Since Hungarian statistics was based on the 1910 census, the increase in the Slovak inhabitants during 28 years numbered only 31,000.

The official statistics reflected the process of coercive assimilation still more drastically in Trianon Hungary. According to the 1941 population census, only 75,920 inhabitants declared their mother tongue to be Slovak; it represented a decrease by 27.5 per cent in comparison with the year 1930. The Slovaks were no longer perceived as a nationality but mostly as Slovak-speaking Magyars or as persons of Slovak involvement (just like Kurds are regarded as Kurdish-speaking Turks in Turkey). The data of 1941 concerning the number of Slovaks according to their mother tongue throughout the extended territory of Hungary including southern and eastern Slovakia, Ruthenia, Transylvania and Vojvodina best document the manipulation of the official Hungarian statistics aimed at defending territorial revision and proving the increasing Magyar population in the State. The number of Slovaks reported to live there was 270,467; this figure surprised even

the Hungarian statistical office because it revealed their unscrupulous falsification of the actual state. Hungarian statistical commentaries had to confess that according to the 1941 census the number of Slovaks living in this area was lower than in 1910 (313,690 Slovaks) which implied a decline by 43,223 in 31 years.

The unilateral and little reliable Hungarian statistics for the period between 1938 and 1945 are not the only source of information. The Slovak statistical data are also available: in the first place those provided by the Slovak demographer J. Svetoň and by E. Böhm, the representative of the Slovak minority in Hungary. They both tried to find out the real number of Slovaks in Hungary on the basis of different data deliberately ignored by Hungarian statistics. Since differences in their evaluation are minimal, the data are worth publishing. They both agree that the number of Slovaks living in the area of occupied southern and eastern Slovakia at the beginning of the 1940s was 265,000. A difference occurs in the figure concerning the Slovaks living in Trianon Hungary which was 300,000 according to Svetoň whereas Böhm reported 405,000 Slovaks on the basis of the research carried out in all villages in Hungary. In addition, Böhm argued that the Slovaks lived in seven regions of Hungary with the preserved compact Slovak settlements.

The first post-war years uncovered some weak points of Hungarian statistics. The members of the Slovak minority enjoyed their feeling of freedom and under the influence of the awakening of national consciousness, encouraged by the organization of Antifascist Front of the Slavs, the nationality life in Hungary was activated. The Slovaks had more courage and consciously declared their Slovak nationality. This became chiefly evident in connection with the population exchange which was implemented on the basis of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreement of 1946 by the Czechoslovak Relocation Committee. The research carried out by the Committee in 416 villages showed that there lived 473,556 Slovaks even in places where, according to the official statistics, no Slovaks should be found. Almost one third of these Slovaks made up a 50-80 per cent majority in those villages. A register of Slovaks was done through contacts with the people who were considered to be Slovaks according to their knowledge of the Slovak language and were of Slovak origin with the aid of local experts by making nominal lists of households or by protocols signed by local authorities. The 1946 research showed that the Slovaks were majorities in 147 villages, most of them (85) being located in northern districts near the Slovak borders. In addition there were 31 villages where the Slovak majority had been turned into a minority as a result of inward migration of Magyars and of assimilation losses. The research also showed that in 308 villages, where no Slovaks were reported to live according to the 1930 Hungarian census, 3,698 Slovaks applied for repatriation. As a whole, the number of Slovaks from northern districts of Hungary who had applied for repatriation was almost twice that reported by Hungarian statistics for 1930 and almost three-fold the number of those who professed their mother

tongue to be Slovak in 1941. A monstrous falsification in Hungarian statistics comes to light after comparing the official results of the 1930 census with the number of Slovak applicants for repatriation. No comment is needed when looking at the following table (see below).

After repatriation of the part of Slovaks to their homeland, the Magyar government continued in their traditional denationalization policy with respect to the rest of the Slovak minority. Those who remained in Hungary were considered and treated as Magyars. With the establishment of communist rule, though equality of nationalities was formally declared, a model of an ethnic state was further constructed. Another population census was taken in 1949, which, similarly as those taken before, was controversial. Starting from the 1941 census, 75,920 inhabitants of Trianon Hungary declared their mother tongue to be Slovak; if 73,273 of these had moved to Slovakia as recorded in the Hungarian data on population exchange, then 2,647 Slovaks should have remained in Hungary. But, as a matter of fact, 25,988 people declared their mother tongue to be Slovak. Where did they come from? Also this figure was distant from reality and disclosed that Hungarian government policy succeeded, after several years of nationality revival, in returning the situation to its old ways and increasing pressure to enforce Slovaks not to profess their nationality but to enter the category of Magyars.

Village	District	Slovaks according to mother tongue in 1930	Slovak applicants for repatriation in 1946
Pécs	Baranya	90	299
Sárisáp	Esztergom	50	1,021
Bándiha	Komárom	99	874
Oroszlány	Komárom	5	642
Csabacsúd	Békés	198	805
Isaszeg	Pest-Pilis	41	277
Péteri	Pest-Pilis	0	508
Galgagyörk	Pest-Pilis	102	504
Újhuta	Borsod	1	975
Püspökhatvan	Pest-Pilis	0	136
Nyíregyháza	Szabolcs	120	5,162
Szirmabesenyő	Borsod	1	416
Miskolc	Borsod	255	1,744
Total		962	13,363

As for the number of Slovaks, a certain improvement was observed in Hungarian statistics of 1960 when their number grew to 30,690. Since then the number has been continuously decreasing. In 1970 only 21,176 people living in Hun-

gary declared their mother tongue to be Slovak, in 1980 it was only 16,054 and the latest 1990 census reported merely 12,745 Slovaks who declared Slovak to be their mother tongue. Objections were raised, however, also by Hungarian authorities as well as by representatives of the Slovak minority. According to their leading authorities, the number of Slovaks living in Hungary is higher than 100,000 but they do not declare their Slovak affiliation for one reason or other.

The disastrous position of the Slovak minority in Hungary is caused by several factors. Firstly, the Hungarian government still continued throughout the period of "people's democracy" in their policy of building a purely Magyar state where there would be no place for the Slovak minority. The constitution of 1949 declared the right of all nationalities to education in their mother tongue but the truth was different. The fundamental rights the Slovak minority needed for preserving its cultural, language and national identity were ignored. We should note that no nationality law has existed in Hungary since 1920 and although there has been one under preparation for several years, it seems that it will not help the nationalities because it is too late. The reasons for present agony of the Slovak minority in Hungary consist, among others, in the fact that in the sixties the nationality school system was liquidated; consequently, national consciousness and identity were not developing and the Slovaks had no opportunity to bring up their own minority intelligentsia. Coercive collectivization split the Slovak farming culture and the unification of villages was detrimental to the Slovak minority.

The interventions by the Hungarian government into the country's minority policy after the fall of the communist regime have been insufficient and cannot rescue the Slovak minority which is now rather weak as a result of the long denationalization process, intimidation, oppression and programmed integration of minorities into Magyar society. Assimilation of the Slovak minority has advanced so far that the younger generation has lost any contacts with their mother tongue and with the cultural heritage of their ancestors. The opinion that the process of integration of minorities has come to its end prevails today in Hungary. As so often in the past, the Slovaks are today conceived as Magyars speaking Slovak.

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