

## CONTACT LANGUAGES AND MINORITIES IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AN ENCYCLOPEDIC OVERVIEW\*

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### 1. The territorial and demographic background

1.1. Slovakia (Slovak Republic – SR) has a total area of 49,014 square kilometres. The latest population census was taken in 1991 when Slovakia's population was found to number 5,268,935. Population density of this Central European country is 107.5 persons per sq km which is considered to be slightly above European average.

SR has at present five neighbours: Ukraine (98 km long borders) in the east, Poland (597 km) in the north, Czech Republic (265 km) in the west, Austria (127.2 km) in the south-west, and Hungary (697 km) in the south. At its widest point Slovakia is 428 km across from west to east and between 76 to 195 km from north to south.

SR covers an area of Western Carpathians, these create a border arching down from the north. It is mostly a mountainous country except for the southern areas of the lowlands around Danube and Theiss lowlands. The open plain in this part of the country has allowed the population to intermingle with that from the neighbouring country whereas the highlands of the northern area might be the reason why this is not so apparent with the northern neighbour. Eighty per cent of Slovakia lies below 750 metres above sea level (low uplands), medium uplands make up only 17.6 % and high uplands only 0.9 %. The mountainous landscape had also led to a certain (language) isolation of the inhabitants within individual counties or comitats (*župy, stolice*). This has also been reflected in the dialectal differentiation of the Slovak language.

1.2. From 1526–1784, the capital of Slovakia Bratislava, was also the capital of Hungary (of the part not occupied by the Turks) and up to 1830, also the coronation town of the Hungarian kings. Bratislava lies in the south-west of Slovakia and its present-day inhabitants number 441,453 (including 91.1 % Slovaks, 4.5 %

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Magyars, 2.3 % Czechs and 0.35 % Germans). Another Slovak town with more than 100,000 inhabitants is Košice in the east which has 234,000 inhabitants (1991 census). Nine towns have more than 50,000 inhabitants: Nitra, Prešov, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Trnava, Martin, Trenčín, Prievidza, and Poprad. As a whole, in spite of the growth of the urban population in Slovakia, 47 % live in the country.

1.3. Slovakia was divided into the following regions until recently: West Slovakia (Bratislava), Central Slovakia (Banská Bystrica) and East Slovakia (Košice). Transformation into smaller administrative units has recently been launched on a former district basis with a division of the country into counties (*župy*).

1.4. According to the latest population census taken in 1991 the total 5,268,935 population of the Slovak Republic consists of 4,116,790 Slovaks, (85.6%), 566,741 Magyars (10.76 %), 80,627 Romanies (1.57 %), 53,422 Czechs (1.0%), 16,937 Ruthenians (Rusyns, 0.32%), 13,847 (0.26%) Ukrainians, 5,629 Germans (0.10%), 3,888 Moravians (0.08%) and 2,969 Poles (0.06%). There are also other nationalities including Russian (1,624), Silesian (1,198), Bulgarian (1,085), Rumanian (247), Greek (45) and others (3,684). National minorities in Slovakia (except Romany, Czech and German) belong to types of minorities living in border areas separated from the homeland just by the state borders. It is an autochthonous population. It is only Vietnamese (some 10,000 whose numbers have been declining rapidly after 1989) and Cuban workers and students (most of whom have left the country) who are alocchthonous in the strict sense of the word.

1.5. Migration has recently been observed within Slovakia (migration of the population into towns). The daily movements of Slovaks to work in the Czech Republic should also be mentioned. Certain movement is seen (mainly Romanies and Ruthenians but also others) towards the Czech Republic (about 308,000 Slovaks live in the Czech lands which is approx. 3 % of the population).

## 2. The historical background of the territory and state formation

2.1. After the fall of Great Moravia at the beginning of the 10th century the Slovaks found themselves in a multinational state where they lived for a thousand years without any administrative division at least on a territorial basis. The territory was referred to within historical Hungary (Habsburg monarchy, Austria-Hungary) up to 1918 as Upper Hungary ("Felső Magyarország", "Felvidék").

2.2. After the disintegration of Austria-Hungary, Slovaks achieved their emancipation. This has gone through various forms: 1918–1939 within the Czechoslovak Republic, constituting autonomy between 1938 and 1939 within it, in the years 1939–1945 within an independent state, from 1945 up to 1992 as part of Czechoslovakia, being a nation republic from 1968 within the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and after the change of regime in 1989 within the federal republic.

On 1st January 1993 the Slovak Republic was established as independent state by virtue of the constitutional law on the split of federation adopted on November 25, 1992 by Federal Assembly of ČSFR.

2.3. State borders for the 1st Republic were settled at the Paris Peace Conferences in the years 1918–20. The northern borders between (Czecho)Slovakia and Poland were derived from the historical frontiers of former Hungary and almost matched ethnic borders. They were finally confirmed by the Treaty of June 20, 1920 when additional 13 Spiš and 13 Orava villages were annexed to Poland (cf Klimko, 1980). Slovakia's eastern neighbour was Ruthenia which belonged to Czechoslovakia up to 1946. The borders with Austria were settled by the Peace Treaty signed in St. Germaine. The most complicated was, however, to settle the borders between Slovakia and Hungary. There were no historical or ethnic borders. No borders were settled for Slovakia within historical Hungary despite a number of requests presented by Slovak representatives, e.g. in *Žiadosti národa slovenského* of 1848 and in *Memorandum slovenského národa* of 1861 (Demands and Memorandum of the Slovak nation). There was no possibility to use Hungarian statistics which only made inquiry about a knowledge of the Magyar language and not about nationality (cf Očovský, 1992; Deák, 1993). The line of demarcation between Slovakia and Hungary was settled on December 21, 1918, taking into account ethnic, economic and geographical (rivers) principles. These were confirmed by the Peace Treaty signed in Trianon on June 4, 1920. A Magyar population numbering 650,597 (according to the 1921 census) found themselves in Czechoslovakia and many Slovaks (over 400,000) remained in Hungary.

These borders have remained till today with the exception of the period between 1938 and 1945 when Slovakia had to cede 10,390 km with 850,000 inhabitants (including 272,000 Slovaks and Czechs; 170 of 279 ceded villages had a Slovak majority) to Hungary on the basis of the Dictate of Munich and the Vienna Arbitration; only a small correction was made on the right bank of the river Danube, the so-called Bratislava bridgehead. The modification was confirmed by the Peace Treaty with Hungary, signed in 1947 in Paris.

### 3. Policy, economics, culture, religion

3.1. After the disintegration of Austria-Hungary in which Slovaks were exposed to strong national oppression strengthened after the so-called Austro-Hungarian Compromise (complete Magyarization of schools, Church, promotion of the idea of a single Hungarian nation meaning Magyar), the Czechoslovak Republic was established in 1918. The state was based on a doctrine of a single Czechoslovak nation and Czechoslovak language (Act No. 122/1910 mentioned two branches of one nation and two variants of one language). The doctrine was adopted at the end of World War I chiefly for political reasons. It was the only way to "conceal" the great variety of nationalities inherited from Austria-Hungary

and to reach a 2/3 majority for a state-forming nation. The nationality structure of the new state was a latent threat to its stability (Gawrecká, 1989, p. 17). In 1921 65.5 % were members of “Czechoslovak” nation, 23.4% German, 5.6 % Magyar, 3.4 % Russian, 1.3 % Jewish, 0.6 % Polish and 0.2 % members of other nationalities).

The Slovak part protested against the Czechoslovakist tendencies in national ideology and in language policy (Novák, 1936). This arose because purism found wide application in Slovakia in a period when in other countries it was already anachronism. There was also opposition to a strong centralism and unitarianism which did not respect differences in the conditions and the life style of individual regions. Democratic and liberal state interior politics trying to promote state integrity through law and government had both positive (encouragement of national education and the space for the development of national culture) and negative features (deepening of the difference between the Czech lands and Slovakia). While modernization was taking place in the Czech lands, the Slovak economy stagnated (liquidation of enterprises, unemployment). More lucrative jobs e.g. in public sector administration, schools, etc., left open by the departure of Magyar employees, were taken by the Czechs (their number in Slovakia doubled between 1921 and 1930; cf Bunčák). In that period, 209,000 Slovaks emigrated to overseas regions. At the same time, however, a significant change took place in the area of school system and education, mainly thanks to the Czechs (Marsina et al., 1992).

Minorities which made up as much as 44 % of population were awarded protection in the Constitutional Covenant (*Ústavná listina*) of ČSR, pp. 121 and 122. According to the Covenant, courts of justice and administration were obliged to communicate with the representatives of minorities in their language in districts with a qualified 20 % ethnic minority. The independent Slovak state of 1939–45 came into existence mainly by virtue of Hitler’s Germany, (Hlinka’s party had made use of dissatisfaction with Prague centralism and struggled for just such autonomy within ČSR). The Slovak parliament adopted a constitutional law, No. 185, in which the principle of reciprocity was applied (the Magyar minority could only have such rights as the Slovak minority had in Hungary). The constitution of 1948 adopted after the communist snatched power did not guarantee protection of minorities but only of individuals. The principles of minority policy (minority as a subject) were amended as late as by the Act of Czechoslovak Federation No. 144 of 1968, according to which minorities should be adequately represented within decision-making bodies, have the right to education in their mother tongue, their own cultural development, the right to use their language in legal and administrative services in the regions populated by a particular nationality and the right to information in the corresponding minority language. The Czech and Slovak languages were here mentioned as equal languages (no variants any more) to be used in official communication on an equal basis.

In 1990 the Slovak Republic adopted the language law declaring Slovak an official language; by virtue of this law national minorities can use their mother tongue in official communication in villages where a minority makes up at least 20 % of population. The Slovak Constitution adopted in 1993 which is based on a national principle declares the Slovak language to be the state language.

3.2. Slovakia had been traditionally an agricultural country, which went through rapid industrialization after World War II. Heavy and military industry built up in that period, required raw materials and energy which the country did not have and which was environmentally harmful. Rapid industrialization was associated with urbanization (in the fifties urban population made up 1/3, at the end of the seventies almost 1/2 the population) but the decline of villages was not significant. After the change of regime in 1989 the arms industry was strongly reduced, the trade directed mostly towards the former USSR had to be re-oriented. The Slovak economy is thus facing difficult tasks to be solved.

3.3. The education level of the population is thanks to the Czech missionary activities in the 1930s and to the well-developed school network rather high. However, a lack of information because of closed of western frontiers did retard the process. According to the education level index of the population in the Slovak Republic, the Czech nationality is in first place, followed by German, Slovak, Polish, Magyar, and Ruthenian-Ukrainian nationalities with the Romany nationality far behind.

3.4. The latest population census confirmed the inhabitants of SR to be rather great religious. Only 511,185 have no stated religious denomination which is less than 10 % of population. Most people are Roman Catholics (3,179,201), Evangelical 413,384, Greek-Catholic 179,623, Orthodox 34,144 and Czech-Hussite 618 (for details see Ritomský, 1993). Substantially more people confessed Evangelical religion in previous centuries; confessional conflicts appeared in the past (e.g. when the issue of Standard Slovak arose). The Ruthenians as a nation were largely constituted on a confessional basis (cf 6.3.).

#### 4. Statistics as ethnoprofiles of contact languages and their speakers (Magyars, Czechs, Ruthenians-Ukrainians, Germans, Poles)

4.1. The most numerous minority in SR is the Magyar national minority which, with its 566,741 members, makes up 10.76 % of population of SR. They live in 13 southern districts of Slovakia, with Magyars dominating in Dunajská Streda (87.9 %) and Komárno (71.1 %) districts. A rather high number of Magyars live in Bratislava and Košice. From the fifties onwards only their absolute but not relative growth has been reported (1961: 518,782 – 12.4 %, 1970: 552,006 – 12.2 %, 1980: 559,490 – 11.2 %, 1991: 566,741 – 10.76 %). This decrease in relative numbers is due to the lower natality of Magyars. But despite

this the Magyars are the only minority (in addition to Romanies) whose absolute numbers have been increasing.

4.2. Magyars in SR are a self-segregating type of minority. This is reflected not only in their "high linguistic closeness" (in absolute dominance of the Magyar language in communication) but also in significant self-awareness of ethnic affiliation, attitudes toward national traditions, etc. (Zel'ová, 1991a, and 1992; Podolák, 1993).

A rather high concentration of the Magyar population in villages, with its high ethnic endogamy, proximity to indigenous nation state as well as spiritual and material ties, all this enables Magyars to accommodate their language without problems. Sixty four per cent of Magyars claim to have a good command of the Slovak language but they use it in the nationally mixed regions only when communicating with the Slovaks who do not speak Magyar (21 % of Slovaks living in the mixed regions have a good command of Magyar while 24 % can speak it partially). Some investigations show that members of Magyar minority expect more acceptability by the majority population living in the mixed regions than the other way round (Hübl, 1990; Šoucová, 1991a; Šutaj, 1992; Zel'ová, 1992).

4.3. Members of the Czech nation living today in Slovakia (53,422 – 1.0 % of population) are scattered all over the country. They mostly live in large towns like Bratislava and Košice or in the towns with military schools or in garrison towns (Žilina, Trenčín, Liptovský Mikuláš, etc.). The use of the Czech language as a communication means predominates (Slovak prevails only in mixed matrimony) not only in families but with respect to comprehensibility as the language used in communication with Slovaks and in the public.

4.4. According to the 1989 analysis the Ukrainian-Ruthenian minority makes up 0.73 % of population (Zel'ová, 1991b). In 1991 the population could freely decide to which nationality they belonged; 0.32 % of the population declared their nationality to be Ruthenian and 0.26 % Ukrainian, which makes them together only 0.58 % of the inhabitants of Slovakia. The number of Ruthenians and Ukrainians (82 % of them are settled in four districts of East Slovakia) has been declining at the rate of 0.7 % per year. The reason mainly rests in the considerable scattering (movements to larger towns – Košice and Prešov – but also to the Czech lands), low homogeneity of marriages (the majority of partners are Slovaks) and the overall aging composition as well as forced Ukrainianization and Orthodoxization in the fifties (Paukovič – Szedláková, 1991; Šutaj, 1992).

In addition to ethnonyms "Rusín" and "Rusnák", the terms "Karpatorus, Uhrorus, Malorus" occurred in the past too: today the names Ruthenian-Ukrainian or Ukrainian-Ruthenian are deemed correct.

4.5 The number now declaring their nationality to be German is 5,629 and 4,200 of them declare German as their mother tongue. The Germans are not concentrated in any region, they are mostly scattered in original diaspora of the past when they lived in great numbers in Bratislava and its surroundings, in the mining

towns of central Slovakia and mainly Spiš, the first place in the east colonized by Germans. In the fourteenth century 250,000 Germans lived in Slovakia which represented one fourth of the population. Before 1945, their number was still 135,000. At the beginning of the century there were Jewish people living in Bratislava whose mother tongue was German (Jahn, 1971). The German population today is predominantly an old one: 48.2 % are over 60.

These inhabitants were known as Carpathian Germans or Slovak Germans (Slowakeideutsche) since the 1930s.

4.6. The number of inhabitants who declared Polish affiliation in SR is lower than 3,000; they are scattered all over Slovakia (Bratislava 494, Poprad 227, Dolný Kubín 200, Košice 200), they are also characterized by high female number and a low number of children, which is, together with their dispersed nature, the main reason for their gradual assimilation (as much as 1.06 % yearly) (cf Srb, 1987; Servátka, 1987).

## 5. Sociolinguistic situation of contact languages and their speakers

5.1. The only minority living in SR which has communication problems with the majority population is Magyar. Most members of this nationality give instruction to their children exclusively in their mother tongue as it is the most essential prerequisite for the preservation of their identity. On the other hand, almost all of them admit that a better command of Slovak, which is worse in comparison with other minorities (Plíchtová, 1992), would contribute to better relations and level of education in the Magyar minority. Mutual tolerance between Magyars and Slovaks is much higher in ethnically mixed regions than in the areas with lower number of Magyars (Zel'ová, 1991b; Ondrejovič, 1992). The understanding of the language law according to which the Magyar language can be used as official language in the areas with more than 20 % minority population by the two nationalities strongly differs: each of them sees it as beneficial to the other ethnic group and not to their own (Šoucová, 1991a).

5.2. Czechs living in SR use predominantly Czech as their language of communication. This is possible to the close affinity between Slovak and Czech. Communication between Slovaks and Czechs when each side speaks its language, without any difficulties, is called semicomunication (Budovičová, 1987).

Means of expression which are the same in Slovak and Czech are considered positive means of contact which can be used to benefit stylistic form e.g. in melioration of expressions or their use in bookish style (cf Buzássyová – Ondrejovič, in press). In the light of recent changes the pressure of the stronger language on the weaker one has been removed and the defensive, ethnopsychological factor weakened (Dolník, 1992).

A special type of language communication is evident in military milieu, where a Slovak-Czech macaronics is still occurring (cf Zeman, 1988).

5.3. As many as 57 % of Ruthenians-Ukrainians use Slovak or an East Slovak dialect at home. According to research carried out in 1987,<sup>1</sup> 59.1 % considered the Ruthenian to be their mother tongue and only 24 % Ukrainian. These results also confirm the refusal by the majority of Ruthenian inhabitants to accept Ukrainian which was forced upon them through bureaucracy.

5.4. The contact language of the German minority is Slovak, German is only partially used in families. Some families were and still are bilingual, or even trilingual, e.g. in Bratislava (besides Slovak, two variants of German or Magyar are spoken) although those born after 1945 are largely monolingual (Born – Dickgießer, 1989).

5.5. The Polish population is bilingual. In some areas they use the Goral dialect (Slovakized) but Slovak (or Slovak dialects) is used as a contact language. The younger and middle-aged generations have a good command of the official Slovak language, all generations speak Slovak dialects (Buffa, 1976). Their sense of ethnic identity is rather strong.

## 6. Linguistic-political situation of contact languages and their speakers

6.1. When ČSR came into the existence, 650,597 Magyars found themselves on Slovak territory. In spite of good conditions for adapting to this (e.g. representation in parliament, high standard of the school system, cultural associations, less in social sphere), accommodating the changes proved problematic. Their position as the ruling nation had changed into that of a minority. Some representatives of Hungary required annexation of extensive areas; this was implemented in 1938. After the war, all (except for antifascists) were deprived of citizenship. A population exchange between Hungary and Slovakia also took place whereby 80,000 Magyars were exchanged for 72,000 repatriated Slovaks (cf Bobák, 1982) and the so-called re-Slovakization process which should have returned the Magyarized Slovaks to Slovakia began. This included the transfer of part of the Magyar population (almost 20,000) to Bohemia which was concluded in 1948, when citizenship was granted to them again and the school system and publishing of books and journals was reestablished. In 1949 Csemadok (Cultural Association of Magyar Working People) was established.

Currently, members of the Magyar minority living in Slovakia may receive education in their mother tongue by attending one of the 257 primary and 18 (10 independent and 8 mixed) grammar schools as well as other types of secondary schools (secondary apprenticeship schools). Recent years have seen an increasing tendency of ethnic Magyar students to attend Slovak-language grammar schools (Gabzdilová, 1992). The Slovak radio broadcasts in Magyar 34.4 hours per week, there are two Magyar theatres in Slovakia.

The number of believers is little lower within the Hungarian minority as compared with the majority population but, according to research results, they show better understanding for Church ends and needs (denominational schools).

6.2. While the state policy of the first Czechoslovak Republic was based on the theory of a single Czechoslovak nation and language, the constitutional laws adopted in 1948 and mainly in 1968 declared Czech and Slovak to be co-equal languages. Czech and Slovak were used alternatively in mass media, particularly in current affairs, entertainment and education programmes. Since January 1, 1993 the official language in Slovakia is Slovak. But Czech has not been eliminated from Slovakia. Although it has become minority language, some Czech programmes continue to be broadcast by the Slovak Radio and Television.

Since the Czech population is scattered over Slovakia and taking into account a possibility of the Czech-Slovak semicomunication, there is no Czech school in Slovakia.

6.3. In 1952 the Ruthenians were officially declared (according to the model of the USSR) to be Ukrainians and during the school year 1953/54 all Russian schools were turned into Ukrainian (in the past, there were quite a few Russian schools in the Ruthenian area). As administrative Ukrainization was taking place so was forced Orthodoxization and with it the dissolution of the Greek-Catholic Church of Ruthenians. A section of the Ruthenians-Ukrainians did not accept Orthodoxy and converted to the Roman Catholic faith. In most cases this also implied their self-identification with the Slovak nation. The Ruthenians always associated their ethnic identity with their religious identity.

The Ruthenian national consciousness has recently been strengthened through the activities of Ruthenian-oriented initiatives. Ruthenian journals are now published, and Ruthenian associations have been established on ethnic principle, etc. In 1991 the first World Congress of Ruthenians was held in Slovakia (Medzilaborce). There is also an Ukrainian-oriented movement within the Ruthenian-Ukrainian community (Zel'ová, 1991b).

6.4. Czechoslovak citizenship was returned to the Germans in 1953, while legal protection was conferred upon them, similarly as upon other minorities, as late as 1968. With regard to their number and spread over the territory, the Germans do not have their own schools. German has traditionally been taught in Slovak secondary and high schools as well as at universities. In 1969 Kulturverband der Bürger deutscher Nationalität der ČSSR was established. The Goethe Institut opened in Bratislava in 1992.

The denominational structure of the members of German nationality is similar to the majority population (70 % Roman-Catholic, 22 % Evangelical).

6.5. The Poles do not have Polish-language schools because of their relatively rapid assimilation, their low number and bilingualism. In the field of religious belief they have merged with the majority population.

## 7. Other minorities and contact languages (Romanies, Jews, Croats)

7.1. A smaller number of people declared their nationalities to be Moravian, Silesian (6,074 altogether, they are concentrated along the borders with the Czech Republic), Russian, showing a strong decreasing tendency (1970: 3,278; 1980: 2,410; 1991: 1,624), Bulgarian (its members are mostly concentrated in larger towns such as Bratislava, Košice, Prešov), Rumanian, Greek, etc. Special attention should be devoted to Romany, Jewish and Croatian minorities living in Slovakia.

7.2. Demographic data show that the Romanies make up approx. 5 % of the population of the Slovak Republic though the number of the Romanies who declared Romany affiliation corresponds to 1.53 %. Their population growth is approx. 4 times higher than that of the rest of population. They are spread unevenly over various regions of Slovakia but they are mostly concentrated in East Slovakia, the region of their first settlement (the first mention of them dates back to 1322).

The so-called regulation of Maria Theresia was one of the first attempts at socializing the Romanies and even at complete assimilation (a ban on the use of their own language, on marrying Romany partners; their official name was Novosedliaci – New Peasants). Their nomadic or seminomadic way of life was limited but attempts at integrating them with the majority population failed.

After World War II, government policy gradually implemented the following concepts: 1. the concept of social assimilation; 2. of controlled dispersion (from 1965 this centred on towns with a high concentration to the Czech lands); 3. the integration of Romanies into society (from 1972). In 1991 the Slovak government adopted new policy toward Romanies: the Government recognized the status of the ethnic Romany minority as a community socially on a par with the rest of population. Socialism denied Romany ethnicity and it separated them as a group being completely dependent on social aid.

After 1989 the Romanies began to institutionalize their ethnicity. They have their ethnic press but civic and political movements have had to face problems associated with their historical development and a lack of ethnic identity. The 1992 research showed that 37 % of those questioned felt themselves to be Romanies, 28 % Gypsies, 18 % Slovaks, and 17 % Magyars (Okáliová, 1991).

The Romanies are the ethnic group with the lowest level of education in Slovakia and from the class and occupational point of view they are associated with the lowest non-skilled professions. They live at a considerable social distance from the rest of population. Some individuals try to adapt to the majority population and they distance themselves from their ethnic origin, they do not teach their children the Romany language and reject traditional customs. These assimilation tendencies follow from their efforts to achieve a living standard and social prestige comparable with those of the majority population. In political movements, the

Romany Integration Party came into existence primarily “to assist the more rapid assimilation of the Romany ethnic group”. It is a rather unique case when the goal of the political party is to kill off the very group they represent (Bačová, 1991).

Public opinion is mostly anti-Romany in mood, unambiguously unfriendly relations with the Romanies predominates among the population (45 %), while 20 % of these questioned reported more friendly or unambiguously friendly relations (Koptová, 1991). In another research 45.2 % of respondents said that the Romanies should be thrown out from their country and only 4.7 % would accept them as close neighbours (Mann, 1992). The negative attitude of the majority population to the Romanies is a consequence of the advantages granted upon them through the previous social policy (e.g. preferential allocation of flats) but mainly their asocial activities (underhand moneychanging; as much as 26 % rate in criminal activities in some districts).

As yet Romanies are still Gypsies (which has been their official ethnonym until recently). The population differentiates between “ordinary” Romanies (Gypsies) and “Olah” Gypsies.

The Romany language does not have any official form nor has it a stabilized norm. Approx. 80 % of Romanies use Slovak Romany dialect (Bačová, 1991, p. 121). Romany dialects in Slovakia also contain some elements of the respective linguistic milieu: in East Slovakia they have palatal sounds *š*, *ž*, only short vowels, in South Slovakia narrow *é*. In lexicology, Romany uses words from the corresponding dialects or from minority languages and adapts their forms, e.g. by means of suffixes *-is*, *-os* (*dochtoris*, *učitelis*, *čilagos*). Some Romany words are used in Slovak slang or argot (*čaja*, *gadžo*).

The functional region of the Romany language is rather narrow and is gradually decreasing. 54 % of Romanies use Romany, 38 % Slovak, 8 % Magyar, 1 % other languages as languages of communication in families. A lower stage of national self-identification is also seen in the fact that Romanies do not consider it necessary to disseminate information in Romany language or to introduce it in kindergartens or in elementary schools.

7.3. Historical Hungary was in the second half of the last century inhabited by approx. 241,000 members of the Jewish community. The emancipation law adopted in 1867 did not define the Jewish population as nation or nationality but rather as a group of people united through their religious belief. In 1868 a nationality law appeared in Hungary which recognized only the existence of a unified Hungarian (i.e. Magyar) nation and other non-Magyar nations were given only very limited linguistic and cultural rights. Jews living in Slovakia could either assimilate nationally with the ruling Magyar nation which offered undeniable advantages or gradually get nearer to the Slovak nation which was struggling with Magyar political circles for recognition of its national identity.

The great majority of the Jewish population living in Slovakia at the turn of the century was Magyarized and they officially declared their nationality to be Magyar. Slovak nationality was declared by a further 4%. This was one of the causes of the tension between the Slovaks and the Jewish people. In the inter-war period a movement was established (Union of the Slovak Jews) the official programme of which was assimilation with the Slovak nation.

Today the Jewish communities number 3,000 people. After persecution and transport to concentration camps during World War II and following several waves of emigration in 1945, 1948 and 1968, the remaining Jewish population in Slovakia numbering several thousand have assimilated with the Slovaks or, in southern Slovakia, with the local Magyar nationality. The identity of the Jewish people has a rather symbolic character based on religious affiliation and on cultural and customary traditions in particular (Kamenec, 1992a).

The Jewish language (Yiddish) is not currently used. Some words live, however, at an informal level in Slovak (*šlamastika, mešuge, chochmes*). Many Jewish families are bi- or trilingual (Slovak, Magyar, German).

7.4. The Croats who came to Slovakia in the 16th century and settled in approx. 80 settlements (creating a majority in 20 of them) were rather rapidly assimilated. They live today in 4 or 5 villages in West Slovakia (Devínska Nová Ves, Chorvátsky Grob, Jarovce, etc.). The older generation of Slovak Croats is bilingual but all of them have a good command of Slovak.

Croatian traditions have been revitalized in recent years. Renaissance of the language, the establishment and cultivation of contacts with the homeland and with other Croats living in Hungary, Austria and in Moravia has been observed. In 1990 a Croatian Cultural Union was established with aim of encouraging the development of national culture, language and education. The Church (Catholic) has always played an exceptionally positive role in strengthening Croatian national consciousness (Kučerová, 1992).

## 8. Concluding remarks

8.1. The 1991 census of population, houses, and apartments from which we draw the latest data of the overall make-up of the population in Slovakia, was taken on the basis of declaration of nationality affiliation. Due to the unclear definition of ethnic consciousness, the results of this census often considerably differ from those obtained from other sources. For instance, 80,627 declared their Romany affiliation, i.e. 1.53 % of the population of the Slovak Republic but according to the 1989 data obtained from public administration noted their number being 253,943, i.e. 4.8 %, not including the Romanies living a particular standard of the majority population. Research into the Croatian population living in Slovakia (Kučerová, 1992) showed that 1,200 out of 1,450 inhabitants of Chor-

vátsky Grob consider themselves to be Croats. The number who declared their Croatian nationality in the latest census is, however, much lower.

8.2. The minority and minority language issues were not investigated thoroughly in Slovakia since it was to a certain degree taboo. The most extensive research was carried out in the Institute of Social Sciences, SAV Košice. The attitudes towards minorities and national groups in Slovakia are mostly worked out on the basis of sociological public opinion polls (*Aktuálne problémy Česko-Slovenska*, 1990, *Aktuálne problémy slovenskej spoločnosti*, 1991, *Aktuálne problémy Česko-Slovenska*, 1992). Slovak dialectology is based on the structural part of research into particular dialects. In depth research into verbal or wider social behaviour of the members of individual nations in Slovakia would be welcome. A research into Slovak-Czech and Slovak-Magyar relations would be particularly topical; better understanding of these relations might significantly contribute to the solution of national and language policy of the Slovak Republic.

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