CHAPTER 4

THE SLOVAK NATION-STATE AND THE HUNGARIANS

Opting out of Czechoslovakia the Slovak State has inherited a sizeable Hungarian population and the accompanying task of arranging its relation with them. Preliminary data of the last census held in Czechoslovakia in 1991 estimated the population at 15,567,666 of which 8,426,070 were Czechs, 4,819,948, Slovaks and 586,884 Hungarians.\(^1\) Table 4.1 shows the ethnic composition of Slovakia in 1991. According to the data of 1991, 96.6% of the Czechoslovak Hungarians live in Slovakia and 3.4% scattered in Czech Republic. The same source estimated the population of Slovakia to be 5,274,335 of which 4,519,328 (85.18%) were Slovaks, 567,296 (10.75%) Hungarians.\(^2\) Independent Slovakia thus inherited the Hungarian minority problem. The Hungarians resided in compact communities along the southern border regions. According to official figures Hungarians constituted 50% of the residents in 434 towns and villages.

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with the highest concentration in 11 Okresi/districts in the Danubian basin area.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Groups</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovaks</td>
<td>4,511,679</td>
<td>85.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>566,741</td>
<td>10.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma (Gypsies)</td>
<td>80,627</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechs</td>
<td>53,422</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruthenians</td>
<td>16,937</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainians</td>
<td>13,847</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>5,629</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moravians</td>
<td>3,888</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poles</td>
<td>2,969</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>13,196</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Minorities</td>
<td>757,256</td>
<td>14.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>5,268,935</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section historical background of the development of Slovak - Hungarian relation is provided. The present Slovak state's equation with its largest minority has often been said to have its antecedents in history. The Magyar minori-

ty issue is far from being an all recent phenomenon. It is in fact a phenomenon that has existed ever since the inception of the Czechoslovak State. Therefore, a glance at the past is in order here.

Independent Slovakia has made a complete break with the communist past. But how complete a break has been made in minority policy? To comprehend this, minority situation during communist era is also discussed in this section.

Section two deals with the contemporary period. End of communism and inauguration of democracy and rule of law heightened minority hopes for more equitable treatment. This section analyses the nature of Slovak state, programmes of Slovak political parties to assess whether such expectations would be fulfilled. Much, however, depends also on how successfully the Magyar community organises itself to articulate its demand, therefore the minority political organisations are studied. The demands of the minority are discussed to discern whether there has been any substantial change in them overtime and to guage how far the Slovak state would be willing to accommodate them.

I. SLOVAK-HUNGARIAN RELATION - A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Slovaks and Czechs belong to the oldest of the western slav people. Around 6th and 7th centuries Slavonic invaders settled in the area from the mouth of the Elba to
the Adriatic coast and set up two influential kingdoms - the kingdom of Samo and Greater Moravia. During the period of Greater Moravian empire the Slovaks were converted to Christianity of the western church and came under the influence of Western European Culture.

Around 1018, the present day Slovakia fell under Arpad of Hungary and henceforth the region was dominated by the Hungarians. With the decline of Greater Moravia and the rise of Hungary an artificial border was created in the Western Carpathians between Slovaks and Czechs who had hitherto been united as one cultural and political state. The Slovaks lost their political independence and for the first time Slovaks and Czechs were forced to separate. In the former Greater Moravia two new kingdoms were set up - the Czech and the Hungarian.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the present day Hungary came under Ottoman rule. This had an influence upon the cultural development of the area - important cultural and political centres were moved to the area of present Slovakia into Bratislava, Banska Stiavnica, Tmava,


5. Ibid.
Kremnica, Kosice and others. 6

The years 1848 and 1867 were key moments in Slovak-
Hungarian history. In 1848 the Slovaks struggled for equal
rights of Hungarian nation within the monarchy. In 1867 the
Austro-Hungarian compromise was achieved accompanied by
the polarization and radicalisation of national relations
within the border of Hungary. This period has justifiably
been regarded as one of Hungarian pressure and domination on
Slovakia. 7 Assimilationist policies, as abolition of new
Slovak grammar schools, prohibition of the Matice Slovenska,
complicated electoral rules blocking Slovak access to repre-
sentative bodies were aggressively pursued. 1sl

(i) Hungarians in the New Czechoslovak State following
World War I Arrangements.

The Slovaks recorded their discontent when after World
War I they chose to realign with the Czechs. One could say
the thousand years marriage between Hungary and Slovakia

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6. ibid., p 21.

7. ibid. In 1868 the Hungarian parliament passed the national
minority law, which proclaimed Hungarian to be the sole official
language of the 'United Hungarian Nation' which included Slova-
kia. In Slovakia Hungarian was established as the language of
learning in 1879. In 1888 a decree was issued for the Hungar-
ianisation of all Slovak schools.
ended in divorce. Formation of Czechoslovakia after World War I meant loss for Hungary not only in terms of territory but also in terms of its population. A sizeable Hungarian population now became minorities in the new Czechoslovak state. According to the census carried out in 1921, the ethnic composition of Slovakia was as follows (excluding Transcarpathia)

**TABLE 4.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>2,958,557</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovaks</td>
<td>1,952,866</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechs</td>
<td>72,137</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>650,597</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>145,844</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruthinians, Ukrainians</td>
<td>88,970</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>48,143</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: In Peter Huncik, Feder Gal, The historical Background to the formation of Slovak - Hungarian Relations, pp. 23-24).

As mentioned earlier the victorious powers sought to protect minorities created in the new state formations by numerous treaties signing off the war. The rights of the

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8. ibid., p 22. The idealogue of future Slovak autonomy Audre Hlinka stated the problem thus 'Now is the time for action. It is imperative for us to decide whether henceforth. We go with the Hungarian or with the Czechs.

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minorities in Czechoslovakia were defined and regulated by the Saint Germain-en-Laye agreement, 10 September 1919. This agreement guaranteed the individual and collective rights of minorities. On the basis of this agreement the new Czechoslovak constitution emphasized that any kind of anti-minority agitation was unacceptable and punishable. The government also pledged to respect the principles laid down in the language laws. Thus paragraph 2 for instance, stated that Czech officials had to accept and act on all questions addressed to them in a language other than Czech or Slovak in districts in which minority groups numbered more than 20%. Paragraph 3 confirmed that any member of parliament belonging to a minority had the right to use his native language in the parliament in Prague. Decree 1938/229 farther stipulated that if the number of minorities in a given region exceeded 50% all official documents had also to be printed in the language of the minorities concerned and if their total numerical strength exceeded 75% the documents need not be printed in the official language unless specifically requested.

10. ibid.
11. ibid.
The discrepancy between theory and practice was, however, blatantly visible from the outset. Early in 1923 the representatives of the minorities in Lutence drafted a petition in the name of 'The Minorities in Slovakia and Ruthenia' which they forwarded to the officials in Geneva informing them of the violation of their rights in Czechoslovakia. Of these abuses the closure of the Hungarian university in Bratislava, the occupation of the predominantly Hungarian settlement of Zitom by former members of Czechoslovak army and the institution of a new voting system were singled out for special mention.12

The overall thrust in the new Czechoslovak state appeared to be on Slovakization as if to get even with the 'Hungarianization they were subjected to as part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Thus soon after the foundation of the Czechoslovak state, the Slovak League came into being which played a crucial role in the development of an efficient and well structured network of schools in southern Slovakia. 15 villages of Slovakia with 75% Hungarian population had only Slovak Schools. In 1931 only 8 (29%) secondary schools in Czechoslovakia were Hungarian. the

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12. ibid., A purely Slovak district required 19,753 votes to secure a single elected mandate while a so-called Hungarian district required 27,697 votes i.e. roughly 8,000 or 40% more.
same year the Ministry of Education spent 228.6 million crowns on secondary schools out of which only 5 million (22%) was granted to Hungarian schools.\textsuperscript{13}

(ii) Fate of the Hungarians in Post World War II Czechoslovakia.

Hungary's attempt to undo the 'Diktat of Trianon' by aligning with Nazi Germany failed with the defeat of the Axis block and had catastrophic consequences for the Hungarian minorities. In Czechoslovakia the National Front government established in 1945 in its Kosice Programme, invoking the principle of 'collective guilt' called for the expulsion of the Germans and the Hungarians from Czechoslovakia. The allied powers consented to the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia to the occupied zones of Germany in the Potsdam agreement of July 18, 1945.\textsuperscript{14} As both Czechoslovakia and Hungary fell under the Soviet sphere of influence a similar call for expulsion of Hungarians was stalled. The communist party of Hungary was represented in

\textsuperscript{13} ibid. pp 24-25. The Slovak Leagues aim was to Slovakize all Slovakia in the same way as its counterpart FEMKE had wanted to 'Hungarianize Slovakia before the war.

the government and eventually seized complete power in the state even before communist party of Czechoslovakia. During the protracted negotiations between the Czech and Hungarian governments the latter was willing to accept exchange of population but not unilateral transfer of Hungarians into an already overcrowded Hungary.\(^{15}\) Under pressure from allied and Soviet powers Czechoslovakia had to relent. Thus while some 92,000 Hungarians left Czechoslovakia in 1945-47, an additional 68,000 were resettled in Hungary in the spring of 1948, the bulk of Hungarians remained in the country.\(^{16}\) As attempts of expulsion failed the government devised methods of dispersing and resettling Hungarians in various parts of Czechoslovakia. The Czech Minister of Agriculture, Duris announced in 1946 that a definitive solution to the question of the Hungarians in Slovakia would shortly be begun and it would take form of the transfer of the Hungarians to the Sudeten German areas.\(^{17}\) On the 17 of June 1946 the Czechoslovak government may transfer Hungarians from Czechoslovakia equal to the number of Slovaks in Hungary voluntarily remove to Czechoslovakia.\(^{15}\) According to the agreement the Hungarian led to the signature of the agreement for the Exchange of Populations on February 27 1946. According to the agreement the Czechoslovak government may transfer Hungarians from Czechoslovakia equal to the number of Slovaks in Hungary voluntarily remove to Czechoslovakia.\(^{16}\) Josef Kalvoda, n.14, p. 4.\(^{17}\) ibid, n. 15, p. 7.
slovak government issued a decree concerning so-called 'Reslovakiation'. This decree rested on the assumption that in fact there never had been any Hungarians in Slovakia, only 'Hungarianized Slovaks. A. Granatier, the man responsible for 'reslovakization spelt out the aims of the decree clearly 'we want to give a chance to everyone who so wishes to return to the family of Slovaks with all that belongs to it or else to join the category of those who have nothing not even citizenship.'\textsuperscript{18} Reslovakisation began the following month. The harsh treatment meted out to the minorities in the immediate aftermath of World War II mellowed to an extent when the communist were voted to power in 1948.

(iii) Hungarians in Communist Czechoslovakia

In the 1948 elections of the 7,204,256 Czechoslovak voters 6,429,145 voted for the communist party.\textsuperscript{19} Among them were the Hungarian minorities who felt it would result in a better status for them. Under the communist leadership, however, Czechoslovakia remained a staunchly pro-Soviet satellite, showing little tolerance for regional

\textsuperscript{18} ibid, n. 4, p. 28., also see Katalin Vadkerty, Hungarians in Post-war Slovakia, the Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. 35, Winter 1994 pp 115-127.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
autonomy or political dissent. But being part of the Soviet block also meant that the strong anti-Hungarian fervour had to be toned down. The position of the Hungarians improved after the introduction of law No. 245 on 25 October 1948.20 In November 1948 the newspaper Bratislava Pravda stated that those Hungarians who wished to return to their homes could do so between January 1 and April 30, 1949.21 The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia declared at a meeting on April 8, 1954 that all reslovakisation should cease forthwith and that everybody should declare themselves to be members of their own particular nationality. Proportional representation in all existing Czechoslovak elected bodies was also granted to the Hungarians. But given the tight control of communist party mechanism the representative character of elected bodies was itself questionable.

The systematic assimilation of the Hungarians between 1945-48 was reverted in 1949. Hungarian schools began to appear. On March 5 1949, the Cultural Union of Hungarian working people in Czechoslovakia (CSEMADOK) was established to promote cultural artistic and civil activities for the

20. ibid., p 51., the law contained three paragraphs about 'setting the legal position of the Hungarians'. However, in reality it was about return of citizenship to the Hungarians rather than an elaboration of minority rights.

ethnic Hungarians in the country. Few days later 'Újszo', the first Hungarian language daily began its publication and on September 1, 1949 after a gap of five years teaching started in Hungarian schools.

Gradual improvement in the situation of the Hungarian minority had begun. On January 6, 1950 the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia discussed their situation and passed resolutions, some of them are noted as follows

- an account of an investment programme in Southern Slovakia
- a basis for solving the problems of the Hungarians returned from Bohemia.
- measures so that official documents would be published bilingually in the areas where Hungarians lived.
- measures to prevent jingoistic propaganda.
- measures to prevent expected tension during the census in 1950.
- the information for officials working in Southern Slovakia that every citizen could become a member of the newly established Cesmadok.

23. ibid, n. 4, p. 51.
The first post war census of March 31, 1950 reflected the impact of the harsh policies that the Hungarians had to face. During the years of war, there was a sudden dip in number and the decline continued unarrested till 1950. On July 1, 1952 a group of representatives took fresh steps to give equal rights to the Hungarian minorities. However, most of those decisions were never put to practice and were not known beyond party circles.

The 50s on the whole as indicated brought some respite to minorities. As these were the years of comparatively mild oppression, the fears of minorities gradually abated. This was reflected in the March 1961 census when persons declaring themselves Hungarians increased to 12.4%.

All improvement in conditions of the Hungarian minority came to grinding halt in the aftermath of the Prague spring of 1968. The long standing distrust for Hungarians intensi-

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25. For instance, that in Hungarian settlements bilingualism would be practised officially.
26.
To counteract Prague's efforts at democratization, the Soviet Union relying on the principles of divide and rule placed Slovak nationalists at the head of Czechoslovakia. In the course of 1969 Gustav Husak and his team consolidated power and gradually curtailed the rights enjoyed by Hungarian minorities. Though by Decision No. 25 of February 1969 it was decided that a Minister for National Minorities would be named but his jurisdiction was never precisely determined, the first and only Minister of Minority Affairs Laszto Dobos was removed in 1971 and since then none had been appointed.

Starting with the early 70s it became increasingly clear the main target of government action was minority (Hungarian) education. Education in their own language hold particular importance for minorities to maintain their

27. During the shortlived Prague Spring liberalisation in 1968 Slovakia attained some measure of political autonomy. In January 1969 Czechoslovakia was declared a federal socialist state consisting of two republics Czech and Slovak, with nominally equal rights in the federation. The Prague Spring reforms also loosened restrictions on minority population by improving their cultural and educational facilities and employment opportunities. The possibility of Ukrainian - Ruthinian and Hungarian autonomy with Slovakia was also discussed. The demociatization efforts were halted by the invasion of warsaw pact troops. Participation of the Hungarian Communist government in the invasion had a particularly negative effect in the situation of the Hungarian minorities.

28. Pavol Pard Frie, Fedor Gal, Peter Huncik Christopher Lord. n. 4, p 52.
identity and culture. Any attempt to restrict mother tongue education is thus particularly regarded with suspicion and opposition. Once post-war persecution ended, the number of children learning in Hungarian rose quickly, from around 5000 in 1948 to 34,000 by 1950. Numbers continued to rise through the 1950s, reaching about 76,000 in the early 1960s. In the past 1968 period the Czechoslovak authorities reduced the facilities for Hungarian language education primarily by redrawing administrative boundaries and amalgamating or closing rural schools. As low as 5.6% of college and university students in Slovakia were ethnic Magyars. A limited access to higher education in turn restricted economic opportunities.

29. Kieran Williams, The Magyar Minority in Slovakia, Frank Cass Journals, p.17. In 1970-71 school year almost 500 primary schools used Hungarian as the main language of instruction, reaching 71,605 pupils whereas in 1980-81 just under 300 such schools were in operation, with 50,398 pupils. The number of secondary schools was halved from 22 to 11, while vocational schools were reduced from 26 to 5. By 1988, 243 primary schools operated in Hungarian and the number of pupils taught had declined slightly to 49,295. In contrast schools teaching in Slovak expanded from 617,518 by 1988. Data suggest that in 1988, 16,085 children of primary school age and Magyar nationality were not being educated in Hungarian schools. The number of grammar schools in Hungarian had declined to ten by 1988, as did the member of students from 5156 in 1980 to 4238 in 1988. But over this period the total Slovak grammar school population declined with growing preference for technical secondary schooling. During the 1980s around 54% of youth in Slovakia aged 15 left school to enter unskilled labour or apprenticeships, among Magyar the rate of school leavers was higher 62.2% in 1987.
The Hungarian minorities organised themselves to pressurize the government to rectify its policy vis-a-vis the minorities. A committee for the protection of rights of the Hungarian Minorities in Czechoslovakia was formed headed by Miklos Duray. In August 1983 Duray was imprisoned for his activities and held in custody for 6 months without trial.\textsuperscript{30} He was arrested again in May 1984 for protesting against the proposed law that intended to do away with teaching national minority students in their native tongue in their schools. His imprisonment provoked widespread protests in Czechoslovakia (from Czech and Slovak intellectuals) and abroad especially Hungarian emigres in USA and Canada. Duray was released in May 1985 after 470 days in prison.\textsuperscript{31}

Throughout this period Hungary's dissatisfaction with the minority treatment in Czechoslovakia had to be voiced within the limitations imposed by bloc discipline and solidarity. On the whole Kadar's Hungary refrained from adopting a confrontationist stance towards Slovak nationalists. The Kadar regime functioned in the expectation that if it closed its eyes to the grievances of the Magyars of Czechoslovakia, Husak in turn would not object in Moscow to the

\textsuperscript{30} J. Kolvodo, n.14, p 8.

\textsuperscript{31} ibid.
Hungarian economic and social reforms. However, since the last years of Kadar's regime Hungary began arguing that ethnic Magyars living outside its borders form an integral part of the Hungarian nation and that Hungary as their motherland had a special obligation towards them.

II. CONTEMPORARY SCENARIO

This section highlights the continuation and intensification of the minority struggle in post 1990s Slovakia, continuation because the essence of the struggle remains the same - maintaining group identity, intensification because the new democratic atmosphere gives greater legitimacy to such demands. First, a brief analysis of contemporary Slovak state is required. This gives one an idea of how the state responds to minority demands, the future it visualises for them and whether the problems that minorities encounter have decreased or increased. Second, one has to note how successfully the Magyar minorities have organised themselves for on it ultimately depends the redressal of their grievances. The third factor important in deciding the Magyar minority equation vis-a-vis the Slovak majority is the presence of Hungary, which is dealt in a separate

32. A reading of the Slovak constitution and the various laws passed by the Slovak government gives one a fair amount of idea of the dominant tendencies.
chapter.

(i) **Independent Slovakia**

The birth of Slovakia as an independent entity in January 1993 was a product of strong nationalist currents which once again enveloped Slovakia after the communist debacle.\(^{33}\)

As the winds of change initiated by Gorbachev reached Czechoslovakia the authority of the Communist Party rapidly waned.\(^{34}\) Relations between Bratislava and Prague strained under the incessant demands of newly established Slovak parties for extensive political and economic autonomy. Capitalizing on the painful process of economic reform they accused Prague of discrimination and of neglecting Slovak interests. The issue of Slovak self determination assumed priority and Slovak deputies pressurized the Federal Assembly into changing the country's name to "The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic" in early 1990. In the June 1992, general elections the pro-sovereignty forces scored well and a full separation between the two republics became eminent as talks of confederation reached an impasse. The Czechs in


\(^{34}\) Velvet revolution of 1989.
their turn were growing impatient with persistent Slovak demands that stalled legislative activity and impeded progress towards market economy. The new Czech prime minister\textsuperscript{35} preferred a formal separation to a long drawn out dispute over constitutions, federal and ministerial powers and intra-state treaties. By October 1992, the two sides agreed on a formal separation and on January 1, 1993 two new states Czech Republic and Slovakia came into existence. A strong Slovak identity in other words was the catalyst behind Czech-Slovak divorce. The urge to nurture and assert this identity pre-occupied independent Slovakia. The political formations which dominate Slovakia gives one a fair idea of the environment in which the minorities find themselves.

(ii) \textbf{Slovak Political Parties.}

The organ which actually performs the function of the state is its government formed of representatives of people elected in democracies from among various political parties. The program and policies of political parties have a considerable impact on policies of state. The strident note of Slovak political parties has been their nationalist intonations.

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\textsuperscript{35} Czech PM Vaclav Klaus.
(a) Movement for Democratic Slovakia:

The Movement for Democratic Slovakia for instance led by Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar ranked Slovak national concern above all other issues and adopted a pronounced nationalist stance. By March 1992 Meciar's party became the strongest political force in Slovakia with an estimated 40 per cent support in public opinion polls. Fighting the June 1992 elections with a program that called for an unconditional declaration of Slovak sovereignty without consultation with Prague, the adoption of a Slovak constitution slow pace of privatisation, anti-Hungarian stance and restriction of Magyar autonomy demands, the MDS missed winning an absolute majority in the Slovak National Council by only 2 votes.

(b) Christian Democratic Movement:

Likewise the Christian Democratic Movement founded in February 1990 gradually by summer adopted a more nationalist orientation. After recasting its program in a more nationalist fashion, it became the strongest political force in

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36. The reason why it splintned off from the pro-federalist public against Vialenu coalition in March 1991.


38. MDS gained 74 out of 150 seats, and captured 37.26% of the popular votse. Meciar was by far the most popular Slovak politi-cian.
the republic at the local level, and in the November 1990 local elections gained 27.5% of the vote.\textsuperscript{39} Internal factionalization developed in CDMk by summer of 1991 over the future of Slovak state. The nationalist faction led by Jan Klepac was asked to tow the party line or leave. The Klepac faction announced its departure. The CDM fared poorly in the June 1992 general elections. It received only 8.88% of the popular vote and won only 18 out of 150 seats in the Slovak National Council. Thus it lost more than half of its previous Slovak supporters.\textsuperscript{40}

However, the overtly nationalist wing of the Christian Democratic Movement - Slovak Christian Democratic Party did not fair better. It attracted only 3 per cent of the popular vote during the June 1992 elections.

(c) Slovak National Party:

The Slovak National Party was established in February 1990. The SNP tried to capitalize on popular frustrations by organising street rallies and other protest actions in support of outright independence and against alleged Czech domination and Hungarian subversion. It organised the first

\textsuperscript{39} Janusz Bugajski, n.3, p. 335.

\textsuperscript{40} ibid, p. 336.
anti-Hungarian demonstration in Bratislava and Nove - Zamky in February 1990. It also sought to revitalise Slovak cultural traditions and contended that all nationalities in the republic had to respect Slovakia's national and state sovereignty in accordance with the rules of international law. The SNP underscored the primacy of 'Slovak National interests' and the position of Slovaks as a 'state forming nation'. Though in June 1992 general elections SNP's performance was far from spectacular it gained one ministry in Slovakia's first independent government (in coalition with the MDS). In the summer of 1993 once again the like minded SNP and MDS came together which meant a greater hand of nationalists in matters of administration and governance.

(d) Party of Democratic Left (PDL):

Given the appeal nationalists program had in Slovakia, the Party of Democratic Left (PDL) which emerged from the Slovak communist Party in October 1990 too, reoriented and cast itself in nationalist dye. In the June 1992 elections the party performed well particularly in eastern Slovakia where it obtained 21.5% of the popular vote.

41. ibid., p. 337.

42. ibid, p.338, Over all the PDL gained 14.7 per cent of vote 29 seats in Slovak National Council.
(e) Slovak Motherland:

In the wake of 1989, 'Velvet Revolution' Slovak Motherland, a national-cultural association once again reemerged. The movements program declared that it would protect the rights of all minorities in Slovakia but also stated that it would work against anti-Slovak phenomena. They strongly opposed Hungarian demand for collective minority rights and issued a strong statement on the position of Slovaks in Southern Slovakia who they felt were endangered by growing Hungarian assertiveness.

Other parties as Movement for an Independent Slovakia, Slovak National Democratic Movement, Party of 'Freedom - Party of National Unity were again parties with strong nationalist overtones.

Thus, it is evident that the Slovak political landscape is dotted with nationalist parties who in the initial years directed the sentiment against the Czechs. They dreamt of an independent Slovak state where Slovaks would be the state forming nation, the Slovak language would be the official

43. It was originally established in 1863 during the period of Hungarian occupation to promote and defend Slovak identity. It was disbanded by Hungarian authorities in 1875 but reemerged during first Czechoslovak Republic. Between 1948-68 it was repressed once more only to be reinstated first in 1968 and again after 1989.
language Slovak culture would advance. The Magyar minority viewed this rising nationalist fervour with increasing apprehension. They therefore, till the end were pro-federalists, which in turn only stoked Slovak displeasure. One of the more contentious issues in discussion of minority right is said to be over guaranteed or proportional representation of minorities in elected assemblies and public offices. Nature of the state and political parties notwithstanding the new Slovak state bid goodbye to communist totalitarianism and is eager to prove its democratic credentials especially to the West with whom like all other states of East Europe it desires integration. This perhaps forced it to tolerate political formation of minorities. In the following pages we focus on the Magyar political parties, their programme and achievements for on it depends how much the minority is able to wrest for itself.

III CONFLICT AREAS:

A major area of conflict between the majority Slovaks and Magyar minority is over language rights particularly in education, publishing and signage. Other sensitive issues are guaranteed political representation and the minority demand for personal and territorial autonomy. 

(i) Language Rights:

For any group, language is a source of preserving their
identity. Magyars in Slovakia are no exception. Surveys show an almost perfect correlation between self-identification as a Magyar and declaration of Hungarian as one's mother tongue. Any attempt to restrict the use of mother tongue is thus not well received and is a recurring source of tension. The attitude of the Slovak state to Hungarian language and the reaction of the minorities can be studied under two heads - education and public sinage.

(a) Education:

As already noted the educational facility available to the Magyars in the communist period fluctuated. Attempts to expand bilingual education was made by communists in 1978 and again in 1984, to increase Magyar grasp of the Slovak language, to increase their social mobility. But Magyars suspecting a hidden agenda of assimilation resisted such moves strongly.

In the autumn of 1990, a bill containing paragraph with similar purpose was submitted to the Slovak parliament. It met with resistance as before, and the paragraph had to be deleted. In January 1992, the first Meciar government, noted that many ethnically mixed towns offered education in just one language: 68 communities had schooling only in Slovak and 113 only in Hungarian, which meant that in some
places children were not learning in their mother tongue. The cabinet resolved that teachers must be trained to work in either language and that parents should have greater opportunity to choose the primary language of institution for their children. After Meciar returned to power in summer of 1992, and after Slovakia became independent talks on bilingual education resumed but no clear formulation emerged.

In July 1995 Eva Slavkovska who was in charge of education portfolio in the third Meciar cabinet issued a comprehensive proposal. According to the draft in 'alternative' kindergartens one of every three instructors would have to be Slovak speaking and in the primary schools a range of subjects such as civics, geography, maths, physics, and biology would be taught in Slovak. The latter scheme would continue in 'alternative' grammar schools while vocational schools would teach most technical subjects in Slovak. To rest Magyar fears it said such schools would be created alongside and not in place of existing Hungarian facilities and would be introduced only at the request of local school boards and parents. However, since the proposal failed to

44. Kieran williams, n.29, p.10.
45. ibid., p.9.
clarify how these schools would be funded the minorities fear that ultimately they would replace Hungarian - only schools was not without substance. Under mounting minority pressure Slavkovska announced that her ministry would not attempt to introduce it in the 1995-96 school year.

Apart from the possible introduction of bilingual schools at the expense of the Hungarian - only schools, the diversion of budgetary allocations caused enormous concern for the minorities. In the 1995 fiscal year the budget allocated 58 million Slovak Crowns for the assistance of minority cultures.\textsuperscript{46} This amount was for minority language press, including children's publications, book publishing and minority culture organisations. Reportedly in the first quarter of 1995 distribution was completed according to the budgetary provisions - the press received no money and Csemadok (the cultural organisation of Hungarians in Slovakia) received 1.6 million Slovak crown. On the other hand violating law no. 567/1992\textsuperscript{47}, 58 million Slovak Crown ap-

\textsuperscript{46} In the previous year 140.5 million Slovak crown was alloted. But the decrease is because of the different method of distribution. The 1995 allocation is not to assist theatres, semi-professional groups, local cultures and libraries.

\textsuperscript{47} 567/1992 specifies that the sum targeted by parliament cannot be used for other purposes. The amount sanctioned for minority culture was diverted to pro Slovakia state fund Slovak culture could not possibly be termed as minority culture.
proved by the budget was transferred into the Pro Slovakia state fund based on a decision by I. Hudec, Minister of culture. Moreover Csemadok has to assume the burden of institutional task⁴⁸ that in case of Slovak culture the central agencies ensure. No immediate decision was made as to what Csemadok programs would receive aid and to what extent. This was with some justification interpreted by minorities as an attempt to destroy Csemadoks infrastructure and make the preservation of minority culture impossible under mounting economic constraints. The minorities also bitterly noted that the budget of Matica Slovenska had increased to 105 million Slovak Crown in the year 1995.

The long standing Magyar demand for their own university in Komarno and separate Hungarian departments at the Nitra Agricultural college⁴⁹ have been repeatedly stalled pleading lack of funds and personnel. The education ministry is also said to be blocking the creation of church run schools teaching in Hungarian attempts to introduce bilingualism, non-fulfillment of their demands have led a majority of the Magyars and their organisations to favour some

⁴⁸. e.g. ensuring methodological background, organising festivals national competitions, reviews.

⁴⁹. The demand has been mooted a number of times by the Magyar political parties.
form of autonomous education system - putting primary schools under the control of local authorities and secondary schools under a regional tier of administration along with special boards to handle all personnel and financial decisions.\(^{50}\)

On April 22, 1995 the Slovak Ministry of Education prepared and submitted to the government's nationality council its standpoint in the Komarno General Assembly's position. The assembly had protested against government actions aimed at suppressing the democratic and minority institutional system. Studying the Ministry's standpoint the plan to expand Slovak language education at the expense of Hungarian education can easily be discerned.\(^{51}\)

The Slovak language law passed in 1995 was it appears a natural culmination of these tendencies.\(^{52}\)

The text attached to the Draft Law on the state language gives one a fair idea of what the law has in store

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50. Kieran Williams, n.29, p. 11.

51. For instance it says - develop a method of distributing monetary resources that generates conditions making Slovak nursery schools more attractive.

52. The law was passed by the National Council on 15 November 1995 and President Michal Kovac signed it on 28 November 1995. The President expressed hope that Meciar would keep his promise and forward a law on the use of minority languages. Transition 29 December 1995, Vol.1 No. 24, p.62.
for minorities. The Slovak language is ranked as one of the oldest civilized languages of Europe and gives a chronological account of the systematic destruction of the language under strong Magyarization pressure following the annexation of Slovakia to Hungary. The text unambiguously states that the Slovak language is the national language of the Slovaks who comprise the only state forming element of the Slovak Republic. It thus follows that Slovak language is the unifying language of all citizens of Slovak republic. The significant number of national minorities who enjoy the constitutional right to the free use of their mother tongue (Article 34) are left without any legal guarantees to such entitlement. The text clearly states that the State organizes the public education system and state administrative system without regard to linguistic identity. The law conflicts not only with the basic treaty signed by Hungary and Slovakia but also leading international documents like Framework convention for the Protection of National Minorities CSCE Copenhagen document, UN Declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, Recommendation.

53. This justifies our observation that contemporary problems are to date heightened by historical experiences.

54. The contradictions between the language law and the treaty which was signed prior to it is discussed in Chapter on Hungary and her neighbours.
1201 of the parliamentary Assembly of the council of Europe, documents to which Slovakia has pledged her commitment. All these documents clearly state in different articles that states in which national minorities exist should allow members of such groups to freely express their identity and the state should also provide them with every opportunity to maintain and strengthen their religious, linguistic, ethnic and cultural identity. The documents further state that persons belonging to national minority have the right to use their language freely in private and in public, orally and in writing.

The 1995 law replaced the 1990 Slovak language law. The 1990 law allowed the use of minority language in official contacts in areas where the minority was at least 20% of the population. The new law makes no such provision.

Arguably the preconditions for the adoption of the 1995 and 1990 language law differ significantly. the 1990 law

55. Article 3(1) of the Framework Convention; Article 32 of CSCE Copenhagen document;

56. Article 5(1) of the Framework connection; Article 32 of CSCE Copenhagen document; Article 4 and Article 2. UN Declaration on the rights of Persons belonging to National Minorities;

57. Article 10 (1) of the Framework convention; Art 32.1, Article 32.5. Article 134 of the CSCE Copenhagen document; Article 2 of UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National minorities; Article 17 of Recommendation 1201.
was adopted with the express desire to reinforce the position of Slovak language vis-a-vis the Czech language that became dominant in the Czechoslovak state and similarly regulate the use of minority language. The new language law has been adapted in the sovereign Slovak state and from the justification attached to the draft law, it intends to remedy historical grievances that fell upon the Slovak language.

(b) Public Sinage:

Another language related sensitive issue in majority - minority relation is public sinage. The Magyar because of their historical roots in the areas they reside, feel that the right to refer to these places by their Hungarian name is absolutely justified. The Slovaks because of their experiences under Hungarian domination have difficulty endorsing such claims. A May 1994 poll found that only around 15 per cent of Slovaks felt that Magyars were completely justified in demanding that town names be bilingual. The 1990 language law approved of only Slovak public signs and in July 1993 the Slovak transport minister Roman Hofbauer used this law and other technical provisions to order the removal

of Hungarian place names.59

Magyar political parties lobbied international organizations, in particular the CSCE and the Council of Europe and succeeded in July 1994 in getting a sign law passed. Under the law, communities in which national minority constitutes at least 20 per cent of population (currently 587 towns and villages) must display signs announcing the name of the community in that minority’s language.60 Clause 3 (3) of the law, however, exempts all towns whose Hungarian names were bestowed between 1867-1918 and between 1938-45, and any attempts to change the name of these towns, even by local referendum, will not be acknowledged.

(c) Administrative Demarcation and Local Government:

Another long-standing grievance of the Magyar minority

59. Magyar deputies raised the matter in the parliament, protest letters were sent to Meciar and Hafbauer on 27 August 1993 ethnic Magyars in the town of Komarno held for the first time ever in Slovakia, a mass demonstration to defend their rights and demand the governments compliance with Council of europe’s Recommendations. _RFE/RL Research Report_ Vol.2. No. 49, 10 December 1993, pp. 41-42.

60. Kieran Williams, n.29, p. 13. William cites an analysis of 506 town names. It found that two per cent were identical in Slovak and Hungarian, 25 per cent differed only in spelling e.g. Baje in Slovak Bajes in Hungarian) 53 per cent were Hungarian translations of the Slovak or bore some semantic resemblances (eg Slovak Jsahodua in Hungarian Eperjes bata of which imply straw berries) while the final 20 per cent bore absolutely no resemblances especially if the Slovak name honours a historical figure such as Stur or Safarch.
concerns the drawing of local administrative boundaries. Of Slovakia's 38 districts, 13 have sizeable Magyar populations. Within these 13 districts there is a wide variety in concentration, ranging from 6-7 per cent in some districts up to 87 per cent in others. In 1960 Czechoslovak and Slovak authorities manipulated district borders to reduce the number in which Magyars would form majority of the local population. Slovakia was divided into 3 regions running along north-south lines to ensure Slovak majority in each. These regions including the regional tier of public administration, were abolished in January 1991. This brought Magyar-Slovak relations to an all time low. It resulted in the Komarno appeal of December 1993 and the Komarno meeting of Magyar town councillors in January 1994 that called for the creation either of an east-west region in which Magyar would constitute 61 per cent of the population or of three smaller more compact regions in which Magyar concentration would be between 54-77 per cent with considerable powers of self-government. The Magyars buttressed such claims by citing Council of Europe 1993 directives, to design regional units keeping 'rights of minorities' in view, are demanding considerable revision of boundaries. Although almost 60 per cent of Slovak Magyars favour some form of territorial autonomy their political representatives are far from united.
on the issue. HCDM leader Bela Bugar has emphatically ruled out territorial autonomy. Citing the Yugoslav case Bugar argues 'territorial autonomy' is a recipe for instability. The 'Co-existence' has on the other hand threatened to press for territorial autonomy if their demand for devolution of power to local government remains unfulfilled. The Meciar government paid no heed to such demands and since 1992 has been considering a new regional configuration which would leave no region with a Magyar majority.

The Meciar government has shown considerable high handedness in dealing with minorities and their representatives. Meciar refused to pay attention to the Hungarian deputies objections of the Slovak constitution, saying they were not the legitimate representatives of the minority. Meciar was prepared only to talk to ethnic magyars in his own MDS. 61 The Meciar government repeatedly underscored that minority issue was Slovakia's internal affair and Slovakia had a high standard of rights for her minorities.

The Council of Europe has time and again, expressed its concern over Slovakia's minority policy and urged it to live up to its international commitments. Shortly after resign-

61. This was revealed the ethnic Hungarian vice chairman of PDL, Erzsebet Borza who tried unsuccessfully to mediate between the government and the Hungarian coalition. RFE/RL Research Report vol. 1 No. 43, 30 October 1992 pp. 13-20.
ing former Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel also expressed concern about the nature of human rights including those of Magyar minority in an independent Slovakia.

On 13 January 1993, the Council of Europe's rapporteur on Slovakia, the Finnish Social Democrat Tarja Halonen submitted to the council's General assembly her final report on Slovakia's admission listing specific requirements to be met with regard to minorities. The four main deficiencies contained in the Halonen report were - the forcible removal (November 1992) of Hungarian language place signs; the ban on the use of Hungarian Christian names on birth registers; a planned territorial reorganisation that would change ethnic composition of the present administrative districts to the detriment of the ethnic magyars; and discriminatory legislation for the losses suffered by ethnic Magyars and Germans as a result of 1945 Benes decrees. In his February visit to Slovakia CSCE high commissioner Max van der Stoel was told by President Michal Kovac that Slovakia would never grant autonomy to its Hungarian minority. Magyar minority representatives and the Hungarian government in their frustration with adamant Slovak authorities had seriously con-


63. RFE/RL vol.2, No. 49, 10 December 1995, pp. 36-37.
From 1993 till now Slovakia's minority policy has not made much positive headway. In July 1996 for instance two senior officials from two crucial countries of the European Union - France and Germany warned Slovakia that its problems with democracy could hamper its integration plans. In his visit to Slovakia in November 1996, OSCE human rights commissioner Max van der Stoel expressed reservation about the amended penal code and the delay in passing a law enabling the use of ethnic minority language in official contact. The high commissioner was also critical about state subsidies for ethnic culture noting that non-Hungarians received five times more financing than Hungarians. He also highlighted the promise of Meciar government that electoral districts with a majority of ethnic Hungarians would be created so that they would have relevant representation in parliament. The high commissioner at the same time agreed with the Slovak President that there was no

64. Under international pressure they softened their stand.
65. SWB EE/2654, C/1-2, 3rd July, 1996.
66. SWB EE/2769 C/4, 14 November 1996.
67. SWB EE/2768 C/6, 13 November 1996.
68. SWB EE/2769 C/4, 14 November 1996.
tension on misunderstanding among common people in Slovakia's nationality mixed areas.

(iii) Magyar Political Parties and the Problem of Political Representation:

In the aftermath of the communist collapse the Magyars drawing on years of experience to survive in unfriendly atmosphere quickly organised themselves into political parties.69

(a) The Co-existence:

The most controversial of the Hungarian parties has been Co-existence, led by the tireless activist Miklos Duray. Formed in 1990, it declared itself free from any particular ideology and pledged to represent the interests of all national minorities in Czechoslovakia. Coexistence consistently supported the federal system as the best environment for protecting minority rights. Its leaders felt

69. Had there been a confrontation with nationalist forces, Magyars would have probably tended to unite in a homogenous bloc. In 1989 the power vaccum was filled in by a civic opposition in Czechoslovakia committed to building a democratic parliamentary system based on European values and principles of federation. This atmosphere encouraged the Magyar minority to organise themselves according to their political convictions and ideas. After January 1990 as nationalist feelings began to grow a survey indicated 80% of the ethnic Hungarians polled would have preferred a united Hungarian movement. In the June 1990 elections thus 75-80% ethnic magyar voters cast their ballot for the Coexistence - HCDM coalition. RFE/RL Research Report, Vol.1, No. 18, 1 May 1992.1 pp. 26-32.
that none of the Slovak parties had a clear minorities policy with which the Hungarians could remain comfortable. Its program underscored 'collective rights' for Czechoslovakia's minorities including cultural autonomy for all ethnic groups and political autonomy in regions containing compact Magyar communities particularly in southern Slovakia. Its economic goals stressed privatisation, private ownership and the transformation of collectives into private farms. It also called for firm legal safeguards that would protect minority interests. The Coexistence objected to the package of language laws introduced by Bratislava in October 1990 that established Slovak as the sole official language even in minority areas with the use of Hungarian limited to districts containing 20 per cent or more. Magyar inhabitants. The Coexistence, proposed legislation in the public use of minority languages in all areas with significant minority populations. In July 1991, The Coexistence and the HCDM objected to the newly introduced land law at a joint session of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly which discriminated against some minorities - Hungarians were entitled to 50 hectares of private land, while members of other nationalities could receive as many as 250 hectares. 70 The Co-

existence also protested against the Slovak government decision in the summer of 1991 to cut subsidies to ethnic minority organisations.

(b) Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (HCDM):

Founded in March 1990 and headed by President Kalman Janics, the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (HCDM) was the second major political group to emerge in the wake of the democratic changes.\(^7^1\) The party grew out of the Hungarian Christian Democratic clubs in Slovakia and became the second most significant Magyar movement in the republic with regard to the number of its local chapters and local representatives.

(c) Independent Hungarian Initiative:

The third main player, the liberal Hungarian Civic Party emerged from the Independent Hungarian Initiative in January 1992.\(^7^2\) The original IHI was established in November 1989 and was chaired by Laszlo Nagy. Its most prominent leaders were long-time dissidents Lajos Grendel, Kalman Balla, Karoly Toth. Its programme emphasizes economic transformation and individual rights which enables it to talk more easily with Slovak parties.

\[^7^1\] ibid., p.344.

\[^7^2\] ibid., p.345.
Yet another party named the Hungarian People's Party was established in December 1991. It became the first Hungarian political party to register with the Slovak Ministry of Internal affairs. The HPP advocated Christian moral values, national reconciliation an 'environmentally secure' social market economy and universal human rights. The HPP was the only Hungarian party asserting that Slovak independence would have a positive impact on the Magyar minority.73

Political parties, social scientists agree, are distinguished by their sole aim to form government so as to realise their plans and programmes. While the Magyar political parties of Slovakia cannot realistically speaking at this juncture or in near future, 'think of forming a government' they have in the various elections managed to capture seats in Federal Assembly and Slovak National Council and have thus kept the Magyar voice alive in the corridors of power.

For the June 1990 elections the Co-existence formed a coalition with the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement and won 12 seats in the Federal Assembly and 14 seats in the Slovak National Council. It captured 8.66 per cent of the

73. They played a crucial role in March 1994 when the Meciar government fell and Jozef Moravick took over.
total vote and nearly 80 per cent of the ethnic Magyar vote
In the November 1990 local elections the coexistence managed
to elect 105 mayors later the number increased to 116.
Other Hungarian parties elected 62 mayors in Slovakia. 74

In the June 1990 elections, IHI ran on the PAV ticket
and won a total of 6 seats in the republican assembly. In
February 1991, the IHI became a member of the three-party
Slovak coalition government, in which it had a parliamenta-
ry vice-chairman, Laszlo Nagy, and a deputy prime minister,
Gabor Zaizlos after June 1991. The Coexistence accused the
IHI/HCP of collaborating with Slovak parties they on their
part maintained that it was more effective to work inside
the government and have the opportunity to influence policy
rather than stand outside in permanent opposition. 75

For the June 1992 election the Coexistence once again
allied with HCDM. the coalition won 14 out of 150 seats to
the Slovak National Council and 12 deputies were elected to
the Federal Assembly. 76

kia's first post communist parliamentary elections.

75. ibid., pp.345-346, For the June 1992 second multi party
elections. HCP could not strike a partnership either with Coexi-
satence - HCDM HPP combine nor with PSAV. the result was disas-
trous, it failed to obtain parliamentary seats.

76. ibid., p. 343. 9 out of 14 in the Slovak National Council
and 8 out of 12 in the Federal Assembly were from Coexistence.
The 1990 electoral law meant to provide a pluralistic political system had already put smaller and newly formed parties and political movements at disadvantage. It had stipulated at least 10,000 signatures to be registered as political party for elections and secure 5% of the votes to gain representation in the Federal Assembly, 3% in case of Slovak National Council. The latter regulation clearly contradicted constitutional Law No. 144 which said that national minorities were entitled to proportional representation in the parliament. At the end of January, the Federal Assembly passed an amended version of the 1990 electoral law which retained the 5 per cent threshold for parties seeking to gain parliamentary representation but raised it to 7 per cent for coalitions of two or three parties and to 10 per cent for coalitions of four or more.77

However, it soon became evident that the ties between the two movements were not truly promoting Magyar minority interests. The IHI proposed that the new federal government should include a minister in charge of nationality affairs and nominated Miklo's Duray for the position. the proposal

was initially endorsed by PASV but later vetoed by the new Czechoslovak prime minister Marian Calfa. Calfa argued such a position was not envisioned in constitution Law No. 144 (1968) and that should a Magyar minister be appointed, other nationalities would also demand cabinet posts.

In the March of 1994, a no-confidence vote led to the dismissal of Vladimir Meciar's government. The new left-right cabinet headed by Jozef Moravcik depended on the tacit support from the ethnic Hungarian deputies. The Magyars representatives conditioned their support on guarantees that several laws be passed granting more rights to minorities at the same time they (the HCDM) favoured a little restrain so as not to upset their long term interest. The Coexistence, however, put the government under constant pressure, which led the government to pass 'two laws recommended by the Council of Europe - on birth registers and bilingual signs, but the Benes decrees were not abolished.'

For the September 1994 elections again the Magyars formed a three party coalition - the Coexistence, HCDM and the third partner this year was HCP. The three parties in their election programs supported decentralization and

increased rights of minorities but they disagreed over the extent of autonomy to be granted. HCDM advocated self rule in the areas of economy, culture, education, social and health care, autonomy over cultural matters. HCP aimed at cultural and educational autonomy. The Coexistence called guaranteed education in the mother tongue from kindergarten to university, it supported the European Charter in Regional and Local Autonomy as a basic norm which allowed communities to resolve their own economic social and cultural problems without state interference. The combine garnered 10.18 per cent of the vote and 17 seats in the parliament. Meciar recovered and the party along with the radically nationalist SNS faired well enough to form the government. Minority rights once again became targets of the overtly nationalist government. The Magyar parties who had worked reasonably well with the Moravcik Cabinet, now found few supporters in the opposition.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion one could conclude that one, historically Slovaks do not appear well disposed towards the Hungarians. Since they became part of Czechoslovak state they have faced much hostility and resentment.

Second, taking advantage of the changed political scenario in the 90s the minorities initially voiced their apprehensions of being part of increasing nationalist state and thereafter organised themselves to fight for their rights. The nature of their demands apart from the demand of autonomy have not altered substantially. Third, the Slovak state is too young in years and democratic experience. the systemic change has not yet altered attitude towards differences. In times of economic hardship when minorities become easy scapegoats, tolerance and respect for minorities need to be cultivated.
Figure 37: Hungarian communities in Vojvodina and East Croatia (1991)