

# THE NUMBER OF MAGYARS LIVING IN SLOVAKIA

BY

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**S**o far we have *not* available *any* certain data respecting the number of Magyars in Slovakia. There are all kinds of estimates in circulation which appraise the number of Magyars living in Slovakia at figures ranging from 67,000 to 120,000. Here particular interest attaches to *the lower figure. This figure is that determined by the 1931 Czecho-Slovak Census* in respect of the territories now forming the Slovak State. It goes without saying that the figures of the Czecho-Slovak Census relating to the Magyars living in present-day Slovakia are not accepted by any one, seeing that *the whole world knows all about the anti-nationality methods employed in Czecho-Slovakia in connection with the collection of Census data.* The above Czecho-Slovak figure is in consequence corrected by every one and supplemented, the object of this process of "appreciation" being to express the fact that every one is perfectly well aware of the anti-minority tendency of the Czecho-Slovak Censuses of former days.

The only question is — how far does the correction and the supplementation of the figure to the maximum referred to above really reflect the actual number of Magyars living in Slovakia?

Seeing that so far no investigation of the matter has been made, we consider it necessary to make the first experiment in that direction.

The starting-point of our inquiry must be the number of Magyars living in the territory of present-day Slovakia prior to the detachment of that territory (taking the figures of the 1910 Census); and we must try to find out what disruptive influence have since affected the numerical strength of the Magyars?

According to the Hungarian Census of 1910 the number of Magyars living within the territory of present-day Slovakia was 265,000. The number of Magyars living at the same period in the territories now restored to Hungary was 747,000 — that showing an aggregate total of 1,012,000 souls. Now what disruptive influences can have affected the development of this numerical strength? The first cause of the decline in the number of Magyars was expulsion: *the number of persons expelled from Czecho-Slovakia having been 107,000* — that being 10.52% of the total number of Magyars. Now if we take the quota of this number falling to the share of the territory of present-day Slovakia, we find that the number of Magyars expelled from that territory must have been 27,878. *The number of Magyars remaining in that territory after deduction of this quota was therefore 237,122.*

The second disruptive influence was that of *dissimilation*. This process must necessarily be regarded as only natural in this territory, where the Magyars have come into contact with other ethnic elements. *The extent of dissimilation has been estimated at 10—15% by Stephen Révay*, one of the leading authorities on the ethnographical conditions prevailing in the Highlands (the Upper Hungary of pre-Trianon days). The lower figure — placing the extent of dissimilation at 10% — applies to the southern districts of the Highlands; whereas the higher (15%) scale of dissimilation applies to the territory of present-day Slovakia. For there is every reason to presume that the process of dissimilation was more extensive in the more northerly areas. We must therefore deduct from the original number of Magyars living in the territory of present-day Slovakia a quota of 15% as being that subjected to the process of dissimilation down to the year 1930; the number involved being 39,750. That is therefore the concrete effect of the working of the second disruptive influence — that of dissimilation.

Now, *the number of Magyars remaining in 1930 in the territory of present-day Slovakia after deduction of the above two quotas was 197,372.* The Czech Census decreased this number to 67,000. We see, therefore, that the work effected by this Census, though perfect from its own par-

ticular point of view, produced results infinitely ridiculous from the point of view of reality.

The Magyars living in the territory of present-day Slovakia were subjected to *further disruptive influences* after 1930. In the first place, the process of dissimilation did not cease in the 'thirties, but continued to work its havoc also in the second decade of the existence of the Czecho-Slovak Republic. The Magyar national minority developed the intensity of its ethnic and national consciousness and offered resistance to outside influences. Nevertheless the process of crumbling still continued; for that was inevitable where several different peoples were living in symbiosis, while the ruling nation was using every effort to divert the process of development into a channel favouring its own interests. But the shrinking due to dissimilation must undoubtedly have been restricted in the 'thirties to the northernmost peripheries, — i. e. to the territory which forms the pivot of present-day Slovakia. The only question is how great was the scale of this dissimilation. Stephen Révay has concluded that during the period when the process of dissimilation was most rapid and most extensive (i. e. between 1925 and 1930) *the number of persons withdrawn by this process from the ranks of the Magyars was 57,057, — that being 5% of the total strength of the Magyar minority.* The greatest (numerically) and the most serious losses suffered by the Magyars were those prior to the year 1921. There is not the slightest reason for estimating the scale of dissimilation to have been greater after 1930 than it was between 1921 and 1930. We shall therefore be using the utmost generosity if we take into account as having taken place down to 1938 a decrease by dissimilation of 5%, and in consequence deduct 13,250 souls from the number of Magyars living in Slovakia in 1930. We shall find, after effectng this deducton too, that *the number of Magyars remaining within the territory of present-day Slovakia at the time of the dissolution of the Czecho-Slovak Republic and of the establishment of an independent Slovakia, must have been 184,122.*

It is true, of course, that the consequences of the first Vienna Award had a decreasing effect; but the decrease involved was not a material one and cannot be estimated at

more than a few thousands. In this way we find that *the number of Magyars in Slovakia may be estimated at roughly 180,000.*

Is this number in keeping with the facts? We believe it to be correct in every respect. For when making our calculations we have taken into account all disruptive influences; and we believe that we have actually made generous concessions in enhancing the effect of the disruptive influences at the expense of the numerical strength of the Magyars. We have therefore no hesitation in commending this figure to the attention of all those who are interested in minority policy. Today the rational husbanding of materials is assuming an ever-increasing importance. So why should we not devote the utmost care to husbanding the numerical strength of our nation?

The figure ultimately reached above may of course be called in question. But in that case we must be initiated into the methods by the aid of which the figure obtained as a result of our calculations can be lowered either theoretically or practically. There will be no danger in facing such an attempt. The only way in which such a decrease is to be obtained is by having recourse to the same methods as were employed in drafting the Czecho-Slovak Censuses — methods which were greeted with such ridicule all over the world.