

Slovakia Before 1989

POLb1135 Slovak Politics

Before 1989



Hungarian Rule (Since 10th Century)

- 1867 – dualization of Austria-Hungary → negative stance against minorities
- National oppression:
 - Press legislation
 - Abolishment of Slovak high schools
 - 1875 - dissolution of **Slovak Motherland** („Matica Slovenská“)
- Aim – creation of one nation without ethnic fragmentation

Slovak Party „System“

- Political conditions:
 - No universal suffrage – only 7 per cent of people in 1918
 - Manipulations of elections
 - High barriers for achieving mandates
 - Low citizen participation and activity
- The result – nearly for the whole period until 1914 there was only one party representing the Slovaks

Slovak Party „System“

- Slovak National Party (SNS, 1871):
 - Elite protestant party
 - Limited resources
 - Internal plurality – Agrarians, the catholic **Slovak People's Party** (SLS, gained independence in 1913)
- Less than **10 MPs** in Parliament (out of 435) → minimal impact on the country's politics

The First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938)

- Two nations in different situation
- Higher development of the Czech part:
 - Economy and standard of living
 - Level of education
 - Character of political parties
- Czechoslovakism - the idea of **one Czechoslovak nation**

Population of Czechoslovakia (1921)

Nationality	Amount	Share (in %)
Czech	6,780,000	50.2
Slovak	1,990,000	14.7
German	3,123,000	23.1
Hungarian	745,000	5.5
Other	880,000	6.5
Sum	13,510,000	100

Population of Czechoslovakia (1921)

Nationality	Amount	Share (in %)
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Sum	13,510,000	100

The First Czechoslovak Republic

- The political system:
 - Parliamentary democracy (PR electoral system)
 - Universal suffrage
 - Citizen freedoms
- Oligarchic bodies
- Changes in the international situation in the 30s → degeneration of Czechoslovak democracy

Political Parties in Slovakia

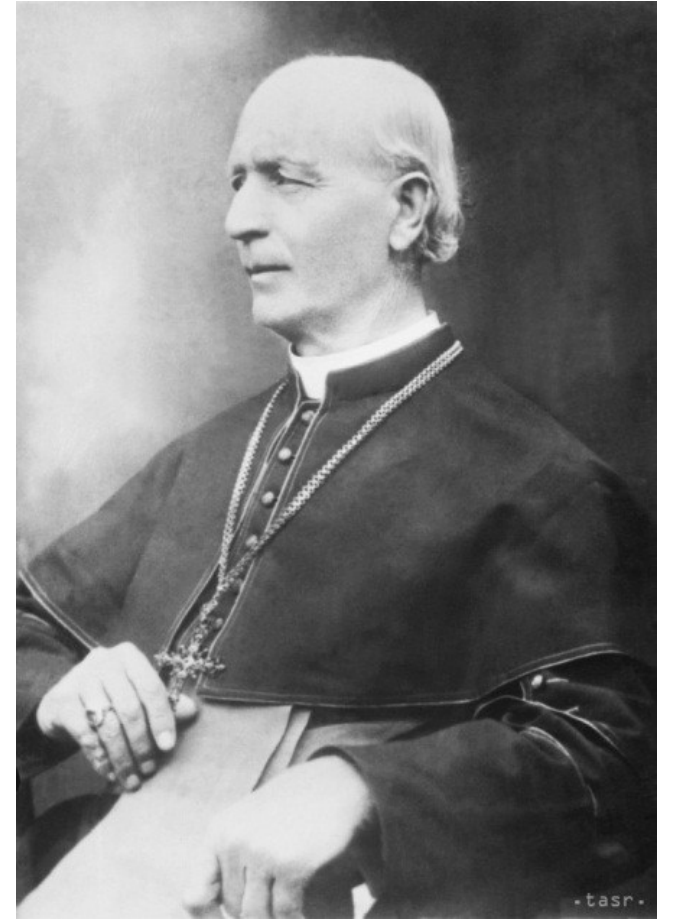
- System of one party changed to plurality
- **Czech parties:**
 - Changed names from „Czech“ to „Czechoslovak“
 - Only limited success in Slovakia
- **Parties of ethnic minorities:**
 - Hungarian and German
 - Oriented towards „their“ minorities
 - Mostly opposed to the idea of Czechoslovakia

'Authentic' Slovak Parties in CSR

- Parties from the past as well as new parties
- Gained votes mostly in Slovakia
- Parties divided into two groups:
 - Autonomists – seeking Slovak autonomy
 - Centralists – accepting CSR
- The strongest actor – SLS - renamed to **HSLS** (Hlinka Slovak People's Party)

Hlinka Slovak People's Party

- Leader – Andrej Hlinka (Catholic priest)
- Ideology:
 - Catholic and conservative values
 - Never fully accepted liberal democratic ideas
- Highest electoral support in Slovakia
- Radicalization in the 30s



Results of Elections

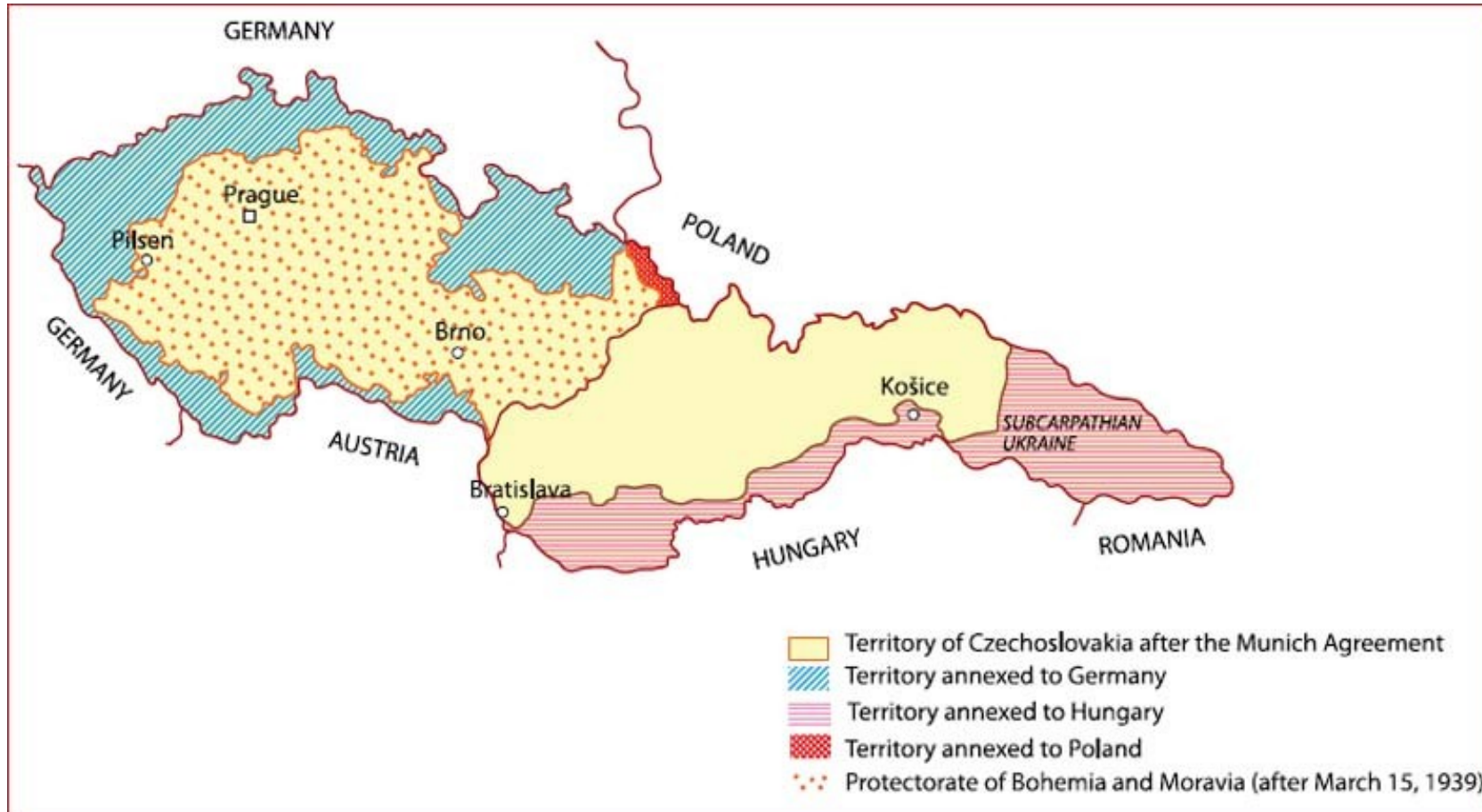
Political Party	1920	1925	1929	1935
HSLs	18.1	34.3	28.2	30.1
Agrarians	18.7	17.4	19.5	17.6
Communists	-	13.9	10.7	13.0
Social Democrats	39.4	4.3	9.5	11.4
Hungarian parties (Sum)	10.7	14.6	15.9	14.2
Czech parties (Sum)	2.3	6.4	11.6	9.7

Munich Agreement (1938)

- Beginning of The Second CS Republic
- Degeneration of democracy in CSR
- Czech lands:
 - Two party system
 - No real competition
- Slovakia:
 - More straightforward decline of democracy
 - Hegemony of HSLS



Munich Agreement (1938)



Autonomy of Slovakia

- **October 1938** – an official request by HSLS:
 - Signed by most Slovak parties
 - Refused by Social democrats and Communists
- **November 1938** – Constitutional law granting autonomy to Slovakia:
 - Slovak Assembly
 - Slovak Government

Autonomy of Slovakia

- Hegemony of HSLS
- Other parties:
 - Forced to merge with HSLS
 - Social democrats and Communists were abolished
- Authoritarian tendencies of HSLS
- Democracy refused as „*complicated*“

Elections to Slovak Assembly (1938)

- „*The one and only*“
- A clear sign of **non-democratic** tendencies:
 - Single candidate list
 - Separate electoral rooms for different ethnic groups
 - Manipulative techniques
 - Violation of secret vote
 - Planned sanctions on people casting blank lists
- Results – HSLS receives **97.3** per cent of votes

The Wartime Slovak State (1939-1945)

- Satellite of the Third Reich
- Non-democratic regime
- President – „doctor“ Jozef Tiso



The Wartime Slovak State

- Clear dominance of executive power
- Overlap of state and the party – Tiso as president and leader of HSLS
- Parliament (Assembly) without any real power
- Para-military forces – the Hlinka guard

The Wartime Slovak State

- Two wings of HSLS:
 - **1. Conservative and more moderate (Tiso):**
 - Catholic and corporatist ideas
 - **2. Radical (Tuka, Mach):**
 - Inspiration in Nazi Germany
 - Connection with Hlinka Guard



1939 - 1940

- Authoritarian regime
- Catholic, conservative, corporatist values
- Weaker position of HSLS's radicals
- Depicted (even now by some parties) as „*The smiling Slovakia*“ despite the nature of the regime
- **Reaction** → Hitler's request for a change



1940 - 1942

- Radical wing of HSLS gained power
- Conservative wing led by Tiso overpowered them but only by adopting their techniques
- Tiso gained the title „**Leader**“ („Vodca“; equivalent to German „Führer“ used by Hitler)
- Antisemitic laws, deportation of Jews (58 thousand in 1942) – 2/3 of Jews living in Slovakia

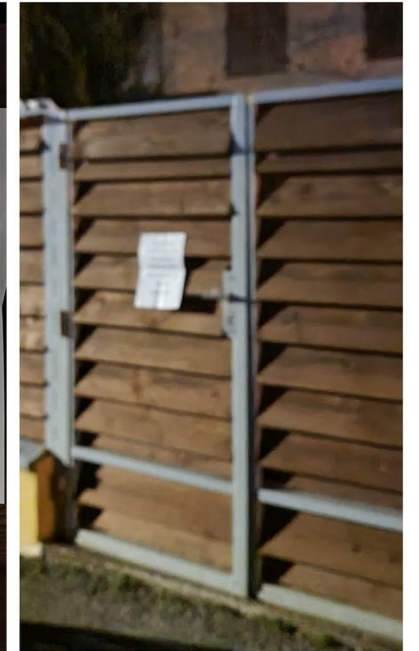


ZOZNAM ZRADCOV


J. Pročko Halič	J. Krúpa Bratislava	J. Šeliga Hruštín	G. Gyimesi Čičarovce	J. Bitto Giganíková Bratislava
A. Andrejiová Bratislava	M. Brisudová Poštár	O. Dostál Bratislava	R. Foltin Bratislava	R. Halák Pezinok
J. Hlinka Bratislava	J. Kerekréti Bratislava	M. Krajčí Bratislava	J. Krošlák Bratislava	M. Laurenčík Terchová
P. Linhart Košice	R. Marcinčin Spišská Nová Ves	M. Mihalik Piešťany	A. Pivková Lučenec	J. Szóllós Bernolákovó
J. Štibi Bratislava	M. Šuteková Zilina	M. Vetrák Bratislava	A. Zemanová Bratislava	A. Baránik Bratislava
P. Cmonej Bratislava	L. Drábiková Piešťany	E. Goga Bratislava	J. Halgašová Bratislava	I. Hus Turčianske Teplice
M. Kollár Hlohovec	L. Krajčír Bratislava	V. Ledecký Spišský Hrhov	M. Luciak Bratislava	V. Marcinková Spišský Hrhov
R. Nemec Bratislava	Z. Plešinská Chmeľnica	A. Remišová Bratislava	Z. Šebová Levice	M. Šipos Stará Ľubovňa
T. Valášek Bratislava	P. Vons Martin	M. Žiak Prievidza	J. Benčík Ružomberok	K. Čekovský Hviezdoslavov
D. Drdul Trnava	G. Grendel Bratislava	K. Hatráková Bratislava	M. Kavecká Kúnerad	S. Kozarec Dechtice
P. Kremský Pezinok	K. Kužera Bratislava	T. Lehotský Poprad	J. Lukáč Záborské	J. Mičovský Humenné
P. Ouský Bratislava	P. Pollák Levoča	R. Sloboda Banská Bystrica	M. Šefčík Holič	M. Šofranko Spišská Nová Ves
J. Vaňová Durkov	A. Záborská Bojnice	J. Žitňanská Bratislava	P. Dobeš Rajecké Teplice	Martin Fecko Prešov
M. Hattas Nitra	R. Kazda Bratislava	M. Kozelová Bratislava	P. Krišťáková Bratislava	L. Kyselica Nové Zámky
P. Líba Košice	A. Mierna Skalica	M. Páter Košice	M. Potocký Michalovce	J. Majorová Garstková Kežmarok
A. Stančík Piešťany	T. Šudík Humenné	R. Vašečka Svederník	V. Zajačík Rejdová	B. Kollár Bratislava ZRADIL



TU BÝVA
VLASTIZRADCA
PROČKO
TREBA MU
POĎAKOVAŤ
AKO?
OBESIŤ!



Tu býva vojnový štváč,
udavač a vlastizradca
Slovenska,
poslanec NR SR
JÁN BENČÍK
Za ľudí / SaS



The erosion after 1942

- Main reasons:
 - Turnover in the Second World War
 - Lower trust of the society
- 1944 – Slovak National Uprising – suppressed by German forces
- 1944-1945:
 - Slovakia under total control of Germany
 - Terror, revenge on partisans, restoration of deportation of Jews



After the World War II

- Third Czechoslovak Republic (1945-1948)
- Only a fiction of a democratic system
- Problematic features:
 - Dominance of the executive power (decrees)
 - Retribution justice
 - Limited plurality of the party system - only a few parties were **allowed** to exist (no German or Hungarian party)
 - Limited political competition among parties

Party System in 1945-1948

- **National front:**

- Umbrella organization with parties as members
- Decided which parties may exist
- All parties had to follow the same political program (nationalization of property, pro-USSR foreign policy)

- **Slovak parties:**

- Communist party of Slovakia (**KSS**)
- Democratic Party (**DS**)
- Two other marginal parties

Democratic party (DS)

- Created by members of several former parties (SNS, Agrarians etc.)
- Civic and non-socialist party
- Protestant party vs. Catholic nation → Catholics added on candidate lists (two thirds)
- Ideas about the position of Slovakia → Czech parties including Slovak communists diminished the influence of Slovak political institutions

Elections 1946 – free and fair?

Czech lands			Slovakia		
Party	Votes (%)	Seats	Party	Votes (%)	Seats
KSC	40.2	93	DS	62.0	43
CSNS	23.7	55	KSS	30.4	21
CSL	20.2	46	SS	3.7	3
CSSD	15.6	37	SP	3.1	2

After 1946 elections

- Rising power of communists
- Infiltration of the state's power components – army, police, secret service, trade unions
- These trends were more straightforward in the Czech part of the state
- February 1948 – end of this time period

Communist rule (1948-1989)

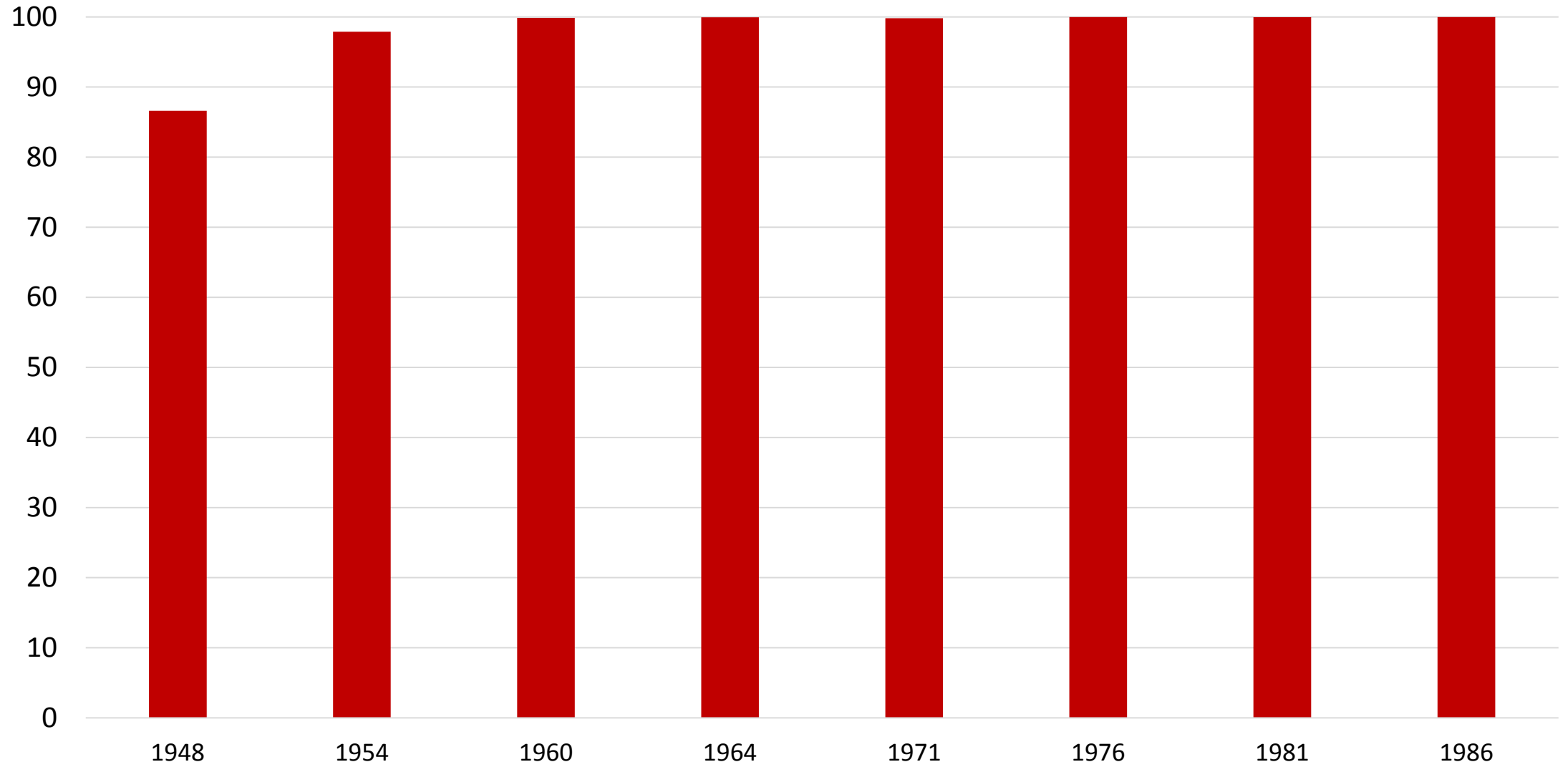
- Totalitarian regime
 - Terror
 - Planned economy
 - Sharp restrictions on human rights and freedoms
- Country and society fully under control of KSC
- Formal existence of „opposition“ parties and elections
- Formal liquidation of Slovak political institutions (1948, 1960)



Results of 'Elections'

Year	Votes (in %)	Blank lists
1948	86.60	994,419
1954	97.89	182,928
1960	99.86	12,775
1964	99.94	6,040
1971	99.81	-
1976	99.97	-
1981	99.96	-
1986	99.97	-

Share of KSC votes



1960s and the Prague Spring

- Alexander Dubček as the first Slovak selected for the chairman of KSC
- „*Socialism with a human face*“
- Two nations with different aims:
 - Czechs – political reforms
 - Slovaks – federalization of the country



1968 – End of Prague Spring

- Czechoslovakia invaded by armies of the Warsaw Pact
- Stop to any liberalization for the next 20 years



After 1968

- **Federalization (1970):**

- Creation of national governments and parliaments (Slovak National Council continued in its existence)
- Ban of majoritarianism

→ Only formal changes – real politics remained unchanged

- **Normalization (1969-1989):**

- Restoration of the regime „before 1968“
- Sanctions against large groups of society
- Higher intensity in Czech part of the federation



Legacy for the Period after 1989

- **Specifics of the communist regime in Slovakia:**

- „Moderate“ version of the regime when compared to Czech lands
- Achievement of federalization (despite its formal character)
- Economic modernization – industrialization, urbanization

- **Effects:**

- Weaker dissent movement
- Higher acceptance of several principles of the communist period
- More sympathy towards the „*middle way*“ → support of less radical economic reforms after 1989