territory before the war. In addition, it left still visible marks on the social and cultural structure of the Hungarians of Slovakia, for those targeted were the urban bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who traditionally had been the creators and vehicles of Hungarian culture, along with owners of large and medium-sized rural landholdings.

**The Soviet Union (Csilla Fedinec)**

Transcarpathia belonged from 1945 to 1991 to the Soviet Union under the official name of the Transcarpathian Territory (Zakarpatskaja oblast’). A territory or oblast is a unit resembling a Hungarian county, subdivided into districts or rayons (rajonov), with these rayons further subdivided into communities (cities, towns and villages). The region progressively became part of the Soviet system from the start of military conquest in the autumn of 1944 until conclusion of the international treaties at the end of 1945.

The Soviet-directed partisan activity that began in Transcarpathia in 1943 was followed by military intervention in September and October 1944. Heavier fighting took place before the capture of the town of Chop, as the 18th Army on the Fourth Ukrainian Front advanced northwest.

Three powers competed in the autumn of 1944 for control over the region’s inhabitants: the local people’s committees, the command of the Red Army and the returning Czechoslovak state administration. The Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia had signed agreements in 1941 and 1943 recognizing pre-war borders. Then on May 8, 1944, it was decided that the Soviet armed forces should hand liberated Czechoslovak territories over to the Czechoslovak civilian authorities, but this was not done in Transcarpathia. There the Soviet military backed preparations for a first congress of the People’s Committees of Transcarpathian Ukraine, held in Mukachevo on November 26, 1944. The delegates arriving for the congress had not been elected legally in all cases; most communities were left unrepresented. On the other hand, the congress was attended by numerous invited partisans, representatives of the
command of the 18th Army and several dozen representatives of
Soviet internal security, the NKVD. Not even these preparations
could ensure that delegates’ opinions were unanimous: there was a
proposal for a referendum to decide the territory’s post-war status
and Transcarpathia’s independent statehood. Finally a motion was
passed that the inhabitants would request “reunion” with their
brethren across the Carpathians, the Ukrainians. The request, in
the form of a manifesto, was signed also by some members of the
local authorities, the people’s committees. Where such committees
would not do so, they were dissolved and replaced.\(^{18}\)

Measures were taken accordingly, and the region was reorganized
on Soviet lines. The kind of transition that occurred in Hungary in
1945–1948, for instance, took place in Transcarpathia at the end of
1944 and in 1945.

There was a big change in the social structure. The intelligentsia
and some of the officials departed for Hungary or Czechoslovakia. Even
before the Mukachevo congress, Hungarian and German men
aged 18–55 were called up by the Soviet military command for three
days’ labor, but were actually sent to the Svaliava concentration
camp and then to labor camps in Siberia that the majority did not
survive. Those who did returned home only after several years. The
German inhabitants fled or were relocated by the Soviets. The
Romanians were classified as Moldavians and had to change from
the Roman to the Cyrillic alphabet, a situation that was reversed
only in the 1990s. The Rusyns were not recognized as a separate
nation and were registered as Ukrainians.\(^ {19}\) The size of the Russian
community increased strongly, mainly through migration. Of a
population of 775,116 recorded in 1946, 527,032 were Ukrainians,
134,558 Hungarians, 72,176 Russians, 12,420 Romanians, 6,998
Jews, 2,774 Czechs and 2,338 Germans.\(^ {20}\)

In education there was continuity of teaching in Hungarian,
but only in lower elementary schools in the 1944–1945 school
year, which began late. Hungarian general schools also opened in
the autumn of 1945, but middle schools did not follow until 1953.
There were also Hungarian groups at the teachers’ training college
in Mukachevo. The first institute of higher education in the territory was the Uzhgorod State University, which opened in October 1945, but taught in Russian, as the language of inter-communal communication in the Soviet Union.

The school system was reorganized, with elementary (lower primary), general and middle schools instead of people’s schools, civil schools and gymnasia (academically oriented secondary schools). All previous textbooks were locked away and the literature syllabus was revised as well. The first Hungarian literature textbook of the Soviet period appeared only in 1950, but the majority nation did no better: Ukrainian literature textbooks were banned for “idealizing the recent past of Ukraine too much.” The history taught was Soviet history, not those of the various nations in the territory.21

The one Hungarian-language paper was the Munkás Újság, which appeared for a few months in 1945 before ceasing publication. Thereafter a territory paper and a district paper were translated into Hungarian from Ukrainian, under the titles Kárpáti Igaz Szó and Vörös Zászló.

The Churches went through hard times in an officially atheist country. Their property was confiscated. In 1949, the Greek Catholic Church was suppressed and its churches were handed over to the Orthodox Church, the last Greek Catholic bishop in Transcarpathia, Teodor Romzha, having been murdered in 1947.22 All aspects of religion were curtailed. Teachers, those in the uniformed services and those in leading positions could not attend church, or even have a church wedding or hold a baptism.23

The prime task for the new regime was nationalization. This covered all denominational schools and other Church property. All but the most rudimentary forms of private economic activity were collectivized, as was the farmland, where the peasants were forced to join their local kolkhoz and hand over their implements and livestock.24

Representatives of the Soviet Union and a still semi-democratic Czechoslovak Republic signed a treaty on June 29, 1945. Hungary was said to have yielded its claims to Transcarpathia under the
Evacuation of Hungary’s military and civilian administration in the Southern Region began at the end of September 1944. On October 17, Josip Broz Tito, commander-in-chief of the partisan army and leader of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, ordered military rule of the Bačka, Banat and Baranja territories, which lasted 103 days. Thus Yugoslav public administration and the establishment of anti-fascist people’s committees began in the Southern Region, as elsewhere, under strict military and Communist Party control. Initially, the Hungarians were expressly excluded from the people’s committees. On October 18, total expulsion and internment of the German minority was ordered. Camp internment of the Hungarians began two days later. There were 40 camps set up in Vojvodina, including two notorious labor camps at Bački Jarak and Bukin. The whole Hungarian population was moved out of some villages, for instance Mošorin and Čurug.26

There were indiscriminate revenge murders of Hungarians during the autumn and winter of 1944, committed by the advancing armed forces, notably the security units, with the assistance of local Slavs. Exactly how many innocent Hungarians were executed during these “even colder days” is still strongly debated. Figures from the People’s Defense Department (OZNA), which performed internal security functions, record that 2,982 Hungarians were executed in Vojvodina. Other sources put the likely figure between 15,000 and 20,000. The tribunals set up to investigate war crimes condemned 899 Vojvodina Hungarians to death in 1944–1945. Death sentences were meted out by military courts early in 1944 to the Hungarian army officers who had led the deadly raids in Novi Sad and southern Bačka early in 1942: Ferenc Feketehalmy-Czeydner, József Grassy

11 Republica Populară România.


18 S. Vidnjans’kyj, “Ukrajina ta «ukraïns’ke pytannya» v polityci Chehoslovachchyny” [Ukraine and the “Ukrainian Question” in Czechoslovak Politics], in O. Derghacov et al., Ukraïns’ka derzhavnist’ u 20 stoliti (Istoryko-politichnij analiz) [Ukrainian Statehood in the Twentieth Century (Historical and Political Analysis)] (Kyiv, 1996); Béla Zseliczyk, Kárptalja a cseh és a szovjet politika érdektérében [Transcarpathia in the Spheres of Czech and Soviet Politics] (Budapest, 1998); “Voz’vedannja Zakarpattia z Ukrai’noju” Materiali konferencii privyjachenoj
“Reunification of Transcarpathia with Ukraine” Studies of the Conference on the 60th Anniversary of the Reunification of Transcarpathia with Ukraine (Uzhhorod, 2006).


Derzhavnyj arhiv Zakarpats’koj oblasti [State Archives of the Transcarpathian Oblast], Fond 125, opis 2, delo 67, f. 58–59.


Spelled Tódor Romzsa in Hungarian and sometimes anglicized as Theodore Romzha. He was beatified as a Martyr for the Faith in 2001.


Shornik dejstvujushchih dogovorov, soglashenij i konvencij, zakljuchennyh SSSR s m ostrannymi gosudarstvami [Valid Treaties,
Agreements and Conventions between the Soviet Union and Outside Countries], Vol. XI (Moscow, 1955), p. 31.


31 Ibid., pp. 472–480.


34 Kriegsverbrechergesetz, 26. 05. 1945, StGBl. Nr. 32.