

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT OF HUNGARY'S NATIONALITY POLICY

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(Conclusion.)

The churches of nationality character in Hungary were the following: —

The Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church, with roughly 2,000,000 members (this figure is that of 1910). Of this number some 300,000 were Magyars by tongue; until 1912 the latter were under the jurisdiction of the Greek Catholic dioceses using the Ruthenian and Rumanian liturgy respectively. These dioceses foisted the Church Rumanian language also on the Magyar children, on the pretext that it was the language of the liturgy. A very important role in the cultural life of the Rumanians of Hungary and in the national development of the Rumanians generally was played by the Greek Catholic Rumanian Archbishop of Balásfalva, who controlled a church with roughly 1,130,000 members which — apart from real estate worth many millions (of gold crowns) — possessed various endowments representing a value of more than 13,000,000 gold crowns. The Rumanian "gymnasium" (secondary school) established in Balásfalva by the Archbishop — which later on was expanded to what is known as an "archigymnasium" by the addition of a course in philosophy — and the theological seminary established in the same place trained the founders of the so-called "Daco-Rumanian" school of history and linguistics (Sinkai, Klein, Major) who were thus the originators also of the Rumanian national consciousness proper; and it was these schools that educated the teachers and professors who by organising the educational system of the two Rumanian

principalities which had been made independent were thus the real founders of Rumanian intellectual life.

An important role similar to that of the Greek Catholic Church was played in the intellectual life of the Rumanians by the Greek Oriental (Orthodox) Rumanian Church, which numbered roughly 1,850,000 members. The latter had a theological college (three years' course), a teachers' training college (in Nagyszeben), a full "gymnasium" (in Brassó) and a "lower gymnasium" (at Brád). The property of the Church — consisting of real estate and various foundations — represented a value of some 12,000,000 gold crowns. Notwithstanding this, the Hungarian State contributed 100,000 gold crowns yearly towards the administrative expenses of the Church, granting also a subsidy of 1,225,000 to supplement the stipends of the priests.

The Greek Oriental (Orthodox) Serbian Church — of the members of which only a small fraction (some 450,000 souls) resided in Hungary proper — was one of the wealthiest Churches in the country. It possessed assets — funds and endowments — representing a total value of 16.5 million gold crowns, and landed property of such extent that the aggregate value of its possessions may safely be estimated at 100 million gold crowns.

Of the importance of these self-governing Churches, of the role which they played in the intellectual life of their respective nationalities and of the influence exercised by them in calling into being and developing the racial consciousness of those nationalities, Mr. Benedict Jancsó — the most eminent authority on the nationality endeavours of the non-Magyars of Hungary, whose data are our authority also for what has been said above — writes, *inter alia*, as follows:⁴ —

"Francis Palacky, the father of Czech historical writing, not only helped to arouse, but was the real initiator of, the Czech national spirit and endeavours. Palacky obtained his previous training, not in Bohemia, where at that time the whole educational system was German both in language and in spirit and where the Czech national spirit was still in a

⁴ Jancsó, Benedek: "Defensio nationis Hungaricae", pp. 160 ff.

state of coma, but in Hungary — at Trencsén and Pozsony... When Palacky went to Pozsony, that town — or rather the Evangelical lyceum of that town — was already an important Slovak literary and nationality centre. This school was the alma mater also of John Kollár, who later functioned as Evangelical minister in Budapest and in his poem entitled "*Slávy dcera*" (The Daughter of Glory) wrote the epos of pan-Slavism. The founders of Slavonic linguistics and of Slavonic archaeology, — Dabrowsky and Schaffarik —, were also born in Hungary; indeed, Hungary was the country in which the latter developed his science. Schaffarik completed his college studies in the lyceum at Késmárk; and his first literary work — a small collection of Slovak folksongs — was published in 1814 at Lőcse... These facts too prove that the cradle of the Czech national renaissance and consequently of pan-Slavism was rocked in Hungary, a circumstance facilitated by the religious tolerance characteristic of the Magyars, by their liberal political views and by the intellectual freedom that was a consequence of the constitutional system prevailing in Hungary...

"In the eighteenth century the domination of the Slav language in the Rumanian Church was put an end to by the Protestant missionary movement, which introduced the Rumanian language into the Church; the movement was started among the Rumanians of Transylvania by Gabriel Bethlen, Prince of Transylvania, and was continued by the two Rákóczis and Michael Apafi, who were also all Princes of Transylvania. There is one more point which I regard it necessary to mention in this connection, — viz. that the bitterest opponents of the introduction into the Rumanian Church of the Rumanian language were the prelates of the Wallachian waywodeships. Theodosius, Metropolitan of Bucharest, who claimed the supreme ecclesiastical authority over the Rumanians of Transylvania, instructed the Transylvanians not to presume to use their own language in their churches, seeing that the Rumanian language was still too unpolished and too rude to serve as the language of divine worship... The awakening of the Rumanian national consciousness and the development of cultural endeavours permeated with the national spirit runs exactly parallel to the

national endeavours of the Hungarian nation. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century the Rumanian national spirit was held completely in check by the Grecianising tendencies of the Phanariot rulers of Bucharest and Jassy, the two capitals of the Wallachian waywodeships; while at the same time there sprang into being centres of cultural endeavours permeated with a Rumanian national spirit, not only in Balásfalva, the seat of the Rumanian Greek Catholic Archbishop, but also in Budapest, the Capital of Hungary so distant from the territories inhabited by Rumanians. The Budapest centre developed among the members of the committee of censors organised in connection with the Budapest University Press, — a circumstance easily explained by the fact that the first censor of Rumanian books was Samuel Klein, one of the founders of the "*Daco-Rumanian*" school of philology and history. This institution — Marienescu wrote in his biography of Peter Major, who was also a book censor employed by the University Press — was a veritable benefit to the Rumanians. Nor could a Rumanian *savant* possessing national feelings have wished for a better office; for he had beside him the University Press and the University Library, continuously stimulating him to do everything he could in the interests of Rumanian literature. This office became the meeting-place of those younger Rumanians who came to Budapest to study; it became a veritable source of national resurrection, showering the benefits of enlightenment on the people too and becoming an unconscious bond of union between those students who later on became writers of more or less distinction or played roles in the national life of the Rumanian people. That the Hungarian educated classes — and indeed Hungarian society generally — did not display any hostility towards these Rumanian literary, scientific and cultural endeavours, was readily admitted by the persons themselves who worked in the cause of those endeavours, and is also proved by undeniable facts. It is well known, for example, that the only assistance accorded during the darkest years of his life to George Sinkai, the founder and "father of Daco-Rumanian historiography", was that which he received from Count Wass and his family. In 1815 a Rumanian Women's Association was established in Buda.

This Rumanian Women's Association was at all times — in view of its humanitarian aims — effectually supported by women belonging to distinguished Magyar families — Baroness Sophia *Horváth*, Rose *Fejérváry*, Maria *Püspöky*, etc. Very interesting and very striking is the description of the effect on the Rumanian waywodeships exercised by the Rumanian national spirit called to new life in Hungary given by Vazul *Urechia*, the whilom President of the anti-Magyar Liga Culturala: — "We are told that freedom and democracy came from America to Europe in cotton bales. We may also establish the fact that the exchange of ideas between the Rumanians of our country and the Rumanians of Transylvania has been effected through the channel, not only of books but also of commercial intercourse. With the packing cases from Brassó have come to Bucharest and Jassy the new Rumanian and Rumanianising writings of the Cichindeals and the Samuel *Kleins and above all of the Peter Majors.*" — Still stronger and still more definite was the influence on the culture of Serbia exercised by the Serb culture developed as a consequence of the influence of the schools of the autonomous Serbian Greek Oriental Church functioning within the territory of the Hungarian State. During the period of almost two hundred years between the time when the Patriarch Tchernoyevitch came to Hungary and the last quarter of the nineteenth century practically all the more important scholars, poets and artists of Serbdom generally, were products of the Serb people which had found a home in the Hungarian State. Right down to 1880 Ujvidék was the veritable centre of Serbian literature and science: that town might safely have been spoken of at that time as "the Athens of the Serbs". Ujvidék is still the seat of the Serbian Matica, a cultural institution which has had more influence on the development of Serbian literature and culture than all the other Serbian institutions of a similar character combined. This literary and scientific society was founded in 1826. Until 1864 its seat was in Budapest; in that year its seat was transferred to Ujvidék. Its present assets (that was in 1919) represent a value of 460,017 crowns — or, together with the scholarships and endowments entrusted to its custody, 3,138,817 crowns. The list of important Serbian

scholars originating from Hungary is opened by John Rayitch, who was born at Karlócza in the second half of the eighteenth century; he is usually spoken of as the father of Serbian historiography. Of Hungarian origin was also Dositheus Obradovitch, the greatest poet and philosopher figuring in the Serbian literature of the eighteenth century. Joachim Vuyitch, the founder of Serbian dramatic literature and the organiser of the first Serbian theatrical company, was of Hungarian origin; so was Branko Radichevitch, one of the greatest representatives of the lyrical poetry of the nineteenth century, John Yoanovitch, the most popular of all Serbian poets, George *Yakshitch* and Lázár *Kostitch* too. To this rollcall of writers and poets we may add the names of such eminent representatives of Serbian scientific literature as Anthony Hadzhitch, the Archimandrite Hilarion Ruvaratz and his younger brother, Demetrius Ruvaratz. However, we find that the most eminent representatives, not only of Serbian science and literature, but also of Serbian art, were Serbs from Hungary. All the noteworthy and valuable products of the Serbians in the field of the arts have been the work of Serbs who were born in Hungary and as citizens of the Hungarian State were brought up in the intellectual atmosphere which was a product of the State institutions and the most valuable result of Hungary's thousand years old history. This fact is indeed admitted by the Serbians themselves. In May, 1916, when Rumania claimed from the Entente, as the price of her entering the War as belligerent, the Banate districts of Hungary, Serbia declared the fulfilment of this demand to be a breach of her interests and submitted to the Entente Governments a memorandum of protest in which she herself formulated a claim to the Banate on the plea that several of the eminent members of the public life of Serbia had been born in that region. "*The Serbians of the Banate*" — so runs the Memorandum — "have played a very important role in the life of the Serbian people and have exercised a noteworthy influence on that life. It was the Serbians of Hungary who first established schools and began to send the younger generation to foreign universities. Dositheus Obradovitch — the first Serbian philosopher (XVIII. cent.), whose statue stands

in one of the principal squares of Belgrade — was born at Csák, in the Banate. He was the first Minister of Education of Serbia — in 1818, in the reign of the first Karageorgevitch. The dramatist Kendjelatz, and the lyric poet Emanuel Jankovitch, were both natives of Versec. George Yakshitch, the best lyrical poet of the nineteenth century, was born at Cserna. Arad was the native town of Sava *Popovitch-Tököly*, who established a big college in Budapest for Serbian students. Arad was the birthplace also of Theodore Pavlovitch, the influential publicist. Marshal Putnik was a native of Fehértemplom. And the greatest Serbian painters with a European fame — Paya Yovanovitch and Uros Preditch — were born at Versec."

We can also produce authentic evidence respecting the general situation and the "oppression" by the older Hungarian régime of the Saxon Church of Transylvania. In a paper officially submitted in 1930 by the Saxon minority of Transylvania for publication in the situation report issued by the Secretariat-General of the Organised National Minorities of Europe we find the following passages dealing with the situation of the Saxon National Church in pre-War Hungary and in New Rumania respectively. —

"In pre-War times the whole cultural-religious fabric of the Saxons of Transylvania was maintained without the imposition of church or school rates. The expenditure was secured out of the following sources: — 1. out of the yield of the landed estates belonging to the church communities (parishes); 2. out of the National Fund ("Nationaldotation"); 3. out of the yield of the securities held by the national church; 4. out of the yield of the "tithe fund" ("Zehntenfond"); 5. out of the State subsidy granted by the Hungarian Treasury. The land reform measures have deprived the church of 35,000 cadastral yokes, which would yield today an interest of 20—25 million lei a year. Prior to the Great War the National Fund represented a value of 325,000 crowns. Today, as a consequence of the depreciation of the currency and of the crowns having been exchanged for lei, this Fund has shrunk to the amount of 184,000 lei a year, the shortage under this head being therefore 13.8 million lei a year. The yield of the tithe fund was originally 496,000

crowns a year — an amount corresponding to 21 million lei of present-day currency. Its present value is however only 435,149 lei a year, the shortage under this head being therefore more than 20 million lei a year... The securities held by the church in pre-War days represented a value of 3,771,880 crowns. This amount the Rumanian State today subjects to the payment of an interest of 3—5%; while the State refuses to redeem the war loan bonds held by the church (value: 7,628.300 crowns), which have therefore become mere worthless paper. The Hungarian Government assisted the church by an annual grant of 746,000 crowns — a sum which, converted into terms of the present currency, would amount to 32 million lei. Instead of that amount the Rumanian Government grants 9 millions a year... In the aggregate the decrease as compared with pre-War days is 75,5 millions... In view of these circumstances we cannot be surprised that the whole cultural fabric of the Saxons of Transylvania has been shaken to its very foundations. This all means an enormous cultural impoverishment and the loss of cultural assets which our forefathers inherited and handed down for centuries..." This is what the "oppression" of the Hungarians really looked like!!"

Those who attack the nationality policy of Hungary are in the habit of referring to the fact that during the half-century immediately preceding the Great War the ratio of Magyars to the total population of the country increased continually and rapidly, exclaiming in a voice of triumph that this result could only have been achieved by forcible assimilation.

It is indubitable that in the period of Magyar hegemony — from 1867 to 1914 — the numbers of Magyars increased on a noteworthy scale. This increase is shown most strikingly by the figures relating to the distribution of nationalities. The development in this respect in Hungary since 1720 shows the following results:

Year	Total Population	Ratio of Magyars %	Ratio of Non-Magyars %
1720	2,582,000	44.9	55.1
1787	8,003,000	39.0	61.0
1850	11,554,000	41.6	58.4
1869	13,561,000	45.5	54.5
1880	13,729,000	46.6	53.4
1890	15,133,000	48.6	51.4
1900	15,684,000	51.5	48.5
1910	18,094,000	54.5	45.5

It is evident that it would be out of the question to bring about a process of absorption on so enormous a scale by mere force. A whole series of natural factors of assimilation co-operated in favour of the Magyars. A decisive role in this connection was that played by the towns. In the period between 1787 and 1900 the populations of the towns with a Magyar character increased by 431%, those of the towns with a non-Magyar character by only 104.4%. The Magyar language used in the economic life and in the highly developed culture of the country imprinted a Magyar character on the towns even in the "nationality" districts: in 1910, of the inhabitants of the towns in Slovak territories 52.9% were Magyars; of the inhabitants of the towns in Rumanian territories 64.6% and of those of the towns in Serbian regions 46.1% were Magyars; the ratios of the respective non-Magyar nationalities being 28.0%, 17.17% and 22.6% respectively. In 1910 77.5% of the inhabitants of our towns were Magyars by language, while 88.9% of the inhabitants (!) understood Magyar. The process of assimilation was furthered also by the direction of inland migration. There was a continuous flow of population from the outlying districts (peripheries) towards the fertile basin in the centre of the country, the density of population of which — taking into account only the cultivable areas — was considerably less (132) than that of the mountainous nationality districts (168). The elements in search of work were attracted to the economic and industrial centres, where they became magya-

rised. Their relatively barren character made the nationality regions particularly liable to the attractions of emigration too. And again a greater share of the natural increase was claimed by the Magyars than that tallying with the proportion of Magyars shown in the Censuses (average for the years 1896—1900, 56.6%; average for the years 1901—1905, 55.6%; average for the years 1906—1910, 57.9%; average for the years 1911—1914, 59.4%). Another moment considerably furthering the process of magyarisation was the circumstance that the bulk of the members of our non-Magyar nationalities (with the exception of the Germans) were on a far lower level of culture than the Magyars. This was also a natural phenomenon: through the medium of agriculture the herdsmen of the plains (the Magyars) came into contact with culture much sooner than the mountain herdsmen (the non-Magyar nationalities).

The development of any strong non-Magyar intelligentsia was hindered, not only by the lesser craving for culture and the inferior schooling generally characteristic of the non-Magyar nationalities, but also by the attraction exercised by Magyar culture, — the latter moment documented clearly and primarily in the case of the German and Ruthenian middle classes, which also became entirely absorbed by the Magyars. The pre-eminent role played in the intelligentsia by the Magyar element is shown strikingly by the statistical data relating to the distribution by nationalities of students and the educated professions. The relevant data for the school year 1913—14 are as follows: —

Pupils of classical and modern schools "gymnasia" and "real" schools: — Magyars, 81.1%; Germans, 8.5%; Slovaks, 2.1%; Rumanians, 5.8%; Ruthenians, 0.1%; Croat-Serbs, 1.9%;

Pupils passing the VIII. class of gymnasia in 1910: — Magyars, 84.5%; Germans, 7.8%; Slovaks, 0.9%; Rumanians, 4.0%; Ruthenians, 0.1%; Croats, 0.4%; Serbians, 1.0%; Others, 1.3%;

Persons employed in the educated professions: — Magyars, 80.9%; Germans, 7.5%; Slovaks, 1.8%; Rumanians, 6.3%; Ruthenians, 0.3%; Croats, 0.2%; Serbians, 1.5%; Others, 1.5%;

Persons engaged in economic professions: — Magyars, 84.5%; Germans, 10.4%; Slovaks, 0.9%; Rumanians, 1.1%; Croats, 0.6%; Serbians, 0.7%; Others, 1.8%.

A small fraction of non-Magyar intelligentsia, strong masses of peasantry, which had however not awaked to any nationality consciousness and in many cases, indeed, — particularly in the case of the Slovaks and Germans — were bound to the land of their Hungarian home by strong ties of sentiment: these were generally speaking the typical characteristics of our nationality society just before the Great War. The “awakening” of our non-Magyar nationalities was retarded by very powerful factors. Such a factor was the unconscious consciousness of a thousand years of symbiosis with the Magyars — particularly in the case of the older non-Magyar nationalities, the Slovaks and the Ruthenians. Another factor of the kind was the gratifying feeling of economic prosperity and of tranquillity which the Hungarian State was able to give all citizens alike without respect of nationality. In the economic field the State did not acknowledge any differences of nationality. Intensive activity was displayed in the Highlands (now Slovakia) and in Transylvania for the development of industry: in Ruthenia the State parcelled out the land and established model farms, creating cottage industry and credit co-operative societies and providing for legal assistance to be given gratis (the so-called “Egan action”). There was nothing to hinder the economic expansion of the nationalities. In the regions lying in the centre of Transylvania, during the five years ending in 1913, 44,000 cadastral yokes of agricultural property and 20,000 yokes of forest land representing an aggregate value of some 25,000,000 gold crowns came into the hands of Rumanians; and during the same period 52,000 yokes of agricultural land and a similar area of forest land — representing an aggregate value of some 45,000,000 gold crowns — was transferred to Rumanian ownership in the districts flanking the Magyar-Rumanian language frontier. In the same way a part of the landed property of the Magyars passed into the possession of Slovaks who had been to America and had re-immigrated, or of co-operative so-

cieties established by Slovaks. And there was nothing to hinder the development of nationality banks either.

Period	Number of Banking Institutes established by			
	Slovaks	Rumanians	Serbians	Czechs
1871—1890	3	16	2	—
1891—1900	8	41	4	—
1901—1910	19	8	18	10
1911—1915	5	19	6	—

The absolutely unbiassed attitude of the Hungarian State is reflected also in the measure of taxation. The Magyars, who possessed 59.9% of the total area of landed property, paid 62.1% of the total amount of taxes; the quotas of the other nationalities being as follows: — Germans, 9.9% of landed property, 16.3% of taxes; Slovaks, 7.7% and 6.2% respectively; Rumanians, 16% and 8.7% respectively; Serbians, 2.5% and 3.5% respectively; Ruthenians, 2.3% and 0.9% respectively. The amount paid in taxes in 1907 by the Magyar countries was 101 million, and that paid by the non-Magyar counties only 81 million pengő.

In the absence of economic "oppression" the leaders of the nationality movements were driven to talk about "grievances" of a different character. What they used in particular as a weapon of attack against the Magyars was the educational policy of the latter, it being suggested that the Magyar schools were hotbeds of "renegades". Yet the State schools were in a considerable minority as compared with those of other character (in 1913/34, of a total number of 16,861 elementary schools only 3296 were State schools, there being 1410 parish and municipal, 240 private and 11,909 denominational elementary schools). The extremely wealthy Serbian, Rumanian and Saxon Churches on their part had no difficulty in maintaining their elementary and secondary schools and in prescribing the obligatory use in those schools of their own languages. In this connection we would inform our readers of the distribution of elementary schools by language of instruction in the school-year 1912/13: — Magyar, 13,453; German, 447; Slovak, 377;

Rumanian, 2233; Ruthenian, 59; Serbian, 270; Italian, 12; others, 10. The training of nationality teachers was provided by 6 Rumanian, 2 Serbian and 2 German teachers' training colleges. That the obligatory teaching of the State language — a stipulation which no single State is prepared to renounce, even in our present "age of minorities" — did not in the least serve the purpose of magyarisation, will be shown by quoting a few characteristic data from Transylvania. Of the Germans living in that country in 1910 only 34.1% knew Magyar, whereas 58.7% spoke Rumanian. Whereas 22.6% of the Magyars knew Rumanian, only 11.8% of the Rumanians were able to speak Magyar. The role played in the spread of a knowledge of the Magyar language by the schools was incomparably less important than that played by economic life, military service and the other natural factors of assimilation. This is proved also by the fact that in 1910 roughly 30% of the female inhabitants were unacquainted with Magyar, while the number of male inhabitants unable to speak Magyar was — as a consequence of the latter being more effectually exposed to the direct influence of the process of natural assimilation — only 20% of the total population.

It is quite evident that the continuous strengthening of the Magyar element — the continuous enhancement of its predomination in the country — ensuing in pre-War Hungary was due, not to any machinations with artificial means, but to a process brought into being by elementary forces out of the vital functions of the country itself. The essential point has been stated very concisely and pregnantly by Louis Ottlik: — "This synthesis — the inclusion within a single framework of the basin of the Carpathians as being a natural phenomenon and the saturation of this territorial unit with the Magyar idea of liberty — this is what is meant by the "Hungarian State idea", not the rule of any one people over other peoples." This is the historical truth, — a truth which objective and serious scientific inquiry cannot but admit.