

# HOW MINORITIES LIVE

## CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

### NATIONALITY PROTECTION — NOT MINORITY PROTECTION!

At the beginning of July, the League of Nations' Unions held a general assembly in Copenhagen. The Magyar delegation from Transylvania was headed by Baron John Jósika; and the Magyar League of Czecho-Slovakia was represented by M. Géza Szüllő, Chairman of the Parliamentary Club of the United Hungarian (Magyar) Party. Baron John Jósika put the wishes of the Hungarians of Transylvania before the Minority Committee. Herr Aldringen Clary stated the demands of the Sudeta Germans, and M. Géza Szüllő in an impassioned speech condemned the practice and methods adopted hitherto by the League of Nations. He objected to the fact that life, liberty and equality were described in the Covenant as a "right" presented as a gift to the minorities.

"What are we then? — cried M. Szüllő — "What was their opinion of us, when they gave us the "right to live" as if it were a privilege? This way of thinking is a disgrace! We do not ask for favours, but for the rights inherent in our status as citizens. I protest against the rights of the nationalities being measured out as favours which may be taken from them again. I declare that we are tired of twenty years of procrastination. The problem of the national minorities has not yet been solved; that is why there is trouble in Central Europe. Here there is shilly-shallying; false opinion is being created by false appearances, and doctored census returns are advanced to justify the acts of the Governments..."

This statement created a great stir. The temper of the meeting grew more and more excited. The Czech delegation moved restlessly in their seats, the Rumanians following suit.

"Where is this being done?" cried M. Procháska, one of the Czecho-Slovak delegates. "Allow me to inform you" — replied M. Szüllő — "that it has been done, for instance, in Kassa (Kosice), where at the time of the elections more Magyar votes

were cast than the number of Magyars figuring in the census. Other cases of a similar kind have occurred in Pozsony (Bratislava) and elsewhere".

At this point, in order to quell the excitement of the debate, the Chairman of the Assembly requested M. Szüllő to confine his remarks to the matter under discussion.

M. Szüllő then continued as follows: "Nationality is the greatest treasure a man can have. And they, by denationalization, would root it out of our souls. This is why the expression "minority protection" is bad; what we need is "nationality protection" and those who want to denationalize the minorities must be made to suffer for it. This is the idea behind the nationality struggles in Czecho-Slovakia, and therefore I move that in the text of the resolution it be added that sanctions incorporated in a statute and controlled internationally shall be applied to all officials found guilty of acts of denationalization."

After Mr. Macartney's intermediary motion it was resolved that, to meet the wishes of the German and Magyar Unions of Czecho-Slovakia, the expression "nationality protection" should be used alongside of the expression "minority protection" in the draft prepared last year in London.

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#### VILLAGE OCCUPIED BY GENDARMES BECAUSE ITS MAGYAR INHABITANTS JOINED HUNGARIAN PARTY

M. Andrew Jaross, Member of the Czecho-Slovak Parliament, put a question to the Minister of the Interior in connection with the abuses committed by the gendarmes in the Csallóköz district. The question, as it appeared in an official publication of Parliament (No. 1347/XII.) contained amongst other things the following statements: "In the Csallóköz district the Czecho-Slovak Agrarian Party had formerly sixty Magyar members, of whom, up to date, fifty-three have announced their resignation of membership of that Party and their intention to join the United Hungarian (Magyar) Party. It would, however, seem that the gendarmes have taken service as canvassers of the Hungarian section of the Czecho-Slovak Agrarian Party, for when they heard of this desertion en masse, a reinforced detachment illegally occupied the village and for days disturbed the peace of the place. They subjected the deserters from the Agrarian Party to an examination, took their names and addresses as if they were criminals, demanded their papers and, using all sorts of means of intimidation, did what they could to prevent these citizens from leaving the Czecho-Slovak Agrarian Party and joining the only Magyar Party in the country."

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## TRADITIONAL HUNGARIAN HARVEST FESTIVAL FORBIDDEN

In Pelsőc (Plešivec) it was customary for the Hungarians to hold a big harvest home every year, which was attended by the leaders of the Hungarians in Czecho-Slovakia. Hitherto this festival has always passed off without any disturbing incident, with joy and gaiety. This year it was to have been held on 17th July, and both the leaders of the United Hungarian Party and the representatives of the authorities received invitations to attend it. But this time the Czecho-Slovak authorities forbade the festival. This shows how, when the whole world is anxiously and hopefully longing for a radical solution of the Czecho-Slovak nationality problem, the situation of the Hungarian minority, instead of improving, is going from bad to worse. — y —

## FEW HUNGARIAN SCHOOLS IN LARGEST TOWN OF EASTERN SLOVAKIA

According to the questions put on 2nd June to the Minister of Education by Count John Esterházy, Acting-President of the United Hungarian Party, and Senator Nicolaus Pajor, the number of the inhabitants of Kassa (Kosice) was put at 70.117 by the 1930 census, which stated the number of Magyars to be 11,504. Although the actual number of Magyars in the town is considerably in excess of that figure, there is only one Hungarian elementary school in Kassa, the Hunyadi-utca ten class school. There is also only one Hungarian State infant school in this large town, and it is situated near the other Hungarian school. In the depth of winter, in cold and frost, poor proletarian Hungarian children have to walk about 4 or 5 kilometres from the other end of the town to reach the only Hungarian school. Poor-class Hungarian parents, who, for the reasons stated above, cannot send their children so far, are obliged to send them to the Slovak school close at hand, lest they be fined. — y —

## RUMANIA

### RECENT GOVERNMENT MEASURES CONCERNING MINORITY LIFE IN RUMANIA

On August 4th the "Monitorul Oficial" published the royal decree concerning the establishment of the Minority Comisariat ("Comisariatul general pentru minoritati"), together with the instructions of the Government concerning the agenda of the new comisariat. On the whole, the latter (namely the instructions) are characterized by an anti-minority tendency and, what is even worse, they do not take into consideration some of the most vital problems of minority life, such as the participation of the



minorities in the work of legislation. In other words, this means that the ban imposed upon the political parties will not be relieved in the future. On this occasion we wish to make only a few remarks concerning these instructions.

In the first place, it was wrong to put the instructions in the form of an order in Council (or: resolution of the Cabinet Council) which may by no means be regarded as a legal source of the same value as, for instance, a law or a Government decree, etc., as it may be revoked or altered by a subsequent order in Council at any time.

In the second place, the instructions still refer to the minority schools as "private" schools (in the literal sense of the word), which is obviously a violation of the Minority Pact. Moreover, instead of providing for an "equitable share" for the minority schools out of the 14% communal surtax, the instructions merely talk of "an adequate proportion" (Art. 3). As regards the public character of minority church schools, the instructions — instead of providing generally for the restoration of those minority schools that were previously deprived of their public character (and there are a great many of them!) — merely mentions that applications of this character, — if they have not been attended to so far, will receive due attention in the future (Art. 4).

The inadequate regulation of the use of the minority languages is another source of grievance. The records of the municipal council meetings in purely or overwhelmingly minority areas must be written in Rumanian (Art. 13), although even a bilingual text — to say the least — would be a very modest concession indeed. That particular provision that the minority citizens may occasionally be allowed to address the municipal authorities in applications written in their own mother tongue becomes almost quite meaningless, as it is connected with the reservation that such applications must be accompanied by a certified Rumanian translation ("o traducere certificata", Art. 14). Nor is it a proof of the free use of the minority languages that newspapers, periodicals and other printed matter *may also bear* the minority names of their place of publication (Art. 18). In other words, this means that the Rumanian place names have to be printed *in the first place*. Moreover, the free use of minority languages is not regulated as regards the inscriptions on sign boards. Art. 25 provides that the sign boards of shops and other commercial establishments must be printed *first of all in Rumanian*, while the inscriptions in the minority languages must follow second.

Art. 20 provides for the *language tests* imposed on minority employees, but it does not contain a satisfactory solution of this burning problem which has caused the dismissal from public service of so many thousands of minority citizens. In this way the pestering sore of minority life still remains open wound.

## SUPPRESSION OF AUTONOMY OF THEIR CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES HAS DEALT ANOTHER SEVERE ECONOMIC BLOW TO MINORITIES

The June 23rd issue (No. 141) of the Rumanian Official Gazette contains the text of a Royal Decree which seriously affects the co-operative society movement of the minorities.

This Decree places all co-operative societies under the supervision and control of the State by suppressing all existing unions of co-operative societies and making their rights over to the newly established *National Institute of Co-operative Societies*. This does away with the Union of Economic and Credit Co-operative Societies, which embraced the Hungarian minority's credit and economic co-operative societies, as well as the Nagyenyed Alliance of "Ant" Co-operative Societies, the most important organization of Hungarian minority co-operative societies. In future *they will function merely as provincial centres*; and this is a very paralyzing blow to the well-developed Hungarian co-operative system.

The following provisions contained in the Decree mean the complete suppression of the autonomy of the minority co-operative societies:

The National Institute of Co-operative Societies may in certain zones ordain the amalgamation of several co-operative societies, determining which society the others are to join (§ 11).

The annual budgets of the unions of co-operative societies, that is to say of the *provincial centres*, must first be approved by the National Institute of Co-operative Societies. *Only 5 of the 9 members* constituting the Board of Directors of the unions of Co-operative societies shall be elected by the general assembly; the other 4 shall be appointed by the Ministry of National Economy (§§ 15 and 17).

§ 55 of the Decree upholds the validity of § 221 of the Co-operative Societies Act, in terms of which the balance, budget, and annual report issued by minority co-operative societies must also be published in Rumanian. A new measure is that minority co-operative societies are bound to place at the disposal of a supervisor a Rumanian translation attested by the parish magistrates, of any extracts from ledgers, any documents, correspondence or certificate required.

## TELEGRAMS MUST BE WRITTEN IN RUMANIAN

According to the latest Ordinance dealing with postal, telegraphic and telephone services the Rumanian Post Office may not take any telegrams except those written in Rumanian, or if telegrams are in a "foreign" language a certified Rumanian translation must be appended. In terms of another order, if anyone hears news dangerous to the security of the State over the wireless, he may not repeat it to a private individual, but is bound under pain of punishment to report it to the proper authorities ("Magyar Ujság", July 7. ).

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INNKEEPER FINED FOR LISTENING TO WIRELESS  
PROGRAMME FROM BUDAPEST

Quite recently the Court Martial at Kolozsvár (Cluj) tried Imre Káli, an innkeeper of Szováta, and six others, against whom proceedings had been instituted because they were charged by the sergeant of the gendarmes in Szováta with having listened in Káli's inn to a broadcast of the national celebrations in Budapest on 15th March. Káli was fined 2000 lei, the Court finding it proved that he had tuned in on Budapest on purpose and had left the door between his rooms and the public rooms open in order that his customers might also hear the programme.

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SON OF A MINORITY WOMAN MAY NOT SEND HIS  
CHILDREN TO A MINORITY DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL

From a minority point of view a very important decision was pronounced recently by the Kolozsvár (Cluj) High Court of Justice. A farmer living near Arad wished to send his daughters to the German denominational school instead of to the Rumanian village school. His application for permission to do so was refused by the Minister of National Education. The farmer appealed against the Minister's decision, and when the case came before the court, pleaded that his father had adopted the Roman Catholic faith on his marriage with a German woman. This was



why he wished to give his daughters a German education. After hearing the Counsel for the State, the High Court of Justice dismissed the farmer's suit. ("Ellenzék", June 5).

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### HUNGARIAN CLUB IN SZATMAR CLOSED AGAIN

About three months ago the chief of the Public Security Office in Szatmár, acting on instructions from his superiors, closed and sealed the premises of the Hungarian Burghers' Club. The explanation given was that in terms of a Government Ordinance the premises of every political party had to be closed. The explanation was a lame one, as the Club had nothing to do with politics. Repeated petitions resulted in Colonel Simion Coman, Prefect of the County, giving permission to re-open the premises on condition that Rumanians might also be members of the Club. It was then re-opened, but later on the committee decided against enrolling masses of new members and notified the Prefect to this effect. The Public Security Office then received new instructions, in terms of which the Club has now been closed again.

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### ACUTE STRIFE OVER LANGUAGE TESTS

In connection with the language tests the Rumanian Supreme Court of Appeal has pronounced a decision of great importance in principle. In the case of John Bokor, a dismissed civil servant of Székelyudvarhely, the Court announced that in terms of the Civil Service regulations, civil servants may at any time and repeatedly be required to pass the language tests, and that those who fail may be dismissed from their posts. At the same time the Court of Appeal refused John Bokor's request for a revision of his examination, demanded because he had a perfect knowledge of Rumanian and had been dismissed on the arbitrary decision of the board of examiners. This decision of the Court of Appeal places minority civil servants at the mercy of the board conducting the language tests ("Déli Hírlap", June 15).

The Town Council of Nagyvárad (Oradea Mare) has again decided to subject the employees of the municipal undertakings to a language examination. Many of these employees are Magyars. The date of the examinations has not yet been fixed, but the

announcement has caused much excitement already ("Szabadság", June 17). — This step runs contrary to the judgment pronounced in principle by the Temesvár High Court of Justice in the case of 9 dismissed employees of the municipal undertakings, in terms of which the employees of the municipal undertakings are to be considered municipal employees, since they are not appointed under the Civil Service Act and do not draw a State pension. This being so, they are simply private employees who may not be required to pass the language tests, or dismissed for failure to do so. The High Court of Justice also announced that the dismissed employees were entitled to claim damages from the town ("Keleti Ujság", June 26).

The Prefect of Szatmár fixed the date of the language examinations to be passed by the minority employees of the County for June 28. The officials who had to appear were those who for some reason or other had not previously passed the language tests. — Not long ago the Temesvár (Timisoara) Chamber of Lawyers also decreed that minority lawyers must pass the language tests. These lawyers then drew up a memorandum in which they declared the decision of the Chamber to be illegal and anti-constitutional. At the same time they signed a statement in which they bound themselves to act in agreement and not to appear at the language examinations ("Magyar Lapok", June 25). When the Board of the Chamber saw the resolute attitude of the minority lawyers, they began to bargain with them. President Brudariu declared that not every minority lawyer would have to take the examination, only those whose knowledge of Rumanian was doubtful. About 25 would have to do so, but not now, only in September. Any lawyer who was prevented from finishing his study of Rumanian by then could apply for a later date. Minority lawyers would be allowed to sit on the board of examiners ("Brassói Lapok", July 2). — The minority lawyers belonging to the district under the jurisdiction of the Arad Chamber of Lawyers were ordered to take a language examination on July 11. The lawyers urswervingly adhered to their opinion that the decree ordaining the language tests was unconstitutional. They therefore rejected it and refused to appear before the board of examiners. The Chamber of Lawyers retaliated with a threat of disciplinary procedure against those who refuse to take the examination. In a very belligerent tone the



minority lawyers were told that their resolution was contrary to the Defence of the State Act and that, should they continue to refuse to take the language examination, they would find themselves up against the authorities entrusted with the defence of the State. Meanwhile negotiations were set on foot. Such minority lawyers as were employed by the State or were drawing State pensions were forced by the pressure brought to bear on them to retract their signatures. But the rest continue to adhere to their standpoint and will not take the language examination. Those of the Rumanian lawyers who take a more understanding view of the question are trying to find an amicable solution, and on the initiation of some of them a movement has been inaugurated with the intention of preventing the strife growing more acute.

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## YUGOSLAVIA

### PUBLIC FUNCTIONARIES ORDERED TO LEARN MINORITY LANGUAGES

It is reported from Belgrade that M. Korošec, Minister of the Interior, has issued a decree ordering all public functionaries employed in the public administration or by the police in areas inhabited by minorities to acquire a knowledge of the minority language (or languages) concerned. Those functionaries who already know a minority language will receive special consideration in respect of promotion, while those who do not know any of these languages are enjoined to learn the one (ones) required within a period of three years. With regard to transfers the decree points out that great care must be taken in the future that public functionaries should have a satisfactory command of the minority language spoken in their new place of service. — It is with great pleasure that we report this piece of news, and we are of opinion that it means a great advantage, not only to the functionaries concerned, but to the Yugoslav State itself, if its public functionaries possess a fair command of the languages of the minorities.

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### FACTS ILLUSTRATING HUNGARY'S MINORITY POLICY

The Serb church choir of Pancsova celebrated its centenary in June; this choir is the oldest union of this kind, not only in

Yugoslavia but all over the Balkans. It will be interesting to mention the fact that it was on the initiative of this union that the first Serbian choral society was established in Belgrade in 1868, which was followed by the foundation of the Serb national union of choirs.

A letter was published on June 19-th in the Belgrade "Politika". In his "Letter from Hungary" the writer describes the present-day life of the Serb inhabitants of two villages in Hungary, Pomáz and Csobánka. The Serb inhabitants, the writer says, have so faithfully preserved their national traditions and their knowledge of their mother tongue that he had the impression of being in Serbia, not in the heart of Hungary.

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### NO PROPORTION BETWEEN THEIR NUMERICAL STRENGTH AND THE NUMBER OF HUNGARIANS APPOINTED ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL IN THE CAPITAL OF THE VOIVODINA

Fully one-third of the inhabitants of Ujvidék (Novisad), the capital of the Danube Banate, are Magyars. On 20th June the Ban dissolved the Municipal Council — which is appointed, not elected — and appointed a new one consisting of 54 members, on which only 5 seats were given to Hungarians of Ujvidék whereas they would have been entitled to 18. With the exception of the Roman Catholic priest and the Calvinist pastor no recognized leader of the Hungarians was appointed.

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