

EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGES OF NATIONAL MINORITIES OF YUGOSLAVIA AS REFLECTED IN STATISTICS

BY
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On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Yugoslav State the Belgrade "Vreme" — in its December 3rd. issue — published a long article showing the state of education in Yugoslavia in 1918 and 1938 respectively. It proudly parades the fact that since 1918 the number of elementary and "city" school, teachers training college and secondary school buildings in the territory of Yugoslavia has increased from 5869 to 10,349, that of teachers (masters) from 14,333 to 40,268, and that of pupils from 722,475 to 1,641,820.

The number of children attending the 574 classes of the 420 infant schools functioning in the territory of Yugoslavia in the school-year 1938/39 is 29,360, that number including 4545 children of German, 3200 of Magyar, 294 of Rumanian, 401 of Jewish, 188 of Ruthenian, 187 of Russian, 102 of Italian, 39 of Bulgarian, 5 of Turkish and 2 of Albanian nationality. According to the statement made by M. Zivotitch, Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Ministry, the number of so-called "Magyar" infant schools functioning in Yugoslavia in 1931 was only 37; and, seeing that during subsequent years the number of such schools has owing to the lack of Magyar infant mistresses decreased, it is absolutely indubitable that the majority of the 3200 Magyar children are compelled to attend infant schools in which the language of instruction is that of the State. And this is the case — on the whole — with the children of German nationality too.

The state of things prevailing in the elementary schools is as follows: of the 1,431,523 children attending the elementary schools during the current school-year, 48,862 are of German, 42,785 of Magyar, 14,753 of Albanian, 12,056 of Czecho-Slovak, 6185 of Rumanian, 3451 of Ruthenian, 926 of Italian, 925 of Russian, 920 of Turkish, 320 of Bulgarian and 8411 of "other" nationality.

As for the numbers of Magyar and German children attending elementary schools referred to above, it must be noted in advance that these official statistical data represent the numbers of children resulting after the application of the system of "name analysis" employed when enrolling candidates for admission to the schools. If no "name analysis" were applied, and if parents were able to freely choose the schools to which they desired to send their children, the actual numbers of "minority" pupils would be far larger. In the article dealing with the official statistical data no mention whatsoever is made of the number of Magyar, German or other "minority sections" established in the State elementary schools or of the fact that in the bulk of these "minority sections" most of the subjects are taught, not in the language of the respective minority, but in the language of the State. Nor does the article refer, for instance, to the fact that only a minority of the Magyar pupils are allowed to attend the so-called "Magyar parallel sections", the majority of those pupils being forced to attend schools in which the language of instruction is that of the State. The same is true also of the pupils of German nationality, more than 20,000 of whom are likewise driven to attend public elementary schools in which the language of instruction is that of the State, — a grievance voiced at the meeting of the Finance Committee of the National Assembly held on December 20th., 1937, by M. Stephen Kraft, former Member of the Skupshtina (see "Deutches Volksblatt", January 1st., 1938.) And the official statement also passes over in silence the intolerable and illegal conditions prevailing in the territory of the former province of Croatia-Slavonia, where there is not a single "parallel section" or even class using Magyar as the language of instruction at the disposal of the 90,000 Magyars living there.

The statement published in the "Vreme" includes only 135,523 minority elementary school pupils — that being only 9.4% of the total number of children attending elementary schools. The number of persons belonging to non-Slav minorities being certainly at least roughly 2,600,000 — i. e. 17.4% of the total number of inhabitants —, the number of elementary school pupils belonging to the minorities should be 259,086 — that being 123,562 more than the number figuring in the official statistics.

The distribution of elementary school teachers by nationalities is as follows: — according to the official data published in the "Vreme" the number of teachers of "Yugoslav" (sic!!) nationality functioning in elementary schools in the current school-year is 28,747, the number of German teachers being 712, that of Magyar teachers 259 (at least 100 less than the number of such teachers actually functioning), that of Czecho-Slovak (sic!!) teachers 185, that of Russian teachers 185 (!!), that of Italian teachers 67, that of Bulgarian teachers 6, that of Rumanian teachers 13, that of teachers of Albanian nationality 103, that of Turkish teachers 69 and that of teachers of "other" nationality 105. Whereas the number of teachers belonging to the several non-Slav nationalities postulated by the respective quotas of population should be as follows: the Magyar minority (3.33% = roughly 500,000 souls) would be entitled to provide 1022 elementary school teachers and the German minority (roughly 500,000 souls) also 1022 — i. e. 763 and 310 more respectively than the number of teachers belonging to these minorities actually functioning today.

We find breaches of the principle of equality laid down in Article 4 of the Yugoslav Constitution and in Article 7 of the Minority Treaty also in the case of the courses for illiterates and of the so-called "domestic economy" schools and courses respectively. The 80 courses for illiterates referred to in the "Vreme" — courses maintained by public monies — have been arranged solely and exclusively for Serbian and other Slav illiterates; and the 130 teachers employed are all without exception of Serbian or other Slav nationality. It is only in recent years that the non-Slav minorities have "presumed" (!) here and there to arrange

courses of the kind on a modest scale maintained at their own expense. The same is true also of the 150 "domestic economy" schools and courses respectively figuring in the statement which are maintained by public monies; these are also primarily for the exclusive benefit of women and girls of Serbian or other Slav nationality as a means of advanced education — a circumstance revealed also by the provision contained in Paragraph 6 of Article 154 of the Elementary Education Act of December 5th., 1929, in terms of which "instruction in these schools and courses respectively shall be given exclusively in the language of the State." The 400 teachers employed in the "domestic economy" schools and courses too are all without exception of Serbian or other Slav nationality.

Of the 226 "city" schools only one is of a minority character — that being the German private boys' and girls' "city" school at Ujverbász licensed "by special grace" in 1931. There are however in addition — in the territories of the country inhabited by Slav nationalities — 50 private "city" schools using Serb-Croatian or Slovene as the language of instruction — a fact referred to, at the Congress held at Banja-Luka on August 21st., 1932, by Mita Georgevitch, retired director of the Ujvidék girls' "gymnasium". The numbers of "city" school pupils and teachers respectively betray the same disproportion at the cost of the non-Slav minorities as is in evidence in the case of the elementary schools. Of the roughly 2300 "city" school teachers, for instance, 86 are Germans (that corresponding roughly to the German quota of the total population), there being 40 Russians, 21 Jews and 17 "Czecho-Slovaks", but only 27 Magyars, whereas the number of Magyars postulated by the Magyar quota of the total population should be 77.

Nor are things any better in the case of the secondary schools. The number of pupils attending the 197 secondary schools in the current school-year is 119.236: of these 1969 are Jews, 1938 Germans, 1605 Russians, 1070 Magyars, 778 "Czecho-Slovaks" (!), 233 Rumanians, 72 Turks, 69 Italians, 34 Albanians, 24 Bulgarians and 208 of "other" nationality. The first thing that strikes us here as remarkable is that the number of pupils recruited from the ranks of the Jews --

69.000 in all — is 3.7 times in excess of the number warranted by their quota of the total population (0.46%), that recruited from the ranks of the Russian exiles (30.000) being actually seven times that warranted by their quota of the population (0.2%). The number of Magyar pupils, on the contrary, is 2899, and that of German pupils 2131, below that due to the respective minorities on the basis of equal treatment and warranted by their respective quotas of the population. This is to a very large extent the reason why the non-Slav students, owing to the lack of opportunities of finding employment in the public offices, are compelled to a certain extent (if only for material reasons) to refrain from attending higher education institutes. The statement does not even attempt to show the distribution by nationalities of the 4969 secondary school teachers, — evidently because the quota of minority teachers is far less favourable even than those shown above in the cases of elementary and "city" school teachers respectively.

There are 43 teachers training colleges, 6 of this number being private schools — there being 1 private school of the kind each at Zagreb, Maribor, Sarajevo, Ljubljana and Skofja-Loka and a German private teachers training college at Uj-verbász (Novi Vrbas). The other national minorities are not allowed to establish private teachers training colleges (of indeed any kind of private school whatsoever) seeing that the provisions contained in §§ 2 and 88 of the Teachers Training Colleges Act (27th. September 1929), in § 164 of the Elementary Education Act dated December 5th., 1929, in § 5 of the Secondary Education Act dated September 17th., 1929, and in § 64 of the "City" Schools Act dated December 5th., 1931 — in direct defiance of the decided stipulations contained in Article 8 of the Minority Treaty — expressly forbid the establishment of private schools. The number of students attending the 43 teachers training colleges during the current school-year is 3500 and that of the teachers employed in the same 469; the statistical statement offers no information whatsoever respecting the distribution by nationalities of either pupils or teachers. It is absolutely indubitable, however, that the respective quotas of pupils and teachers is even more unjust to the non-Slav nationalities

than it is in the case of the types of school already dealt with.

The only moment of interest to us in the part of the statement dealing with the higher education institutes — universities and colleges — is that this group includes also 15 private music and art schools with or without the status of public secondary schools — a fresh proof of the fact that in practice the prohibitory provisions of the Acts relating to the establishment of private schools is applied only as against the national minorities. In connection with the higher education institutes attention must be called further to the fact, injurious to the interests of the Magyar and German minorities, that the 9 Roman Catholic seminaries functioning in the country do not include a single Hungarian or German college, although there are almost 900.000 Roman Catholics of Magyar or German nationality, who, seeing that they represent 17.1% of the total number (5.200.000) of Roman Catholics in Yugoslavia, would be fully entitled to have at least 1 seminary each.

This is the real condition of the national minorities of Yugoslavia in respect of educational matters — as reflected by the official Yugoslav statistics!!!

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