

HOW MINORITIES LIVE

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

THE ELECTIONS IN SLOVAKIA AND THEIR MORAL

The elections in Slovakia on December 18, 1938, resulted in a victory of the Government Party. It is worth while to stop for a moment and see what lessons the results of these elections may teach us. The first of these lessons is that through these elections the Slovak people has passed judgement on the absolutistic government of Prague in the last twenty years and has expressed its warm sympathy for the idea of self-government. In a word, Prague has been utterly disavowed by this manifestation of the people's will through the general elections. The second lesson is that the Czecho-Slovak Government, having deprived the Slovak people of the possibility of exercising its right of self-determination, has substituted for this very essential political right the rather doubtful privilege of general elections.

And, finally, there is also a third lesson to be learnt from these elections, which is all the more important as it bears on the minority problem. Namely, the Tiso Cabinet placed only one list before the electors, on which list the candidates of the minorities occupied those places which the Government was willing to assign to them of its own accord; thus, Count Esterházy, the candidate of the Hungarian Party, occupied the seventeenth place on the list. By this method the entire Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia, (i. e. about 150.000 people) will be represented by one single member in the Parliament of Slovakia. Even in the past the Hungarian minority has often complained that, while 17.000 — 20.000 votes were enough for the election of a Czech or Slovak member, a Hungarian candidate had to secure at least 32.000 votes for a seat in Parliament. The policy of the Tiso Cabinet is, therefore, not only a flagrant violation of international obligations, but also a gross insult to the Hungarian minority, whose situation in the new State is now even more hopeless than it was in the old

Czechoslovak Republic. Apparently the leaders of the new Czecho-Slovak-Ruthenian Republic have not learnt anything from the tragedy of the Czechoslovak State.

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SLOVAK CENSUS: ILLEGAL METHODS EMPLOYED

On 31st December the Slovak Government ordered a census. This sudden decision was of the nature of a putsch, and the methods employed were detrimental to the interests of the minorities, for the inhabitants were not allowed to fill up the papers themselves. This work was done by the census agents. The census was taken so suddenly that very many people knew nothing about it, and either their names were omitted or in their absence the agents wrote what they liked in their papers. It even happened that the census officers simply filled up the papers with data taken from the registers kept by the doorkeepers of apartment houses, without seeing the tenants themselves. In other places the names were taken from the list of electors and only such data added as suited the agents' purpose. The census officers were always accompanied on their rounds by Hlinka Guards, who took care that no data of which they did not approve were allowed to appear in the census papers.

In these circumstances it is no wonder that the taking of the census was conducted amidst a storm of protests on the part of the German and Hungarian inhabitants. The United Hungarian Party has made representations to the authorities concerned in order to safeguard the rights of the Hungarians of Slovakia in connection with the census.

M. Karmasin, M. P., Secretary of State for German minority affairs in the Slovak Cabinet, telegraphed his protest to Premier Tiso. He also set forth in writing the attitude of the German minority, according to which the figures of the census must be considered invalid because of the illegal methods employed. M. Karmasin insisted that the rights of the minorities could not be curtailed on the strength of an illegally conducted census and that the Slovak Government had no right to issue any decrees dealing with the minority situation.

In his telegram to Premier Tiso, M. Karmasin stressed the point that the circumstances accompanying the census might easily be responsible for a breach in the good understanding existing between the German racial group and the Slovak Government. M. Karmasin also expressed his dissatisfaction with the circumstance that no notice of the intended census was given to the German State Secretary's Department, which created the impression that the Slovak Government was mistrustful of that Department. Furthermore he disapproved of the fact that only Czecho-Slovak agents had been employed.

Practically the entire text of newspaper articles criticizing the defective methods of the census was deleted by the Slovak censor.

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BRUTALITY OF UKRANIAN TERRORISTS

The Ruthenian population in December lived in constant fear of the Ukranian terrorists, who, though in the minority, exercise the executive power and in December too continued to suppress all movements of a Ruthenian character. In public places the people are not allowed to speak anything but Ukranian. The decision of the Ruthenians to have their children taught in Ruthenian has been simply ignored, and Ukranian has been arbitrarily introduced in the Ruthenian schools. The Government offices have been unable to work, because Ukranian has been introduced in the administration — formerly conducted in Czech — though the population does not understand it. The language problem is one of the most difficult problems in Ruthenia, because all the Ukranian exiles from Poland, Rumania and the Western States have settled in Ruthenia and want to force their own language on the Ruthenian population. The population of the large and small towns has at once become abnormally large. Thus, for instance the population of the village of Szolyva has increased from 7000 to 21.000. Instead of disarming the soldiers, new recruits have been called to the colours. Food problems are becoming more and more serious now in the winter season. The roads are so bad in some places that communication has become almost impossible.

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MAIZE — AS A MEANS OF PROPAGANDA IN EVENT OF PLEBISCITE

Instead of distributing among the population the maize consignments imported into Ruthenia, the Volosin Cabinet has ordered that the maize should be stored. The Government thinks that a plebiscite will in the near future be held in Ruthenia, and it intends to employ these consignments of maize as a means of propaganda in the event of a plebiscite. The population already calls the "Vlasta" cigarettes plebiscite cigarettes because the price has been reduced from 4 hellers to 1 heller. By this and similar tricks the Volosin Cabinet is trying to popularise Ukrainism.

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HUNGARIAN SCHOOL OF TÉCSŐ — CLOSED

It is reported from Técső (December 16.) that the Ukranian authorities of the village have ordered the closing of the local Hungarian senior school and have dismissed the staff of Hungarian teachers. The closing down of the Hungarian school was immediately followed by the opening of a Ukranian school to serve the purpose of the speedy Ukranization of the Hungarian population. All employees not in the service of the State are compelled to send their children to classes in Ukranian. Vehement protests have been lodged by the Hungarian population against this violent attack on the cultural rights of the minorities.

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RUMANIA

TWENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE OMITTED FROM LIST OF RUMANIAN CITIZENS IN NAGYVÁRAD

In comparison with other towns the number of people omitted from the list of Rumanian citizens in Nagyvárad is very large. The consequences to these people, especially to those on the pension list, are extremely disagreeable. The latter have been told to send in their applications for pensions, which must be endorsed by the Mayor of the town, to the pension department. It has been established that about twenty thousand people — or nearly a quarter of the inhabitants of the town — have been omitted from the list of Rumanian citizens.

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THE MAROSVASARHELY "CATHERINE BETHLEN" SOCIETY, A CALVINIST CHARITY ORGANIZATION, SUPPRESSED

On instructions received from the Ministry of Justice the Marosvásárhely Court has decreed to cancel the rights as fictitious person of the "Catherine Bethlen" Society in that town. An ordinance issued by the Minister of Justice licenced the activity of the society and established its position as a fictitious person in 1927.

An appeal against the sentence of the Court has been filed. The aims of the society are noble ones: the welfare and education of women. The object is to implant religious feelings and educate the girls living in the institute belonging to the society, most of whom are the daughters of Reformed Church pastors and teachers, in a real Calvinist spirit. At present there are 60 girls living as boarders in the institute. Their parents are scarcely able to pay the compulsory monthly fees. The rest is paid by the denomination.

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MINORITY PHYSICIANS WHO HAVE BEEN IN PRACTICE 15—20 YEARS COMPELLED TO RETIRE

The committee appointed to re-consider diplomas acquired abroad and "naturalized" in Rumania, has suspended the right of many physicians to practise in that country. Some of these doctors are Rumanians, but the majority are minority citizens. So far most of the diplomas examined have been acquired at Italian universities, and a large number of the 380 doctors holding such have been deprived of the right to practise. The reason given is that these doctors neglected to pass the State examination at the appointed time. Among them is a doctor of Arad who took his degree at Budapest university in 1919. Many of them are physicians who have been practising for 15 — 20 years and who during that time have not only made a name for themselves as medical men, but have also produced valuable scientific work. They have now applied to the higher tribunals for redress and are resolved to address a petition to the King. — y —

Dr. FRANCIS SCHEFFLER, CANON OF NAGYVÁRAD, SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT BY KOLOZSVAR MILITARY TRIBUNAL

Dr. Francis Scheffler, Canon of Nagyvárad and manager of the publishing offices of the "Magyar Lapok" and the "Néplap", two dailies appearing in that town, was charged with having banned political pamphlets in his attaché case when he left for Hungary on 6th December.

At the trial the accused stated that, although innocent, he had been arraigned before the Military Court before. He pleaded "Not Guilty" to the present charge. His only fault — he said — was that he had neglected to be sufficiently careful and had not read the pamphlets, which arrived by post, but had just thrust them into his attaché case. He was not the editor of the "Magyar Lapok" and the "Néplap", merely the manager of the publishing office and owner of the printing office. He had no intention of committing an illegal act in retaining possession of the banned pamphlets.

The Military Court pronounced him guilty of an offence against the security of the State and sentenced him to two years' imprisonment and a fine of 10.000 lei, and also suspended his political rights for a term of six years. Dr. Scheffler has appealed. — y —

NO DECISION YET IN RE STATE SUBSIDY TO MINORITY SCHOOLS IN RUMANIA

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Béla Varga, Bishop of the Unitarian Church, has made a statement to the representatives of the

Press in connection with the question of a State subsidy to the minority schools. He said that so far no answer had been made to the memorandum on the subject submitted in August, and that therefore it was quite uncertain whether the Rumanian Government would come to the aid of the almost destitute minority schools. At present the State gave grants to clergymen but none to schools ("Brassói Lapok" Dec. 27.) — y —

CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN TRANSYLVANIA SENT TO GAOL BECAUSE OF HUNGARIAN "CREDO" AND A PICTURE

Dr. Joseph Vajda, parish priest of Tulka, a village in County Bihar, has been sentenced by the Kolozsvár Military Court to one year's imprisonment, a fine of 3000 lei and the loss of his civil rights for a term of 5 years. Years ago Dr. Vajda had brought some school-books home with him from Hungary and those he had recently presented to the denominational school in the village. One of these books contained the Hungarian "Credo" (a patriotic poem. Ed.), and he was forthwith arraigned before the Military Court on the charge of sedition. Dr. Vajda's defence was that he had not read the books and was ignorant of their contents; and this plea was supported by the fact that the books were uncut.

The Rev. Gáspár Lokodi, parish priest of Túr, has been sentenced to 7 months' imprisonment, a fine of 4000 lei and the loss of his civil rights for a term of 3 years because a picture was found in his parish church portraying St. Stephen in the act of offering the crown of Hungary to the Virgin Mary ("Magyar Lapok", Dec. 16 and "Magyar Újság", Dec. 11). — y —

YUGOSLAVIA

A FRESH GLORIFICATION OF SARAJEVO ASSASSINATION

At Sarajevo in 1934 a society was founded with the title "Karjisnik" for the purpose of erecting a memorial home to the memory of, and under the name of, Gavrilo Princip, the Serajevo murderer, at Bosanski Grahovo, the poorest village in Bosnia and the birthplace of Princip. The society has already collected a fund of 400.000 dinars, and it intends to raise a further 600.000 dinars by public subscription to procure the total amount needed for the erection of the Princip memorial home. In consequence of this action the Hungarian population in some cities may also be compelled to contribute towards the memorial home of the criminal responsible for the double murder of Sarajevo. ("Reggeli Újság", December 6, 1938.) — y —

CROATS REFUSE TO CELEBRATE DECEMBER 1st, THE DAY COMMEMORATING YUGOSLAV UNITY

In its issue of December 3rd, 1938, the "Vreme", a Belgrade daily, reproduces — as reported from Zagreb — the text of a pamphlet published by the local organization of the Croatian Peasant Party at Zagreb: "Croats of Zagreb! In obedience to the dictator's orders — satirically termed "law" — every citizen has hitherto been compelled to hoist the Yugoslav flag on December 1-st, the anniversary of the unification of Yugoslavia. So far, we regret to say, there have always been a few house owners in Zagreb who have obeyed these orders. But this must stop now; first, because we Croats have but little reason to rejoice on December 1-st; secondly, because we have only one weapon to use against the dictators's "must": "never!". We call upon all house owners not to put out the flags on December 1-st, unless they want to incur the displeasure of the entire Croatian people... We know that this time too, as on previous occasions, the police will employ force; but if the poorer citizens of the suburbs have been strong enough to resist this force, the owners of big houses must also be able to do so. Anyone who is not with us is against us. You may choose between the sentence of the police magistrates — provided there is time enough left for such a sentence — and the contempt of the nation. The local organization of the Croatian Peasant Party, Zagreb. — Signed and approved by Dr. Vlatko Maček."

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EXPLOSION OF INFERNAL MACHINE AT ZAGREB

An infernal machine exploded at 8 a. m. on December 15, 1938, in the home of M. Hugo Verk, a solicitor in Zagreb, who is the correspondent of the "Samouprava", the official organ of the Yugoslav Government. A letter containing the following message was found in a passage after the explosion: "Here is some new material for your next article in the "Samouprava"; it may also serve to stimulate you to invent further stories about a unified Yugoslavia. Long live Dr. Macek!" The explosion was apparently the work of the solicitor's political opponemts.

SUPPRESSION OF Dr. MACEK'S PARTY ORGAN

Following the parliamentary elections — held on December 11, 1938. — the Government has ordered the suppression of the "Jadranski Dnevnik", one of M. Maček's party organs appearing at Split (Spalato).

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