

HOW MINORITIES LIVE

RUMANIA

CONFISCATION OF WIRELESS SETS AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE ON RUMANIAN FRONTIERS

According to the report of visitors who arrive in the village of Nagybockső, anti-Magyar acts of violence are the order of the day in Rumanian territory just over the frontier. A Magyar who had been beaten so badly that he was bleeding from many wounds fled to Hungarian territory and told the people there that in his native town, Máramarossziget, the Magyar and Ruthenian inhabitants were just coming out from the Sunday service when a number of gendarmes attacked them without provocation. The Magyar and Ruthenian inhabitants were beaten with the butts of rifles, and many of them were seriously injured.

The wireless sets in the possession of the Magyar inhabitants of the counties of Arad and Szatmár were sealed by the police last April. A few days ago the Rumanian authorities confiscated the wireless sets of all Magyars in the frontier districts, after which all wireless sets were broken to pieces. ("Felvidéki Magyar Hirlap", May 20th).

EXTRA TAX ON BOOK-KEEPING IN A MINORITY LANGUAGE

The provision of the direct taxation law of 1935 which imposes a pretty heavy sur-tax on enterprizes and institutions that do not keep their books in the official language of the State, has been fought before a court of law by the Lutheran parish of Nagyszeben. The contention of the Lutheran Church was that this provision is an infraction of the fundamental principles of the Constitution, ignoring as it does the equality of all Rumanian citizens in the eyes of the law.

The case has been tried by the supreme Court of Appeal and the Lutheran Church has been non-suited on the ground that *the official language of the country was the language of the majority nation and that the sur-tax was imposed on those who could afford the luxury of doing their book-keeping in an alien tongue.* The relevant provision of the taxation law was pronounced constitutional by the Court of Appeal.

We ask our readers to compare this pronouncement of the Rumanian Supreme Court with the provisions of two of the

Articles of the treaty concluded in Paris on 9th December 1919 between Rumania and the Allied and Associated Powers. In Article I of that treaty Rumania undertook to recognize as a fundamental law the provisions contained in paragraphs 2—8 of the said Article and guaranteed that no law, ordinance or official measure should run counter to or contravene those provisions, and that no law, ordinance or official measure should prevail against them. The first paragraph of Article VIII stipulates that no Rumanian citizen shall be restricted in the free use of any language in private or business life, in religious life, in the Press or any other means of publication, or at public meetings. Here we must note that in pre-Trianon Hungary all institutions and undertakings were free to keep their books in any language they chose without having to pay a special tax. The use of a minority language was never pronounced a luxury by the Hungarian courts of law.

MONUMENT OF TWO HEROES OF HUNGARIAN WAR
OF INDEPENDENCE IN SZAMOSFALVA
(NEAR KOLOZSVAR)

One night recently a monument erected during the Hungarian era to the memory of two heroes of the Hungarian War of Independence who were executed by the enemy, was pulled down by unknown persons. In connection with this matter M. Joseph *Sándor*, ex-senator and present Vice-President of the Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania, went to M. Coriolan Tataru, Governor of the province of Szamos, and informed him of what had taken place. M. *Sándor* begged the Governor, in the interests of internal peace, to take steps to prevent similar outrages on Hungarian memorials in the future. M. *Sándor* also told the Governor that the Hungarian Cultural Society would re-erect the monument.

THEATRICAL GRIEVANCES IN TRANSYLVANIA

The Committee of the *Magyar Volksbund* in Transylvania has submitted a long memorandum to the Minister of Education demanding a redress of the grievances of the Hungarian theatres in that province. In terms of the new measures introduced by the Minister of Education, the committee superintending theatrical affairs in the Banate and Transylvania has no power except to recommend the licensing of certain plays; the licences themselves must be issued by the Ministry of Education. This means a great loss of time and results in the theatres and amateur theatrical societies being obliged to perform old plays. The memorandum, which sets forth all the grievances of the Hun-

garian theatre in Transylvania, demands a return to former conditions. This memorandum was signed by Count Nicholas *Bánffy*.

CINEMAS IN TRANSYLVANIA RUINED BY HIGH TAXATION

In defiance of the principle of equal rights, the Rumanian Government has imposed a much higher tax on the cinemas in Transylvania than on those in Old Rumania, so that the owners are unable to run their cinemas. The proprietors protest against the new system of taxation, because most cinemas in Transylvania are classed as first-class cinemas and have to pay a tax of 2400 lei a day, irrespective of the amount of their takings. The second-class cinemas have to pay 1600 lei a day, third-class ones 800 lei, and fourth-class cinemas 200—300 lei a day. In all the large towns of Transylvania, e. g. in Kolozsvár, Temesvár, Arad, Nagyvárad, Brassó and Nagyszeben, all the cinemas have been ranked as first-class cinemas. On the other hand, the cinemas in Old Rumania always used to pay higher taxes previously — when the taxes amounted to 20% of the total receipts — which shows that they were always more prosperous. Nevertheless, there is not one first-class cinema now in Old Rumania except in Bucharest, while in Transylvania all the cinemas in the large towns are now ranked as first-class cinemas.

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

MAGYAR EMPLOYEES OF TOBACCO FACTORY AT SEPSISZENTGYÖRGY TO UNDERGO LANGUAGE TEST

In the course of the last twenty years the Magyar employees living in Rumania have had to undergo repeated language tests, and the dismissal of Magyars under the pretext of unsuccessful tests has been a frequent occurrence, thousands of Magyar families being thereby reduced to poverty. It is now reported that the Rumanian Government is preparing to take similar steps against the inhabitants of a purely Magyar county, the County of Háromszék.

The director of the tobacco factory at Sepsiszentgyörgy has been instructed to order all those of his employess who have not a sufficient command of Rumanian to undergo a language test on July 15th. The director, accordingly, has compiled a list of those employees to whom this regulation applies and has told them that the factory will arrange a course in Rumania for them. Some of these employees are heads of families over 50 years of age who cannot possibly acquire a sufficient knowledge of the language in two months, however ambitiously they may try to learn it. Those on the list include

also charwomen and servants of the factory.

MINORITY SCHOOLS IN SEPSISZENTGYÖRGY RECEIVE NO GRANTS

The budget of the town of *Sepsiszentgyörgy* (6.500.000 lei) has now been endorsed by the Provincial Governor of *Bucsecs*. This budget was a great disappointment to the Magyar minority, for in it no provision had been made by the Municipal Corporation for grants to the local Roman Catholic and Calvinist minority elementary schools. These schools are the only schools in the town for Magyar children. The budget is another flagrant instance of how the Government neglects to fulfil the obligations undertaken in the minority treaty of 9th December, 1919. For in Article 10 thereof the Rumanian Government undertook to guarantee the minorities a proportionate share of all the sums accruing from the public revenue that are devoted to education, religion and charity in the State, municipal and other budgets in all towns and districts in which a considerable proportion of the population are Rumanian citizens belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities.

AGREEMENT WITH HUNGARIAN MINORITY — IGNORED AT SEPSISZENTGYÖRGY

When the present leaders of the Hungarian minority consented to join the Rumanian National Renaissance Front the Government made a solemn promise to subsidise the schools of the Hungarian minority. This agreement, however, is not being observed everywhere. — The town of *Sepsiszentgyörgy*, for example, has not provided in its new budget for the subsidising of the Hungarian schools. The leaders of the minority churches appeared before M. Cretiu, the burgomaster, and asked him to let the two minority elementary schools have their due share, according to the quota of the Hungarian population, of the subsidies given to schools. Although they based their claim on the provisions of the above agreement, the burgomaster refused to grant their request, whereupon the churches lodged a protest against the budget of the city.

WORK OF MAGYAR CHORAL SOCIETIES IMPEDED

Every year the General Hungarian Choral Society arranges a series of competitions in the various districts. This year

difficulties have been raised by the Rumanian authorities. In the county of *Nagyküküllő*, for instance, the gendarmes would not allow choir practice except between the hours of 5 and 7 p. m., when the members of the choral society were busy with their work in the fields. Having no opportunity of practising, this choir was not able to take part in the competition. We understand that the General Hungarian Choral Society intends to intervene and lay these grievances before the Government.

MINORITY CLERGYMEN MOLESTED AND PERSECUTED

Because of an old hymn-book and a *Turul* (legendary Hungarian bird) the Calvinist clergyman and precentor of the town of Zilah have been arrested: Dr. Michael *Mezey*, Calvinist clergyman of the town, was ordered by two officials of the *Zilah* Public Security Office to open the door of the church, as they wished to examine the interior. The two officials went straight up to the gallery, and, opening the music-case beside the organ, took out the book of hymns used by the precentor, M. Géza *Aracsi*. They expressed their displeasure with the fact that the Hungarian National Anthem had not been removed from the hymn-book. Then they went to the church treasury and demanded an explanation of a stone *Turul* (eagle) which they found there. This *Turul* is an object of historical and artistic value, for it is the work of John Fadrusz, a famous Hungarian sculptor. Some years ago it was handed over to the parish office for preservation by the Government authorities. The upshot of the matter was that both Dr. Michael *Mezey* and M. Géza *Aracsi* were arrested and taken to the gaol of the military court in Kolozsvár.

CALVINIST CLERGYMAN OF COUNTY MAROS ARRAIGNED BEFORE MILITARY COURT

The case of M. John *Nagy*, Calvinist clergyman of Bede (County Maros), has been tried before the military court in Kolozsvár. He was arraigned before the court on information received from M. Constantin Manea, a State teacher, who accused him of persuading several members of his congregation not to send their children to the State school and of having conducted a conversation of a political nature contrary to law.

The accused stated that he considered the charge an act of revenge, for even after he had lodged his information, Manea had declared that he was willing to come to terms if he was paid for it. First he demanded 1500 and then 2000 lei. The chief

witness for the prosecution was a Greek Catholic priest, who however stated that he was present at the alleged conversation and that Mr. Nagy had not said anything illegal. Mr. Nagy was acquitted.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE PUPILS OF THE DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL OF NYOMÁT

After the denominational school of Nyomát was closed down by the authorities, the Inspector of Education of Marosvásárhely ordered the pupils of the school to be taken to the State school. Until the Hungarian section of the State school is completed, the Hungarian language will be taught as a regular subject in eight hours a week, that being four hours for each of the two teachers.

RUMANIANS AGAIN SEIZE BY FORCE PASTURE LAND OF SZEKELY VILLAGE

The Székely people have again been outraged by another act of violence, — the seizure of a common pasture ground. The Rumanian inhabitants of the village of Gyergyóbékás have by force occupied the common pasture ground (600 yokes) belonging to the inhabitants of the village of Gyergyótekerőpatak, on the pretext that the possession of this pasture ground is of vital importance to the Rumanian village. The inhabitants of the same Rumanian village had already (last year) seized — also by force — 440 yokes of land from the inhabitants of the village of Gyergyószentmiklós and another 409 yokes from the village of Tekerőpatak. In other words, they have seized 2000 yokes in all by sheer force.

The seizure of the pasture ground in Tekerőpatak was a heavy blow to the inhabitants, because the herd was left without any pasture ground and was in danger of extinction. The representatives of the community of proprietors appeared before Col. Drimba, Prefect of the County, asking him to have the pasture ground evacuated. The Colonel gave orders accordingly to the gendarmes of Csíkszereda and told the inhabitants of Tekerőpatak to remain on the pasture ground until the people from Békás had departed. But after the departure of the gendarmes the people of Békás displayed such a hostile attitude that the representatives of the other village were obliged to flee. — The Rumanians of Békás drove their animals back to the former pasture ground immediately after the gendarmes had left. Thereupon another delegation appeared before the Prefect with the same request as before. The Prefect

instructed them to gather their cattle and send them to the pasture ground, which would be evacuated by the time they got there. The cattle arrived at the pasture ground, but were not allowed to graze there, as the Rumanians were guarding the property they had unlawfully acquired armed with hatchets and guns. As things at present stand, the Székelys of Tekerőpatak are not able to use their own pasture ground in spite of the express orders of the authorities.

SLOVAKIA

SPEAKING HUNGARIAN A CAPITAL OFFENCE

On 25th March, John *Dula*, a native of Garbócbogdán employed as a clerk in a court of law, crossed over to Slovak territory to visit his relations at Magyarizsép. Although he could speak Slovak and had been warned that it was not advisable to speak Hungarian in Slovakia, he did so. This was reported to the Hlinka Guards, who arrested him. He was sent to a concentration camp about seven kilometres east of *Varanno*, where fifty men were detained. These poor prisoners were lying on the bare ground with only a thin layer of straw under them. For ten days they had no blankets, and were ill in consequence. They were kept crowded within doors and were only allowed to take the air for ten minutes every day. Their food was the poorest imaginable. They got just enough to keep them from dying of starvation. Andrew *Barna*, a lawyer of Hommona aged 52, was also punished for speaking Hungarian. *Barna*, who does not speak Slovak well, was heard to say that he preferred to speak Hungarian. When this was reported to the Hlinka Guards, they immediately arrested him and beat him sorely.

PRO-HUNGARIAN SYMPATHIES PUNISHED

At the time of the last Hungarian advance, *Gustave Svéd*, a butcher's assistant in *Kemence*, was heard to say that if the Hungarians continued to advance so rapidly they would reach that village in three days. For this he was arrested, tortured and beaten, and on 3rd May was sent to the concentration camp at *Távorna*, where he was again maltreated. Then he was locked up in the "dark cell." This, one of the favourite means of torture employed by the Hlinka Guards, is a little cell full of dirty water and filth. — When the Hungarian troops were taking up their position along the temporary frontier, *Julius Lingsch*, an innkeeper of Homonna, met an old friend among the Hungarian soldiers, and smilingly shook hands with him. The Hlinka Guards,

who were watching the scene from a distance of about 150 metres, took this to mean that Lingsch was pleased to see the Hungarian troops. He was sent to a concentration camp.

GRIEVANCES OF HUNGARIAN PENSIONERS IN SLOVAKIA

A report published in the Hungarian daily "Uj Hirek" (Pozsony-Bratislava, April 5th) says that pensioners will not receive their pensions unless they can prove that they were born and have been domiciled within the territory of the present Slovak State. This arrangement runs counter to the provisions of the recent agreement between Hungary and Slovakia. This agreement provides that everyone's nationality (citizenship) shall depend on his present place of residence. If, therefore, someone was residing within the territory of the present State of Slovakia at the date indicated in the agreement, he must be considered as a Slovak citizen, irrespectively of his domicile. The above edict ignores this provision of the agreement and determines everyone's right to his pension according to his domicile.

MAGYAR WORKERS DISMISSED FROM EMPLOYMENT IN SLOVAKIA

It is reported from Kassa (April 6th) that an ever-increasing number of Magyar workers is being dismissed from the various factories and other establishments in Slovakia. The workers thus dismissed are, of course, unable to find new jobs and are, therefore, deprived of the possibility of earning their daily bread. A striking example of their fate is the case of a worker from the village of Aranyida, János Vozár, who has just returned from Slovakia. Vozár had been employed in the building operations of a tunnel on the railway line near Stubnyafürdő. On March 29th the Slovak authorities ordered the Magyars to be picked out from the 10.000 workers employed there; these workers were then dismissed without any explanation. Vozár and the other Magyar workers who are domiciled in the recently re-incorporated areas of Hungary at least received their hard-earned wages, thanks to the intervention of the Hlinka Guard. On his way towards Lovinabánya, however, he was held up by members of the same Hlinka Guard, who robbed him of all his earnings, 500 Czech crowns. The poor man would have been compelled to walk home, to the distant village of Aranyida, if the Hungarian gendarmes had not lent him 13 pengő.

NUMBER OF MAGYAR SOLICITORS IN SLOVAKIA TO BE LIMITED

According to a report published in the "Slovák" (on April 16. 1939), the Slovak Ministry of Justice has ordered the conscription of all practising solicitors of Magyar race in Slovakia. As a result of this conscription it was found that altogether 67 Magyar solicitors were actually practising in the country. It is now rumoured that the Ministry of Justice will issue an edict declaring that the percentage of Magyar solicitors must not be higher than the general percentage of Magyars in Slovakia.

YUGOSLAVIA

STRANGE CROAT COMPLAINT

The May 12 issue of M. Maček's paper, the „Hrvatski Dnevnik“, complains of the distribution according to religion of the municipal officials in the town of *Szabadka* (*Subotica*). According to that newspaper, there is only one Roman Catholic judge among the 15 functioning in the local courts of justice, and that one is not a Croat. Only one of the 7 judges at the district courts is a Roman Catholic, and the other is a Bunyevatz, 14 of the 39 officials employed at the municipal revenue office are Roman Catholics, but only 4 are Croats. In the suburban inland revenue office 3 of the 25 officials are Roman Catholics, and only 6 of the 32 customs officials are Roman Catholics and Croats.

This remarkable complaint will be intelligible only if we consider the fact that of Szabadka's 105.000 inhabitants only about 7000 are Orthodox Serbs, while 51.000 are Roman Catholics of Bunyevatz race and another 43.000 are Magyar Roman Catholics. The number of Bunyevatz persons in Szabadka who openly profess Croat sympathies and who style themselves Croats is growing steadily. Expression was given to these racial and political sympathies in the month of April, when, led by the Bishop's surrogate, M. Rayitch *Blashko*, a large Bunyevatz delegation from Szabadka visited M. Maček and laid the complaints and demands of the Croat Bunyevatz and Shokatz peoples before him. In his reply M. Maček declared that in the present difficult times he had the affairs of Szabadka particularly at heart, and would do all he could for his *Bunyevatz* and *Shokatz* brethren of the Voivodina. („*Obzor*“, April 27.)

ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

On May 1st M *Yuritch*, Chairman of the Municipal Council of *Szabadka (Subotica)* and member of the National Legislative Assembly, appointed a Magyar doctor to the vacant post of District Medical Officer in the city. M. *Yuritch* has also made it possible for 20 Magyar applicants to find employment in the municipal administration. This generous gesture — unprecedented in the history of the city since it has been under Yugoslav rule — was a token of gratitude to the Magyar inhabitants of the city, the majority of whom had supported M. *Yuritch* at the time of the last parliamentary elections. We regret to say, however, that no other town in Yugoslavia has so far felt the necessity of following this generous example, still less the Yugoslav State. If we examine the list of all the functionaries employed by the State, the Banates and the several local governments — about 250.000 altogether — we find that there are only a *few hundred* Magyars among them, in spite of the fact that, by virtue of its percentage, the Magyar minority in Yugoslavia ought to hold at least 9.000 public posts.

ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION OF "EQUAL RIGHTS"
IN YUGOSLAVIA

Though the law concerning the local government of towns was passed five years ago, it has not yet been enforced. The result is that 74 towns in the country are still governed by municipal councils appointed by the Government; these bodies are absolutely at the mercy of the Government and may be dismissed whenever the Government pleases. The Government recently (May 4th) dissolved the municipal council of the town of *Ujvidék (Novisad)*, the seat of the Danube Banate. With due regard to the principle of "equal rights", the Government has allowed six Magyars to sit on the council, in spite of the fact that the Magyars represent one-third of the inhabitants, so that — in fact — they would be entitled to hold 18 seats out of the 54 (the German minority, whose percentage is much lower, is represented by 7 members!).