

BOOKS

The Transylvanian Question.

Never before has there been published a comprehensive summary of the Transylvanian question, apart from certain details of it.

Therefore, it is with sincere joy that we greet the publication of a collective work under the editorship of Prof. *Imre Lukinich*, President of the Eastern European Institute of Budapest University (full title: Ostmitteleuropäische Bibliothek... (Essays on East Central Europe).

In his preface Prof. *Lukinich* outlines the scope of the work: to illustrate the rôle played by Transylvania during the course of history; in the Middle Ages, when it was still only a geographical name and formed a part of Hungary; in the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was an independent principality, and finally, from that date onward — including the end of the 17th century, when the Transylvanian question was created — down to our days.

The first article — by Prof. Louis Tamás — describes the origin of the Rumanian people and language and gives a summary of the question at its present stage. Prof. Tamás gives a learned summary of the machinations of Rumanian scholars who have endeavoured to prove — or rather to make credible — the connections between the Romans and the Rumanians by a rather unusual method; namely, they maintain that the migration of the peoples led to a certain mixture of races, and that the "Vlachs" of the Balkan Peninsula were also among the races taking part in the process of mixing. In face of this assertion Prof. Tamás maintains the theory — which can be proved from scientific sources — that the evacuation of Dacia — and, therefore, Transylvania too — by the Romans was complete and without any effects. Only a few centuries later did the Rumanians begin to immigrate from Italy, taking their route through Albania and Bulgaria towards the East. This may be seen both from the characteristics of Albanian which can be found in Rumanian, and from the fact that the Rumanians adopted the Bulgarian faith together with the language of the Bulgarian Church. It is an old-established fact that the Rumanians entered Transylvania from the direction of the Balkans, and the first document that mentions their presence in that province is dated 1210.

The late Prof. John *Darkó* gives a summary of the history of Transylvania in the Middle Ages, from the Magyar Conquest of Hungary until the establishment of the Principality of Transylvania (895—1541.). His paper gives a mosaic-like illustration of Transylvania's history and its characteristics. Among other things he describes the origin of the "Szekler" people, the gradual immigration of the Rumanians from the Balkans, and the development of rights within the boundaries of Hungary. He proves that this development and legal situation is by no means less favourable than that which we find in the other regions of Hungary, or that which may be found in the history of the "Szeklers" or the Saxons in Transylvania. These statements in Prof. Darko's paper secure wider interest for the whole book.

In the same spirit Nicholas Mester — a teacher of history, who is at present Member of the Hungarian Parliament — continues to describe the history of Transylvania between 1541 and 1690, in which period Transylvania formed an independent principality, and from 1690 to 1867, when Transylvania lived under the rule of the King of Hungary, that is to say, it formed an integral part of the Kingdom of Hungary from the point of view of governmental policy too. We get short glimpses of the development of the Transylvanian constitution and of the changes effected therein, the relations between Hungary and Transylvania, the Turkish Porte and Transylvania, the enactment of religious freedom, in which the little principality of Transylvania preceded all other countries in Europe. We then get a summary of the policy of the Princes of Transylvania, including the invitation of the Rumanian voivodes by the Habsburgs. Among the latter we find Michael the Brave (*Mihail Viteazul*), Prince of Moldavia, who united under his sceptre Moldavia, the Rumanian Lowlands and Transylvania, not in pursuance of his own great plans, nor with the idea of the reunion of all territories formerly under Roman rule, but simply as a vassal of the Court of Vienna. M. Mester then gives a description of the policy of the Transylvanian Princes in respect of foreign affairs and of church affairs as well as of matters of culture, with special regard to their policy towards the Rumanians in Transylvania. Then follows the history of the Grand Principality of Transylvania, — a name given to it under the Habsburgs; the history of the Transylvanian Parliament, its influence on the development of life in general and on the future development of the peoples of Transylvania in particular the special autonomy of the church in Transylvania, which secured a certain form of local government to the Transylvanian peoples themselves, both in scholastic and in political matters. We become acquainted with the efforts of the Rumanians to communicate to their brethren in the old country the blessings of Latin civilization — with which they had been made acquainted in Transylvania — and so

to raise the cultural standard of the latter. Then we are informed of how the Rumanians — driven by the Turks — reached a level making then numerically the equals of other inhabitants, and how they even outnumbered them by means of a fresh influx into Transylvania in the 18th century. This process ultimately overthrew the numerical balance of the peoples of Transylvania and gave rise to that political movement which induced the Rumanians — a people who first became acquainted with "*Romans*" in Transylvania, the seat of classical *Latin learning* — to establish the principle of the Roman-Rumanian Continuity of rights in matters of language and ethnic origin. This movement — based on the adoption of Latin learning — originated in 1790; its object was no less than the participation in political leadership of the Rumanian element which, by this time, had actually become a majority in Transylvania. It is a mistake to believe that they revolted against "oppressors", as is sometimes asserted; far from it, they aimed directly at assuming supreme command over Transylvania, whereby — on the principle of majority — they could secure unprecedented privileges for themselves on the one hand, and overshadow the other peoples of Transylvania, on the other.

M. Zsombor Szász is the author of the article in which the history of that period is described when the Rumanians — with help from outside — were at last enabled to carry their efforts to victory. The title of this article is: "The creation of Greater Rumania", and it contains the Transylvanian issues of the development of this Greater Rumania. By reference to various sources this paper shows how little the peoples of Transylvania were allowed to express their own opinion in the course of this development. The rôle played in this development — and the development of Transylvania during this period — by outside influence, war aims and war treaties, becomes quite obvious. As he refers to Rumanian sources, *M. Szász* is exempt from the charge that he is writing from a biassed Hungarian point of view.

The second part of the book treats the problems of the present: the geography of Greater Rumania, its statistical curiosities, the situation of the Magyar minority in Rumania and its struggle for life, and finally the economic situation of Greater Rumania. The references show that the articles in this part were written before the Vienna Award.

Prof. Andrew Rónay gives a striking description of Greater Rumania — an offspring of the Treaty of Trianon — from a statistical, geographical and economic point of view. We learn that the original territory of Rumania — 137.000 sq. kilometres — was aggrandized by 103.000 sq. kilometres of Hungarian soil alone, while its original population of 8 millions was augmented by a mixed population of 5 millions in Transylvania alone.

After — and in consequence of — the Paris peace treaties Greater Rumania's territory amounted to 295.000 sq. kilometres with a population of 18 millions, out of which 13 millions (73%) were Rumanians. Even the Rumanian Census of 1930 admits the presence in Rumania of 1.5 million Magyars, not counting the Transylvanian refugees living in Hungary and the inhabitants of Jewish race.

The articles written by Messrs. Eugene Darko and László Fritz present a most distressing picture of the situation of the minorities. It appears that the assumption of supreme power by the Rumanians resulted in the oppression of all other national elements in Transylvania. It overthrew the numerical balance of the peoples of Transylvania — which had always been the basis of their peaceful symbiosis — and it put an end to this peaceful harmony. The incorporation of Transylvania in the Balkan country of old Rumania meant the ousting of the Rumanians of Transylvania and the assumption of political power by Bucharest, and the latter also meant a negligence of the interests of the former, as also of the other peoples of Transylvania. These articles give a striking description of how Transylvania, a country with a completely Western character and a link in the Central-European political system, was surrendered to the arbitrary rule of a Balkan régime.

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