

SITUATION OF MAGYARS IN RUMANIA

BY

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The number of the nearly two million Magyars living in Rumania before the Vienna Award of 30th August 1940 has decreased very considerably since the recent territorial readjustments. According to a rough estimate made by Dr. Elemér Gyárfás, leader of the Magyars of Rumania, that number is now between six and seven hundred thousand. (To this must be added the 300.000 Magyars in the "Regat", so that the total number of Magyars in Rumania is about one million.) The Magyars living in the parts of Transylvania left in Rumania have been — as was emphatically pointed out in the Hungarian Government's statement issued about the beginning of October — and are still being subjected to cruel persecution. The steadily growing number of Magyars driven out of Transylvania by this persecution, which is contrary to the provisions of the Vienna Award and to all standards of humane behaviour, has — as the Hungarian Premier announced in Parliament on 9th October — compelled the Hungarian Government to have recourse to reprisals. Our readers will remember that the Rumanian delegation sent to Budapest under the leadership of M. Valerian Pop broke off negotiations, so that in terms of the Vienna Award the Hungarian Government has been forced to draw the attention of the two arbitrating Powers to this increasingly acute situation and to request them to appoint a mixed German and Italian commission to inquire into it. *In his exposé delivered on 13th November during the debate on the Budget, Count*

Stephen Csáky, Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that "as soon as negotiations are re-opened and we see that the attitude of the Rumanians is favourable, we shall conclude a minority treaty with them, not merely a paper treaty but one that will also be respected."

General Antonescu, Premier and Leader of the Rumanian State, saw the leaders of the Magyar minority on 24th October, and in reply to a petition submitted in writing gave his consent to a meeting of the heads of the Magyar ecclesiastical, economic and local organizations being convened at Nagyenyed on 4th November. He also gave the Magyars permission to fill the posts in the central organization of the Magyar Racial Community left vacant in consequence of the territorial readjustment, and promised to supply them with information concerning his own views of the relations between Rumania and Hungary and his intentions in respect of the Magyars left in Rumania. At the Nagyenyed meeting, held with General Antonescu's consent, a Central Executive Committee of the Magyar Racial Community was formed with full powers to act until it proves possible to convene a general meeting. The vacant posts were also filled, with Dr. Elemér Gyárfás as President. At this meeting it was established with profound regret — as we read in the November 13th issue of the Arad "Déli Hírlap" — that no Hungarian daily newspaper belonging to the Magyars of Transylvania is allowed to appear in that country. For on 9th October the Rumanian Government forbade the publication of any Hungarian newspaper, and it was not till 10th November that the Arad "Déli Hírlap" was allowed to appear again. After appearing for three days, however, it was once more suppressed, so that at present the Magyars of Rumania have no newspaper in their own tongue. Special mention is due to that part of the resolution adopted at the Nagyenyed meeting which charges the Committee to

employ every means at their disposal to secure an abatement of the crushing taxes imposed on the Magyar co-operative societies, on the local branches of the Magyar banks now cut off from their central institutions and on all Magyar public institutions.

According to the Order in Council issued by the Rumanian Government on 15th November, it is forbidden to attend political meetings or express opinions directed against the present régime under pain of a sentence of from 5 to 12 years' hard labour. Should the offender be of non-Rumanian ethnic origin the sentence will be doubled. In other words, non-Rumanians are liable to suffer double punishment in Rumania.

After the meeting of the Magyar Racial Community held on 4th November, Baron Edward Aczél, leader of the Magyar youth left in Rumania, was arrested, severely maltreated and dragged away to the military gaol at Nagyszében. In Déva (Count Hunyad), on 15th November, Rumanian Iron Guards smashed with hammers a memorial tablet placed in a recess in the upper part of the Déva Fortress. This tablet, with an inscription in English and Hungarian, was erected to the memory of Francis David, the founder of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania, who had been walled in alive in that same recess.

In general the Rumanian authorities are doing their level best to force the Magyars to flee the country. The town of Brassó alone has lost 15 or 20 thousand Magyar inhabitants. In Rumania the Magyars are only third-rate citizens who cannot use their own mother-tongue in the streets and other public places without the risk of being maltreated.