

STATE SECRETARY TIBOR PATAKY DISCUSSES HUNGARY'S NATIONALITY POLICY

In a separate article we deal with the formal opening of the Debrecen University summer courses. The inaugural address of the "nationality course" being arranged within the framework of the university extension programme was given by M. Tibor Pataky, Secretary of State in the Prime Ministry.

In his address the Secretary of State discussed the fundamental principles of Hungarian nationality policy. He emphasized that in the speech made by him on his debut in Parliament M. Nicholas de Kállay, Prime Minister, had described the nationality question as *one of the most important problems of government* — a question the character and significance of which impelled him to desire to keep it independent of all party political discussions. In the Hungary dismembered under the Treaty of Trianon no particular objective importance had attached to the question; but the Hungarian Government of post-Trianon days had consistently devoted the greatest attention to the problem and had handled it in the consciousness that one day full consideration would have to be had — in the Greater Hungary that was to come into being — for the demands postulated by the nationality conditions of that country. The territorial aggrandizements ensuing since 1938 had resulted in *the return to the Realm of St. Stephen of a considerable number of non-Magyar nationals* (considerable both absolutely and relatively). This circumstance itself shows the significance of the problem. But the nationality problem of present-day Hungary is thrown into relief and differentiated as compared with the state of things prior to 1918 by *two important changes*. Some of our non-Magyar nationalities thus returning to the mother-country have as a consequence of 20 years of separation *become strengthened in their nationality self-*

consciousness, a small proportion of the same having indeed brought with them the spiritual consequences of a deliberate anti-Magyar propaganda. The other important change is that the *German ethnic revolution* of such importance as a factor of world history has not left unaffected the Germans living in the Danube Valley either.

"Europe is being re-born and re-ordered". "One of the *sine qua nons* of the permanence of this re-ordering is the existence of a *strong, equipoised Hungarian State* in the Valley of the Danube. *It is this strong Hungarian State* — centering round a Magyar people proudly conscious of its ethnic intactness — *which is destined within the territory inhabited by many peoples to ensure the peaceful and harmonious development and undisturbed symbiosis of the Magyars and the other ethnic elements living within its frontiers.* We are passing through a world conflagration; but that must not hinder us from further cultivating and strengthening the synthesis of *brotherly unity which, within the framework of the Hungarian State, welds together the Magyars and the non-Magyar nationalities of Hungary and is the sine qua non of the existence of the Hungaria State and a sure guarantee of peace in the South-East of Europe.* The mission of the Hungarian State is determined by historical and natural factors. In the work of fulfilling that mission the solution of the nationality problem is *not in itself a new task, though its character has been changed* as a consequence of the very changes already referred to.

"We must continue in the future too, in our treatment of the non-Magyar nationalities, to follow the fundamental principles rooted in our ancient Constitution. Expressed in legal phraseology, this means that *persons belonging to the non-Magyar nationalities, as Members of the political Hungarian nation, are citizens of the Hungarian State enjoying both de jure and de facto the same rights and privileges as the Magyar themselves.*

"It is a fundamental principle that *persons belonging to the non-Magyar nationalities are entitled freely and without hindrance to preserve and develop their own cultural — intellectual and economic — forces.* To that end they may establish and maintain schools, educational institutes,

associations and societies of a cultural, economic or social character. And, *in all these* matters it is not only forbidden to throw obstacles in their way, but *we are required to assist and further their efforts with affection.*

"Another fundamental principle is that in the future too— as hitherto in the past too — persons belonging to non-Magyar nationalities will be entitled in particular *to use their mother-tongues* both in private and in church and economic life and as far as possible also in dealings with the authorities and with public offices.

"These fundamental principles are contained in Act XLIV. of 1868, in Order in Council No. 4800/M. E. ex 1923 issued as a supplement to the Act bringing the provisions of the same up to date, and — in respect of cultural questions — in numerous ordinances issued by the Hungarian Ministry of Education.

"A legal enactment of importance is Act V. of 1941, which provides for the protection under the penal code of nationality sensitiveness. In respect of the German nationality special mention is due to the importance attaching in this connection to the Protocol Agreement signed at Vienna on August 30th., 1940.

"A characteristic peculiarity of our *nationality provisions* — this referring also to the Vienna Protocol Agreement — is that *they guarantee individual members of the various non-Magyar nationalities the enjoyment and exercise of the rights accorded the nationalities.*

"Another fundamental principle of our nationality policy is that the form and method of securing the fullest possible assertion of nationality rights is determined by our peculiar conditions and our peculiar historical development. This means that we follow the historical method when determining the substance and time of effectuation of the agenda postulated by new situations. The forms and methods change in keeping with the changing requirements of the particular period. But the basis never changes — the peculiar Magyar basis created by history And that basis is that *in the course of our history the Magyar nation has always admitted to membership of its body and welded together in brotherly affection every son of the Fatherland without respect of*

language, origin or nationality. The past centuries of bloody, strenuous warfare and awful struggles *always served to unite the peoples of this country, just as in the present titanic struggle too the compelling sense of interdependence — the consciousness of a common destiny — warns us to unite in brotherly symbiosis, calling upon Magyar and non-Magyar alike to reciprocally respect one another's rights.* It is on these fundamental principles that we must erect the system of practical agenda postulated as *sine qua nons* of a solution of the nationality problem in the changed situation. A considerable proportion of these practical agenda devolve upon the organs of our public administration. It is primarily these organs that will be expected by their conduct and their direct intervention to co-operate in the work of ensuring the development of mutual confidence and affection between majority and minorities and in making that confidence and affection as perfect as possible. It will be their duty to provide that the manifestations of nationality life — the attributes of the ethnic life of the nationalities, the cultural institutions of the nationalities, of their schools, cultural, economic and social associations and societies, the manifestations of nationality literature and nationality artistic life — shall be regarded by the majority as natural forms of nationality life essential also to the equipoise of the Hungarian State. Not aversion, but confidence and affection should be the feelings evinced when regarding everything constituting a reflection of nationality life — naturally provided that such reflection remains within the limits prescribed by the interests of the Hungarian State and does not in any way jeopardize the strength of that State. It is upon the functionaries of the Hungarian State that will devolve primarily the duty of cultivating the development of a suitable spiritual atmosphere.

"But above all these functionaries must provide for the infusion of a sound, healthy view of life in the minds of the non-Magyar nationalities too. They must make those nationalities realize that as a consequence of historical and of unalterable natural and economic conditions the Hungarian State is their natural fatherland.

"In order to obtain full results in respect of nationality

synthesis there is need primarily of a *public administration permeated with an unbiassed, deep-seated social sense and fully qualified for its special work*. And a very important *sine qua non* of such efficiency is a thorough knowledge of all the various conditions of nationality life as affecting the nationality problem. *A matter of particular importance is that officials functioning in nationality districts shall be quite familiar with and shall also be able to speak fluently the language of the respective non-Magyar nationality*. Another matter of importance is that officials of the public administration shall be fully conscious of the fact that in all official proceedings in dealings with non-Magyar nationalities — and indeed in all functions performed by them — the are engaged in a mission. *Oftentimes a mission entailing trials and requiring enormous patience and great perseverance! But it must not be forgotten that — apart from the moments referred to above — this is the way to induce and keep alive in persons belonging to the non-Magyar nationalities confidence in and attachment to the functionaries of the public administration and to the Hungarian State*. Patience and affection will enable us to eliminate the noxious — and often morbid excrescences brought into being here and there by twenty years of separation.

"This is the duty imposed by us primarily upon the civil servants of the Hungarian State and indeed in general upon all public functionaries; but *we impose the same duty also upon Magyar society as a whole*. Every Magyar must be conscious that the new situation ensuing in the nationality question requires of him too individually a higher standard of conduct continuously cultivating this synthesis, — affectionate tolerance of the manifestations of life of the non-Magyar nationalities, an inner sense of interdependence and a community of destiny, i. e. *a suitable spiritual atmosphere the objective basis of which is an' actual community of destiny*.

"*There must be a unity of views and a unity of will in our nationality policy; and that object will be achieved, because we shall take good care that in the nationality question the well-considered policy of Government shall be enforced. (It is impossible in a question the outstanding and*

fateful character of which demands uniform direction and uniform action *to proceed in a hundred different ways according to a hundred different ideas*, however magnanimous the intentions inspiring the individual ideas). The task demands discipline on the part of the workers in science, in journalism and in political literature alike. This task is no easy one, and the sacrifices incidental to its solution are no light ones; but those sacrifices can be met by a strong and virile Magyar people and a strong Hungary. *A strong Hungarian State is in the interest of the non-Magyar nationalities; for the destiny of the Hungarian State is their destiny too.* If they are attached to and love this land, they must also show an attachment to the Hungarian State and must love that State: for Nature and history alike postulate that this land and this State must of necessity be Magyar.

"In the nationality question an important *sine qua non* of the permanence of the synthesis is that *the enforcement of the nationality rights — the measure and the method of that enforcement — must in no wise impair the Hungarian State, the unity of the Hungarian State or the security of the structure of that State. The supreme State power must remain intact and united in Magyar hands; that power cannot be atomized or parcelled out.* That is absolutely and unequivocally necessary.

"Political art consists in harmonizing and reconciling the satisfaction of the wishes of the nationalities and the enforcement of their rights with the security of the Hungarian State. This involves obligations on the part of the Magyars and of the non-Magyar nationalities alike. The members of the non-Magyar nationalities must in all the manifestations of their nationality life show *absolute loyalty* towards the Hungarian State, towards the authorities of the Hungarian State and towards every individual citizen of the Hungarian State and the associations cultivating the assertion of their nationality character — in their various cultural, economic and social institutions, in their literatures and presses — they must prove beyond a doubt that they are sons of the Hungarian State and of the Hungarian Fatherland. They are not entitled to live a life hermetically separating them the Hungarian State or from the other citizens of the

Hungarian State. *Their nationality life must not extend to nationality exclusivity.* Should there be in evidence here and there any excrescences in this respect, we have every reason to hope these excrescences will disappear. They must disappear, because they are obstacles to the development of the suitable spiritual atmosphere of confidence so essential to both parties.

"But the Magyars must also do away with exclusivity; in every point directly or indirectly affecting the nationality question the Magyars must show an exemplary conduct and behaviour in the practical carrying into effect of the fundamental principles referred to already and must proceed in all relevant matters in an exemplary manner.

"The object of the nationality course is to deliberately induce in those attending the course — and through them in the general public — *the development of a uniform and correct attitude* in the nationality question.

"This course is merely the first step in a far-reaching programme of work of an informative and educational character."

OSZK
Országos Széchényi Könyvtár