

HOW MINORITIES LIVE

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

THE CZECH AUTHORITIES PLACE THE LEADING ORGANS OF THE MAGYAR AND SLOVAK MINORITIES UNDER AN EMBARGO

On September 21st. the Prague Prefecture forbade the appearance of the "Prágai Magyar Hirlap", the organ of the Hungarian (Magyar) Parties of Slovakia and Ruthenia for a period of three months. The "Prágai Magyar Hirlap" has been in existence since 1922; it has at all times defended the legitimate rights of the Magyar minority in a tone of courage which however has never exceeded the limits prescribed by law. From the very outset the Czech censor had a very strict eye on this paper, which was confiscated on the average once a month. In the middle of September, 1933, the paper was placed under an embargo for three months on the basis of the novel to supplement the Act passed in re the Defence of the Republic. Then, when it was again allowed to appear, the censor was even severer in his control, confiscating it on several occasions for articles dealing with purely domestic affairs, the internal affairs of the Czech parties. We must however note that the "Národné Listy", the organ of the Czech National Democratic Party now in opposition, has been far more frequently confiscated than the Hungarian paper; nevertheless, its appearance has never been prohibited and is not likely to be. This flagrant breach of Articles 7 and 8 of the Czecho-Slovak Minorities Treaty deserves the particular attention of the League of Nations, which has already before it the memorandum of the Hungarian deputies and senators of the Prague Parliament protesting against last year's interdiction of the "Prágai Magyar Hirlap".

A few days prior to the interdiction of the "Prágai Magyar Hirlap" the "Národné Noviny", the organ of the Slovak National Party, was placed under embargo by the Pozsony Prefecture. This paper has been in existence for 66 years; during the Hungarian régime it was an intransigent organ of Slovak nationalism. Yet it never occurred to the Hungarian authorities to interfere with the paper. Indeed, those authorities treated it in the most courteous and chivalrous manner. In proof of this statement we herewith quote a passage from the speech made by Martin Rázus, Evangelical minister, National Assembly deputy representing the Slovak National Party, on the occasion of the celebration of the seventieth birthday of Andrew Hlinka, leader of the Slovak Catholic People's Party:

"In the year 1917— during the Great War— the following incident happened. Our beloved friend Škultéty, editor of the "Národné Noviny", was unable to find any setters. It looked as if the appearance of the "Národné Noviny" would have to be suspended. Then our dear friend Škultéty heard that in the cellulose factory under State supervision there were two workers who were compositors by profession. So off he went to Beniczky, the famous deputy sheriff of the county. He told Beniczky that he had no setters, but that there were two in the cellulose factory who could save the "Národné Noviny". He begged Beniczky to place these two workers at his disposal. And, you will ask, what did proud Beniczky do in these days of an antagonistic Hungarian régime? He deferred to the wishes of our dear friend Škultéty and with a generous gesture, without the slightest hesitation, placed the two compositors at his disposal. One thing more: during a period of many decenniums the Hungarians never once interdicted the "Národné Noviny". This fact should be

borne in mind by the rulers of today, who are leaping joyfully over the grave of the "Národné Noviny"!!"

We believe all comment on this speech is superfluous.

MONSTER POLITICAL TRIAL: IMPEACHMENT OF FORMER CZECHO-SLOVAK ŽUPAN (SHERIFF)

The most important event of recent weeks in the political life of Slovakia, the Highland province severed from Hungary, was the trial of Bazovszky, which began on October 1st.

In externals this trial shows a very close resemblance to the great trial of 1929 — the trial of *Tuka*, a former professor in the University of Pozsony and Vice-President of the Slovak Catholic People's Party, member of the National Assembly, who was impeached for having written an article published on January 1st., 1928, in the "Slovák", the official organ of Monsignor Hlinka's People's Party, in which he said that in the relations between the Czechs and the Slovaks a state of "ex lex" would ensue on October 21st., 1928, unless by that time the Czechs gave Slovakia full autonomy, seeing that the assembly of Slovaks held at Turócszentmárton (Turčiansky Svätý Martin) only voted for a union with the Czechs on condition that the relations between the two peoples should be re-adjusted after a lapse of ten years. *Louis Bazovszky*, advocate, of Losonc, the first Czech župan (sheriff) of the former County of Nógrád, and one of the most prominent leaders of the Slovak National Party, has been placed in the dock for having written an article — published on July 24th., 1933, in the "Národné Noviny", and entitled "Observations in re the Revision of the Peace Treaties" — in which he described revision as a "categorical imperative".

So both trials owed their origin to newspaper articles. However, seeing that on such a ground it would barely have been possible to pass a draconic sentence, the Czech administration of justice charged *Tuka* with sedition as organiser of the "Rodobrana", an affiliation of the Slovak People's Party, and into the bargain also with espionage. In the fifth week of the trial Czech agents in Vienna "discovered" a witness in the person of a concierge of the name of *Christina Schramm*, whose evidence — combined with that of a person called *Belánszky*, who was not even sworn — sufficed to get *Tuka* sentenced to fifteen years' hard labour. Later on it was discovered that for this service *Christina Schramm* was being paid a "bounty" of 250 schillings a month, the sums being remitted to her (through Colonel *Soukup*, of the Czech general staff) by the Czecho-Slovak War Ministry. And the charge against *Bazovszky* is that he conspired with various individuals both at home and abroad for the purpose of detaching Slovakia from Czecho-Slovakia and re-annexing it to Hungary; the "witness for the crown" to prove this statement being a certain adventurer of the name of *Vince Mihalus*, who has been recalled for the purpose from abroad, though he has already served all shades of tendencies from communism upwards.

The indictment — comprising about 150 pages — charges *Bazovszky* and five associates of his with various acts contrary to the provisions of several clauses of the Act dealing with the protection of the Republic. The incriminated article referred to above contains the following passages:

"A revision of the treaties of peace must sooner or later ensue. This has long been evident to politicians watching the events in international politics.

"The economic situation of Europe is very closely connected with the so-called Central European — or rather, Danube Basin — problems. Now the Danube basin can never be healthy without a revision of the treaties of peace. It was really amusing to hear of the heroes of the national history of Slovakia (a satirical gibe at the tiny group of so-called "Centralist Slovaks" in the service of the Czech Government. Ed.) being impelled to arrange anti-revisionist demonstrations. It was like the little boy whining at table and saying he is not going to eat the soup . . .

"For our Slovak nation — continued Bazovszky — it would be simply fatal to continue to play the ostrich and bury our heads in the sand so as not to see the shadows of coming events. Whenever it is a question of the adjustment of the Danube riparian problems, or of a partial revision of the treaties of peace, or indeed of a new demarcation of frontiers, we are naturally very nearly concerned. Our Slovak nation has already been ignored once — when the treaties of peace were signed; we had no representative, so that the so-called "Turócszentmárton Declaration" was omitted from the text of the treaty. It is to this silence that we must attribute the process of utter impoverishment that has overtaken Slovakia during the last fourteen years, that impoverishment being accompanied by a proportionate enrichment of the provinces originally forming parts of the kingdom of Bohemia. The Slovak nation must find ways and means to inform the world at large of its existence. We must no longer tolerate the Slovak problem being discussed abroad without Slovakia. We demand that the Czech nation should offer full compensation for all the losses inflicted by it on Slovakia."

In his pamphlet entitled "For the Information of Monsignor Hlinka's Slovak People's Party and of the Slovak National Party" Bazovszky establishes the following facts:

"The Czechs have reduced Slovakia to beggary, have deprived it of its means of living, have cajoled the Slovak exiles — particularly those living in America —, have counterfeited the Turócszentmárton Declaration; they deluded the public opinion of the world and the Versailles Peace Conference (or rather the diplomats who took part in the Conference) and are still throwing dust in the eyes of the world by the aid of material means stolen from Slovakia . . . They have declared — as if they were saying the most natural thing in the world — that they are not prepared to yield a single inch of the territory of Slovakia. These anti-revisionist declarations are heard in Geneva; and the whole world will be of the opinion that the Slovak nation is the happiest nation on earth, pampered and treated to every luxury and only incited against the Czechs by a few hired agitators. The real picture of Slovakia is utterly unknown to foreign diplomats; there is no one to supply foreign countries with proper information: indeed, the first person — D. Béla Tuka, a highly cultivated university professor — suited to supply information in certain foreign Catholic quarters was thrown into prison by the Czech nation and is now lying there ill and feeble and suffering terribly from the effects of the punishment meted out to him."

The indictment further charges Dr. Bazovszky with having, in 1932, written a pamphlet addressed to the Slovaks of America and entitled "Message to Our Slovak Brethren in America". In this pamphlet he said: "Brethren in America, listen to what I have to tell you!! In Slovakia there has been no spring for years past; and our children have long forgotten to sing the old Slovak song "Hoja bunda hoja . . ."; in our schools there is no more joy, and our children are being alienated from our nation and educated in a Czech spirit. There are no more blooming flowers in the forests and the fields; our gardens no more produce fruit for the Slovak nation; and every drop of our Slovak blood — the sweat of our brows — is feeding the arteries of the Czech nation."

During the trial Bazovszky declared that he was not in a position, either physically or mentally, to offer any defence. He was dangerously ill, was unable to concentrate his thoughts, and could only read a few words from a piece of paper. In these few words he called in question the competency of the court. The letters referred to in the indictment were the creations of Vince Mihalus's imagination. He had been embittered by the critical economic situation prevailing in Slovakia; but he threw the blame for that situation, not on the whole Czech nation, but on certain individuals.

Then Clementis, counsel for the defence, endorsed the objection raised by the accused, who had declared the delegation of the Pozsony District Court to be illegal. When the decision of the superior tribunal in re the delegation of the Pozsony Court was handed to Bazovszky, the latter was seriously ill and lay in a state of nervous and mental collapse in the prison attached to the Pozsony District Court in a cell notorious for its lack of comfort and for its noisomeness and filth and vermin, whence he demanded to be transferred to a hospital. He filed

his appeal against the decision of the superior court within the time limit prescribed by law; but he was visited in his cell by Grimm, magistrate, who informed him that unless he withdrew his appeal he would be left in the cell and would not be removed to a hospital. Under the influence of this pressure the sick man withdrew his appeal, though under such circumstances such withdrawal could not be regarded as valid.

However, the court — notwithstanding all these circumstances — dismissed the objection to its competency, then on the basis of the reports of the medical experts adjourned the trial for a period of six months, at the same time ordaining that the accused should be liberated on bail. But the Public Prosecutor appealed against the liberation of the accused, thus prolonging the sufferings of the invalid.

This trial deserves to be taken cognizance of by the public opinion of Western Europe. Why, the mere fact that a man who during the years immediately following the establishment of the Czecho-Slovak Republic acted as confidential agent of the Prague Government in Slovakia should have been kept in prison for a whole year pending his trial and should be charged with the most serious political offences, is a striking illustration of the antagonism existing as between the Czechs and the Slovaks, as also of the disillusion today permeating even those Slovaks who at the outset had expected the union with the Czechs to improve the lot of their people, — though they were soon compelled to convince themselves that they could not expect anything of the kind. When the trial is resumed, it will come to be known whether the charges brought against Bazovszky by the Czech Public Prosecutor are well-founded or not? But even in the event of their proving groundless, — as appears extremely likely — the mere fact that the Public Prosecutor of the Czech State presumed the possibility of their being well-founded is eloquent testimony that the Czech State authorities do not trust the loyalty even of those Slovaks whom they at first chose as their collaborators.

RUMANIA

UNEXPECTED RESULTS OF "BLOOD ANALYSIS"

In four counties of Transylvania severed from Hungary nearly four million Magyars are living in a compact mass. Of this pure Magyar population known as "Szeklers" the Rumanians assert that they are of Rumanian origin and have only in the course of time become magyarised. Rumanian scholars are propounding all kinds of scientific theories respecting the Rumanian origin of the Szekler-Magyars. One of these theories declares the racial composition of a considerable proportion of the Szekler villages is the same as that of the Rumanians of Transylvania. Of the ignominious failure of this "scientific" theory we read in the "Keleti Ujság" (No. 209, September 14th., 1934). The result of the analysis of the blood of 500 Szekler inhabitants of the village of Zetalka (Udvarhely County) carried out in the Kolozsvár Institute of Public Hygiene shows that that blood is not the same as that of the Rumanians of Transylvania, but corresponds to that of the inhabitants of Debrecen in Hungary. We read of this unprecedented procedure also in an Italian daily, which speaks of the attempt to employ scientific methods as a means of denationalisation, and mockingly observes that it would be wise to be chary of resorting to blood analysis, for that may ultimately show that the Rumanians are not the successors of the ancient Romans.

NAME ANALYSIS USED TO DEPOPULATE MINORITY SCHOOLS IN TRANSYLVANIA

The minority denominational schools must fight hard cultural battles year after year to keep their old pupils and secure new ones. In Transylvania — as everybody knows — Magyar pupils whose names do not sound

sufficiently Magyar may not enter Magyar denominational schools. As we read in the *Brassói Lapok* (No 209, 14th. September), not one of the 90 pupils attending the Roman Catholic girls' secondary school at Kolozsvár whose names were analysed, was accepted as Magyar by the Ministry of Education. So many of the applicants wishing to enter the Saxon elementary school at Kolozsvár were rejected by the Ministry of Education that, for lack of a sufficient number of pupils, the school is thinking of closing.

FREE USE OF LANGUAGE

The Arad police authorities are engaged in carrying into effect an ordinance which is alleged to have been published at an earlier date. Under this ordinance the Magyar language may not be used alone on posters (placards), it being obligatory to print the texts of posters (placards) in two languages, that being done in such manner that the Rumanian text shall occupy three-fourths and the Magyar text only one-fourth of the poster (placard). The ordinance prescribes further that the letters of the Rumanian text shall be three times as large as those of the Magyar text. The provisions of the ordinance extend also to the notices of prices displayed in shop-windows and to shop-signs too. ("Erdélyi Hirlap", September 26th., 1934.)

EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY

The Brassó County ("Judetul Brasov") School Inspectorate has by a single stroke of the pen abolished all the Magyar sections of the State elementary schools in the county. This measure in defiance of the most elementary considerations of pedagogy is also a breach of § 7 of the Elementary School Act. The General Assembly

of the Hungarian Evangelical Diocese of the County of Brassó has branded as inhuman and illegal this measure, which compels children of 6—7 years of age to acquire all material knowledge of practical subjects, not in their mother tongue, but in a foreign tongue. ("Erdélyi Hirlap", September 23rd., 1934.)

YUGOSLAVIA

UNPLEASANT ADVENTURE OF BRITISH TOURISTS IN YUGOSLAVIA

Two British tourists — Alfred Geest Gunter, student of Edinburgh University, and Charles Suad Campbell, London student — on August 2nd., passed through Szeged in their own car and proceeded to cross the Yugoslav frontier with the object of continuing their journey in the Balkan Peninsula. On the car, in addition to the Union Jack, they carried a small Hungarian pennant which had been presented to one of them last year on the occasion of the World Jamboree. The moment they crossed the frontier, the Serbian frontier guards seized hold of the car and, snatching the Hungarian pennant, tore it to pieces, and then forced the two Englishmen — despite their energetic protests — to accompany them to Horgos, where, after being for hours subjected to a searching scrutiny and to all kinds of chicanery, they were finally allowed to proceed. They did not continue their journey as originally planned, but returned to Budapest, where they indignantly told their friends of the brutal treatment inflicted on them — a treatment which, they said, would not have been their lot even among the Zulus.

THEATRE ♦ LITERATURE ♦ ART

KODÁLY'S "PSALMUS HUNGARICUS" CONDUCTED BY TOSCANINI

The Budapest musical season has just been opened by a powerful overture — the concert given under the direction of Toscanini, the greatest conductor in the world, assisted by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, one of the best in the world, and the Budapest Municipal Choir, which recently, in Vienna, displayed its eminent musical knowledge, the soloists being Elizabeth Schumann, Richard Mayr, Enid Szántó and Andrew Rösler, a select quartet of singers who added lustre to the performance. The pieces performed were Beethoven's immortal Ninth Symphony and the "Psalmus Hungaricus" (Hungarian Psalm), the grand creation of Zoltán Kodály, the eminent composer who occupies a distinguished position among the modern musicians of Europe. In the columns of the "Pesti Napló" the illustrious musical critic Aladár Tóth, writing of the concert, gave the following appreciation of the "Hungarian Psalm":

"The concert opened with Kodály's "Psalm". It was as if all the demons of passion, pain and rebellion had suddenly been liberated when the orchestra, at a sign from Toscanini, struck the first chords. Voices crying for justice and calling on the name of God in their holy anger rising to Heaven seemed to be rending the stormy fabric of the dark Hungarian firmament. Already in this first grand vision we felt the ineffably grand harmonisation of Toscanini's Italian and Kodály's Hungarian temperament, of their pathos and their dramatic energy.

"The Psalm is a succession of visionlike musical images of the kind. And it is not for nothing that in the history

of Italian music Toscanini represents the *dantesque* spirit: where it is a question of calling into being great visions, he is quite in his element!! And indeed we were compelled involuntarily to think of Dante when this gifted conductor with an incredible power of expression conjured before us out of the sounds of orchestra and chorus grandiose visions of the sordid army of schemers, of towns pulsating with the hubbub of hatred, avarice and dissension. of a people whispering soft prayers or rising in a revolt of despair and finally with a victoriously renewed faith shouting the triumph of justice.

"This unforgettable interpretation was "dantesque", — though not only in the feverish, deeply burning glow of the visions, in their sentimental impregnation and their dramatic superheat, but also in the peerless plasticity of the several images, in their compactness and in their formal isolation giving them the character almost of terzinas. It was not till Toscanini's genius showed us that we became conscious of the hells and purgatories and heavens displayed to our mental vision by Kodály in this masterpiece — Hungarian hells and purgatories and Hungarian heavens . . .

"And how clear and noble the outlines opening before us of the personality of the psalmist, of the poet-prophet who has passed thro the three stages of damnation, purification and transfiguration. What a boundless wealth of feelings and impulses and passions — from pious supplication to apocalyptic curses, from tormenting desire to the redeeming transcendent harmony of faith in God — was woven by the orchestral fantasy of Toscanini round the tenor solo of the prophet calling for his people."