

EXPULSION EN MASSE OF YUGOSLAV HUNGARIANS

As a consequence of the Marseilles attempt the Yugoslav Government filed a complaint against *terror* with the Council of the League of Nations. This action was taken by the Government of that country which during the whole course of its history has at all times regarded terror as one of the chief instruments and a practically indispensable appurtenance of government and politics, — which from the very first moment of the formation of the Southern Slav State has applied that instrument to ruthlessly oppress the national minorities — Hungarians, Macedo-Bulgarians, Albanians, Rumanians, Turks and to a certain extent Germans, and during later developments also the Croatians, the "brother people". And while the complaint of the Yugoslav Government was being discussed at the meetings of the Council, to the accompaniment of a rattling of sabres on the part of the Little Entente, the Belgrade Dictators set loose a veritable avalanche of terroristic actions by the unprecedentedly cruel expulsion of more than 3000 defenceless persons. A large proportion of the peaceful and innocent victims — 90% of whom were Magyars by nationality — were literally dragged from their beds during the night and were not even allowed to take with them the most indispensable clothes and other belongings. Their movables were simply kept back and for the most part carried off immediately after the "deportation" of the proscribed persons. But the houses and lands of the persons expelled, equipments of their farms and of their workshops too, were left without owners. Not merely were these persons given pilgrims' staffs; they were provided also with beggars' wallets. The inhumanity and the unsystematic character of the work of expulsion is shown by the circumstance that in very many cases parents were put across the frontier without their children, and husbands without their wives; and vice-versa. Nor was any regard shown for old men and women or invalids either. Helpless old men and pregnant women in a serious condition of health were dragged to the stations and thrust into railway wagons as if they had been animals or inanimate objects. And the arbitrary character of the procedure is illustrated further by the fact that the persons expelled include also men who *according to the evidence of their papers have done military service in the Yugoslav army, an indubitable proof of their having been considered Yugoslav nationals.*

If we may credit the stories told by the persons

expelled, their number includes also people who were first taken on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the murdered King Alexander and then at a minute's notice — though shortly before they had been considered as loyalists — thrown over the frontier. We are told also that the Hungarians who are still tolerated are being constantly harassed by the authorities and persecuted in particular by a ruthless exaction of taxes imposed with the openly avowed intention of bringing about their material ruin.

No exact statistical data relating to the persons expelled are yet available; but we may roughly establish the fact that those persons may be divided into *four* categories: —

1. The *first* category includes those who, provided with passports as Hungarian nationals, were only staying temporarily in Yugoslavia on visits to relatives or on business. The expulsion of these persons may be taken exception to as a breach of the usages of hospitality and owing to the brutality of the procedure adopted.

2. The *second* group includes those who have been living for years past in the territory of Yugoslavia on the basis of regular *permis de domicile* and permits to undertake work. The said permits granted in the ordinary way by the Yugoslav authorities to the members of this group — for the most part poor persons having only limited possibilities of earning — were invalidated at a moment's notice, the holders being within a few hours put over the frontier.

3. The *third* — probably the largest — group consists of those who have for decenniums been living in Yugoslavia, have applied for release from Hungarian citizenship and also in the prescribed manner for admission to Yugoslav citizenship, on the ground that when the change of régime took place — and indeed previously to that event — they were permanent residents in the territory annexed to Yugoslavia. However, the Yugoslav authorities have not yet adjusted the question of these applications, despite the provisions contained in Articles 3—6 of the Minorities Protection Treaty, of Articles 61—66 of the Treaty of Trianon and indeed of the pertinent clauses of their own Nationality Act passed in 1928, as also despite their having in many cases extorted considerable amounts from the applicants by promises of a grant of citizenship.

4. In the *fourth* group may be included those who after much trouble and at the cost of considerable

material sacrifices had succeeded in securing Yugoslav citizenship, as also those who — having served in the Yugoslav army — possess a right to Yugoslav citizenship which is entirely beyond dispute.

And these unfortunate victims were collected indiscriminately and with inhuman cruelty deported from the country, — indeed, the work of expulsion is still going on. And when these unprecedented expulsions *en masse* aroused the indignation and protests of the whole civilised world, instead of withdrawing the warrants of expulsion and thereby rendering possible the return of at least a considerable proportion of the persons expelled, the Yugoslav Government employed the press deprived of its freedom of action to put forward an explanation and justification of the expulsions which is a diametrical contradiction of the facts and the truth. For through the press dependent upon its favour the Yugoslav Government declares that it was driven to effect the expulsions by way of retaliation for the recent expulsions *en masse* of Yugoslav nationals from Hungary and for reasons of State security. In answer to this statement, already on December 9th. the following *dementi* was issued by competent Hungarian quarters: —

"The control of foreigners is effected by the Hungarian authorities without distinction of nationality. The number of Yugoslav nationals who owing to a lack of the qualifications prescribed by law could not be given *permis de domicile* or were expelled the country, is on an absolutely normal level and does not exceed the average number of cases affecting nationals of other countries or reported in other years. The number of Yugoslav nationals deported in the year 1934 is *altogether 66*. The number of cases in which *permis de domicile* have been withdrawn is *31*."

Now as concerns the plea of State security we would ask whether the safety or security of Yugoslavia rests on so shaky a basis as to be in danger from helpless old men, sick women and children — from children like the four-year-old Judith Várossy, who was living with her grandparents at Zombor because her widowed mother was unable to provide for her and was expelled from Yugoslavia by special warrant also as "*an element undesirable from the viewpoint of State security*"?

Apart from these perversions, in its December 14th. issue the semi-official "*Vreme*" published an old-wives'-tale to the effect that the Hungarian authorities were treating the Yugoslav nationals residing in Hungarian territory to a veritable reign of terror, that the Orthodox (Greek Oriental) priests of the Serb religious communities had been interned in a monastery at Szeged, and that at the same time orders had been given to close several Serb churches. These reports too originated from the same source of calumny as all the others and are nothing but mere inventions the evident object of which is to counterbalance the indignation of the public opinion of the civilised world and to palliate the otherwise inexcusable procedure of the Yugoslav Government. To counteract these absurdly

groundless charges the Hungarian Press addressed to the Yugoslav authorities and the Yugoslav Press open letters calling upon them to prove their statements — *under the control of the foreign press and the public opinion of the world* — by the production of protocols, photographs, names and places, as had been done by the Hungarian authorities and the representatives of the foreign press who had made enquiries on the spot. The same step was taken also by the Hungarian broadcasting service, which — in answer to the invented charge to the effect that Hungarian broadcasting stations placed along the Yugoslav—Hungarian frontier were being employed to call upon the Hungarians in Yugoslavia to defend the Hungarian national idea — *offered the sum of one million dinars* to any person able to prove in a satisfactory manner the existence of any such broadcasting station. These absurd charges — the products of an implacable hatred — have collapsed in the light of truth as completely as the tendentious calumnies cast in the teeth of Hungary by the Little Entente in connection with the Marseilles murder.

In this connection it should be noted that Hungarian society has displayed the utmost charity and generosity in espousing the cause of the refugees. So far the action undertaken by society has resulted in the collection of more than 300,000 pengő in cash and of large numbers of gifts in kind. The Hungarian towns and counties are rivalling one another in their efforts to adequately provide for the needs of the persons expelled from Yugoslavia.

Finally, we regard it as a pleasant duty to express our most heartfelt and warmest gratitude to that section of the foreign press which has raised a voice of protest against the cruel expulsion of thousands of Hungarians. This refers in the first place to the Italian and the British Press, and at the same time also to the five Members of the British Parliament — Sir Robert Gower, Mr. W. Mabane, Mr. Lovatt Fraser, Colonel Wedgwood and Sir C. Rawson — who in the House of Commons branded the procedure of the Yugoslav Government as inhuman and urged the intervention of Great Britain on behalf of the deportees. But our gratitude is due most particularly to the British Government and to Sir John Simon, Foreign Secretary, for it is due exclusively to their energetic intervention that — though not entirely suspended — the work of expulsion has been slightly mitigated in violence and the number of persons expelled reduced. May we hope that this invaluable support will be thrown into the scales with equal stress also when the persons expelled return to their hearths now left unoccupied and apply for a fair compensation for the losses inflicted upon them?

The effect upon British public opinion of the expulsions may be seen best from the leading article published in the "Times" on December 8th. The leading British journal establishes the fact that there are very large numbers of people "whom the present European situation has cast hither and thither like flotsam thrown ashore by the sea. The wrecks due to the Great War have been added to by the broken existences rendered homeless by the changes of frontiers", Then the article continues: "—Although Yugoslavia deserves sympathy in the terrible blow inflicted upon her, a considerable part of that sympathy has been forfeited as a conse-

quence of the behaviour of her Government towards the Magyar inhabitants. If we may credit the things told by the refugees, we find that the procedure followed during the work of expulsion showed but little regard for the decencies generally observed by civilised governments." According to the "Times" it is a lucky thing that Yugoslavia's decision to expel the whole Hungarian colony has been revoked, though it believes that this "policy of provocation" has in any case been the cause of very much pain and trouble to the innocent peasantry. It cannot but injure the good name of the Yugoslav authorities if the charges of "inhuman outrages" brought against their organs are substantiated.

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION AND THE EXPULSIONS

During the meeting of the British Lower House on December 12th. there was a lively discussion concerning the expulsions of Hungarians from Yugoslavia. This discussion is eloquent testimony to the spirit of humanity, for which Hungarians are so deeply grateful, inspired in the public opinion of Great Britain by this fresh injustice. "The Times" published the following report of the debate:

In reply to Mr. Mabane (Huddersfield, L. Nat.), Sir R. Gower (Rochester, Gillingham, U.), Mr. Lovat-Fraser (Lichfield, L. Nat.), Col. Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme, Lab.), and Sir C. Rawson (Brighton, U.).

Sir J. Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Spen Valley*, L. Nat.), said: — It is a fact that during the past two or three weeks a considerable number of Hungarians—between 2,000 and 3,000 in all—have been expelled by certain Yugoslav authorities from Yugoslavia. According to my information, the persons concerned were of Hungarian, or at any rate not of Yugoslav, nationality, and the provisions of the treaty with Yugoslavia for the protection of minorities would not therefore apply to them. Nevertheless His Majesty's Government were impressed both by the hardship to those concerned and by the importance of avoiding anything which might further embitter the dispute which had been referred to the Council of the League of Nations; and they accordingly made representations to the Yugoslav Government to bring these expulsions to an end. The Prince Regent, on his return to Yugoslavia on December 8, at once ordered that the expulsions should cease, and I am informed that they have ceased. I do not know whether any of those expelled have yet returned or whether they desire to do so.

Mr. Mabane. — Is the right hon. gentleman aware that without respect to the merits, the manner in which these expulsions have been carried out is

against all British canons of justice and fair play, and will he represent to Yugoslavia the intense indignation felt in this country against the Yugoslav authorities?

Sir J. Simon. — I think that the answer I have already given will explain to the House in rather more moderate terms (*cheers*) the advice we thought it proper to tender to a friendly nation. (*Cheers.*) I think it is true, as I have already said, that hardship was involved in some cases. Inasmuch as the matter rests with me, I am sure that my hon. friend will agree with me that the best course, in the interests of peace and good relations, is to be very well satisfied that it has ended.

Mr. R. J. Davies (*Westhoughton*, Lab.). — In view of the excellent results that have accrued by the intervention of the Government in stopping the expulsion, would it be too much to ask whether the Government would make arrangements to see that these people may return to their homes in Yugoslavia?

Sir J. Simon. — I am much obliged to my hon. friend. That matter has not escaped our attention, and he will observe in my first answer that I do not know whether any of those expelled have yet returned or whether they desire to do so. It is obviously undesirable (the right hon. gentleman was understood to add) that we should seem to press those who are willing to make other arrangements. But the matter has not been overlooked.

Col. Wedgwood. — Could the right hon. gentleman add to the service which he has rendered to humanity by obtaining permission for those who have been deported to return if they wish to do so?

Sir J. Simon. — That is what I mean when I say that the matter has not escaped our attention.