

B O O K S

“La regione autonoma della Rutenia dopo il trattato di San Germano“. By Dott. Antonio Scrimali. Libreria Pampalone, Palermo, 1938. pp. 121

The great importance of the Ruthenian question is shown by nothing better than by the keen interest in it displayed in the international press and scientific literature. The above book was written by an Italian university professor's assistant, who has for years been making a study of the problem. His work has been published just at a time when the eyes of the whole world are fixed on the eastern part of the Carpathians where half a million people, the Ruthenians, are engaged in a life and death struggle for their existence.

The book deals first with the history of the Ruthenian problem, giving full details of the activities of the different national councils during the War and at the time of the Peace Conference. Clear and accurate data reveal the falsehoods and forgeries which alone were responsible for the fact that this people was torn away from Hungary without its wishes being consulted and attached to a new State unable to provide it with a livelihood.

It is well known that the Treaty of Saint Germain guaranteed the Ruthenian people an extensive autonomy. For twenty years Prague consistently refused to fulfil this treaty obligation. Dr. Scrimali devotes particular attention to this question and shows a thorough knowledge of every aspect of Ruthenian autonomy.

Of special interest is the part describing the heroic struggle of the Ruthenian people against the efforts to denationalize it. Prague tried, with fire and sword, to exterminate the Ruthenian language and force Ukrainian, a language quite different from their own, upon the people. To further this end Ukrainian immigrants and agents from various countries — in particular from Soviet Russia — were encouraged to settle in Ruthenia, and entrusted with the work of winning over the Ruthenian natives. Prague was anxious to root out ancient traditions and deprive the Ruthenians of their mother-tongue, hoping that thus it would be

possible to divert the sympathies of the Ruthenian people from Hungary and break the attachment to that country which they had never ceased to feel under Czech rule. In this Prague was mistaken, for the two nations' need of one other and the links of a thousand years of peaceful and fraternal symbiosis have proved stronger than all Prague's propaganda: for twenty years the Ruthenians clung fast to their language and traditions, remained loyal to their friendship with Hungary and energetically rejected the Ukrainian culture and ideas so alien to them. A splendid proof of this was given last year when — in spite of all the pressure brought to bear on the people by the Czech authorities — the plebiscite on the question of the language of instruction to be used in the schools was overwhelmingly in favour of Ruthenian.

All these questions are dealt with exhaustively in Dr. Scrimali's book. We recommend it warmly to all who desire to acquire a knowledge of the Ruthenian problem, which at present plays so important a rôle in European politics.

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The History of Csik, Gyergyó and Kászón (County Csik) and their People to 1918. By Nicholas E n d e s. pp. 683. Budapest, 1938.

From ancient times the Székler people have lived at the foot of the South-Eastern Carpathians, between Beszterce and Brassó. In language and customs they are Magyars; their method of organization was identical with that of the Magyars, and they were able to preserve intact this ancient military organization, which was based on a tribal system, to the end of the sixteenth century, whereas it was greatly modified among the Magyars from the reign of St. Stephen on, chiefly in consequence of the influence of ideas imported from Western Europe. Their tenacious adherence to this system of organization resulted in the land of the Széklers, though forming until quite recently an integral part of Hungary, always occupying a distinct position therein and, like a closed area, living its own peculiar historical life under quite special conditions. The advantage of this was that within their own exclusive tribal and military system the Széklers were better able to withstand the attacks of enemies from within and from without, and have also been better able to preserve their racial traits and Magyar character than the rest of the Magyars in Transylvania. The Széklers have remained the largest and most coherent body of Magyars in that country, by virtue of their very adherence to racial traditions; and it is this circumstance that makes them today the strongest bulwark of Hungarianism in Transylvania.

We are therefore fully entitled to say that a separate history

of the Székler people is warranted and necessary; but so far no scientific work dealing with the subject has been published. It is consequently a matter of peculiar satisfaction to find that the lengthy volume written by Nicholas Endes, which gives us the history of one-fourth of the Széklers, the inhabitants of County Csik, is a great step towards the desired end. Endes, the scion of an old family that has played an important role in the history of the Székler people, was engaged in the study of family records when he was seized with a desire to undertake this formidable task. His researches in public archives and his study of all the published matter dealing with the subject have produced a bulky volume containing the history of the Széklers of County Csik from the oldest historical times to 1918. His work, besides being a record of their political history, embraces that of every branch of their culture, of religion, education, government, administration, political economy and the arts.

After obtaining an insight into the moving forces behind the history of the Széklers, how ridiculous appear the endeavours of certain Rumanian authors (e. g. Opreanu) to prove the Rumanian origin of that people! The Turkish tribal system, based on the closest ties of blood and serving military ends, is as far removed from the „kenéz” system of Slav origin, based on a community of labour and merely serving economic aims, which was adopted by the Rumanians, as heaven is from earth, and in corresponding measure the differences, not only of temperament, but also of character, dividing the two races are a wide chasm which the notorious system of name and ethnic analysis will never be able to bridge over.

Eugene Darkó.

M. J. Dálnoki: „Pristottu Unkari“ (Mutilated Hungary), Helsingissä, Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, pp. 242.

The feeling of brotherly love and the interest which the Finnish people has always displayed towards its brother nation, the Hungarians, has now manifested itself in a magnificent form in a book which quite recently appeared in the Finnish book-market under the above title. The author of the book gives detailed information on the problem of Hungary and all other questions connected with it.

The book begins with a historical retrospect, paying special attention to the nationality question in Hungary. On the basis of Serbian and Rumanian sources the author shows that the seeds of the culture of both these nations were sown in Hungarian soil at

a time when the inhabitants of both Rumania and Serbia were leading the life of Turkish slaves. This fact alone would be enough to refute the accusation that Hungary oppressed her non-Magyar nationalities. Then the author describes the peace negotiations at which the representatives of the Succession States employed the most fantastic lies and inventions to mislead the representatives of the Great Powers. As a result of these machinations Central Europe, in particular the Danube Valley, became a hotbed of unrest and discontent. The Treaty of Trianon, therefore, apart from plunging the nations concerned into a state of political and financial misery, dragged the whole of Europe to the brink of a constant danger of war.

The author pays particular attention to the life of those Hungarians who were subjected by force to the rule of other peoples. The picture which he shows his Finnish readers is both impartial and quite frank. He gives detailed information concerning the religious, cultural, political, economic and other grievances of the Hungarian minorities. In order to show the difference between the situation before and after the war the author compares the minority policy of the Succession States after the war with that of pre-war Hungary. This comparison at once shows Hungary's superiority in this respect.

The book also contains a very careful and detailed description of the problem of the Danube Valley in all its aspects. It arrives at the conclusion that the only way to solve the problem is an absolute territorial revision, which is the only means of creating a situation calculated to secure a permanent peace in Europe.

The entire Finnish press has given a very hearty reception to M. Dálnoki's book and has discussed it in detail. Thus Prof. J. G. Granö quotes numerous passages from the book in the newspaper "Uusi Aura" (December 4, 1938) and, commenting upon it in the most cordial manner, calls the attention of his readers to the highly important and interesting character of the book. Another leading Finnish paper, the "Lakeus" (December 18, 1938), writes as follows: "M. Dálnoki's book gives a thorough and elucidating explanation and description of the consequences of the Treaty of Trianon. Its tenor is impartial, we may almost say sublimely peaceful. Nor does he need pathos, for the numerous statistics, diagrams and photographs carry much more convincing force than the text itself. We have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the statistical data contained in his book, as they are identical with those published in our own pre-War reference-books."

We may also add that the book is decorated and made still more interesting by the numerous illustrations contained in it, namely: 142 maps, diagrams and photographs.

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