

## M. CALINESCU'S FALSE ARGUMENTS

BY

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**T**he "Paris Soir" of 23rd February published a statement made when Deputy Prime Minister by M. Armand Calinescu, the present Rumanian Premier. Certain passages of that statement are such as cannot be passed over in silence.

Speaking of the minority problem, M. Calinescu started by declaring that "it is a mistake to speak of a minority question in Rumania". In his opinion this is best proved by the circumstance that the ethnic minorities have collaborated in the work of creating the National Renascence Front, which fact, he argues, fully justifies the Rumanian conception of minority politics. "Above all things, we are a national State." continues M. Calinescu. "The soil of Rumania was occupied, tilled and made use of first by our people. And though later our territories came under alien rule, this was only a temporary stage. During that period the Rumanian people preserved their traditions, folklore and language. There is no agreement or treaty that can draw new ethnic frontiers, for such frontiers are established by history and the natural rights of the peoples. And these frontiers we shall defend."

M. Calinescu concluded his statement about the minority problem with the assertion that the minorities were nowhere treated better than in Rumania. The principle of the legal equality of all citizens was — he said — laid down in the Rumanian Constitution. The minorities enjoyed full rights in the spheres of language, religion and the Press, and were free to form associations. They were at liberty to establish denominational schools and institutions, and, naturally, were entitled to education in their mother-tongue, teaching in which had been introduced in the State schools.

It would be hard to find a Rumanian politician with other

views, and M. Calinescu is not the first to declare that "Rumania is a national State". It makes no difference to him that according to the figures published by the Rumanian Statistical Office, 27% of Rumania's 18 million inhabitants (or 4.900.000) are minority citizens, and that of these almost 5 million people 2.300.000 live in Transylvania and Máramaros, 1.300.000 in Bessarabia, 502.000 in Bukovina and 783.000 in Older Rumania.

With these figures in view we are forced to the conclusion that M. Calinescu was guilty of an error when he declared that it was a mistake to speak of a minority question in Rumania.

Nor can we accept his argument that the collaboration of the ethnic minorities in the work of creating the Rumanian National Renaissance Front is a proof of his statement. More than once we have pointed out in the columns of this paper that the minorities acted under compulsion and had no other choice.

As regards the treatment meted out to the minorities, facts compel us to deny M. Calinescu's assertion and to establish the truth that, despite the letter of the Constitution, the Rumanian Administration does not treat the minorities in any field as citizens enjoying equal rights. The language, religious and educational rights of the minorities, the liberty of their Press, their right to form associations and to assemble, are even today so often curtailed that there is no foundation of fact for the statement that the minorities are treated nowhere better than in Rumania.

Another point in which M. Calinescu's arguments are lame is where he says that Rumania's frontiers were drawn by history and the natural rights of the peoples. The evidence of history does not support this statement, and we are constrained to contradict it. For historical research proves the error of the assertion that the Rumanians were the first people to occupy Transylvania, and that they came under alien rule later on and only for a time. History teaches us that Dacia, thee Transylvania of today, was occupied in 107 A. D. by the Roman Emperor Trajanus (the Rumanians today declare that they are descended from these ancient Romans); but this province did not continue to be part of the Roman

Empire for long. In 251 A. D. it was invaded by the Goths and in 270 the Emperor Aurelianus evacuated it, settling its Roman inhabitants in Moesia, present-day Bulgaria. (This is incontestably proved by contemporary documents.) With this Dacia as such ceased to exist, and for centuries the territory was inundated by wave after wave of migrating peoples. In the fifth century the Goths were subjugated by the Huns, and after Attila's death in 453 an attempt was made by the Gepidae to establish themselves in Dacia, but in 567 their State was conquered by the Avars, who in turn were crushed by Charlemagne. Then the province was ruled by the Bulgars until 896, when Árpád created Hungary, the only State that was able to withstand all the vicissitudes of history, of which Trianon is an example. Granted that Dacia (Transylvania) was a Roman, or, as the Rumanians call it, a "Rumanian" province, from 107 till 251 P. D., a thousand years of Hungarian possession certainly gives Hungary a better title to that territory than Rumania's claim based on a mere 144 years of Roman rule.

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