

# HOW MINORITIES LIVE

## RUMANIA

### ANTI-HUNGARIAN TERROR IN RUMANIA

The persecution of Hungarians in Rumania is described in the most striking manner in a letter, dated from Bucharest, which was recently published in the "Uj Hirek" ("Latest News"), a Hungarian daily appearing at Pozsony (Bratislava), the capital of the Republic of Slovakia (March 31st). — Rumania, the writer of the letter says, has been seized by an atmosphere of panic which has had no precedent in the past twenty years. An enormously huge crowd of people set out from the smallest villages towards the cities and railway stations, and wherever people were not willing to go they were driven on by the bayonets of soldiers and gendarmes. At the same time an unprecedented anti-Hungarian propaganda was begun as if obeying the gesture of an invisible hand which is bound to surprise the spectator even in Rumania, a country which could never be accused of an aversion to atrocities. In the schools, for instance, a whole lesson is every day devoted to the description of the alleged brutality of the Hungarians in the reannexed territories of Upper-Hungary, for which brutality — they say — the Rumanian people must take a noble revenge on the Hungarians.

The results of this crazy propaganda and hatred began to make themselves felt only too soon. Day after day fresh insults and atrocities are being reported to Bucharest. The crowds of Wallachians (Rumanian mountaineers) pouring down from the mountains into the cities plundered the houses of Hungarians on their way, beat their owners black and blue, pulled down their fences and set the hay-stacks in the fields on fire. — In the Bratianu Boulevard — one of the main streets of Bucharest — a lady was badly insulted in a crowded tram car for addressing the conductor in Hungarian; a Protestant clergyman who protested against the insult to the lady was arrested. — The Protestant minister of the village of Kolosborsa was driven out of the village, his house was plundered, he himself fled to the city of Kolozsvár (Cluj); here he applied to the gendarmes for protection, but they could only advise him not to go back to his village. — At Marosvásárhely, three Hungarian recruits marched through the streets

of the city singing Hungarian songs; a crowd of Rumanians stopped them and asked them how they dared to sing in Hungarian. In the heat of the argument one of the Hungarians was stabbed to death. — At Kolozsvár (Cluj) a band of Wallachians attacked a Hungarian boy, beat him to death with their staves and performed a dance of triumph over the poor boy's dead body.

Among the many cases of the utmost horror there were a few humorous ones. A Rumanian recruit, apparently in a state of intoxication, suddenly began to shout in the street: Hurrah Hungary! — He was, of course, instantly surrounded by policemen, who flew at him with their batons. Thereupon another Rumanian from the crowd called to them: Leave him alone, don't you see he is drunk? And don't you know that truth is hidden in wine? — Needless to say, this Rumanian received proper treatment from the policemen. — y —

#### NUMEROUS LAW-SUITS AGAINST MINORITY PERSONS BEFORE MILITARY TRIBUNAL OF KOLOZSVAR (CLUJ)

The Rev. Kálmán Déri, Protestant Minister of the village of Mezököl, has been sentenced to the payment of 2000 lei; he was accused of "disrespecting the national holidays", because he did not hoist the Rumanian flag on his church on the Rumanian national holidays of May 10th and July 8th. The sentence of the Military Court was passed in defiance of the provisions of the law, according to which churches are exempted from such obligations.

The Rev. Kálmán Pető, Unitarian Minister of the village of Nyomát (County of Maros-Torda) has been fined 2000 lei and made to pay 1000 lei costs, following the denunciation of the village teacher, who accused him of disrespecting the National Anthem. Last year on May 10th, which is a Rumanian national holiday, the Unitarian church service was preceded by a school festival at the end of which the children sang the National Anthem. Nevertheless, the teacher played it again on the organ at the conclusion of the service, so that the authorities might have no complaint against the church; the minister, however, did not wait until he had finished playing, but led the children out of the church, since they had already sung the anthem at the end of their festival.

József Derzsi, a dentist in Abrudbánya, has been sentenced to pay a fine of 2000 lei, because he did not put out the Rumanian flag on his house on June 2nd, which is the Heroes' Commemoration Day in Rumania. Two young men of the village of Nyáradszereda, László Demeter and Sándor Farkas, have been sentenced to pay fines of 2000 lei each because some time ago, when they were ordered to carry the Rumanian flag at the head of a detach-

ment of recruits, they furled the flag, as the wind was blowing very hard. Márton Ötvös, a young musician, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment because, during the carnival festival in the village of Mezőtelegd (County Bihar), he did not hear the Rumanian anthem being played and remained sitting. („Ellenzék", March 12th.)

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#### VILLAGE NOTARY COURT-MARTIALED FOR PUBLISHING VILLAGE ORDINANCES ALSO IN HUNGARIAN

M. Dénes Gidófalvy, notary of the village of Kakasd, was ordered to appear before the Military Court for publishing the village ordinances both in Rumanian and in Hungarian. M. Gidófalvy declared to the Court that he thought it necessary to publish his ordinances in both languages if he wanted to make them understood by both the Rumanian and the Hungarian inhabitants of the village. He was acquitted. („Magyar Ujság", March 18th.)

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#### A GIPSY MUSICIAN COURT-MARTIALED FOR PLAYING HUNGARIAN AIRS

Béla Bámbó, a Hungarian gipsy musician, was playing Hungarian tunes in a restaurant at Marosvásárhely. On the denunciation of two policemen in civilian clothes, who were present at the time, the gipsy musician was ordered to appear before the Military Tribunal, together with the proprietor of the restaurant. Frederick Röder, a Saxon by birth. The Military Tribunal acquitted the musician, but the proprietor of the restaurant was sentenced to pay a fine of 2000 lei, because he did not warn the gipsy not to play Hungarian airs. („Magyar Szó" March 10th.)

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#### ONLY CONTROLLED CHURCH MEETINGS PERMITTED IN TRANSYLVANIA

It was a serious blow to the minority churches of the County of Háromszék when last year the authorities forbade them to hold any kind of religious meetings. In this way the religious societies were prevented from exercising any cultural activities, that meaning a deadlock of their religious life. The leaders of the churches often appealed to the authorities to revoke this unjust measure, whereupon the gendarmes were ordered to permit strictly religious meetings and such as are absolutely necessary for the administration of the Church. The clergyman or church authority responsible for the meeting is ordered to report to the gendarmerie 24 hours before the meeting and he must also submit the full programme of the meeting for inspection. („Brassói Lapok", March 8th.)

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MINORITY VILLAGE SCHOOL OF NYOMÁT SEALED  
BY AUTHORITIES

A special commission has appeared in the village of Nyomát (County of Maros-Torda) and sealed the Unitarian school of the village. With this, the only Hungarian school in the village has stopped teaching. The Rumanian Ministry of Education some time ago withdrew the public school character of the village school of Nyomát, but the teaching was continued without a break. After this a Rumanian State school was built in the village; the Rumanian headteacher then reported to the Ministry of Education that he had detected certain abuses in the administration of the minority school. The Unitarian church authorities were also informed of this report, but the Church at once proceeded to rectify matters. Nevertheless, the report of the Rumanian headteacher has now led to the sealing of the school building. („Brassói Lapok”, March 16th.).

GREEK CATHOLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN COMPELLED TO  
ATTEND ORTHODOX CHURCH SERVICE

The Minister of National Education recently issued an edict according to which the Rumanian school children, irrespective of their religion, must go to the Orthodox Rumanian church in all those parishes where there is no other church. They are not allowed to go to minority churches. Up to now it was the custom to take the school children to the local Roman Catholic church if there was no Greek Catholic church in the village. („Brassói Lapok”, Febr. 23.)

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RUMANIAN GENDARME SERGEANT CLAIMS RIGHT  
TO ISSUE ORDERS CONCERNING LANGUAGE

The sergeant of gendarmes in the village of Micske (County of Bihar) ordered the teacher of the Protestant village school to teach his pupils to greet each other with the word „Sanatate” („Health”), which is the salute of the Rumanian National Renascence Front. The teacher thereupon inquired of his superior church authorities whether any order had been issued to this effect. The reply of the church authorities was negative, and the teacher was instructed to ask for a written order in case the sergeant should continue his importunity.

The teacher thereupon informed the sergeant of the reply of his superiors. The latter, however, paid no attention to the teacher's instructions and reported him for defying the language of the State.

The case has now been tried by the military court of Kolozsvár (Cluj). The public prosecutor contended that the teacher had outraged the national feeling of the Rumanian people, while

in reply the counsel for the defence argued that the sergeant had no right to issue orders concerning the use of language. Finally, the defendant was acquitted of the charge brought against him. ("Budapesti Tudósító", February 6.) — y —

### HUNGARIAN FUNCTIONARIES OF THE CITY OF NAGY-SZALONTA AGAIN SUBJECTED TO LANGUAGE TEST

The Prefect of the County of Bihar has ordered the few Hungarian functionaries still retained in the service of the town of Nagyszalonta to appear in the County Hall for a new language test. Those affected by this ordinance are seven Hungarian functionaries who have already successfully passed a language test and have, accordingly, received certificates to testify the result. This order for a repeated test is in strict contradiction with the provisions of the Minority Statutes. — y —

### NEARLY 100.000 MAGYARS IN TRANSYLVANIA IN DANGER OF BEING DISMISSED

The Rumanian authorities have begun the conscription of inhabitants not included in the register of citizens. A few hundred thousand people were omitted from the register during the Census of 1924 and last year, and nearly a hundred thousand Hungarians who were born in Transylvania have lost their political rights through no fault of their own but through the omission of the census officials. The new Citizenship Act, which has been in force since February 1st, provides that those who are not included in the register of citizens are not allowed to take any employment; they may not exercise any industrial profession as independent craftsmen; they are to be dismissed from official employment and also to lose their pensions. The situation is hopeless for the pensioners, who have not received any pension for over a year now. („Ellenzék", Febr. 28.) — y —

### TRADE BOYCOTT AGAINST MINORITIES IN RUMANIA

A furious campaign has been launched against the minority shopkeepers by the Rumanian Press. Suggestions of an outrageous nature have been put forward in the columns of the "Tribuna" and the "Universul." V. Pitti, a merchant of Nagyszeben, for instance, calls for a law forbidding landlords to let shops and business premises to any but true-born Rumanians. Until such a law can be promulgated he advises the formation of a committee within the framework of the National Renaissance Front to safeguard Rumanian interests and keep a register of all the Rumanian shopkeepers, so that whenever the lease of a shop lapses it may be given to a Rumanian ("Tribuna," 17th Feb).

Stephen Penes suggests that only Rumanians be allowed to sell monopoly articles, that 80% of all public contracts be given to true-born Rumanians, and that 80% of trade appointments and posts in the National Bank be reserved for ethnically pure Rumanians. ("Tribuna", 18th Feb.) — y —

### FORMER RUMANIAN CABINET MINISTER DEMANDS EXCLUSION OF MINORITIES FROM ECONOMIC LIFE

M. Joanitescu, a former Rumanian Minister of Labour, recently gave a lecture in Bucharest on the protection of Rumanian national labour. He demanded that Rumanian labour should be protected, not only against workers from abroad, but also against the minorities. He also demanded the speedy introduction of the minority percentage of 20%. ("Brassói Lapok", February 23rd). — y —

### MINORITY ARTISANS OBLIGED TO EMPLOY RUMANIAN APPRENTICES

Among the items figuring in the agenda of the new Rumanian Cabinet there is a Bill to be drafted by the Ministry of Labour concerning the compulsory employment of apprentices. Artisans and merchants — especially those belonging to minorities — are obliged to employ an adequate percentage of Rumanian apprentices. ("Budapesti Tudósító," February 3.) — y —

### EVEN TAXI DRIVERS MUST PASS LANGUAGE TEST

The authorities of the town of Mărmarosziget have ordered the taxi drivers in the town to appear for the language test. The driving licenses will be withdrawn from all those drivers who have an insufficient command of Rumanian. ("Magyar Ujság," February 2). — y —

### SAXONS OF TRANSYLVANIA HAVE HAD THE RIGHT TO THE FREE USE OF THEIR FLAG FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL

Herr Georg Kraft, teacher of the Saxon confessional school in the village of Dedrad, has been accused of disrespect towards the Rumanian nation because, on June 8th last year, a national holiday, he hoisted the Saxon flag beside the Rumanian flag on the school building. Herr Kraft was acquitted of the charge, as the Military Tribunal agreed with the counsel for the defence, who pointed out that the Saxons of Transylvania have enjoyed the right to the free use of their colours from time immemorial. („Déli Hírlap", February 22nd.) — y —

## SLOVAKIA

### SLOVAK ATROCITIES

The following cases were reported from Pozsony (Bratislava) in March 29th, 1939:

1. In the city of Igló, eight Hungarian young men were arrested and taken to Lőcse. For some days past the Hungarians of Igló have repeatedly been stopped in the streets, their party certificates and badges taken away, and many of them badly insulted. The houses of Hungarians were searched by various uniformed organizations without any official warrant; the Hungarian House of Igló has been seized by the Hlinka Guards.

2. At *Szomolnok*, M. Kálmán Bubrovsky, President of the local branch of the Hungarian Party, was arrested and taken to Lőcse.

3. At *Aranyosmarót*, unruly elements tore off the sign-board of the Hungarian Party and the name-plates of Hungarian solicitors and doctors and the Hungarian sign-boards of Hungarian shops.

4. At *Nyitra*, uniformed people have for some days past continued to insult the Hungarian inhabitants, tearing off their party badges.

5. At *Mocsonok* and *Királyi*, uniformed people from Nyitra plundered a number of shops and kept on brutalizing the Hungarians. At Nyitra and in its neighbourhood large numbers of Hungarian workers are being dismissed, so that the unemployed industrial and farm labourers now number many thousands. At *Misérd*, three Hungarians from the neighbourhood were attacked by the crowd; all three of them were beaten black and blue, their clothes were torn off and the crowd kept on shouting insulting terms at them. Thereupon they were again beaten and searched by uniformed people. As the three Hungarians were about to leave the place the crowd threw stones and bricks at their car.

6. At *Pozsony* (Bratislava), Hlinka Guards continue to take away from the Hungarians their party badges, although the Slovak Government has given permission for their wearing. — y —

### THE SHERIFF OF JOLLSVA BRUTALISED BY SLOVAK GENDARMES

In a letter to the Budapest daily, "Magyar Nemzet" (March 28th, 1939), M. Ferenc Kerpely, town clerk of Jolsva, gives a detailed account of the brutalisation of János Gérec, sheriff of the same town. The following is an extract from the letter, which was verified by the victim himself:

On March 25th János Gérec and his little ten-year old son went, provided with a regular passport, to visit his sister in the neighbouring village of *Nagyszlobos*, which is situated across the frontier in Slovakia. They had not been there more than about ten minutes when, all of a sudden, Slovak gendarmes appeared in the house and arrested Gérec without any further inquiry. They

then took him to the gendarmerie, where they beat him out of his senses, threw him on the floor and tortured him with their bayonets fixed against his breast. When the unfortunate sheriff was completely exhausted by this treatment and the gendarmes, too, grew tired of their work, he was at last able to ask his torturers for the reason of this treatment.

The sheriff then told the gendarmes that he had always been proud of his Slovak nationality, of which he made no secret even after the re-annexation of the town to Hungary. He declared himself for a Slovak at the last census, too, though he had now become a Hungarian public functionary. Although the Slovaks only represented 13% of the population of his town, he had never experienced any disadvantage from the Hungarian authorities on account of his Slovak nationality. In his office as well as in the town he always spoke Slovak and he was, he declared, extremely proud to have lived to the day of Slovakia's independence.

The gendarmes, thereupon, felt ashamed of their conduct, asked the sheriff for his pardon and offered him a seat. The sheriff then told them that this treatment made him feel ashamed of being a Slovak and demanded a speedy explanation of their brutal conduct.

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### THE CONCENTRATION CAMP OF RAHÓ

Rahó is a small town in Ruthenia, situated on the upper reaches of the river Tisza, at the foot of Mount Dumeny, a hill 1600 metres high. In this little place the Ukraine adventurers headed by Canon Volosin set up a concentration camp for the torture of their Ruthenian and Hungarian victims. Not less than 194 prisoners were released from here after the fall of the Ukrainian Government.

In the beginning the prisoners were placed in the empty hangars of the Skoda Works; the hangars were not heated, of course, so that hundreds of prisoners froze to death in the terrible winter cold of 30 to 40° C. Later on a number of low sheds were built for the prisoners; the furniture of these sheds consisted of four rows of berths, a few shelves, a tiny window and a tub in the corner, bearing the inscription in Hungarian, German and Czech: Drinking Water. — When a prisoner died of the inhuman tortures, his name was simply erased from the list and his body buried behind the dust heap without any name or sign. There was a sort of a dug-out at the back of the camp which served as the prison. The doors were closed by iron bars, and the air penetrated into this horrible shaft through tiny holes in the wall. The prison was teeming with rats. The shaft was so deep that if somebody had been thrown into it he had to be pulled up by means of a rope. Sometimes a prisoner would suffer in this horrid place for five or six days, merely because he failed to



jump quickly enough at the approach of a guard. We now relate a few authentic incidents from the life of the prisoners in the concentration camp of Rahó.

István Olasz, a school teacher, once contradicted the orders of Sergeant Djamba, the ill famed commander of the camp, whereupon this monster put out both his eyes during a hearing.

The Rev. Paszulyka, a clergyman of Terebes-fehérpatak, was brought into the camp because he had appeared at the Congress of Ungvár on November 3rd, when the question of the reunion with Hungary was discussed. The clergyman was seized by Ukrainian terrorists during a divine service and he was carried through the valley in his full clerical robes. He was forced to go bare-footed, at times he was hurried on with the butt of a gun; while in the camp, he was forced to perform the most abominable form of work without any implements.

Mons. György Egressy, a Dean, was beaten round the camp stark naked at a temperature of  $-20^{\circ}$  C.; after he became quite exhausted they poured buckets of water on him until his body was literally covered with a solid block of ice. Only then did they allow him to be taken into the sheds, where his fellow-prisoners looked after him. It is indeed a miracle that he was able to leave the camp alive.

Ivan Rászony, leader of the Hungarophile Ruthenes, was hung up with his head downward until he died.

The Rev. István Zombory, a Greek Catholic priest, was obliged to walk over a heap of broken glass, after which his wounds were covered with salt.

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### NINE CLASSES IN EIGHT CLASS ROOMS

The Hungarian Grammar School and Teacher's Training College of Pozsony (Bratislava) has now moved into its new building, which used to be that of the District Court. The work of the school is greatly handicapped by the fact that the students of the Teacher's College are obliged to have their lessons in the afternoon, as the Ministry of Education has not yet provided for the building of the ninth class room of the Grammar School. At the same time, however, the number of pupils is expected to become still higher next year, as this is the only Hungarian Grammar School in the whole of Slovakia, so that the more remote Hungarian settlements in the country will also send their children to this school.

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## YUGOSLAVIA

### HUNGARIANS STILL PRACTICALLY EXCLUDED FROM PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

In the town of Zenta — inhabited by an 87% Magyar majority — the municipal council recently (February 25th) elected 8 minor officials, of whom only one is a Magyar.

At a recent meeting, at the end of February, of the Government Party at Szabadka (Subotica) it was decided that the municipal positions would in future be filled according to the following principle: for every 3 minor officials of Bunievatz nationality 1 Serb official would be elected, while for every 6 Bunievatz officials one Magyar is to be elected in Szabadka, where the Magyars represent 43% of the population: — y —

### SITUATION OF SCHOOLS IN DANUBE BANATE

At the meeting of the Executive Council of the Danube Banate held on January 21st, the deputy head of the Department of Education read a report, from which we quote the following passages for the information of our readers.

In the current school year there are altogether 25 Senior Schools in the Danube Banate; 32 are maintained by the State, while 3 of them are in private hands. The distribution of subjects is as follows: commercial subjects in 15, industrial and manufacturing subjects in 12, and agricultural subjects in 8. The minority — which represent 18% of the population of the Banate, even according to the official records — does not possess even one single Senior School, though according to its percentage it ought to have at least 6 such schools. The entire staff employed in the above 35 schools includes 444 Senior School teachers, of whom only one or two are Magyars; though, in view of the percentage of the Magyar population, there should be at least 80 Magyar teachers working in these schools. — As regards Secondary Schools, there are 26 of them in the Danube Banate. One of these is a complete Hungarian school, i. e. consisting of eight classes, while 4 of them have only a parallel Hungarian section in the lower grade. Yet in even these two schools the majority of subjects is being taught in the language of the State. The staff of these 26 schools includes 759 teachers, of whom only 4 or 5 are Magyars; though, in view of its percentage the Magyar minority ought to have at least 140 teaching posts in secondary schools. — Finally, the report quotes the figures referring to elementary education. There are altogether 2270 elementary schools in the Danube Banate; in these schools there are only about 120 partly Magyar sections. Now, according to its percentage the Magyar minority would be entitled to claim — in the Danube Banate alone — at least 409 elementary parallel sections and — counting 4 forms to each section — at least 1636 forms with teaching exclusively in Magyar. Instead, however, the Magyar minority has now at least 289 elementary sections and 1156 elementary forms less than it is rightfully entitled to, both by virtue of its percentage and those rights of equality which are guaranteed by the Constitution to every minority citizen. — y —