

# HOW MINORITIES LIVE

## RUMANIA

### FURTHER MILITARY COURT PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HUNGARIANS

The Military Court of *Kolozsvár* (Cluj) has tried M. István Csengery, Notary Public in Szatmár. He was accused of irredentist propaganda, a charge which the defendant — pleading not guilty — described as pure fiction. The Court did not accept his explanation and sentenced him to two months' imprisonment; as, however, M. Csengery had already spent two months in detention, the Court ordered his immediate release. ("Keleti Ujság", March 25, 1939).

The Rev. József Márton had to appear before the Court to answer a charge of wilfully carrying on irredentist propaganda with a view to "Magyarising" the Swabian (German) population of his parish; he was also accused of spreading false rumours concerning the Rumanian status-quo. The Military Court sentenced the minister to three months imprisonment, while his two associates were sentenced to the payment of a fine of 2000 lei. ("Magyar Lapok", March 29).

M. József György and M. István Biró, two leaders of the Hungarians in the County of Maros-Torda, had to answer for a speech they made in the village of Vadad one year ago, when addressing the audience of a religious performance given by the local Women's Society. A few weeks after their appearance at this performance the local gendarmes reported them for wilful propaganda against the State elementary school. It appeared at the trial, however, that the two speakers had dealt with strictly religious and ecclesiastic problems and did not even mention the State elementary school. Both were acquitted. ("Magyar Lapok", March 29).

A petition was submitted to the Court of Law by the Rumanian population of Románrákos that 81 yokes of common pasture land and forest land should be taken away from the neighbouring Hungarian village of Tordaszentlászló and given to the Rumanian village. Although each of the surrounding villages had received an adequate share of common land in course of the Land Reform, the Court accepted the Rumanian petition.

When the inhabitants of the Rumanian village came over to the Hungarian village to take possession of the 81 yokes, the inhabitants of the two villages started a fight, which was only stopped by the gendarmes. The gendarmes then reported 16 Hungarian farmers of the village of Tordaszentlászló for mutiny and slandering of the Rumanian nation. All of them were found guilty by the Military Court of Kolozsvár (Cluj). Three Hungarian farmers were fined 2000 lei each, while the others had to pay fines of 1000 lei each. ("Magyar Ujság", April 2).

Sister Ilona *Mátyás*, a nurse, came to Rumania on March 10th to visit her relatives in the village of Tordaszentlászló. In her bag the customs officials discovered a book of poems which they regarded as propaganda hostile to the State. The book was thereupon confiscated, and the nurse was arrested. Sister *Mátyás* pointed out at her trial that she had bought the book to read on the journey, but its contents had been unknown to her. The Military Court did not accept her explanation and sentenced her to one month's imprisonment. ("Keleti Ujság" April 5).

The Rev. *Dávid Potowschi*, the Roman Catholic parish priest of Csikdánfalva, appeared before the Military Court of Kolozsvár (Cluj) to answer the charge of hostile propaganda against the State. He was alleged to have forbidden his parishioners to go to the local Greek Catholic church. He was also alleged to have spoken in his sermons against those parents who sent their children to other than their own churches on the Rumanian national holidays. — The defendant explained to the Military Court that there is no law by which the children could be compelled to go to any other church than their own. In any case, he said, he had only done his duty in encouraging his parishioners to visit their own church. The Military Court acquitted the priest of the charge. ("Népujság", April 2).

The Rev. *László Szabó*, Protestant minister of the village of Szilágyszentkirály, M. *József Süle* and *Antal Pap*, his two churchwardens, were also summoned before the Military Court of Kolozsvár (Cluj) on the charge of irredentism. The charge against them was that they had ordered their church to be painted with the colours of the Hungarian tricolor: the roof red, the windows green and the walls white (the Hungarian tricolor being: red-white-and-green). — The defendants pleaded not guilty and pointed out that the roof was not red but purple, the windows — it is true — were green, but that the walls were gray rather than white. Judgment was reserved. ("Keleti Ujság", April 2).

Father Leonard *Trefán*, former Prior of the Order of St. Francis, had to appear before the Military Court because during a dominiciary visit a book of poems entitled "The Broken Harp", had been found in his library, though it was under embargo in

Rumania. The Military Court dismissed the case, as it fell under the amnesty edict. ("Néplap", March 23). — y —

PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHING RUMANIAN CITIZENSHIP.  
FLAGRANTLY UNJUST TREATMENT OF MINORITIES IN  
RUMANIA.

The Minority Minister, Dr. Dragomir Silviu, promised the Magyar members of the National Renaissance Front that the question of the Magyars whose names had been omitted from the lists of Rumanian citizens would be settled by a special Order. On 24th March, a decree dealing with the question of citizenship was actually issued by the Minister of the Interior, but it discriminated in favour of the majority and against the minorities by instituting flagrantly unequal methods of procedure. For, whereas all that members of the majority require is a simple form of recognition, a lengthy and expensive procedure is imposed on minority subjects who wish to become Rumanian citizens.

That the decree discriminates between Rumanian and non-Rumanian subjects is shown by what is required of them.

An applicant of Rumanian ethnic origin has only to file an application bearing a four lei "courts of justice" stamp accompanied by the following documents: 1. birth certificate; 2. certificate of his parents' marriage; 3. a statement that he renounces citizenship of any other country; 4. a certificate from the courts of law that he is not under tutelage; 5. a certificate from the Attorney General's Office that he has no criminal record; 6. a certificate of integrity from the local authorities of the place where he is domiciled; 7. a certificate from the mayor or parish council of his place of domicile proving that he is a Rumanian and that his parents were also Rumanians, and 9. a certificate to the same effect from the parish priest.

An applicant of non-Rumanian origin must file his application on a special form bearing a 600 lei stamp and must affix thereto an extra 100 lei so-called "Ministry of Justice" stamp and another 2 lei one. This application must be addressed to the President of the Naturalization Committee (Presidente al Comisiune de naturalizare) in the Ministry of Justice and with it must be enclosed:

1. birth certificate;
2. a certificate from a court of justice that the applicant is not under tutelage and that he has not been deprived of his civil rights;
3. a certificate from the Ministry of Justice stating that no State has applied for his extradition on a criminal charge;
4. a certificate from the Public Prosecutor's Office that he has no criminal record;

5. a certificate of integrity from the local police or government authorities;

6. a certificate from a court of law or the local municipality that he is not suffering from an incurable disease;

7. a statement of the taxes he pays, or should he pay none, of the sum he receives at present as a pension;

8. a certificate that he is able to meet the requirements necessary to obtain the rights of citizenship;

9. a school certificate that he can read and write Rumanian;

10. a certificate that no bankruptcy proceedings have been instituted against him;

11. besides submitting these certificates, if required by the Committee of Naturalization, he must make a statement that he renounces citizenship of all other countries;

12. a certificate that he has lived uninterruptedly in Rumania for the past ten years. ("Néplap", March 30.)

That minority subjects are obliged by the decree to pay 702 lei per head in stamps while a person of Rumanian origin must only submit a petition bearing a 4 lei stamp, and that non-Rumanian applicants are required to produce a school certificate that they can read and write Rumanian, are proof that, despite the treaty obligations internationally undertaken, the same system of unequal treatment that for the past two decades has weighed so heavily on all non-Rumanian inhabitants, still continues to be applied to the minorities in Rumania. — y —

## THE FARMERS OF NAGYSZALONTA NOT ALLOWED TO COME TO HUNGARY TO LOOK AFTER THEIR FARMS

The town of *Nagyszalonta* (County of Bihar), like so many other places, also had its area cut in two by the provisions of the Treaty of Trianon, so that many farmers have one part of their farms in Hungary, and the other in Rumania. In all those places where the same situation prevails, the farmers are generally given a permanent permit to cross the frontier in order to be able to look after their farms in Hungary. These permits are printed in Bucharest, from where they are sent to the frontier authorities, who issue them to the claimants. — This year, however, the permits have not yet arrived from Bucharest, so that the frontier authorities have refused permission now to cross the frontier. The farmers concerned have submitted a petition to the Director of the Customs Office at Nagyvárad, asking for permission to cross the frontier. The spring work in the fields, they pointed out, was already in full swing, and it would therefore cause them heavy losses if

they were not allowed to till their land. The Director's reply was a flat refusal. ("Magyar Lapok", April 2, 1939). — y —

### HUNGARIAN COUNTIES AND TOWNS NOT ALLOWED TO LISTEN IN TO BROADCASTS

The police authorities of *Szatmárnémeti* have officially informed the population that several wireless sets in the town and in the county are to be sealed. The edict says that within a zone of twenty kilometres from the frontiers no private persons are allowed to operate wireless sets. The edict also specifies, according to the letters of the alphabet, in what order the inhabitants have to present their sets for sealing. After they have been provided with an official seal by the police, the sets are to be returned to their owners. All those who do not promptly obey these orders will be sentenced to imprisonment for periods of from one month to two years. Repeated domiciliary visits will secure police control. ("Keleti Ujság", April 5.)

Similar orders have been given in the town of Arad. The police appeared in the wireless shops and sealed all news sets on stock. The police in the town of Marosvásárhely have sealed the wireless set of the Hungarian school there. After *Szatmár*, *Arad* and *Marosvásárhely*, several wireless sets have been sealed by the police in the whole of Szeklerland. The police had received instructions to visit several owners of wireless sets and to seal the sets on the spot. The population has been warned against hiding their sets, under pain of two years' imprisonment. ("Népujság", April 15). — y —

## SLOVAKIA

### EXCESSES OF HLINKA GUARDS: NUMEROUS MAGYARS ARRESTED

The "Slovak" of 1st April, 1939, publishes a report received from Eperjes on 30th March stating that 70 important Magyars had been arrested in the town and environs. The newspaper, the official organ of the Slovak Government, adds the following comments: "On Tuesday and Wednesday (March 28 and 29) 70 persons were arrested in Eperjes and environs, 20 of them in the town itself. All these stirrers up of strife had been deliberately trying to disturb the peace of the citizens in Eastern Slovakia and create unrest and confusion.

"They did not succeed, and now they can sit in their cells and meditate on their Judas-like behaviour and its consequences ... It should be noted that these men are Magyar gentry landowners and some of the wealthier people of the town and

its surroundings. They were supported by the Magyar pensioners and the Jews.

"Rigorous proceedings will be instituted against them. The authorities in Eastern Slovakia are determined to apply the severest measures, should they prove necessary. A list has been made of persons under suspicion of circulating false reports and rumours incompatible with the interests of the Slovak State."

The truth, however, as reported from Pozsony on 13th April, is that the Hlinka Guards are not particular about the methods they adopt to procure money, seeing that they have to provide their own food and clothing. In Nagymihály they resorted to open brigandage. They made a system of arresting the well-to-do citizens of the town on the pretext that they were dangerous to the independence of Slovakia. A large number of well-to-do citizens were carried away from Eperjes to an unknown destination. A few days later their families received a visit from members of the Hlinka Guard, who told them that there was a possibility of the arrested citizens regaining their liberty, but that it would cost them from 50 to 100 thousand crowns each, as the case might be. These sums were demanded as bail, but everybody knew that it was really a question of ransom money to provide the Hlinka Guard with means. If the relations of the arrested persons pay this so-called bail, they will never see their money again, and if they are not in a position to pay, their relatives will be carried off to a concentration camp.

It was reported from Pozsony on 11th April that the persecution and arrest of the Magyars were the order of the day in Slovakia. A few days before Easter the following persons were arrested in Nyitra: Bernard Rolfesz, vice-burgomaster; the parish priest, Kálmán Smida, a man aged 75, who was the chairman of the local branch of the United Hungarian Party; the honorary president of the local branch of the Party, Dr. Akos Györgyi; the wife of the district president; a tradesman named Charles Szelcsik, who was a member of the municipal organization of the Party, Julius Gerlai, a confectioner, and three other Magyars of Nyitra. In *Nagymihály* a doctor, Ernest Szécsényi, a member of the Hungarian Party, was arrested. These arrests came as a bolt from the blue and the arrested persons were not informed what the charge against them was. When the Bishop of Nyitra intervened, Premier Tiso ordered the parish priest, Kálmán Smida, to be released.

The Hlinka Guards have been guilty of a series of acts of violence in Eperjes and in other places along the Hungarian frontier.

In Eperjes they arrested a lawyer named Dr. Joseph Kisóczy and plundered his house. Kisóczy, who had lost an arm in the

great war, was one of the most prominent of the Magyars of the town. Several other Magyars were arrested in Eperjes, and the houses of all of them were plundered. Many important members of the Slovak intelligentsia were also arrested, several of whom were men well-known in Kassa. Among others were arrested Dr. Joseph Ruzsiák, a lawyer, Dr. Paul Novák, another lawyer, and his wife, and Dr. Ladislav Petrikovitch, a former notary public. Besides these several physicians have been arrested. Paul Novák was for a time burgomaster of Kassa during the Czecho-Slovak régime. It is rumoured that they were arrested because they had openly expressed their conviction that the future of the Slovak nation could best be assured by establishing contacts with Hungary. All these people have been sent to the convict prison in Illava.

The inhabitants of Nagyszalánc are being kept in a state of permanent terror by the Hlinka guards. Things came to a head on the Thursday of Easter Week, when the people of the place, who were tilling their fields, were driven into the village by armed men. The Hlinka Guards marched up and down the streets, shooting. A young man, Stephen Chikó, jr. was wounded in the shoulder. Numerous houses were searched.

According to a report received from *Pozsony* on 13th April, John Böszörményi, Reformed Church pastor of Kolbász (County Zemplén) has been carried off by Hlinka Guards. Nothing further is known of his fate.

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## TREACHEROUS ATTACK OF HLINKA GUARDS AT KASSA

As reported from Ungvár on April 24th, on April 22nd, about 6.30 p. m., a Hungarian patrol of two men set out on their round from the frontier village of Hernádtihany (near Kassa). They had hardly left the village when two men dressed in mufti who had come from Slovakia, fired at the Hungarian patrol from the direction of the railway tunnel. Both Hungarian frontier guards were severely wounded, one in the stomach and the other in the chest. The one who was less severely wounded had just enough strength, before falling unconscious, to fire at the two assailants, who however managed to escape to Slovakia. It is not known whether his shots hit them. — The two severely wounded Hungarian soldiers were conveyed to the hospital in Kassa, where one of them died. The other soldier was at once operated; the bullet was removed from his body, but his condition is still very grave. The gendarmes and the military authorities at once proceeded to inquire into the matter. It is believed that the assailants were members of the Hlinka guard dressed in civilian clothes.

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## NEW SLOVAK FRONTIER INCIDENT AT SAROSREMETE

As reported from Ungvár on April 21st, on Thursday (April 20), at 9.15 p. m. Slovaks opened fire on the Hungarian frontier guards, and the following day, at 6 a. m., began to bombard the village of Sárosremete. The village was hit five times. The Hungarian frontier guard offered resistance. No losses have been reported on the Hungarian side. — y —

## YUGOSLAVIA

## NEW MINORITY COMPLAINTS AND DESIRES

The leaders of the Magyar minority in Yugoslavia leave no stone unturned in their effort to ensure and hasten the fulfilment of the legitimate demands of the minorities so often stated and to obtain redress of the complaint just as often voiced. In this direction the following steps have been taken by the Magyar minority.

On 25th March Senator Várady saw in Belgrade M. Beshlitch, Minister of Agriculture and M. Tomitch, Minister of Commerce, with whom he discussed questions affecting the Magyars in Yugoslavia. True to form, both of the Ministers promised to fulfil the wishes stated and to redress the complaints submitted. So far, however, no measures have followed.

The Magyars of Magyararkanizsa (Pavlovgrad) — a town 95% Hungarian — have launched a movement with the object of dividing the office of head inspector of elementary schools, in view of the fact that the present inspector of all the elementary schools does not speak a word of Hungarian. The parents of the Magyar pupils demand a Magyar inspector for the so-called Hungarian parallel departments of elementary education, and insist that the inspector of the State elementary schools shall be a man with a working knowledge of the Hungarian language. In the first week of April a delegation of Magyar parents and representatives of the Magyar associations in Magyararkanizsa went to M. Beshlitch, Minister of Agriculture, who at the time was on a visit to Zenta, demanding from him greater freedom of movement for the Magyar associations, the appointment of Magyar teachers in the Hungarian departments of the elementary schools and the employment, in proportion to the numerical strength of the Magyar minority, of Magyar officials in the Government offices. They also insisted on a settlement of the question of a Hungarian teachers' training college in accordance with the wishes of the Magyar minority. This delegation, too, was sent away with fair promises.

On 15th April the appointed Town Council of Szabadka (Subotica) held a gala meeting to honour Dr. Ivan Radivoyevitch, the recently appointed Ban of the Danube Banate. On behalf



of the Magyars of Szabadka, Dr. Denis Strelitzky, former member of the Skupshtina, addressed the Ban. In his speech he begged the new Ban to show a greater sympathy for the legitimate demands of the Magyar minority than his predecessors had done. M. Radivoyevitch replied in the usual terms, saying that "the same treatment was meted out by the Government to all loyal citizens irrespective of nationality and religion."

At the last meeting of the Town Council of Szabadka a resolution moved by the Magyar councillors was adopted which abolished the extra tax levied from the local Magyar societies on all "foreign", that is to say Magyar, amateur theatricals and cultural lectures. The argument urged by the Magyar members of the Town Council was that in Szabadka the Hungarian language could not be described as "foreign", since a considerable section of the inhabitants (53%) belonged to the Magyar Minority. Against this resolution, which was adopted by a majority of the Council, an appeal was submitted to the Ban's Office. In this appeal it was urged that all languages except Serb, Croatian and Slovene should be considered foreign.

On behalf of the German minority Herr Francis Hamm and Dr. Trischler, members of the Skupshtina, on March 24 presented to M. Tziritch, Minister of Education, a memorandum stating the demands of that minority. The most important of these demands are: permission for the private German-Swabian teachers' college in Ujverbász (Novi Vrbas) to accept a larger number of pupils; teachers of German nationality for the German departments of the State schools; education in German all along the line, and the establishment of German secondary schools. — y —

## THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL AND JUST TREATMENT IN PRACTICE.

At its meeting on March 28th the Municipal Council of the city of Ujvidék (Novisad; centre of the Danube Banate) decided this year to accord a grant of 134.800 dinars to the various local associations. Out of this grant the various Hungarian associations of the city will receive only 10.700 dinars, instead of 40.200 dinars, which would be nearer to the fair share which the 30% Hungarian population of the town may lawfully claim. The German associations will receive a grant amounting to 7000 dinars, while the rest of the amount will be divided among various Slav and other associations.

Six scholarships have recently become vacant at Zombor, where the Gyalókay Fund supplies fifteen Roman Catholic secondary school boys with scholarships of 4000 dinars a year each. At its meeting on March 20th the Municipal Council of Zombor decided to divide the six Hungarian scholarships among five boys of Slav nationality and only one Hungarian boy. — y —