

# MARGINAL NOTES ON YUGOSLAV POLICY

## SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF M. TSVETKOVITCH'S PREMIERSHIP

BY

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On February 5th it was two years, that after the unexpected downfall of M. Stoyadinovitch, his successor, M. Tsvetkovitch, formed his first Cabinet. Our reason for mentioning this anniversary is that M. Tsvetkovitch has done great service to his own country and also to the cause of peace, not only by bringing to a successful conclusion an agreement between the Serbs and Croats, and normalizing relations between Russia and Yugoslavia, which had been unsettled ever since the end of the war, but also, and from a Hungarian point of view primarily, *by drawing Yugoslavia and Hungary closer together through the Treaty of Friendship concluded on 12th December last, and last but not least, by his more humane and equitable treatment, especially as compared with former conditions, of the Magyar minority in Yugoslavia.*

As regards the Treaty of Friendship, the Bill dealing with its enactment was unanimously passed without debate by both Houses of the Hungarian Parliament. This was taken cognizance of in a series of strikingly enthusiastic articles by all the Yugoslav newspapers irrespective of their political views. The Treaty will be ratified shortly when M. Cincár-Markovitch, Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs visits Budapest.

Two recent events mark the strengthening of the cultural links that have been forged during the past few years between the two neighbour countries. *The one was a concert given in Budapest on January 23rd by the "Obilic", a mixed choral society of university students from Belgrade; the other, the presentation to the Belgrade University of about 200 volumes of the latest publications issued by the Hun-*

*garian Academy of Sciences.* This gift was from the Hungarian Government, and it was handed over to the University by the Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, *M. George Bakács-Bessenyei.*

Another thing that points to an increasing improvement in the political relations, attributable partly to the international tension, was the extreme satisfaction with which the news of the former Hungarian Minister in Bucharest, *M. Ladislaus Bárdossy's* appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs was received in *Yugoslav political circles and by the Serb and Croat Press alike.*

One of the newspapers of the German minority, the "Volksruf", sharply criticized *M. Budanovitch*, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Szabadka (Subotice) because he had ordered the Roman Catholic school-buildings at Szilberek (Brestovac) in the Bácska to be knocked down, and had had a home for a society called the "Youthful Crusaders" built in their stead. The "Volksruf" finds it astonishing that *"the persuasive ability of the priests should be able to coax the extremely thrifty and cautious Swabians to part with millions and millions of dinars for such an entirely meaningless and useless institution designed merely to make the Swabian youth dull and stupid."* Besides in Szilberek, Bishop Budanovitch has established homes of this sort for German youths in three other, mainly Swabian, villages of the Bácska. *"And — says the "Volksruf" — in the rest of the German villages the priests are scheming to obtain possession of German schools and German money for the same purpose" . . . "We warn the parish councils of the German villages — continues the newspaper — not to help the priests to carry out their schemes, not to make terms with the ecclesiastical authorities concerning the school-buildings and school funds confiscated from the Churches by Ordinance No. 10.030 issued on 20th August 1920, when education was nationalized, and not to give any money for such purposes."* ("Volksruf", 1940, Dec. 11.)

As was stated in an earlier issue of this paper, the Germans of Yugoslavia already have over 50 sport societies. German in character and completely under German management. Now, at a meeting of the German sport societies of

the Bácska held on 6th January at Ujverbász (Novi Vrbas) it was resolved at the instigation of the "*Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund*", the central organization at Ujvidék (Novisad) of the cultural and social clubs of the German minority, to form a separate German football association in the Bácska, to function as a sub-department of the *Kulturbund*. The formation of this association will be followed shortly by the formation of similar German football associations in Seremia and the Banate. *Besides this, a separate German games committee is to be organized.* The clubs joining the German football association are soon to resign membership of the Szabadka sub-division of the Yugoslav Football Association. This resolution, which could not have been put into execution a year ago because of the insuperable obstacles that would have been raised by the authorities, signifies an important stage of advance in the widespread organizing activities of the Germans in Yugoslavia. ("Napló", Jan. 8.).

*The movement of the German minority to achieve independence has now spread to all social, professional and even religious organizations, and will increasingly result in the creation of a united German front in all walks of public life.*

*A similar movement, but one more political in character, has been set on foot by the Bunyevatz people of the Vojvodina, a large number of whom openly profess to be Croats.* On 12th January these Bunyevatz-Croats held a meeting at Szabadka under the aegis of the Croat Cultural Alliance, to which 72 cultural societies of the Bácska and Baranya sent representatives. At this meeting, presided over by Mons. Blasko Rayitch, Papal Prelate, and attended by Bishop Budanovitch, comparisons were drawn between the situation of the Bunyevatz-Croats of the Bácska and Baranya and that of the Germans, who, it was complained, were now steadily gaining ground even in the public administration. The Germans — it was stated — had no fewer than four secondary schools, but permission to establish a Croat denominational secondary school in Szabadka had not yet been granted by the higher authorities. It was also complained that there were strikingly few Roman Catholic

teachers or teachers of Croat (Bunjevatz and Shokatz) nationality in the State elementary and secondary schools in the Voivodina. Before the meeting dispersed a resolution consisting of four points was adopted. According to it, the Bunjevatz and Shokatz people of the Bácska and Baranya are Croats, who have thrown in their lot with the Croat nation and have accepted the Croat Peasant Party as their representative. *They demand the appointment of "Croat" teachers in the Croat schools and the establishment of a Roman Catholic "Croat" secondary school and a teachers' training college in Szabadka, where the greater part of the Bunjevatz people reside.* In conclusion the resolution declares that *the cultural organization of the "Croats" of the Bácska and Baranya is the Croat Cultural Association, and their economic organization, the "Matica" in Szabadka.* All "Croat" cultural and economic societies are therefore requested to join these two "Croat" peak organizations. ("Novosti" Jan. 15.)

One effect of the Treaty of Friendship concluded between Yugoslavia and Hungary on 12th December last is that the organization of the Magyars of Yugoslavia has also begun with great *élan*. It makes things much easier that the authorities only occasionally raise difficulties, and no longer make it *a priori* impossible with all sorts of machinations for the Magyars to unfold their wings, as they so often did in the recent past. *The Hungarian Cultural Alliance formed at Ujvidék on 24th November is working with feverish zeal to accomplish the organization of the Magyars of Yugoslavia in the fields of culture, economics, public health and physical training.* This work is greatly facilitated by the gratifying circumstance that the bye-laws of the Alliance were approved at last on 3rd February by the Government. Various Magyar societies have now joined the Alliance, and *there is every reason to expect that in a short time all the cultural, social and economic societies of the Magyar minority will become members thereof.* In terms of the approved bye-laws, means will also be found of establishing sport clubs of a Magyar character, a long-felt want in Yugoslavia. Besides this, the Hungarian Cultural Alliance proposes establishing local branches in as many Magyar villages as

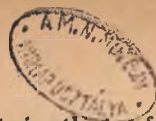
possible, in order to ensure harmonious work and effective co-operation.

The Hungarian Cultural Community in the Banate of Croatia has also been working with satisfactory and growing success. Recently it established two new local branches, and in time it will organize all the Magyars — some 65 or 70 thousand — living in that Banate. To this work of organization belongs the formation on 9th February of a new association for the Magyar university students in Zagreb. This was greatly needed, seeing that after the creation of the Banate of Croatia a Decree was issued by the Ban dissolving all students' associations.

Another satisfactory result of the Treaty of Friendship was that on 11th February the Belgrade Government at long last approved the agreement concluded and signed on 26th July 1939 by Hungarian and Yugoslav delegates concerning the *Tökölianum* and the *Angelianum*, two Serb institutes in Budapest, as well as the *Julian* Hungarian schools which till the end of the last war had been functioning in *Croatia-Slavonia* and *Bosnia*. The ratification of the agreement and the exchange of the documents of ratification will take place in Belgrade. ("Novosti" and "Reggeli Ujság", Febr. 12.).

In the spirit of the Treaty of Friendship *the authorities in Zombor, Ujvidék, Zagreb and Szenttamás (Srobran) allowed the Magyars to arrange balls expressly called "Hungarian balls"*. These balls provided occasions for the exhibition of Hungarian peasant costumes, the performance of Hungarian peasant dances and the presentation of Hungarian peasant customs. A few years ago any attempt to arrange a Hungarian ball or to wear Hungarian costumes would have been frustrated by "irresponsible elements" with all sorts of acts of violence and terror.

The Treaty of Friendship also makes its effect felt in connection with the notorious Decree restricting the buying and selling of real estate. In the matter of an appeal the judgment of the Szabadka Courts of Law, which constitutes a precedent, was that the District Courts have no right to adopt an attitude at variance with the provisions of the recent Ordinance containing various mitigations of the ori-



ginal Decree. The result of this precedent is that, for the present at least, *the practice of strictly limiting the free buying and selling of real estate has ceased, and even people of Magyar nationality have only to produce their certificates of Yugoslav citizenship in order to be able to buy and sell houses and land.* ("Reggeli Ujság", Jan. 23.) This, however, does not mean that a question closely affecting the material interests of the Magyars of Yugoslavia and their chances of being able to acquire property has been definitely settled; but it is an important step towards a just and satisfactory solution.

A certain improvement is also noticeable in the field of Magyar education. One Magyar female teacher has at long last been appointed by the Ministry of Education to teach in the elementary school belonging to a group of outlying farms near Oromhegy (Uzunovicevo) where, for lack of teachers, 238 Magyar children of schooling age have not received any elementary education for some time now. In the purely Magyar village of Gombos (Begojevo), thanks to the representations made by Dr. Leo Deák, former member of the Provincial Diet, 42 Magyar children were transferred from various classes of the State elementary school to a parallel Hungarian department. These children had been relegated to the State school at the beginning of the present school-year by the educational authorities on grounds furnished by the notorious system of name-analysis. Yielding to the insistence of Magyar parents the Government has also opened a Hungarian parallel department in the village of Erdöd (Erdevik), but has omitted or neglected to appoint a teacher of Magyar nationality, or at least one who can speak Hungarian.

A radical and just solution of problem, the school was again urged by Senator Varady, Dr. Leo Deák and Dr. Ivan Nagy, three prominent leaders of the Magyar minority, when they paid their respects to *M. Miho Krek*, the new Minister of Education, on 13th February. Whether their efforts will be crowned with any success worthy of the name, the future will reveal.