

# POLITICAL MOSAIC

## RUMANIA IN OLD AND NEW EUROPE

Rumania cannot rest in peace. She demands the restoration of her former, now broken, frontiers and keeps on intriguing against her neighbours. In blind rage she not only challenges Hungary and Bulgaria, but is even prepared to quarrel with Soviet Russia.

Recently *Patriarch Nicodem* issued a *pastoral letter to the Rumanian nation*, in which he described the Vienna Award forced upon Rumania by the Axis Powers as "a ruthless and terrible mutilation". The country is groaning in pain — says the Patriarch — as though the lament of the great Rumanian poet, Eminescu, who said that "From the Dnyester to the Tisza the whole Rumanian nation weeps", had come true. The Patriarch then appeals to the Almighty to save the Rumanian people from having to quaff this cup of bitterness, and prays that they may be allowed to unite again within their old frontiers.

This pastoral letter, issued by the head of the Rumanian Church, clearly shows that *Rumania has not given up her dream of ruling from the Dnyester to the Tisza*,

That country has learned nothing from the experiences of the past twenty-two years. Hatred, ignorance and ambition, taking advantage of momentary weakness, created a large State which collapsed the first time it was faced with serious difficulties. All the favours showered upon it by the era now past were not enough to enable it to play the great rôle assigned to it. With stolen, alien territories in her possession, Rumania gave herself up to dreams of supremacy, to achieve which she *kept five million people of other nationality in the galling bonds of minority slavery*. During the past two decades the country was in a constant state of revolution kept in check by military law, and the corruptness of public life, coupled with this permanent unrest, *was poisoning the whole atmosphere of South Eastern Europe*. Rumania made no attempt either to appease her own subjects or to effect reconciliation with her neighbours; she added blunder to blunder and has no one but herself to blame for the ruin that has overtaken her.

But history knows no cold shower sobering enough to bring the Rumanians, intoxicated with dreams of supremacy, to their senses. *They still continue to behave as they have done for the past twenty-two years*.

Even now Rumania has a considerable number of minority citizens, amongst others about a *million Magyars*. She has not

taken to heart the lessons taught by the unfortunate results of her minority policy during the Trianon era. She not only continues to pursue the old disastrous policy of intriguing against her neighbours, but also contrives to make the atmosphere of hatred at home more stifling than ever.

In a lengthy article published in a Rumanian newspaper appearing in Arad, a writer, who evidently aspires to winning the same kind of laurels as Haynau did at Brescia, *threatens to bastinado any Rumanian women who dare to speak a single word of Hungarian*. In his opinion, however rude and unchivalrous it may seem, the only way to prevent people chatting in Hungarian is to flog them.

Such Press statements require little commentary. If women of Rumanian ethnic origin are threatened with a beating for daring to speak Hungarian, what is likely to happen to those whose mothertongue it is?

Rumania not only flouts the Vienna Award; she also evidently visualises settling down thus in the new European order of things. She heats the atmosphere of Orthodox mysticism to the point of fanaticism in order to foster hatred of their neighbours among her own people.

### FRESH PERSECUTION OF THE MAGYARS LEFT IN SOUTHERN TRANSYLVANIA

As a result of the Vienna Award of 30th August 1940 about a million Magyars were left in Rumania. After the Iron Guard got the upper hand, their position became much more serious than it had ever been before. They live in a state of civil disability, unparalleled except perhaps in the case of the Magyars of Transylvania in 1919, at the time when the Paris Peace Treaties detached that province from Hungary and awarded it to Rumania. Then, as now, minority inhabitants, in the first place the Magyars of the detached areas, were deprived of their most elementary rights in the fields of politics and culture as well as economics.

*The Magyars of Rumania suffer chiefly on account of the high-handed way in which the Rumanian Government ignores its binding agreement with the Hungarian Government concerning the claims of those who have opted in favour of Hungary*. For months the Rumanian Government kept the Magyars in a fever of excitement and uncertainty with statements (the last was made on 22nd February) to the effect that the six months allowed by the Vienna Award for opting would expire on 28th February. The Hungarian Government, on the other hand, adopted the view that no period for opting could be fixed until the two Governments had arrived at an agreement regarding the methods to be employed. At last, on 26th February, a settlement was

effected between the two countries on the terms proposed by the Hungarian Government. Now that this agreement has been made public, those concerned may learn that, far from the period allowed for opting having expired on 28th February, it has not been fixed yet by the two Governments, and will not be fixed until a reciprocal agreement has been reached determining how the right to opt. is to be exercised and regulating the details connected with the properties of those who, availing themselves of that right, decide to leave Rumania.

*The Rumanian Government's unilateral interpretation of the relevant provisions has been used as a weapon to harass the Magyars, and pressure is being brought to bear on them by the authorities in order to force them to leave the country.* Many have been compelled to yield to that pressure, and, selling their properties for a song, have left their native land, only to be robbed of their possessions — articles of value and money — at the frontier. The loss, material and moral, sustained by the Magyars of Rumania because of this conduct of the Rumanian authorities is incalculable.

*Even today the authorities refuse the Magyars permission to organize, hold meetings and gatherings, or arrange lectures.* Because of this, not only the social and church life of the Magyars, but also their co-operative business, is paralyzed. *The Magyar racial community does not possess one single Hungarian daily, for the "Déli Hirlap", which was published in Temesvár, was suppressed by the Government last December, and has not been allowed to appear since.* In most places the wireless sets belonging to Magyars have been confiscated, so that now, lacking newspapers in their own language and the wireless, the Magyars of Rumania are in ignorance of what is going on in the world. Even during breaks the pupils of village elementary schools are not allowed to speak a word of Hungarian. *Speaking Hungarian in any case exposes people to insults and persecution everywhere, so that nobody dares to use that language openly in the streets.* In very many places the Magyar inhabitants are treated with great inhumanity, and even today are subjected to domiciliary visits. *M. Joseph Keresztes, a Reformed Church pastor, was cruelly tortured in Arad, and it was only on the intervention of the German and Italian Mixed Commission that he was released by the police.* M. Keresztes, who had been kept in chains and maltreated for a long time, is now laid up at home with a nervous breakdown. In *Aldoboly (Dobolii de Jos), a village of County Háromszék, Stephen Imre, a local farmer, who had gone out at night to the stable with a lamp to see why his cattle were restless, was severely beaten by the Frontier Guards with the butt-ends of their rifles. He was taken to the hospital at Brassó in a dying condition.* In *Arapatak (Araci), another frontier village in the same county, the premises of the Reformed Church*



elementary school were being used for Divine Service because the church itself had been badly damaged by the earthquake. But on instructions from the authorities the Rumanians have begun to hold their dances in those premises, so that the Magyars prefer to worship in the dangerous church building. One Sunday, when there was to have been a baptism, and all the Calvinists of the village flocked to the church, *the gendarmes drove them away* and beat two young men nearly to death. The Reformed Church authorities were required to hand over the courtyard of the parochial buildings to be used as a site for a Rumanian church, and were told that if they refused it would be taken away by force.

The German Press has begun to take note of what is going on in Rumania. On 22nd February the "*Südost Echo*", a newspaper appearing in Vienna, contained a rather long article showing how German education had fared in Rumania. In the light of that article the boasted "benevolence" with which the various Governments had, according to their own statements, treated the minorities turns out to have been little deserving of the eulogies they bestowed on it. The "*Südost Echo*" accords full praise to the educational policy of the pre-war Hungarian Government and at the same time declares that the German State schools maintained after the war by the Rumanian Government for the Swabians of the the Banate lost more and more of their natural character year by year. *In the Banate* — says the "*Südost Echo*" — *there is scarcely such a thing as a German school*. The schools of the Saxons of Transylvania — which before 1919 were generously subsidized by the Hungarian State and which were able to function undisturbed during the Hungarian era — found themselves in a much less favourable position under Rumanian rule. If everything is taken into consideration — says the article in question — it will be found that German education in Rumania may be considered to have practically ceased by 1940. It was only at the eleventh hour that reconstruction on a National Socialist basis saved the German schools from utter extinction.

LANDS ARBITRARILY EXPROPRIATED DURING  
THE RUMANIAN ERA MAY BE RECLAIMED.  
THE LAND REGISTRY OFFICE IS FUNCTIONING AGAIN  
IN THE RESTORED AREAS.

The areas of Eastern Hungary and Transylvania restored to Hungary are daily becoming more and more an organic part of the mother-country. March the 17th was an important date in their life, for on it the Land Registry Office began to function again, and the Hungarian laws relating to real estate came into force.

As a consequence Northern Transylvania has now become organically connected with the highly developed legal system in force in Hungary, from which it was so arbitrarily detached by Trianon. How disastrous the effects of the 22 years of Rumanian rule were on legal life in Transylvania, may be gathered from the fact that *in the restored areas the Hungarian authorities were obliged to suspend the functions of the Land Register for more than six months*. The departing Rumanian authorities left everything connected with the Land Register in the greatest confusion, which is not surprising when we consider that in the so-called "Regat" — Rumania proper — the Land Register was an unknown institution, and that little was done in the past 22 years to introduce it there. No wonder then that the Transylvanian Land Registry Office suffered in consequence of the occupying Rumanian régime's ignorance of its functions.

Simultaneously with its beginning to function again a number of measures came into force that make a redress of the wrongs suffered during the past 22 years by Magyar landowners possible. Those who during the Rumanian era were induced to part with their estates to persons threatening to persuade the authorities to take steps involving serious financial or other losses to the owners and serving the interests of the would-be purchasers may, under Order in Council 1440/1941 issued by the Prime Minister, apply before 22nd February 1942 for the transactions to be invalidated.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the many illegal or pseudo-legal methods employed by the Rumanian authorities and private persons abusing their privileged position as majority citizens to deprive the Magyars of Transylvania of their possessions. Compulsion, threats, misrepresentations, abuse of official authority, judicial partizanship, legal quibble, were all employed to deprive the autochthonous Magyars of their property. "Historians" were paid by the Rumanian Government to comb ancient archives and produce all manner of false data to prove that the assets of the economic and cultural institutions belonging to the Hungarian churches could either be taken from them by means of lawsuits or simply confiscated. The lawyers employed by the State and the municipalities were constantly on the watch to discover various pretexts for laying hands on the estates of the Magyars. Certain cases were such crying instances of injustice, bore such marked signs of mere greed, that they achieved a shameful notoriety all the world over. Such was the case of the Private Property of the Szeklers of Csik, upon which finally judgment in favour of the plaintiff minority was pronounced by the Geneva Areopagus. Onisiforu Ghibu, priest and professor, was notorious for his zeal in laying claim on behalf of the State to minority property. Ghibu marked out the estates of the Roman Catholic Church of Transylvania as his prey, and with the help

of the State, the Courts of Law and the Land Registry officials applied himself to the task of stripping that ancient Church bare.

Now when the hosts of greedy pro-consuls have departed from part of a Transylvania reduced to the level of a mere colony, elementary justice demands that the despoiled Magyar institutions and private persons should be reinstated in their rightful possessions.

The Order also makes mention of those who parted with their real estate, not because they were compelled by the authorities to do so, but because they had suffered such severe financial losses during the period of occupation that they were forced to sell on terms ensuring an unreasonable profit to the purchasers. Such persons may claim compensation, either in the form of a restitution of part of their land, or in some other form. Then let us remember the 100.000 odd Magyars who after the Trianon Edict of lamentable memory was enforced, were forced to leave their native land because their new masters had taken the bread out of their mouths. And let us think of the no small number of exiles driven out of their homeland by brutal treatment and the fear of death. Those people were obliged to sell their belongings for a song, in order to save at least a fraction of their possessions. Elementary justice demands redress for these people too.

As regards the negative side of the Order, mention should be made of the fact that neither §. 1 nor §. 2 refers to the transactions in real estate that were effected within the framework of the law, such, for instance, as took place under the Land Reform. *The Rumanian Land Reform with all its legal consequences remains valid*, and this although Rumanian official circles made no secret of the fact that it was devised in order to break the economic and political strength of the Transylvanian Magyars. *Despite this it will be left intact by the Hungarian Government*, with which a respect of vested rights is a tradition and which is inspired by a spirit of social understanding.

Another important measure contained in the Order stipulates that no aliens may acquire possession of agricultural or forest land in the restored areas without the permission of the Minister for Agriculture. This restriction is no novelty; it merely upholds an old Rumanian law, with the difference that the Hungarian interpretation thereof will not prove detrimental to the Rumanians of Transylvania. For in the Rumanian legal system the conception of citizenship is expressed by the term „nationalitate”, corresponding to the French word “nationalité”, and the authorities, taking full advantage of its double meaning, used it as a means to prevent people of Magyar nationality acquiring real estate. As Hungarian law makes a sharp distinc-



tion between nationality and citizenship, there is nothing to prevent a priori an elastic interpretation of the conception of citizenship.

## WHAT THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DONE FOR THE PEOPLE OF SUB-CARPATHIA

From the first moment of the return to the Crown of St. Stephen of the "gens fidelissima", — the most loyal followers of Prince Rákóczi in his war of liberty, both the Hungarian Government and the public of the mother country have been doing their best to make these honest people forget all the miseries of the twenty years of Czech domination. Sub-Carpathia is, perhaps, the most deserted spot on earth. Its people are poor, its land is barren, and the twenty years of Czech rule introduced all sorts of political, and religious controversies. In consequence, the opposing groups of the population were always too weak in their division to unite against their rulers for the defence of their interests.

The foremost task of the Hungarian Government was to *alleviate the misery* of the Ruthenian people and thus to make it a useful and productive member of the community of St. Stephen's Crown. The repair of the neglected roads, bridges and railway lines, and the building of new ones, was the first step towards this end; hereby the Ruthenian people has been enabled to convey its products to the mother country. *The Hungarian Government has spent over 10 million pengő on the repair of roads and bridges.* This sum meant a substantial contribution towards the abolition of unemployment, which had already become a state of natural development in the twenty years of the Czech régime. After the repair of the means of communication the most essential thing was the exploitation of the greatest natural resource of Sub-Carpathia, that of wood. The cultivation of forests and the production of wood is now proceeding at such speed that to-day there is not only no unemployment question in Sub-Carpathia, but, on the contrary, there is a growing shortage of labour. In some places, however, there is an occasional wave of unemployment, but here (as for example at Munkács), the Government at one blow solves the problem by means of some public works. *For twenty years the Czech exercised such a ruthless policy of exploitation in the Sub-Carpathian forests that, if their régime had lasted another 20 years, there would have been no forests left in that region.* In order to counterbalance the effects of this disastrous policy, the Hungarian Government at once took steps to begin the planting of new forests. Thus, at the very outset the Government had 3 million pine saplings planted and established 123 nurseries, in order to encourage the production of wood. The above numbers have since increased considerably, and the planting of new forests is proceed-

ing at a rapid pace. At the same time, the Government took measures to improve the quality of pastures, cattle breeding and dairy farming being the principal means of living in Sub-Carpathia. *Considering the present economic crisis of the country, it was wellnigh a heroic deed to provide, at such times, for the repair and cleaning of pastures and the setting up of drinking places for the cattle.* In order to illustrate what enormous responsibility the Government has undertaken, it will be enough to mention that in the district of Szobránc the cleaning of pasture land needed 8.700 working days, while the improvement of pasture land in the district of Rahó cost 100.000 pengő.

!Furthermore, great care had to be taken of cattle-breeding, special breeds of cattle had to be purchased which could survive on the alpine pasture land in Sub-Carpathia. *The Government distributed 72.000 brood-cows among the farmers, who pay the price — by instalments — from the amount received for the milk sold by them to the cooperative societies.* The organization of these cooperative societies requires great care, and the Government has hitherto issued 41.000 licences for the opening of new branches.

The scheme effected by Government in respect of the cooperative movement has proved very beneficial to the people of Sub-Carpathia. The old branches have been retained, while new ones have been established with the assistance of the *National Credit Institute and the "Hangya" ("Ant") Cooperative Society.* The cooperative societies provide, not only for the supply of the people of Sub-Carpathia, but also for the selling of its products. For this purpose the Government has organized the *Society for the Sale of Cattle*, with the participation of the Hungarian Farmers' Union and the "Hangya". This society is not merely a business undertaking, but it also deals with the improvement of live stock and its most advantageous exploitation; for this reason the Society buys the surplus products even in the smallest villages.

With a view to finding a similar solution for the credit to be extended to the Ruthenian farmers, the Hungarian Government has settled the affairs of the "*Podskarpatska Bank*", which had been on the verge of bankruptcy towards the end of the Czech régime. *The Government had to offer a helping hand in order that its shareholders, poor Ruthenes in America and Sub-Carpathia, may not lose their small savings.* The bank was saved by the intervention of the Bank Syndicate and thus the investments of small people were also saved.

Further economic assistance was given to Sub-Carpathia by the Government's resolution to exploit all the products of the land so as to serve the wellbeing of the Ruthenian population. The Government has set up *ten institutes for experimentation with medicinal plants* and aerating establishments for the drying of medicinal plants, whereby the Verhovina region, which is rich in medicinal plants, has found a new means of livelihood. At Nagy-



szőlős a flax mill has been built, while at Tekeháza a working house for basket making has been opened and wickers for this purpose purchased in the neighbourhood.

In additional to these economic measures the Hungarian Government has also been careful to *raise the level of education* in Sub-Carpathia. On January 26th, 1941, the foundation of the *Sub-Carpathian Scientific Society* took place with a view to furthering and protecting the Ruthenian scientific and ethnographic values and interests. The Government has also opened a number of schools for the education of children in their own tongue. *The number of teachers recently appointed to Sub-Carpathia is over 1500*, and these teachers frequently go for short visits to the Capital, as the guests of the Government, while the most eminent pupils of Sub-Carpathian schools are educated free of charge in institutes in Budapest. The Hungarian Budget this year allotted 1 million pengő for scholastic purposes in Sub-Carpathia.

The above is just a rough description of the Government's work in Sub-Carpathia in the past few months. It is our firm belief that the love and help extended to that province both by the Hungarian Government and by the Hungarian public will soon enable the Ruthenian people to become again what they were before — a powerful support of the Crown of St. Stephen, in brotherly cooperation with the Magyar people.