

CURRICULUM OF SECONDARY AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS IN RESTORED SOUTHERN HUNGARY

BY

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The organization of education in Yugoslavia, a country that was itself to blame for its collapse, was such that the favoured German and, to a lesser extent, the numerically inconsiderable Rumanian minorities were granted certain meagre rights, but the rest of the minorities were very niggardly treated from the very outset. The Magyar national minority, for instance, did not possess one single board or technical school, and it was a well-known fact that in the two secondary schools (gymnasias) it was supposed to possess — the so-called parallel departments of the eight-class secondary school at Szabadka and the four-class one at Zenta — apart from Hungarian grammar and literature and now and then religion, all the rest of the subjects were usually taught in the official language of the State alone. *In the elementary and secondary schools where the medium of instruction was the official language of the State Hungarian was not taught even as an extra subject, clear proof that the Magyars and their language were not considered to be of any importance in the areas wrested from Hungary and attached to Yugoslavia.*

In contrast with this the Hungarian Government is pursuing quite a different policy, one of fair-play and understanding, in the restored Southern areas, as the following data prove.

Ordinance 58.500/1941, issued by the Hungarian Ministry of Education, contains a provisional timetable for all the secondary and technical schools in the restored areas of Southern Hungary, along with rules concerning the régime of those institutions.

This Ordinance applies to all secondary schools, thus

also to those in which the language of tuition is German or Serb, as well as to the teachers' training colleges, commercial schools and industrial secondary schools, including the mechanical and architectural departments, women's industrial schools and all boys' and girls' board-schools.

The timetable provides for the teaching of minority languages in Southern Hungary, and is so constructed that, besides acquiring a knowledge of Hungarian, the pupils will be able to make progress in the various branches of science. In secondary schools (gymnasia) in which Hungarian is the language of tuition Latin will be taught four times a week in every class. In the German and Serb gymnasia the teaching of Latin will begin in the third class. *In the Hungarian gymnasia the Serb language will be a compulsory extra subject in the first four classes and an ordinary subject in the four upper ones.* By making Serb a compulsory subject the Ordinance aims at preventing the children of the Serb populations of Southern Hungary from forgetting their mother-tongue and ensuring that on leaving school for positions in the administration they will be able to speak to the Serb nationals who have business to do in public offices in the latter's own language.

The above nationality clause applies only to schools in which Hungarian is the medium of instruction and has nothing to do with the curriculum of the Serb schools, which all through takes into consideration the educational requirements of the Serb nationals in accordance with the rights guaranteed to them in the laws of Hungary. How true this is may be gathered from the speech of Dr. Valentine Hóman, Hungarian Minister of Public Education, during the debate on the part of the Budget affecting his own portfolio on 11th November. Here we shall quote only one passage from it.

"The Government" — said the Minister — "must make provision for the nationalities, and the State must deal with their cultural requirements. The attitude of the Hungarian Government is clear and unambiguous, and is in conformance with centuries-old Hungarian traditions. *In Hungary the nationals are free to use their own racial culture. The citizens of non-Hungarian tongue who are living among us must be*

made to feel and given to know that they are not the step-children of the Hungarian State."

How and to what extent these principles are being applied in practice in the Bácska and the Baranya Triangle the following data taken from a report made by Dr. Ivan Nagy, Ministerial Councillor and University Lecturer, will show.

According to that report, besides 354 Magyar teachers, 282 Serb, 241 German, 46 Slovene and 35 Bunyevatz teachers were taken over from Yugoslavia by the Hungarian State. This is the more worthy of note if we remember that these Southern Slav male and female teachers were taken over by Hungary in wartime, when every State must be more careful than usual in its choice of the persons to whom the education of the coming generation is entrusted. This gesture on the part of the Hungarian Minister of Education is an unmistakable sign that Hungary has no desire for reprisals and that in the sphere of education, and culture in general, she wishes to give to the nationalities living in restored Southern Hungary the rights guaranteed, in accordance with the principles of St. Stephen, by the Hungarian laws and the Hungarian Constitution to all her non-Hungarian speaking but loyal citizens.