

THE "RE-RUMANIANIZATION" OF THE SZEKLEERS

BY

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A ccording to the Rumanian census, about one-third of the 1.660.488 Magyar inhabitants of Transylvania (which was detached from Hungary and adjudged to Rumania by the Trianon edict) live in the four counties known as the "Szeklerland": *Csik, Háromszék, Udvarhely and Marostorda*. The Hungarian census of 1910 found 502.030 Magyars in the Szeklerland and even the Rumanian census of 1930, the figures of which are illusory because of the unreliable nature of the statistics so arbitrarily registered, puts their number at 472.476, or 67.4⁰% of the total population of that region.

The several Rumanian Governments have done everything in their power to strip this compact block of Magyars of their national characteristics. In the spheres of religion and education those half million Magyars have been practically at the mercy of the endeavour to Rumanianize them. By means of forcible proselytism the Rumanians try to shepherd the Magyars into the fold of the Rumanian national Church. Like mushrooms, Orthodox parishes spring up in every part of th Széklerland, and recently Orthodox deaneries were established in three purely Magyar towns: *Kézdivásárhely, Sepsiszentgyörgy and Székelyudvarhely*. Education is also being pressed into the service of this "*re-Rumanianization*". The "cultural zones" established by the *Elementary Education Act* promulgated on 26th July 1924 are also intended to further the denationalization of the Szeklerland Magyars. In ten of the Transylvanian counties, among them

the four above mentioned, special measures have been instituted by that Act. Teachers of State schools are accorded special material privileges of no mean sort — a supplementary salary of 50%, etc. (§ 150). Naturally the main task of these well-paid teachers, who, by the way, for the greater part scarcely know a word of Hungarian, is to denationalize their Magyar pupils. The same is the aim of the system of so-called "name analysis" (§ 8), which examines the ethnic origin of the children's parents, and should it be established that a child's parents or ancestors were "Rumanians", such a child may not attend any school other than a Rumanian public or private one.

It is a sad fact that in these Magyar districts the language of instruction in the infant schools (Kindergartens) is exclusively Rumanian and that the teachers employed in these schools do not speak Hungarian at all. It is also a lamentable truth that in every field the Magyars of the Szeklerland are being harassed with the expressed purpose of divesting them of their nationality and their religion, or, as the Rumanian Government says, "of restoring them to their original nationality."

Rumanian propaganda does its best to prove that this great Magyar island, the Szeklers, are a people entirely different from the Magyars of Hungary. It was Professor Jorga who first, in 1926, put forward the theory that the Szeklers were simply Magyarized Rumanians.

Since, however, the only argument he could urge in support of this theory was that the houses, dances and songs of the Szeklers resembled those of the Rumanians, he altered it in the May of 1927, saying that the Szeklers were descendants of the Cossacks. In April 1929, again, he modified the whole theory and declared that the Szeklers were not Rumanians, but that there were very many Magyarized Rumanians in Szeklerland.

The protagonist of the anti-revisionist movement, the "Universul", is the organ of a well organized Government propaganda. It demands that foreign countries should be enlightened as to the "real" ethnic composition of Transylvania, and finds fault with the Rumanian Statistical Office for registering the Szeklers under the same heading as the Magyars.

Our only reply is that scientific research has established the fact that the Szeklers are a race akin to the Magyars and that in all probability they were sent by King Ladislas (Saint Ladislas) from Transdanubia to settle in Transylvania for the defence of the eastern frontier line. Whether they were Huns, Avars or Kabars — all kindred races of the Magyars — is a question over which authorities on history may be left to argue. One thing is certain: none of those tribes was Rumanian.

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