

BOOKS

Dr. Andvew Fall: „Why Hungary is Entitled to Transylvania“.

An extremely interesting book was recently published by Dr. Endre Fall under the title: *“Why Hungary is Entitled to Transylvania”*. In the first place the author points out that the Paris peace treaties annexed to Rumania 103.000 sq. kilometres of Hungarian territory (31.7% of pre-war Hungary) with 5.200.000 inhabitants. This, together with Bessarabia, South Dobrudja and Bukovina, involved the annexation of 157.146 sq. kilometres of new territory by Rumania, this territory containing nearly 9 million (8.738.000) inhabitants; this amounts to an increase by 114% in territory, while the above number of inhabitants was added to Rumania's original population of roughly 7 millions (6.966.000). The population of Greater Rumania included 5 million minority inhabitants. As for Transylvania, this province has preserved its Hungarian character ever since the conquest of the country by the Magyars. Not until the twelfth century did the kings of Hungary begin to settle German colonists here, investing them with special privileges in respect of local government. The Wallachian shepherds (by which name the “Rumanians” were known until the nineteenth century) did not begin to filter into Hungary in small numbers and only sporadically from the Balkans until the tenth century; gradually their numbers increased, until they reached their pre-war figures. Their migration followed no set scheme; this explains why the Wallachians did not receive privileges similar to those of the German colonists. Nevertheless, many Wallachians were raised to the rank of nobility, in the same way as the Magyar serfs. The Wallachians belonged to the Greek Orthodox church, and only a small number adopted the Greek Catholic faith.

The Hungarian war of independence of 1848 granted equal rights and complete liberty to the Magyar serfs and to all non-Magyar nationalities, including — of course — the Wallachians. Act LIV of 1868 incorporated the rights of the minorities, including those of the Rumanian churches.

It is evident, therefore, that the Rumanians cannot lay any historical claim to Transylvania. The theory of what is called “Daco-Roman continuity” is both false and unscientific. It has been proved that the ancestors of the Rumanians (Wallachians) migrated from the Serbo-Albanian coast to Thessaly and then

to Macedonia, where the Greeks called them "*blacchos, vlacchos*" (meaning "peasant"; hence their former name "Wlach", "Wallachian"). After this the wandering tribe lived in the neighbourhood of the Bulgarians; from here they wandered into their present kingdom, whence a number of small groups penetrated into the neighbouring province of Transylvania. The waywodeships of Moldavia and Wallachia were created by the kings of Hungary, who intended them to act as marches (military frontier districts), so that these two provinces — the union of which in 1861 led to the creation of the Principality of Rumania and subsequently, in 1881, by decision of the Berlin Congress, to the foundation of the Kingdom of Rumania — really owe their existence to the kings of Hungary.

On geopolitical grounds, too, Hungary alone has a rightful claim to Transylvania. The Carpathian mountains are so inseparably united with the Danube Basin encircled by them that peoples inhabiting the latter also form a similarly indivisible unit. The same fact is proved by the inseparable water system of this area. The forests and mines of the mountains form a firm link with the granary of the Great Plain; they weld the provinces of the thousand-year-old Hungarian Kingdom into an unbreakable economic unit. On the other hand, the Carpathian mountains separate Old Rumania from Transylvania, their respective water systems and economic interests remain counter to one another.

The distribution of its population, too, binds Transylvania to Hungary. The river valleys and the municipal centres in Transylvania are inhabited by Magyars, and the Eastern counties (the "Sicilian area") are likewise inhabited by Magyar Szeklers; this area extends over 18.768 sq. kilometres (over one third of Transylvania) and the Rumanians form only one fourth of the population here. The Saxon element forms small but compact groups, whereas the Rumanians — even in the counties where they live in large numbers — are mixed with other national elements, mainly Magyars. The intellectual superiority of the Magyar people may be seen from the fact that even the Rumanian official statistics admit that the large towns of Transylvania (Nagyvárad, Arad, Kolozsvár, Szatmár, Marosvásárhely, etc.) have an absolute Magyar majority, while the others with one exception show a relative Magyar majority.

The strategic importance of the Carpathians is extremely great. With the help of this chain of mountains Hungary possessed a stronger natural bulwark than the Maginot line throughout her history of a thousand years; and it enabled Hungary to defend herself and — at the cost of enormous sacrifices — Western Europe against the danger of Pan-Islamism and then against that of Pan-Slavism, thus securing the balance of power in Europe. It is, therefore, extremely important for the whole of

Europe that the Hungarian people should again be allowed to guard the Carpathians as it did during a thousand years.

Rumania has deprived her minorities of their rights, of their means of livelihood; the Land Reform deprived them of their land, while the various regulations deprived them of the possibility of earning a living by finding work in economic life, as we showed in our last number. On the other hand, the Hungarian régime fostered their economic interests and promoted the well-being of the population in general, irrespectively of nationality. The Hungarian régime endowed the Rumanian churches with large estates and other property. The Rumanian and Saxon banks in Transylvania were allowed to allot former Hungarian estates to their racial kinsmen even at the cost of the interests of the Magyar element and to increase the wealth of their people at an unprecedented rate. Twenty years of Rumanian rule have proved enough to arrest this natural development of economic life and to reduce the population to a state of destitution.

The author then quotes a number of foreign authorities describing the Rumanians as immoral, uncivilized and savage hordes; he even quotes certain Rumanian authorities censuring the appalling corruption now raging in Rumania. As against this picture, the author points out that the Hungarian Princes of Transylvania and the kings of Hungary founded the first Rumanian printing presses, published the first Rumanian religious books and inspired the first beginnings of the development of Rumanian literature; they were also responsible for replacing the Slav liturgy by the Rumanian national liturgy. As we have seen, they endowed, the Rumanians with complete equality of rights by means of the Acts of 1848 and 1868; they also gave considerable grants to the Rumanian churches and schools; the teaching of the Rumanian language was allowed freely in these schools, and the heads of the Rumanian churches were invested with high secular functions. On the other hand, the whole world knows the machinations whereby the Rumanians continued the unceasing persecution of their minorities, — how they deprived them of their right to the Hungarian language, of their schools, of their church privileges, and how they went on Rumanianising their minorities after turning them out of their estates.

Anyone who peruses Dr. Fall's highly interesting book will be conscious of the fact that Hungary alone has any real claim to Transylvania, not to mention the purely Magyar frontier district on the Rumanian side of the new frontiers.