

HUNGARIAN-SLOVAK RELATIONS

BY

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The relations between two nations are reflected on the one hand in inter-State actions and on the other hand in the manner in which they reciprocally treat their minorities, — provided that they have minorities living under their care. The relations between Hungary and Slovakia too must be adjudged from these two viewpoints. There are Magyars living in Slovakia: and there are Slovaks living in Hungary too; and there is in addition a lively diplomatic and economic intercourse between the two States. And now, if we would outline the present condition of the relations between Hungary and Slovakia, we must survey briefly the relevant events. We must investigate the question of the results attained by Hungary and Slovakia respectively in the development of the relations between the two States.

I. HUNGARY

During the winter months the Slovak minority has been displaying a lively cultural activity. Literary and cultural soirées and lectures have been arranged, theatrical pieces performed, and social gatherings organised, in most cases with a double object. In the first place, to strengthen the cultural consciousness of the Slovak minority; and on the other hand, to procure from the receipts of the cultural soirées etc. the material means of enabling the Slovaks of Hungary to develop their own social policy — and in particular to provide support for poorer Slovak students attending universities. This cultural activity on the part of the Slovaks of Hungary has been on so large a scale and so general in character that the Slovak papers appearing in Slovakia too have been repeatedly compelled to acknowledge the fact. In its January 15th., 1942, issue the “*Gardista*”, a daily, for instance, publishes an exhaustive report dealing with the cultural activity of the Slovaks

living in Hungary during the Christmas week and at New Year. The January 23rd. issue of the same paper was again in a position to publish a report of cultural activity on the part of the Slovaks living in Hungary. *Here, of the factors engaged in cultural activity, mention is made of some ten Slovak cultural associations.* Long articles summing up the cultural activity of the Slovaks of Hungary were published also by the following papers: — “*Slovenska Politika*” (January 29th.), “*Slovenska Pravda*” (January 29th.) and the semi-official “*Slovak*” (February 1st.).

Valuable evidence of the loyal attitude respecting the relations between the two countries adopted by Hungary is the significance attaching to the visit to the Tatra region of M. Anthony Ullein-Reviczky, Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary, Chief of the Hungarian Press Bureau, who spent his holiday in a health-resort in that part of Slovakia. The Hungarian diplomat took advantage of the opportunity offered by his stay in that country to get in touch with M. Casper Tido, Chief of the Slovak propaganda Bureau, and M. Mach, Slovak Minister for the Interior. These conversations attracted the attention, not only of the Slovak and Hungarian, but of the foreign papers; and the pourparlers were regarded as tokens of a desire on the part of Hungary to develop the friendly relations between Hungary and Slovakia.

In this connection there are events to be recorded in other fields too. Hungary has approved of the conclusion in Slovakia of the so-called Settlement Convention. She has acknowledged the validity of the claims put forward by Slav settlers introduced into Magyar areas previously detached from Hungary, which claims amount to more than 100,000,000 crowns. *To cover this amount the sum of 60—70,000,000 crowns is to be written off from the amount of the debt due by Slovakia to Hungary under the agreement relating to the distribution of the assets of the Kassa—Oderberg Railroad Co. In addition, Slovakia is to take over from the estates of Hungarian nationals situated within the territory of that State 18,000 cadastral yokes of arable and 40,000 cadastral yokes of forest land.* As may be seen, therefore, the loyal attitude in respect of property rights and

economic questions by Hungary towards the young State of Slovakia is the same as that shown by her in cultural matters too.

Quite recently an agreement was concluded in terms of which Hungary is to surrender to Slovakia documents of great importance: one of the most important collections of this kind to be handed over being the archives of the former Pan-Slav Association, the "*Slovenska Matica*", which the Hungarian authorities were compelled to seize when taking penal measures to counteract Pan-Slav agitation.

II. SLOVAKIA

The Hungarian (Magyar) ethnic group living in Slovakia has also in recent months attempted to develop its cultural life. The object of the endeavours of the leaders of the Magyars of Slovakia was the same as that of the leaders of the Slovaks living in Hungary, — to appropriate the receipts obtained by their cultural activity for socio-political purposes, for the support of infant schools and the financial assistance of Magyars studying in Slovak universities. *The January 29th. issue of the "Gardista", however, launched a savage attack on John Esterházy, leader of the Magyars living in Slovakia, blaming him for the appearance in the "Magyar Hirlap", a Hungarian daily published in Pozsony, of a notice of the arrangement of a Carnival gathering.* The attitude adopted by the "*Gardista*" was that such gatherings could not possibly be tolerated, even if so far no ordinance prohibiting such had been issued. As a consequence, *the only event of the kind in the life of the Magyars of Slovakia which we are in a position to record was the conversazione arranged by the Magyars of Nyitra, which was a gratifying success both in material and in moral respects.* The "*Magyar Néplap*", in its January 25th. issue wrote about this event; but the February 1st. issue of the semi-official "*Slovak*" already announced that Carnival gatherings of all kinds had been prohibited in Slovakia.

The Slovak papers have recently launched several attacks on the person of John Esterházy. *He was attacked, for instance, in the January 29th. issue of the "Gardista" in connection with the arrangement of a cultural soirée by the*

Magyars of Pozsony. He was attacked also in the January 28th. issue of "Slovenska Politika", which quoted a speech made in the Slovak Parliament by Deputy Kocsis expressing doubts as to whether the grievances enumerated by Esterházy in the Slovak Parliament as having been suffered by the Magyars of Slovakia had really occurred. At the same period broadcasts were given by the Pozsony radio station in which a re-evaluation of the past history of Hungary was put before the public on the basis of unwarrantable presumption. Early in February, for instance, Dr. Tóth—Paulini spoke of the Slovaks having during the past two decades been subjected by the Hungarians to a large-scale magyarisation. What really happened was just the contrary: for even in the second half of the nineteenth century the Magyar element in the districts of Upper Hungary continually lost ground as compared with the Slovaks, — a fact most strikingly proved by the very name of the speaker himself, seeing that it would be difficult to find a more distinctively or more ancient Magyar name than Paulini-Tóth.

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