

Hungarian Minority Tensions With Slovaks Worry Budapest

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BUDAPEST, June 21—Tension between the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and the Slovaks has caused worry here this month.

Hungarians also complain about discrimination against the Hungarian minority in Rumania.

It is understood that both Alexander Dubcek, the new Czechoslovak Communist party chief, and Janos Kadar, the Hungarian leader, have intervened personally to calm tensions between Hungarians and Slovaks.

They conferred on the matter at a meeting in Budapest last week and agreed to continue working closely together to resolve the nationalist conflicts.

In May and early June, Hungarians returning from visits to Bratislava, the Slovak capital, and other Slovak communities reported that the minority had come under intense pressure from Slovak chauvinists.

A recent visitor to Slovakia said that "in some villages the Hungarians feel it is better not to go out at night," and then went on to speak of beatings and scuffles.

Reunion Avoided

A woman who went to Bratislava to attend an alumni reunion of her Hungarian school there said many of her former classmates stayed away from the festivities because they feared trouble with their Slovak neighbors.

There are believed to be almost one million of Hungarian origin in Slovakia, although fewer than 700,000 openly declare themselves to be members of the minority. Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was dissolved in 1918, all Slovakia belonged to the Hungarian crown.

Between the wars, Bratislava was officially a trilingual and trilingual city—with Austrians, Hungarians and Slovaks enjoying equal rights.

Czechs, though a tiny minority in Bratislava, soon took over most of the leading political and economic posts, acting as agents of the Prague Government. From the Slovak viewpoint, this exchange of Hungarian-Austrian masters for Czech masters served to fan their nationalism all the more during the period between the wars.

Meanwhile, some of the Hungarians of Slovakia, remembering the days when Bratislava was Pozsony—and the capital of a truncated Hungary—still hold it to be "theirs" and they have occasionally provoked the Slovak majority. After World War II about 120,000 Hungarians were resettled from Slovakia to Hungary.

Since 1945, Bratislava has become an almost exclusively

Slovak city and has lost virtually all its cosmopolitan aura.

According to reliable information available here, groups of Slovak nationalists marched in May through villages where the Hungarian minority predominates, shouting: "Hungarians to the Danube." The Danube forms part of the border between Hungary and Slovakia.

Gyula Lorincz, a Stalinist who was appointed chief of the minority in 1946 by the Hungarian premier, Matyas Rakosi, inflamed Slovak resentment further last month by declaring that Hungarians "had not asked" to be included in Czechoslovakia in 1918.

Retorting to this sally, a Slovak cultural official, Ondrej Kulik, told the Hungarian minority newspaper in Bratislava, Uj Szo: "If the Hungarians want to destroy our state then nothing remains for us but to drive them out with weapons."

The hope in political and intellectual circles here is that the Czechoslovak democratization process will eventually slake Slovak nationalist demands for federal rights and then will permit the Hungarian minority to gain greater group liberties.

The Hungarians in Slovakia are hoping to obtain more schools and higher educational institutions as well as a theater.

Situation in Rumania

The situation of the Magyar minority of 1,500,000 people in Rumania remains a sharper thorn in the Hungarian side. While Budapest intellectuals acknowledge that there is slightly greater travel freedom and that there have been economic improvements for the Hungarians in Rumania, they complain of other forms of discrimination.

They note that Hungarian textbooks are often printed in editions of under 5,000 copies, which a writer said, "is far too small for a minority that size." Imports of most Hungarian writings are barred by the Bucharest authorities. The intellectuals also excoriate the resettlement measures that have driven thousands of Hungarians out of their traditional homes in the Transylvania region of Rumania.

Earlier this year, the Rumanian regime abolished the Transylvanian territory known as the Magyar Autonomous Region, redrawing the administrative lines along the prewar county system. The reaction here was a shrug of the shoulders. "That region soon became neither Magyar nor autonomous," said an intellectual "so what is the difference? What counts are personal liberties and equality."