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THE
PROBLEM OF THE BANAT

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY
Dorothy COCKING

PARIS
ÉDITIONS ERNEST LEROUX

28, RUE BONAPARTE (VI^e)

1919

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR :

Din Istoria Dreptului privat Roman (*From the History of the Private Roman Law*).

Bucarest, 1896.

Traité du Casier judiciaire.

Paris, Giard et Brière, 1899.

Notiunea Dreptului (*The notion of Justice*).

Bucarest, 1912.

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Bucarest, 1912.

Romania fatia de răsboiul European (*Rumania and the European War*).

Bucarest, 1915.

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In the following pages we wish to make clear the problem of the Banat, in the form in which it is being put before the Peace Conference.

The first chapter deals with the elements of the problem.

The second and third chapters deal with the two proposed solutions.

The fourth and last chapter summarises the results which we have arrived at.

G. G. M.

Paris, 22nd. January 1919.

N. B. — In the English translation the author has suppressed the appendix and made several slight additions to the text of the work. The appendix to the French edition contained the reproductions of two articles — Roumains et Serbes, and Les Roumains du Timok — which had been published by La Roumanie (Paris) on December 26, 1918, and January 16, 1919, respectively.

THE PROBLEM OF THE BANAT.

I

THE BANAT

Temisiana, or Temisioara, one of the Rumanian provinces under Hungarian rule, has always been spoken of as the Banat.

The word Banat is derived from *ban*, which signifies *chief* or *lord* and corresponds with the French title of marquis. Thus *Banat* simply means *Marquisate*. As Temisiana formed a marquisate, it was called by the Magyars the *Banat of Temesvar*, or, for short, *The Banat*.

This province has for a long time formed a political unity and constitutes a well defined geographical unity, being separated from the surrounding provinces and countries by natural frontiers. On three sides it is bounded by large rivers : the Danube, the Theiss (or Tissa) and

the Marosh (or Muresh), while on the fourth side the frontier is formed by a branch of the Carpathians.

The Banat is an irregular square of 28,523 square kilomètres.

For administrative purposes this province is at present divided into three departments (or Comitats) which are each subdivided into various districts. These departments divide the province into three unequal longitudinal sections which run parallel to the Theiss and the mountains. These are : the department of Torontal which runs along the Theiss and has an area of 10,016 square kilomètres ; the department of Caras-Severin (Krassó-Soreny), which runs along the mountains and has an area of 11,047 square kilomètres ; the department of Temes, which lies between the other two and has an area of 7,433 square kilomètres.

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According to the official Hungarian statistics of 1910, the total population of the Banat was 1,582,133 ; of these 466,147 fell to the department of Caras-Severin, 500,835 to the department of Temes, and 615,151 to Torontal.

The same statistics made out that, according

to the mother-tongue (1) of the inhabitants, 592,049 were Rumanians, 387,545 Germans, 284,329 Serbs, 242,152 Hungarians (Magyars) and 76,058 of other nationalities.

We are obliged to refer to the Hungarian statistics, these being the only existing official ones for that region. But it is said that they have been arranged to the detriment of non-Magyar nationalities. In them the number especially of Rumanians is given at a lower figure, because the Rumanian element, which is compact, strong, and attracted by a neighbouring flourishing state, constitutes a grave danger for Hungary.

On the other hand, Hungarian religious statistics partially prove this « arrangement » of statistics according to the mother tongue. This has also been admitted by all foreign writers and scholars who have taken an interest in the question (2). For this reason it has become the custom to rectify the statistics taken according to the mother tongue, by making use of the religious statistics, thus getting a more accurate

(1) By « mother tongue » the Magyar statistics refer to the national language of the individual.

(2) Arthur Chervin, « *L'Autriche et la Hongrie de demain* » (Paris, 1915), p. 7. Seton-Watson, « *Rumania and the Great War* » (London, 1915), p. 76.

estimate of the true state of affairs. By rectifying the Magyar statistics in this manner, we find that the total number of Rumanian inhabitants of the Banat amounts to 615,336. But still the actual number of Rumanian inhabitants is greater than this partly corrected figure shows.

The original population of the Banat is Rumanian and was formed by the fusion of Romans and Dacians ; Dacia, of which the Banat formed a part, having been conquered by the Romans at the beginning of the 2nd. century.

After other invasions, Rumania also had to submit to that of the Magyars in the 9th. century. But it was not till the 11th. century that the Magyars really established themselves in the province, which then fell under the sovereignty of the Kings of Hungary, yet still keeping its complete autonomy.

In the middle of the 16th. century, the Turks conquered the Banat, holding it for more than 150 years (1).

(1) Towards the end of the 15th. and in the 16th. century, owing to the pressure of the Turks, who had invaded and then conquered Serbia, there were great immigrations of Serbs into the Banat. But of this Serbian population, of which it was impossible to realise

At the beginning of the 18th. century the Austrians, in driving out the Turks, annexed the Banat, making a colony of it for Germans, Serbs, and also some Lorrains and Czecho-Slovaks (1).

In consequence of a compromise concluded in 1867 between Austria and Hungary, the Banat then passed under Hungarian rule, and in 1872 there began a systematic colonisation of the Banat for Magyars.

the exact importance, nothing — or at least little — remained at the beginning of the 18th. century, A large part recrossed the Danube, returning to Serbia while the remainder partly emigrated towards the centre of Hungary and partly perished in the wars which flooded this country especially during the 17th. century. A map of the Banat executed by the Austrian authorities in 1725 shows 34 communes as being completely abandoned, and 80 as having an extremely reduced population.

(1) Regarding the colonisations of the 18 th. century, compare the book by K. v. Czoernig, « *Ethnographie der Oesterreichischen Monarchie* » (Vienna, 1855), which contains a chronological list of the forced colonisations in the Banat from 1720 till 1846. Date, community and nationality of all colonists are shown according to official documents.

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The present situation of the Banat is the following :

The Rumanians already consider the Banat as a part of Rumania.

The Rumanians of Transylvania, of Crishane and of Maramuresh have constituted an independent state after having separated themselves from Hungary.

A General Assembly of 100,000 Rumanians held at Alba-Julia (Transylvania) on December 1, 1918, founded a Council of 200 members which forms the Constituent of the new State. This Council has also founded a Government which has assumed sovereign power over all Rumanian provinces which had hitherto formed part of Hungary. The Government of the new State, in accordance with the Constituent and supported by the General Assembly of Alba-Julia, proclaimed the union of the new Rumanian State with Rumania. The Banat is thus officially united to Rumania.

But Serbian troops penetrated into the Banat, occupying the western portion, and forcibly prevented the union of this portion with the

new Transylvanian State (1). The Serbs claimed to have rights in the Banat ; and now, in January 1919, they still hold the western part of this province as far as the railway Arad-Temisvar-Vershetz, in spite of Rumanian protests and in spite of the fact that the Entente Powers had by the Treaty of Alliance concluded with Rumania in 1916, acknowledged the Banat to be a Rumanian province which ought in its entirety to be united to Rumania.

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Thus the problem of the Banat consists in a controversy between Rumanians and Serbs as to the rights of their respective nations to this province.

We will now proceed to examine this controversy.

(1) The Serbs also prevented the 200 Rumanian delegates of Torontal from taking part in the General Rumanian Assembly of Alba-Julia. See our article « Rumanians and Serbs » in *La Roumanie* of December 26, 1918. As a reply to this act of violence the Assembly of Alba-Julia specially confirmed the rights of Rumania to the entire Banat.

Bibliographical Note.

So far a special monograph on this subject has not been published, but the matter has often been discussed in the press. Amongst the articles bearing on the question, we can point out the following, in the order of their publication.

Our article, *La Question du Banat*, in *La Roumanie* of November 14, 1918.

A letter by M. EMILE MOREAU entitled *La Question du Banat* in the *Temps* of December 12, 1918.

Answer to this letter by M. G. YAKCHITCH, entitled *Le Banat*, in the *Temps* of December 19, 1918.

Answer by M. TRAJAN LALESCO, entitled *La Question du Banat*, in *La Roumanie* of December 26, 1918.

Our article in same number of *La Roumanie* entitled *Roumains et Serbes*.

Reply to M. Jakchitch by M. D. DRAGHICESCO in *Le Rappel* of January 1, 1919, entitled *Le Banat de Temesvar*.

Our article *L'occupation du Banat* in *La Roumanie* of January 2, 1919.

At the moment of this little work going to print, *La Roumanie* of January 23, 1919, announces the appearance of a book by M. SÈVÈRE BOCOÛ (a native of the Banat) entitled *La Question du Banat*. We regret that we have not been able to take note of this work, which is not yet obtainable. See also in same number of *La Roumanie* article by M. G. MURNÛ : *Le Problème Serbo-Roumain*.

The various documents on the Banat have been furnished by the general works on Austria-Hungary or on Hungary, as well as by the official statistics of Austria and of Hungary.

Among the special works on the Banat we would quote that by the Abbé J. GRISELINI, which is important because it dates from the 18th. century. This work, published in Italian at Milan (1780) under the title of *Lettere Odeporiche*, etc. was translated into German and published in Vienna (Austria) under the title *Versuch einer politischen Geschichte des Temesvaren Banaten*. It is now in the national library of Paris.

Besides this, by, we might recommend as a further special work the study by the Reverend Father GEORGE POPOVICI : *History of the Rumanians of the Banat* (in Rumanian), 1904.

SERBIAN CLAIMS IN THE BANAT

The Serbian claims in the Banat are of a rather recent date.

The national claims of Serbia have especial regard to the part near Macedonia, but she has also asserted her claims on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Several Serbian patriots are also considering a union with the other Southern Slavs.

But not until recent years has Serbia laid a claim to the Banat — or at least to a part of the Banat — which claims have become accentuated during the war. In consequence, a dispute has arisen between Serbs and Rumanians, who had always been friends.

The Rumanians believed that the Serbs would

finally renounce their claims owing to their being so little foundation for them, and also because of the great sacrifice which the Rumanians are making in favour of the Serbs in the Timok region, where 300,000 Rumanians are living in a compact mass (1).

In view of Serbo-Rumanian friendship, and of the friendly sacrifice on the part of Rumania in favour of Serbia, the Serbian claims to the Banat do not cause much anxiety to Rumania. For this reason the right of the latter to the Banat, and the lack of foundation for Serbian claims, has not been made the subject of a serious propaganda in foreign countries. The Serbs have taken advantage of this fact by making an intense propaganda in favour of their claims.

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The result of this Serbian propaganda, which was not in any way counteracted by Roumania,

(1) The highest figure acknowledged by the official Serbian statistics is 159,510 (statistics of 1895). But unfortunately these statistics have been « arranged » according to the Magyar system, to the detriment of the Rumanian element. See our article *The Rumanians of the Timok*, in *La Roumanie* of January 16, 1916.

was to give the impression in many quarters that Serbia had a real right to a portion of the Banat. And yet, if these Serbian claims are examined in the light of the principles of liberty and justice, which are to serve as the basis for the coming peace, it must be found that they are without any foundation whatever.

And the fundamental principle which must help to solve territorial questions is, without doubt, the principle of complete liberty of peoples. In order to attain this complete liberty, each people must rule the territory which, in majority, it inhabits.

Are the Serbian claims to the Banat founded on this principle of liberty and justice? Certainly not. *The Serbs have no majority in the territory which they claim in the Banat.*

This is easy to prove with the aid of the official Magyar statistics. They show the following:

Considering the Banat as a whole, the Serbs represent 18 p. c. of its population (284,000 Serbs out of a total population of 1,582,000).

This proportion not being sufficiently favourable from the point of view of the Serbian propagandists, they have found that the Banat does not form a geographical unity owing to its being partly flat and partly mountainous. They have

therefore decided that it ought to be divided politically into two portions, i. e. the plains and the mountains. They say that the plains are Serb, while the mountains are Rumanian.

The accuracy of the statement that the mountainous part of the Banat is essentially Rumanian cannot be doubted, for in this portion 72 p. c. of the population is Rumanian, *while only 3 p. c. is Serb* (336,000 Rumanians and 14,000 Serbs out of a total of 466,000).

The assertion of the Serbian propagandists that the plains of the Banat are Serbian is, on the contrary, not accurate. For in this portion (the two Comitats Torontal and Temes) only 22 p. c. of the population is Serb (266,000 Serb out of a total of 1,105,000). The more moderate Serbs have understood that it is ridiculous to assert that a territory should belong to a nationality which does not form even a quarter of its population.

They have therefore reduced their claims to the Comitatus of Torontal. In this Comitatus the Serbs are certainly more numerous, without however forming the majority of the population. They represent 32.4 p. c., or nearly one-third (199,000 Serbs out of a total of 615,000).

But let us now examine the nationality of the inhabitants of each district of the Banat.

As regards the districts of the Comitatus of Krasso-Szööreny, where the Rumanians represent 72 p. c. and the Serbs only 3 p. c., it is unnecessary to do this; and the Serbs agree that it is unnecessary.

But as regards the other two Comitatus — Temes and Torontal — the situation is as follows :

Of the eleven districts of the Comitatus of Temes, the Serbs have a majority only in one, i. e. in the district of Fehertemplom, where they represent 57 p. c. of the population.

Of the fourteen districts of the Comitatus of Torontal, where the Serbs claim that they are the indisputable masters, they have a majority in only two : in the district of Torock-Becse, where they represent 68 p. c., and in the district of Antalfalva, where they represent 52 p. c. of the population.

Thus the Serbs have a majority only in three districts; and even these districts are not contiguous, but form three separate thinly populated racial islands or groups. It is therefore impossible to find a portion of the Banat which has a Serbian majority sufficiently definite to give the Serbs any foundation for their claims (1).

(1) After the appearance of the French edition of this little work, M. LALESKO, continuing this analysis, examined the ethnical conditions of each *commune* of the

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There is, however, the following objection : it is true that the Serbs have not a majority in any portion of the Banat and that they cannot claim any part of this province if ethnical principles are rigorously applied — these principles which are only another form of the principle of liberty of peoples. But the mixture of races in the Banat does not permit of the rigorous application of this principle, which ought therefore to be modified by the aid of other principles.

It is not a question of the undisputed right of Serbia to some portion of the Banat, but of a compromise in favour of Serbia.

Let us then examine the matter from this point of view. Which are the secondary principles which should form the basis for argument, and in which order should they be applied? The

Banat; he found that, according to the official Hungarian statistics, of the 795 communes which constitute the Banat, the Rumanians are in an *absolute* majority in 456, and in a relative majority in 16 other communes. Thus the centres of population of the Banat are, in their great majority, Rumanian, which goes to prove still further that the ethnical character of this province is Rumanian. Compare *La Roumanie* of February 6, 1916.

Serbs refer above all to the strategic necessity ; they speak only timidly of their historic rights and object to considerations based on geography.

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The military argument of the Serbs is the following : « There is an evident necessity for a defence for Belgrade and the Morava valley ». It is therefore necessary for them to establish themselves beyond the Danube in order to defend the capital of Serbia and her main ways of communication. This argument, never very strong, has since the end of the war lost all value ; for this fact there are two main reasons.

First, the extraordinary progress made during this war by artillery and aviation, as well as in the means of repelling sudden attacks, have minimised the defensive value of an army encamped on a narrow strip of land with two large rivers in its rear.

The second reason which renders the military argument null and void is that this argument is in contradiction to the aims of peace which have been solemnly proclaimed, i.e. the need for establishing an international organisation for the prevention of future war. The ideas of strategic

necessity and of the Society of Nations clash with each other.

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I have already mentioned that the Serbs are timid in speaking about historic rights ; this is not without its reason, for they are obliged to admit that they are only colonists in the Banat, while the original population is Rumanian.

They must also acknowledge that the Serbian colonists were brought there in the 18th. century by the Austrian authorities, who oppressed the original Rumanian population and tried to denationalise it by enforced colonisations. Now is the time to make good this injustice towards the Rumanian people, not to maintain it.

As for historic changes, there only appears to be one in favour of Serbia : the constitution in 1849 of a Serbian Duchy (Voivodine), which also comprised the Banat. But this Duchy, which only lasted eleven years, was Serbian only in appearance. It was organised by Austria and depended on her ; civil and military authorities were German, the official language was German, etc.

It is comprehensible that the Serbs should be slightly diffident in taking advantage of this

German organisation in order to support their claims to the Banat. If any other people can lay a claim to the Banat, it is the Germans, not the Serbs ; the former also inhabit the Banat in greater numbers.

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We now come to regard the problem from the geographical point of view.

The Serbs of the Banat are separated from their kinsmen by two large rivers — the Danube and the Theiss (Tissa), and are united in a province of which the boundaries are in reality natural. The Banat is, in fact, a rare example of a country with natural frontiers : on three sides it is surrounded by large rivers — the Danube, the Theiss and the Marosh, while on the fourth side the frontier is formed by the Transylvanian Alps.

Should then this province be divided amongst several different states ?

It should; if different nations possessed incontestable rights to certain portions of it. The principle of geographical unity would thus have to give way before the fundamental principle of the liberty of peoples.

But this does not apply in the case of the Banat.

As regards the Serbs, it has been shown that they have no absolute majority in any part of the Banat. It is evident that if the principle of nationality were applied to each inhabitant, there would be many thinly populated racial islands — especially in the Torontal — which would have to be assigned to Serbia. But as such ridiculous parcelling out is not admissible, the geographical principle must be applied.

The Serbs should only propose a territorial division of the Banat which could justify their claims without violating the great principle of liberty of peoples.

But they will never succeed in doing this.

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What solution can then be found? Is it necessary that, in order to make a concession to the Serbs all principles, on which peace is to be based, be violated? Is this admissible? Is it even reasonable that the Serbs should demand such injustice from the Allies? For that which constitutes a favour for the one, means injustice to the other.

On the one hand there are the unfounded claims of the Serbs; on the other, the incontestible rights of the Rumanians to the Banat.

In order to be just to the Rumanians, the principles which are to form the basis of peace must not be violated, they need, on the contrary, only be applied.

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In stating these facts and remembering the sacrifices made by Rumania in favour of the Serbs of the old Kingdom of Serbia, it is impossible to understand the attempts made by the Serbs to establish themselves in the Banat, thereby trampling under foot Serbo-Rumanian friendship.

The remark recently made by M. Adrien Veber in *La France Libre* of December 29, 1918, is very true: « It is an open secret that Serbia is not behaving well towards Rumania, and that the Entente hesitates to remind Serbia that after all war was declared owing to her, and that Rumania has been a belligerent nation and sacrificed herself for the common cause... » (1)

(1) We do not wish here to raise the question of the effort made and the losses sustained by Rumania in the war. We have lately mentioned them in our article *Les Titres de la Roumanie* in *Le Rappel* of Jan. 20, 1919, and partly reproduced by *La France* of Jan. 21, 1919. Rumania was not attacked. The enemy coalition did

its best to win her to its side, but she refused to join the enemy and remained on the side of the Entente. She attacked the enemy coalition, putting all her forces and her resources at the disposal of the common cause and risking her own existence. Exhausted by an effort beyond her strength; completely cut off from her western Allies; betrayed by her neighbouring Ally; her army swamped by a Russian army which was three times as large and which was fraternising with the enemy, threatening the Rumanians; isolated, pillaged, martyred by the enemy on the one hand and her former Allies on the other, Rumania capitulated. No other country has been in such a terrible situation. M. A. Gauvain, in the *Journal des Débats* of October 8, 1918, rightly remarked: « Rumania has not, like Serbia, the possibility of an exodus by sea ». Unlike Serbia, Rumania had not the advantage of being able to remain in contact with the Allies — she was, on the contrary, entirely isolated from them and the Allies could not help her. The endurance of Rumania (which prevented the advance of the Russians at a time when it would have been a disaster for the Allies), her confidence in spite of unspeakable miseries, her fight against Bolshevist anarchy, her great sacrifices (800,000 dead, which means one inhabitant in nine) add new claims to the bravery of her soldiers and to the services rendered by her campaigns of 1916 and 1917.

III

THE RIGHT OF RUMANIA TO THE BANAT

We have shown in the preceding chapter how the Serbian claims to the Banat should be dismissed, and in doing this the rights of Rumania have been made clear. The dispute in fact lies between Rumania and Serbia. The other nations represented in the Banat by certain important minorities — the Germans and the Magyars — do not dispute the rights of Rumania. In order to show more clearly the fairness of the Rumanian claims, we will examine her right to the Banat in the same way as we have examined the claims of Serbia.

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To begin with, that fundamental principle, for the sake of which the Allies have fought and which is to form the basis for the Peace Treaty, must not be lost sight of : the principle of liberty of peoples. This means to say that each people has the right of governing the territory in which it constitutes the majority of the population (1).

We have seen that in the department of Caras-Severin the Rumanians are in an overwhelming majority : 72 p. c. according to statistics of language, 73 p. c. according to religious statistics ; and, in reality, more than 80 p. c.

The Rumanians are also in an absolute majority in a territory of almost 15.000 square kilometres, or more than half the Banat. As regards this half of the Banat, no one can contest the right of Rumania (2).

(1) That means that a territory should belong to the nationality which forms the majority of its population. This is another form of the principle of nationalities, which is a consequence or an aspect of the principle of liberty of peoples. See our article « *L'heure de la Justice* » in *La Roumanie* (Paris) of December 19, 1918.

(2) If the centres of population of the Banat are examined, — i. e. the communes — it will be found that the great majority of these are Rumanian : of the

In the other half of the Banat the Rumanian are represented by a quite important minority but in that part no other people is in a majority either. There is, in fact, a mixture of races, of which the relative majority is German.

During the 18th. century the Austrian Government pursued an important policy of colonisation in this portion of the Banat, which was the most fertile, bringing in Germans, Serbs (1), Czecho-Slovaks and even French (from Lorraine). It often happened that the authorities turned Rumanian peasants out of their own houses and properties in order to make room for colonists.

The Austrian Government by this means tried to weaken the original Rumanian element and to assure their own domination by means of creating antagonism of races. This was an illustration of the Austrian motto : *Divide et impera*.

795 communes which constitute the entire Banat, 472 are Rumanian; in 456 of these the Rumanian population is in an *absolute* majority, and in the remaining 16 in a *relative* majority. See the article by *M. Lălesco*, quoted in the footnote of page 20.

(1) Under the pressure of the Turks, who had conquered Serbia, there had been an immigration of Serbs; but in the beginning of the 18th. century, no more of these Serbian immigrants were left. (See footnote 1, page 10.)

Later on, after 1872, the Hungarian Government began a colonisation of Magyars, in order to Magyarise the country. None of these foreign elements inhabit in a compact mass any region sufficiently large for it to become the object of a national claim for the colonising nations.

The result of successive colonisations has been the establishment of many small racial islands, amongst which the original Rumanian element has persisted, maintaining the ethnical unity of the country and giving it a Rumanian character.

Another result is the extraordinary mixture of races in the western part of the Banat. There the Germans are the most numerous, not the Serbs.

To try to apply the principle of nationality in this portion of the country would be absurd, for it would mean the creation of a number of small states on 15.000 square kilomètres.

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As it is impossible here to apply the fundamental principles which ought to serve as basis, what solution would be possible? It will be necessary to apply secondary principles. The secondary principles to be applied are the following:

Historic rights, or, rather, reparation of past

injustices; geographical principle, or the principle of natural frontiers; the attempt to prevent future wars by avoiding friction between two nations; economic necessities of the land; mutual sacrifice.

All these principles serve to support the claim of Rumania to the Banat. For this reason we have said in the preceding chepter that, in order to satisfy the claims of Serbia, it would be necessary to violate all the principles which are to form the basis for the coming peace treaty, while to satisfy the claims of Rumania it would only be necessary to apply these principles.

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As regards the historic right, it will be sufficient to call to mind that the original population of the country was undeniably Rumanian and that the country for a long time formed an independent state under a Rumanian ruler.

All the changes which have finally brought this province under Magyar oppression, the accumulated injustices against the original population, the colonisations undertaken in order to denationalise and supplant the original element, cannot make these original inhabitants lose their

rights. These rights must be asserted now when injustices committed against nations are to be repaired and a new order of things is to be based on justice.

This forced colonisation, carried through by Austria, who oppressed and tried to exterminate the original population, was a great injustice to the Rumanian people. The moment has now come to make reparation, and it would be supremely unjust if the claims of Serbians, who have been the instrument of the Austrian oppressor, were to be definitely admitted as regards the country belonging to Rumanians.

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The second principle mentioned above is the principle of geography, or of natural frontiers.

This has already been discussed in the preceding chapter, and it has been shown that from this point of view the Banat forms a characteristic example, its frontiers being actually traced by nature.

The idea of dividing the Banat into two or more states being contrary to geographical principle, it follows that it should be assigned to the nation which forms the absolute majority

of the population in half the country, which penetrates into every corner, which constitutes the relative majority of the entire country and which forms the original population.

The Rumanians of the Eastern Banat, which form a continuation of the Rumanians of Transylvania and of Rumania, are not separated from the Rumanian minority in the Western Banat. But on the contrary, the Serbian minority, the result of various colonisations, and forming thinly populated racial groups in the Western Banat, is separated from Serbia by the Danube and the Theiss (Tissa).

Natural frontiers are a guarantee for peace. They have a greater value than fortifications, for they not only serve as defence in case of war, but they prevent war by eliminating all cause for conflict.

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This brings us to the third principle which must be taken into consideration.

The terrible sufferings brought about by the war have imposed on the civilised world the duty of preventing a recurrence of a like scourge. By means of the Peace Treaty all possibilities of future conflict must be avoided.

Therefore, if Serbs were brought into the Banat — thereby bringing together two nations which had hitherto been friends but who at present cannot agree as to their rights to this province — a possibility for mutual expansion and infiltration between Serbia and Rumania would be given and grounds for conflict be created. Instead of taking measures in the general interest of humanity for the purpose of preventing future war, the exact contrary would result : the ground would be prepared for war.

In the interest of all, therefore, the natural frontier of the Danube should be allowed to remain between Serbia and Rumania.

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The fourth principle referred to is that of economic necessity.

The chief source of wealth both for the Banat and for Transylvana lies in the mines (especially iron and coal) and forests.

For the advantageous exploitation of these products their transport by waterway is necessary. They must be transported as hitherto by way of the Muresh, or by the canals of the Banat, towards the Danube and the Theiss. It

will be necessary to make other canals in order to permit of a further exploitation of these products.

If therefore the Banat were to be divided between Serbia and Rumania, the latter would be deprived of her means of transport by water and the exploitation of the products both of that part of the Banat assigned to Rumania, and of Transylvania, would be rendered impossible. The consequences of this would be disastrous from an economic point of view both for Transylvaniana and for the Eastern Banat.

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Another principle which has always been considered as a basis for justice between nations is the principle of reciprocity, both as regards responsibilities and advantages.

If the claims of Serbia to the Banat were admitted, either partly or in whole, this reciprocity would disappear, and it would be Rumania who would suffer.

It has already been pointed out in the preceding chapter that Rumania has made a great sacrifice in favour of Serbia by refraining from putting forward the claims to the 300,000 Ruma-

nians inhabiting in a compact mass the north-eastern portion of Serbia between the Danube, the Morava, and the Timok (1). Rumania has even refrained from all propaganda which, in developing the national sentiments of these Rumanians, might have caused difficulties to Serbia. Rumania has acted in the same way regarding the 100,000 Rumanians of Serbian Macedonia.

Do these sacrifices not deserve any recognition on the part of Serbia ? If the Serbs themselves do not offer any practical recognition of these sacrifices, should not the Allies seek to make it clear to them that a sacrifice on their part equal to that made by the Rumanians would only be just ? It is a question of justice, and it is the duty of the Allies both to impose and to render justice.

If Serbia insists on her claims to the Banat, then Rumania must reclaim the Timok region

(1) See our article « *Les Roumains du Timok* » in *La Roumanie* of January 16, 1919. See also the article « *Roumains et Serbes* » in *La Roumanie* of December 26, 1918. See also the study by M. Valsan, translated by M. Tafraïi, published at the same time as this little work and entitled « *Les Roumains de Bulgarie et de Serbie* » by G. VALSAN, translation by O. TAFRAÏI.

and assert her rights as regards the Rumanians of Serbian Macedonia.

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There is also another aspect to this question.

Apart from the great sacrifices made by Rumania in favour of Serbia, the former on several occasions — many of them very grave — assisted Serbia in face of great dangers, especially in the year 1913. These sacrifices and this help, which should earn for Rumania the gratitude of Serbia, have also served to maintain Serbo-Rumanian friendship. This friendship would be seriously threatened by a possible Serbian theory that all sacrifice should be made by Rumania, Serbia only reaping the benefits. The question thus becomes a moral one, which must be solved by justice, the foundation of the coming peace.

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There is yet another important consideration to be weighed in the light of justice.

Serbia wishes to retrieve even the smallest groups of her subjects from wherever they are at present situated. From the Serbian point of view this is both comprehensible and very lau-

dable. Yet such absolute justice is impossible. It is possible that this action may be contrary to the rights of other peoples (as is the case in the Banat), or renunciations may be in the general interest, both in order to maintain friendly relations between neighbours, and to assure the peace of the world.

Rumania, guided by these considerations, has made important renunciations on all her frontiers. Apart from the 300,000 Rumanians of Serbia already mentioned, Rumania has not reclaimed the 100,000 Rumanians living in Bulgaria on the right bank of the Danube (on the Rumanian frontier). She also leaves to Hungary the Rumanians living in the western part of Crishane and in the north of Maramuresh ; according to Hungarian statistics these do not amount to more than some tens of thousands, but in reality the number is far greater. Neither does she claim the considerable number of Rumanians living in the Ukraine between the Dniester and the Boug, numbering about 600,000. Thus Rumania sacrifices more than a million of her people. She makes sacrifices in all places where she believes these sacrifices to be in the general interest.

It would therefore be most unjust to impose

on her yet another sacrifice in the Banat, without a very urgent reason.

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In the matter of the justice of the claims of Rumania to the Banat it must be added that since 1916 the Allies have admitted her claim to the whole of the Banat. Thus we have yet another proof of the justice of Rumania's claim. And if four of the greatest Powers have admitted the claims of a small country, which by reason of its size is unable to impose its will, that is surely a proof of the justice of these claims.

From all points of view the right of Rumania to the whole of the Banat appears entirely justified.

IV

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

We hope we have made it clear that, as regards the Banat, right is on the side of Rumania. This right is based upon the principles of liberty and justice, which are to be the foundation of the coming peace.

The Serbian claims to the Banat are unfounded; they are contrary to the principles of nationality, as well as to those of justice, which should form the basis for a lasting peace.

The Banat should therefore in its entirety be united to Rumania. The reasons for justifying this solution of the Serbo-Rumanian controversy may be summarised as follows :

- 1) The Rumanians are in an *absolute* majority

in half the Banat. In the entire Banat they are in a relative majority (39 p. c. according to religious statistics). The Serbs *are not in an absolute majority in any part of the Banat*. They are in a relative majority (32.4. p. c.) in *only one* department.

2) The Rumanians inhabit in a compact mass one-half of the Banat (about 15,000 square kilometres), and they are also to be found in all parts of the province. The Serbs are almost completely absent from the Eastern Banat, and only form thinly populated racial islands in the Western part.

3) The original population is Rumanian. The Serbs are only colonists, brought there by foreign authority which oppressed the original Rumanians and tried to denationalise them.

4) The province of the Banat forms a geographical unity, and is a typical example of a country with natural frontiers. Such frontiers being an essential condition for a lasting peace, they must not be changed, more especially when no urgent reason for such change exists. If the Serbs were in a majority in any extensive part of the Banat, the natural frontiers could not be taken into account because the principle of nationality would have to be considered. But this is

not the case as regards the Serbs of the Banat. They cannot rely upon the principle of nationality, nor upon any principle of justice which should form the basis for peace. The sole fact in their favour is that in a single department they are more numerous than the Rumanians. The Rumanians who are in absolute majority in the Eastern Banat form a united body with the minority of the Western part. To separate them artificially would be contrary to justice. The Serbian minority of the Western Banat is separated from Serbia by the Danube and the Theiss.

5) To bring Serbia and Rumania into the Banat, would be to prepare a future war by creating reasons for friction and conflict.

6) In order to be able to exploit the wealth of the mines and forests of the Banat, it is absolutely essential that the waterways leading to the Danube should be utilised : i. e. the Muresh, the canals of the Banat, and the Theiss. By dividing the Banat between Serbia and Rumania, the latter would be deprived of these indispensable means of transport for the products of the Eastern Banat and Transylvania, and their exploitation would become impossible. The economical development of the country would therefore be hindered.

7) Rumania made a great sacrifice in favour of Serbia by refraining from claiming the Timok region (in the north-east of Serbia) where there are 300,000 Rumanians living in a compact mass (apart from the 100,000 Rumanians of Serbian Macedonia). This sacrifice demands recognition. In this question of the Banat the Serbs have, for the first time, an opportunity for making a just return to Rumania. This return, which would mean to Serbia a sacrifice inferior to that made by Rumania, is only a question of justice. If Serbia does not offer to make the return of her own free will, she should be obliged to do it by the Allies.

8) The friendship of Rumania for Serbia has been shown not only by the sacrifice already referred to, but also by the assistance given by her when the latter was in urgent need of it, especially in 1913. Rumania is therefore justified in expecting gratitude on the part of Serbia, who has never yet had an opportunity for helping Rumania. Gratitude cannot be forced, but Serbo-Rumanian friendship would be gravely threatened if it were to become evident that Serbia did not wish to recognise the services rendered by Rumania. The Allies cannot encourage the Serbs in this view.

9) Rumania is making important sacrifices everywhere, on all ethnical frontiers of the Rumanian people : in Serbia, Bulgaria, in the Ukraine, and in Hungary. More than a million Rumanians are thus being sacrificed by their country in the interests of general peace. It would therefore be extremely unjust to demand from her a further sacrifice - i. e. the Banat.

10) In 1916 France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia acknowledged the justice of the claim of Rumania to the entire Banat. As the Great Powers could neither have acted thoughtlessly, nor could they have been forced to this decision by a small Power like Rumania, it must be recognised that in doing so they fully realised the legitimacy of Rumania's right.

STATISTICS

*The population of the Banat according to the Hungarian
official statistics of 1910*

(According to the mother-tongue)

	Rumanian	German	Serb	Magyar	Ot. nat.	Total
a) Caras Severin (Krasso-Szöreny) 11.074 km ²	336.082	55.883	14.674	33.787	25.721	466.147
Percentage	72 %	12 %	3 %	7 %	6 %	

	Rumanian	German	Serb	Magyar	Ot. nat.	Total
b) Temes 7.433 km ²	169.030	165.883	69.903	79.960	16.057	500.835
Percentage	33 %	33 %	13 %	15 %	6 %	

	Rumanian	German	Serb	Magyar	Ot. nat.	Total
c) Torontal 10 016 km ²	86.937	165.779	199.750	128.405	34.280	615.151
Percentage	14,1 %	27 %	32,4 %	21 %	5,5 %	

	Rumanian	German	Serb	Magyar	Ot. nat.	Total
ENTIRE BANAT 28.523 km ²	592.049	387.545	284.329	242.152	76.058	1.582.133
Percentage	37,4 %	24,5 %	18 %	15,3 %	4,8 %	

NOTE. — According to religions statistics, the total number of Rumanians amount 615.336.

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