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PRISONS AND CAMPSEthnic MinoritiesRELIGIONSOURCE LONDON: An emigrant of foreign origin.DATE OF OBSERVATION: current.

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A recently arrived Armenian emigrant from Rumania reports that the Armenian colony in the town of GHERLA - North Transylvania - has now dwindled to the insignificant group of about 30 people, of which only two or three speak Armenian.

GHERLA, once the seat of an Armenian bishop with three beautiful Armenian churches, has now only one Armenian church, which is still open. During the war this church was robbed of two of its most valuable treasures. The large picture by RUBENS "Christ Taken Down from the Cross" bought by a rich Armenian in VIENNA in the 18th century, and a very large, quite unique Persian rug, were taken by the Hungarian troops in 1944 during their retreat from Transylvania and are now in BUDAPEST.

The Armenians are not able to recover these treasures, because they are being told that "the People's Governments of Rumania and the People's Government of Hungary are now great friends" and apparently cannot afford to quarrel about such trifles.

Our informant visited GHERLA several times, as his sister-in-law is living there. He was told that the local prison holds many political prisoners, and he also knows that people are sent from other places to serve their sentences there. A person personally known to him in CONSTANTA had spent three years in GHERLA prison. However, the local population of GHERLA does not appear to have any information about the conditions in the prison.

EVAL. COMMENT: Existence of Armenian colony and location of prison confirmed. - 2,500 prisoners, mostly workers and kulaks.