

HOW MINORITIES LIVE

RUMANIA

ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS ARRAIGNED BEFORE MILITARY TRIBUNALS

The military tribunal in *Temesvár* have sentenced *Francis Faragó*, a Roman Catholic priest of *Lugos (Lugoj)*, to four months imprisonment on a charge of agitation dangerous to the State. Proceedings were taken against this priest because he was alleged to have been teaching subversive songs to the school-children. The Cernaut military tribunal acquitted Dr. *Coloman Némethy*, parish priest of *Józseffalva (Vornicen)*, of the charge of having insulted the Rumanian nation. The evidence for the prosecution consisted of five confiscated letters written by the accused to the editors of Hungarian newspapers in Transylvania, thanking them for the assistance rendered to *Józseffalva* (a Magyar village in Bukovina) when it was almost destroyed by fire. The fact was established by the military tribunal that a primitive and faulty translation of the letters had been responsible for the charge, and Dr. *Némethy*, who at the time of the fire had given his own bed to one of the sufferers, was acquitted. ("*Népujság*", March 23.)

STATE GRANTS (CONGRUA) TO MINORITY CLERGYMEN STILL MUCH LESS THAN THE GRANTS ENJOYED BY RUMANIAN PRIESTS

We have already reported that after lengthy negotiations the Rumanian Government standardized the State grants (congrua) paid to the *Magyar Protestant clergy* on the basis of the grants enjoyed by the *Magyar Roman Catholic* priests. The difference is an improvement of by 67—68%, so that a Unitarian village pastor who hitherto received a State grant of from 1300 to 1700 lei will in future enjoy one of 3000. This is certainly an improvement, but there are two flaws in the measure. The one is that the increased grants have been fixed only for the first three months of the year. For the rest all that the Magyar Protestant Churches received was a promise that those grants would be included in the new Budget beginning on 1st April and would be paid as from that date. The second flaw is that the State grants to be paid to the clergy of the minority Churches have not been made uniform with those

enjoyed by the priests of the Rumanian Churches, which even after the increase promised to the Protestants are much higher than the subsidies granted to the clergy of the minority Churches. ("Hírlap", March 4.)

INSTEAD OF TWELVE, ONLY ONE UNITARIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ALLOWED BY THE ADMINISTRATION

The Unitarian *Church of Transylvania* petitioned the Government for permission to establish twelve new public elementary schools. It is a well-known fact that of the Magyar denominations in Transylvania maintaining schools the Unitarian Church, for lack of material means, was obliged to close down the largest number of schools. Now that denomination is planning a new and more extensive educational campaign, the first step being the filing of applications asking permission to establish twelve new schools. So far Government has only allowed one of the twelve to be established, at Lupény (Count Hunyad). Before deciding about the other eleven applications the Government is to delegate commissions to study the question. We shall quote only one figure here to show how Magyar education has deteriorated and how great the need of new Magyar elementary schools would be: 70% of the Magyar children of schooling-age do not receive instruction in their own mother-tongue. ("Brassói Lapok", April 4.)

RUMANIAN MINISTER OF JUSTICE ADMITS IN PARLIAMENT THAT A MAGYAR ESTATE OF 6.500 YOKES WAS EXPROPRIATED BY MISTAKE

First let it be said that the Rumanian Land Reform has deprived the Magyar minority of almost 3.000.000 yokes practically without paying any compensation for the land. Among the Magyars to suffer was *Count Herman Mikes*, a Rumanian citizen of Zabola (County Hâromszék). An estate of 6.500 yokes belonging to him and his wife was expropriated en bloc before 1926 on the pretext that he was an absentee. Count Mikes produced evidence to prove that he was not an absentee, and this was also established by the Agrarian Committee which heard the case in 1928. This Committee also established the fact that a "mistake" had been made. The half of the estate which according to the findings of the Agrarian Committee belonged to the Countess Clementina Mikes, had been expropriated too. It was furthermore established that the application demanding the expropriation of Count Herman Mikes's estate had been withdrawn before the term during which appeal might have been made had expired, but that by "mistake" the Committee had neglected to take any notice of this withdrawal, and that some-

how or other, nobody knew from whence, an unfiled supplementary application demanding expropriation had appeared. In consideration of these facts the Central Agrarian Committee, although it did not reverse the decision, admitted a "mistake" and authorized the Ministry of Agriculture to redress this wrong and restore to Count Mikes the land to which he is legally entitled. Through the medium of the administrative authorities the Minister of Agriculture actually did issue an order that it should be restored. But the Cabinet then in office fell, and the new Government's Minister of Agriculture revoked the order issued by his predecessor. Thereupon Count Herman Mikes sued the Ministry of Agriculture in the Court of Administration and also in an ordinary Law Court. He won his case in the first and second instance, but the Supreme Court of appeal gave judgment in favour of the State and against Count Mikes. The Count then addressed a petition to the Legal Committee of the Rumanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs." I must note" — said M. Sisesti Jonescu, Rumanian Minister of Agriculture, to Parliament — "that the Committee, which is composed of our most eminent jurists, has, after several sessions, established the fact that a "mistake" was made, and that a way of redressing the injustice done to Count Mikes must be found. The Edict issued while Parliament was in recess has now been submitted for ratification by Parliament. This Edict orders the restoration to Count Herman Mikes of the property expropriated. Speaking of it, M. Misescu Istrate, Minister of Justice (now Speaker of the Rumanian Parliament), said that the order dealing with Count Herman Mikes's expropriated estate was intended to correct a "juridical mistake". In the course of his speech the Minister of Justice gave a detailed exposé of the "res iudicata" of the question. He said that "by mistake" the Agrarian Committee had taken a wrong decision and had expropriated the whole of Count Herman Mikes's land." The Rumanian State and nation cannot take it upon their consciences to acquire 5000 yokes of land *when the judge responsible for the order of expropriation himself admits that he issued it on the basis of false representations*. This is the moral side of the question, Gentlemen", — continued the Minister — and in such a case it makes no difference to me what the nationality of the man who has suffered injustice may be." The Edict was ratified by Parliament, unanimously and without debate. All we have to say on the subject is that we could — alas! — cite a vast number of similar "legal mistakes" in connection with the 3.000.000 yokes of land expropriated in Transylvania from the Magyar minority. The point is that the poor unfortunate Magyars who lost the greater part of their property by expropriation have not been able to obtain redress, although they have wasted their last remaining possessions in seeking it, for they were not in a position to

spend 17 years in litigation, as Count Mikes did, in order to recover the land taken from them by a "legal mistake".

WHAT HAPPENED TO EXPROPRIATED HEADQUARTERS OF SZATMARNEMETI CRAFTSMEN'S HOME SOCIETY

When the Chambers of Labour were formed in Rumania, acting on the *Minister* of Labour's instructions, the *Szatmár Chamber* forcibly took possession of the headquarters of the local Craftsmen's *Home Society*, a building worth several million lei. The Society went to law over this illegal act, and the Court restored the property to the Society. Scarcely had a week gone by when another ministerial order was issued, again handing over the building to the Chamber of Labour. The Society went to law again, but before the lawsuit was over the Ministry applied to the Court to deprive the Society of its status as a fictitious person. The matter has not been settled yet. Now, the Ministry of Labour has made a composition with the Society out of court, and in exchange for a statement in which the Society waives all claims to compensation, a Royal Decree has taken the building away from the Chamber of Labour and restored it to the Society. This is only one of the many instances in which the assets of the minorities are deflected from their original purpose only because they belong to Magyars. The settlement of comparatively unimportant affairs of this sort is being used by Government to throw dust in the eyes of foreign countries; but the 12,000 yokes (of the 63,000 illegally expropriated from the joint tenancies of the so-called Csik Private Estate) which the League of Nations ordered to be restored have not yet been given back to the Magyars. ("*Magyar Lapok*," April 9.)

THE "PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY" AS APPLIED TO MAJORITY AND MINORITY INSTITUTIONS

In the *Kolozsvár* municipal Budget for 1940—41, approved by the Viceregent's Office, a sum of 3,700,000 lei has been appropriated for the majority schools, while the minority schools are to receive only 1,100,000. The *Kolozsvár* Rumanian National Theatre and Opera is to receive a grant of 1,000,000 lei, but the Magyar Theatre (*Thalia Co. Ltd.*) will receive only 300,000. There is no proportion between these sums and the taxes paid by the minority citizens of the town.

UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF SZEKLER COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

The Magyar Parliamentary Group has submitted a memorandum dealing with cottage industries in the Szekler districts.

For, in certain places the Chambers of Labour wish to compel the people engaged in cottage industries, (as, for instance, the potters of *Country Udvarhely*), to take out licences, although the Industrial Act applies only to those who follow an industry as a regular profession and not to those engaged in cottage industries, which are pursued as a means of earning a little extra money. The memorandum notes that facilities have been granted to the Rumanian hill-dwellers, who are allowed to pursue cottage industries without any licence. The memorandum begs for the same treatment in the case of those engaged in cottage industries in the Székler districts. ("*Magyar Lapok*", April 16.)

PENSIONS PAID IN RUMANIA TO DISABLED OFFICERS OF OLD AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMY LESS THAN PENSIONS OF PRIVATES

The disabled officers of the old *Austro-Hungarian* army who live in Transylvania, the *Banate* and *Bukovina*, have submitted a memorandum to the Viceregent of Transylvania, in which they point out that the law regulating the pensions of disabled officers and men does not apply to them, consequently their pensions are so small that a private soldier's is more. The memorandum enumerates the names of 167 such officers, almost all of whom are minority citizens.

NAGYSZALONTA MAGYAR PEOPLE'S CIRCLE DISSOLVED AND ITS ASSETS CONFISCATED

For two decades there existed in Nagyszalonta an "Independent People's Circle" with a furnished building of its own worth 300.000 lei. A general meeting held in 1931 resolved to wind up this society and join the Hungarian Party. From that time on the Nagyszalonta branch of the Hungarian Party used the building of the old Independent People's Circle as a "Magyar House". But when in 1938 Government ordained the dissolution of all political parties but one and the confiscation of their assets, the Nagyszalonta Magyar House and all its equipment was confiscated and the People's Circle was deprived of its status as a fictitious person. The appeal lodged by the Circle against the decision of the Court and demanding the restoration of the building and other — moveable — property has been rejected by the Court of Second Instance in Nagyvárad. ("*Brassói Lapok*", March 25.)

SLOVAKIA

NEW ANTI-MAGYAR PRESS MEASURES IN SLOVAKIA

In our last issue we reported that the authorities were unreasonably restricting the publication of Hungarian newspapers

in Slovakia. *One of the Hungarian papers appearing in Nyitra, for instance, was suppressed.* Now the "Uj Hírek", the Hungarian newspaper enjoying the widest circulation in Slovakia, has been made to suffer owing to the anti-minority attitude of the Slovak authorities. At the New Year the intention of developing this newspaper in 1940 was announced. But before any of the proposed plans could be put into execution, the Pozsony police put a spoke in the wheel. *The editorial offices received a writ (No. 2.000/1940) dated April 3rd restricting the size of the newspaper to four pages.* This measure was instituted by way of "retaliation". The reason stated was that as the Royal Hungarian Prime Ministry had not granted the "Slovenska Jednota", a Slovak newspaper published in Érsekújvár (Hungary), permission to expand, it had been necessary to resort to retaliatory measures. Hence the writ. The facts of the case, however, are that, owing to a shortage of paper, general measures have been taken to reduce the size of all newspapers published in Hungary. *These measures apply equally to newspapers of every description — Magyar and minority alike. Because of this shortage the Hungarian Prime Ministry has not allowed one single Press organ to add to the number of its pages.* This circumstance has been made use of by the police in Pozsony as a pretext for instituting retaliatory measures against the Hungarian "Uj Hírek".

THE LOT OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN SLOVAKIA

For thirty years Emil Karczagi Krupár, a Magyar by race, held an appointment in the Besztercebánya District Sick Relief Bureau. When the Slovak Government took over the administration, a Slovak Government Commissioner was appointed head of the Bureau. Immediately after the change of State, the director of the institute submitted a proposal to the Government Commissioner that Emil Karczagi Krupár should be dismissed at once with six weeks salary in lieu of notice. *In accordance with this proposal, Krupár was immediately deprived of his post as head accountant.* Krupár, a conscientious and efficient official, was completely dumfounded, the more so since during the Czech era he had suffered constant persecution at the hands of the Czech directors, who had involved him in a series of disciplinary proceedings. After his dismissal he appealed for redress to the Labour Court. *The Courts of the first and second instance decided that his dismissal was illegal, reinstated him in his appointment, and sentenced the director who had suggested his discharge to the Government Commissioner to pay him compensation.*

Commenting on this affair, the "Uj Hírek" of Pozsony writes as follows: — "This decision, which serves as a precedent, is important, because there have been many similar cases

throughout Slovakia of Government Commissioners abusing their administrative authority over the institutions placed under their control. *Numerous Magyar families have been the victims of these illegal measures, instituted often to give vent to private dislikes.* In a little town of Eastern Slovakia, for instance, an official, the father of a large family, took his sudden dismissal so much to heart that he committed suicide." ("Uj Hírek", March 20.)

THE MAGYARS' STRUGGLE FOR LIFE IN SLOVAKIA

We have repeatedly called the attention of our readers to the hardships and struggles of the Magyar element in Slovakia. The foremost champions of this struggle for life are the mothers of Magyar children. Their work is described by the Hungarian daily "*Uj Hírek*" (*Pozsony-Bratislava, April 19th*) as follows: "How touching is the modest work which they perform with such enthusiasm! How often have they helped poor Magyars to have their boots mended! We know the boots of our poor Magyars in the suburbs only too well. How often do we watch these boots in the middle of winter with the same pity as Mary Magdalene watched the dusty feet of our Saviour. We know what a supremely charitable act even the mending of a pair of boots may be. The work of the Magyar women is the noblest appreciation of our life, which has now become so hard. The pure love of the mother warms the feeble little blossoms of Magyar life, our little Magyar children and those who have fallen in the struggle for life, and whose life is full of sorrow and misery."

NON-SLOVAK FAMILY NAMES TO BE CHANGED IN SLOVAKIA

We have already mentioned the great campaign which has been started in Slovakia for the changing of Magyar family names. The Slovaks, who have based the government of their State on the principle of governmental and political exclusivity, now wish to pretend that they are exclusive masters of their State even from an ethnographic point of view. The first thing to do, therefore, is the abolition of Magyar family names which betray the Magyar origin of many Slovak citizens. According to a report of the *Slovak Telegraph Agency* a legal foundation has already been created for this new campaign: on March 13th the Slovak Government issued a "decret légal" (edict), which allows anyone to exchange his Magyar name for a Slovak family name. The edict is to remain in force until the end of the year 1940. This shows that the Slovak Government wishes to finish the campaign within a short time, and to blot out the

traces of "Slovakisation" from Slovakia's legislation as soon as possible.

THREE KINDS OF CITIZENSHIP IN SLOVAKIA

As has already been stated in this paper, the new Slovak Citizenship Act divides the inhabitants into three categories in respect of citizenship. The Slovaks are in a different category from the minorities. But even the minorities are not treated alike, the Act making a distinction between Germans and Magyars. This distinction was soon apparent in practice. For in Slovakia the inhabitants must now apply for recognition of their Slovak citizenship, and *the authorities have instituted one procedure for the Germans and another for the Magyars*. The latter had to send in their petitions for recognition of citizenship before 17th April, 1940, but according to the "Grenzbote" of 16th April, this does not apply to the Germans of Slovakia, whose applications must be filed by 21st September, 1940.

YUGOSLAVIA

MAGYAR ROMAN CATHOLICS OF PANCSOVA WITHOUT SPIRITUAL MINISTRATION IN THEIR MOTHER-TONGUE FOR YEARS

Mention has repeatedly been made in our columns of the complaint of the 400.000 Magyar Roman Catholics in Yugoslavia that the supreme ecclesiastical authorities — the bishops and archbishops of the Church, who are all without exception Southern Slavs — have consistently refused to accede to their absolutely legitimate wishes concerning the training of Magyar priests. One consequence of this utterly intolerable state of affairs is that since the Minorites of Arad were forced to leave, *the Magyar Catholics of Pancsova have no Magyar priests, not even one who can speak Hungarian. The Roman Catholic parish of Pancsova is under the care of Franciscan monks of Croatian extraction who do not speak Hungarian*. It is to be hoped that this typical state of affairs will undergo a change now that the Archbishop of Belgrade has — subject to the consent of the Franciscans — graciously permitted Dr. Gregory Orbán, parish priest of *Jakuba*, who voluntarily offered his services, to undertake the care of the Magyar Roman Catholics of Pancsova. ("Reggeli Ujság," Apr. 21.)

RUIN OF MAGYAR SETTLEMENT IN UJVIDÉK

This year's floods have wrought great havoc in many parts of Yugoslavia, as, for instance, at Ujvidék, the capital of the Danube Banate. Here the rolling masses of water flooded the

so-called Adamovitch (formerly Darányi) Settlement inhabited chiefly by Magyars, and either wholly destroyed half of the 2000 houses there, or made them unfit for human habitation. A local Hungarian newspaper, writing of the damage caused by the floods, raised the question of responsibility, and alleged that certain officials had been guilty of gross negligence. The newspaper pointed out that the Town Council had not been elected by the people, and that its members, who were mostly strangers, had not given much thought to the fate of the Adamovitch Settlement and its Magyar inhabitants. They had taken good care to safeguard the some thousand yokes of arable land owned by the town against the danger of floods by means of a strong dyke that had cost 10.000 dinars to build, *but they had forgotten to provide adequate protection for the Magyar settlement.* The flood of 1926 had shown that the town and especially the Magyar Settlement were not properly protected in the direction of Futak, since the dykes and banks were in bad repair. During the 14 years that had since elapsed not one single Mayor of the town had taken the trouble to order the imperatively necessary repairs to be made. The argument that "there was not money" was nothing but a flimsy excuse, for it had transpired from an official letter written on 16th April by the manager of the State Mortgage Bank that in reply to an application made by the Town Council on 20th November 1937, the Bank, on 26th January 1938, had in principle agreed to grant a loan of 20.000.000 dinars to the municipality of *Ujvidék (Novisad)*. Of that sum 5.000.000 dinars ought to have been spent on making the town safe from the danger of floods. As, however, the municipal authorities had for five months neglected to take the steps necessary to obtain the loan, the State Mortgage Bank had been obliged to withdraw its offer at the end of June 1938. To make the picture more complete, it should be noted that the issue of the Hungarian newspaper raising the question of responsibility was suppressed.

INTERESTING PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION

A Parish Council by-election was held on 31st March at *Mozsor (Mošorin)*, a village in the Banate. There were two lists, that of the J. R. Z., the Government Party, and that of the Voivodina Opposition (*Autonomist*) Front. The Voivodina Autonomist Party secured 500 votes, while the Government Party obtained only 268. These results are further proof that the number of those who demand an extensive autonomy for the Voivodina when it comes to the reorganization of internal order in Yugoslavia, is steadily growing, so that now the majority of the inhabitants belong to it.