

POLITICAL MOSAIC

ANTI-FLOOD-DAMAGE SCHEME OF HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

After last year's catastrophe Hungary was again visited by the same disaster this year, when the Danube and the Tisza, and their tributaries, flooded the country to a hitherto unprecedented extent. In addition to the floods, subsoil waters appeared and ruined thousand of acres, a large number of farms and farm-houses.

The protection of the most exposed inundation areas has been one of the outstanding problems of the Hungarian Governments for many years. As early as 1874 and 1881 the Hungarian Parliament passed laws providing for the regulation of the inundation-areas of the Danube and the Tisza, and the results of these operations may be compared with the achievements of any other nation in the world. In order to illustrate the dimensions of these operations let us draw the following comparison: The total length of the Danube and Tisza dykes is 5.800 kilometres. The next longest dykes in Europe are those of the river Po, 525 kilometres, and the Loire, 483 kilometres. The total area encircled and protected by the Danube and Tisza dykes is 4.623.000 cadastral yokes, while the Po dykes protect an area of only 700.000 hectares and those of the Loire not more than 95.000 hectares.

These tremendous efforts of the Hungarian Governments are supplesected by the work of the various dyke companies, all of them bent upon warding off the peril of inundation in the Hungarian Plain. It is a notable fact that there are 35 *private companies* dealing with the protection of the *Tisza*, area, while the *Danube* area is being looked after by 32 *companies*. The total amount of money invested in the works of these companies is more than 400 million pengő. In additior to these, a number of private companies provide for the protection of the areas of the tributary rivers; the largest of these is the Körös-Maros-Tisza company, which provides for the protection of a huge area of 476.000 cadastral yokes.

Unfortunately, however, it has been impossible, so far, to find a solution for the entire flood problem as visualised by Count Széchenyi, the "Greatest Hungarian", last century. In the first place, the overthrow of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849 and the absolutistic régime folowing that tragic event,

prevented the nation from attending to the problem; then in 1914, came the Great War and, four years later, the dismemberment of the country, when it again became impossible even to dream of the solution of this grave problem.

The fact, however, that the country was attacked by floods twice within a year this time, has induced the Hungarian Government as well as the nation as a whole to set themselves the task of completing the gigantic scheme of the great Count Széchenyi; and it is hoped that even though the world is now being devastated by the disasters of the present war, the Hungarian people will be able before long to change the vast plains of its land into a paradise.

BIRTH OF INDEPENDENT CROATIA

One of the most dramatic events in this age of rapid movements was the extinction of Yugoslavia, the last political formation created at Versailles. Quite recently it seemed as if the pro-Axis policy of the Stoyadinovitch Cabinet, continued and intensified by M. Tsvetkovitch's Cabinet, and then the signing of the Tripartite Pact on behalf of Yugoslavia, had gradually succeeded in guiding the ship of State out of the danger-zone, when all of a sudden an outbreak of the reactionary chauvinism of Old-Serbian public opinion precipitated her towards her ruin.

The State of the Southern Slavs, which had reckoned on the strength represented by the bayonets of the Serb soldiers, rapidly collapsed under the blows of the powerful German army and gave birth to the hitherto persecuted ideal of Croatian independence.

The Croat nationalists, who had taken shelter against Serb oppression in the countries of the friendly Axis Powers, have already returned to Croatia to take over the power.

On April 10th General Slavko *Kvaternik*, acting on behalf of Dr. Ante Pavelič, Head of the new State, announced the creation of an independent Croat State. In an interview with the Stefani Agency, Dr. Pavelič pointed out that the Croat State has a history of a thousand years, and that *it had never lived in political union with the Serb people*, except during the last twenty-two years. The river Drina not merely forms the frontier line of the two States, but it serves also as an eternal dividing line between East and West.

M. *Maček* himself, who was Deputy Premier in the Tsvetkovitch Cabinet, has instructed his party and the whole Croat people in general to obey the orders of the new leaders.

Dr. Pavelič proceeded at once to form his Cabinet — the first Government of Croatia — from among the foremost mem-

bers of the Croatian nationalist movement. The organization of the new State is in full swing already.

Hungary was the first country to express its heartiest congratulations on the birth of the new State.

FIRST AUTHORISED MEETING OF TRANSYLVANIAN REFORMED CHURCH DIOCESE

Transylvania is the easternmost outpost of Protestantism. Since centuries it has been washed on the south and east by the sea of Orthodoxy; but the Magyars of these regions stubbornly defend the traditions of Western Christianity and Protestantism. In the sixteenth century this little country, forestalling the civilized West by centuries, incorporated religious liberty in its laws. In the heyday of its princes' rule, and during the reign of the House of Austria, the Reformed Church of Transylvania was constantly in touch with the great centres of Calvinism in the West.

The Peace Edict of Trianon attached this easternmost outpost of Protestantism to Rumania, to a country that with all the passionate fanaticism of young nations espouses the cause of Orthodoxy. It was Magyar Transylvania that first placed in the hands of the Rumanian people the Bible and a liturgy in their own language, thereby setting in train a process that led to the emergence of their Neo-Latin national consciousness and resulted in their reaching a higher social and political level.

How have the Rumanians shown their gratitude for the invaluable service rendered to them by Transylvanian Magyar Protestantism? During the past 22 years the successive Rumanian Governments have done everything in their power to ruin the Magyar Protestants in Transylvania. More than 24,000 yokes of land worth 400 million lei were expropriated from their ancient parishes and schools, for which a mere 20 million lei was paid in compensation; expropriation was in fact equivalent to confiscation. One hundred and seventy schools were taken away from the Reformed Church, so that only one-third of the Calvinist children of schooling age were able to attend Magyar schools belonging to their own denomination; the rest were compelled to attend Rumanian State schools. The *congrua* (State grant) paid to the Calvinist pastors was a mere beggar's portion compared with the rich donations enjoyed by the priests of the Orthodox State religion. In this way the Reformed Church pastors, one of the strongest pillars of Magyar life in Transylvania, sank into the direst poverty.

Now that Northern Transylvania has been restored to Hungary Magyar Calvinism is able to breathe freely again. It counts its wounds and is making preparations for a new lease of life. The first major event marking its deliverance from

bondage was the special General Assembly convened on 29th March, at which it was announced with great rejoicing that after two decades of trials the Reformed Church diocese of Transylvania had now returned to the bosom of its beloved Mother Church. Besides Bishop John Vászárhelyi, Count Arthur Teleki, Moderator, and Counts George Bethlen und Nicholas Banffy, Chief Superintendents, there were present also the representatives of the Reformed Church of Hungary and the Hungarian Government, Bishop Ladislas Ravasz, Baron Daniel Bánffy, Minister of Agriculture, State-Secretary M. Tibor Pataky (of the Prime Ministry), State-Secretary M. Stephen Fáy, (of the Ministry of Education) and Count Stephen Bethlen, former Hungarian Premier.

After the opening addresses Bishop Vászárhelyi delivered an impressive speech. He spoke with the greatest appreciation of the self-sacrificing work that had been done by the Church, which during the difficult period following Trianon had never ceased to spread the Gospel and to foster a national spirit in schools, Sunday schools and women's societies and by means of the various branches of home mission work, and this although the Rumanian Government, especially during the past few years, had thrown many obstacles in the way of religious life and the teaching of religion. The Church had stubbornly defended national interests, of which it had become the only champion, and it had never ceased to work for the cultural, economic and social advancement of the people under its charge.

The Bishop cordially welcomed those who now for the first time after twenty years of exile were again able to visit Transylvania and enjoy the hospitality of the Transylvanian Reformed Church, in particular Count Stephen Bethlen, Bishop Ladislas Ravasz and M. Tibor Pataky. He then continued as follows: "But when we welcome those who are here with us, we must not forget that there are many who cannot be present. Let us think of those who are still compelled to fight a hard battle for their mothertongue and their faith; who must struggle strenuously in order to remain what God created them — Magyars and Protestants... The Psalmist of old, sitting by the waters of Babylon, sang thus: 'If I forget thee, Oh Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.' We, too, now say in the presence of the living God: 'If ever we forget Gabriel Bethlen's school, the orphans in Szászváros, the congregations by the Maros and the Küküllő and all the rest of you; if ever we forget your white-walled churches and schools, then let Him who is our right hand forget us'."

Speaking of the home mission work of the Church, the Bishop mentioned three tasks as of special importance: national education, social welfare work and the cure of souls in isolated places.

In conclusion Bishop Vásárhelyi enumerated the great moral principles upon which the economic and political future of Europe, including Hungary, must be based.

"Justice for the unjustly oppressed, equality for those who have been given unequal treatment, union for those who have been separated by force and against their will, and a place in the sun for everybody. These four principles may be summed up in one sentence, as they were summed up by our forefathers: The Church struggles in order that the law of Christ may rule upon earth."

When the Bishop's speech was ended, the General Assembly welcomed with great enthusiasm the statement that Count Stephen Bethlen, former Hungarian Premier, had been unanimously elected by the parishes as Chief Superintendent of the diocese.

Count Bethlen warmly thanked the Assembly for this honour and reminded them that Transylvanian Calvinism had always been a bulwark of the Magyars in times of storm and stress. He thanked Providence with emotion that he had been able to return to the bosom of the Reformed Church in Transylvania to which he had said goodbye a quarter of a century ago, not to suit his own convenience or lightly, but in order to be able to work for Transylvania in free Hungary. In every office and every post he had held he had always tried to be the advocate of Transylvania's interests. With this aim in view he had undertaken any and every kind of work, duty and office — with one exception. He had not accepted the honour of being Chief Superintendent of the Reformed Church in the mother-country. He had not done so because he felt that he could not be unfaithful to the Reformed Church in Transylvania in which he had been born and brought up. Count Bethlen then continued as follows: "Now I wish to do my share of the work of construction just beginning. We have lost practically everything. We must rebuild the institutions of the Church from the ground up, for they are the foundations of Transylvanian Magyar culture. Let us remember those who are still beyond the frontier — a frontier not drawn by the finger of God. Let us remember Nagyenyed, Torda, Dicső and the rest of the Magyar towns and villages. The Magyars of those places gaze at us with wistful eyes in the belief that a better morrow for them depends on the rapidity of our work. I pray for God's blessing first on those left outside Hungary, then on every member of the Church and on the work of construction which it is our duty to God and man to accomplish."

THE SITUATION OF THE MAGYAR NATIONAL MINORITY
IN RUMANIA

The Magyar national minority living in Rumania — roughly a million souls — is being subjected to the most inconceivable forms of chicanery and humiliation. We offer our readers merely a few examples by way of illustration: —

Although *the use of minority languages* is not officially forbidden in private life or in business, yet no one should attempt to speak Hungarian loudly in the streets or to use that language in shops, — not to mention the circumstance that in public offices everywhere there are notices forbidding the use of any language but Rumanian ("Vorbiți românește!"). The intolerance in this field is so great that even persons racially Rumanian are threatened if they dare to speak Hungarian. We would refer in this connection to an article of three columns appearing in a Rumanian paper published at Arad which indulges in violent abuse of the *Rumanian women* who have fled from the territories recently transferred and *who still speak Hungarian*. In the "STIREA", a Rumanian paper appearing at Arad, there was published recently an article headed "*Rumanianisation . . . if need be, with the help of the bastinado*" which said that in case of need the drastic, unchivalrous but effective method of retaliation by *the bastinado* must be resorted to. Further on the article again stressed that the only means of redress is the bastinado, adding that the present state of things cannot be allowed to continue.

At Arad and Temesvár — the measure being based upon the provisions of Order No. 1030 ex 1941 of the Rumanian Ministry for the Interior — the authorities ordained that as from March 20th all inscriptions and shop-signs in Hungarian should be replaced by Rumanian inscriptions and shop-signs. This measure is to a certain extent incomprehensible; for we can hardly believe that there is any town in Transylvania where Hungarian inscriptions or shop-signs are still to be found. For Rumanian chauvinism years ago got rid of all Hungarian inscriptions and shop-signs. At Temesvár the text of bills of fare in first-class restaurants may be written in Hungarian as well as in Rumanian and German; but *at Arad the Censor's Office cancelled the whole text even of the Hungarian obituary notices submitted for approval* under the pretext that such notices might be published in Rumanian only. The same fate is in store also for the Hungarian texts of biblical cards submitted for approval. But the Censor's Office at Arad has prohibited also the printing of the Hungarian printed matter required for its own use by the Ruman Catholic parish. This procedure is quite in keeping with the methods employed by the Arad Censorship, which has for years been notorious for its blind zeal.

Insults to Magyars are the order of the day in practically

every part of the territory of Transylvania left in Rumanian hands. On March 18th last, in the village of *Magyarszovát* (Suatu) in *Kolozs County*, a farmer of the name of *George Pálpeti Székely* residing there was so seriously mishandled by the Rumanian frontier guards that on March 22nd he died of his injuries. The Rumanian authorities had the dead body of the victim dissected, it being ascertained that he had been suffering from an affection of the kidneys and from rupture and that that had been the cause of his death. The strange thing about the medical certificate making these assertions is that *George Pálpeti* had never in his life been ill, and had never complained of any trouble. In the same village (*Magyarszovát*) the Rumanian gendarmes arrest and mishandle those Magyars whose relatives have fled to Hungary to escape the brutalities of the Rumanians. Thus, two farmers named *Michael Nagy* and *Gregory Csete* respectively, whose sons have escaped to Hungary, have been arrested and taken to some unknown place of confinement.

The Rumanian Government is striving to undermine the position of the undertakings which are still in Magyar hands by appointing so-called "supervising inspectors". *Not only the bigger undertakings, but also Magyar establishments of a quite insignificant character are harnessed with inspectors*, whose salaries the undertaking or establishment in question has the greatest difficulty in paying. Very characteristic is also the measure taken by Government in appointing a government commissioner of the kind to supervise the "*Déli Hirlap*", a paper appearing at Temesvár which is the only organ of the *Hungarian Ethnic Community* of Rumania, though here the undertaking concerned is not a commercial undertaking, there being in consequence no justification whatsoever for the appointment of a government commissioner or inspector. We would note in this connection that on March 16th, after a forced silence of six months, the "*Déli Hirlap*" was again allowed to appear by the Government. In the present case authorisation to direct the literary editorship of the paper, and to engage and dismiss employees, has been granted to *Liviu Bulea*, the journalist appointed to act as government commissioner. As things stand today, there are inspectors or supervisors respectively appointed to control 78 Magyar undertakings. Another circumstance illustrating the methods employed is that the honorarium of inspectors or government commissioners of the kind (which has of course to be paid by the respective undertaking) has been fixed a maximum of 25,000 lei a month, the object in view being to prevent individual profit-mongering. And the Magyar employees are being dismissed everywhere; for the industrial undertakings and commercial firms have been required to get rid of their Magyar officials and Magyar workers. Thereby the Magyars are being deprived of every chance of earning a subsistence.

Politically and culturally too the Hungarian (Magyar) minority is being robbed of its most elementary rights. There can be no question of any right of free assembly or association, though at the same time the Saxons of Transylvania and the Swabians of the Banate enjoy every form of privilege.

SLOVAK MILITARY TRADITION

The assertion that from a military point of view the Slovaks are inferior to any other race in Central Europe, is entirely without foundation. The Slovaks are an honest people; their social life is well-balanced, and they have instinctive leanings towards pure aims. They are also capable of self-sacrifice to attain such aims. They have always demonstrated their military virtues whenever weapons were put in their hands for the defence of the aims dictated by their own position; but they have never distinguished themselves in battle when called upon to fight for false interests. This was most clearly evident at the time when Czecho-Slovakia collapsed. In spite of its excellent technical equipment, the Czecho-Slovak army proved unable to fight. To many this was something incomprehensible, but its explanation lies in the fact that the several units of that army were united only in wearing the same uniform, while they lacked a common aim, and were not welded together by identical desires and endeavours. This being so, they disintegrated into their constituent elements at the first breath of danger. Before they were called upon to fight, they fell into as many groups as the number of nationalities in Czecho-Slovakia.

If we cast a glance at the records of their past history we shall discover innumerable instances showing the military virtues of the Slovaks. Even today King Matthias's Black Army is a living memory among them. Historical records prove that there were many Slovaks in that famous army of King Matthias, which at the time was symbolic of world power. Speaking in general, the Slovaks always took part in every Hungarian military action. After King Matthias's reign the Slovaks displayed the same bravery as did the Magyars in their defence of the border fortresses. In noble rivalry with the Magyars they developed military virtues and military prowess in their struggle against a common foe. From the time of the Turkish invasion we have innumerable soldier songs in both languages the texts of which are identical in Hungarian and Slovak. There is also a whole literature dealing with these Magyar and Slovak variations of the songs in vogue during the "Kuruc" era (the name — "Cousader" — given to the soldiers of Francis Rákóczi II who fought against Austria for Hungarian independence). In the battles fought by Rákóczi large numbers of the Slovaks of Upper Hungary took part. Their participation in the Hun-

garian Prince's struggle was so active that certain historians are inclined to describe the Rákóczi rising at the beginning of the XVIII century as a Slav rebellion. In the "Kuruc" war of independence Slovaks and Magyars fought shoulder to shoulder against Austrian oppression.

The same thing happened again about the middle of the nineteenth century, during the Hungarian war of independence. Contemporary historical records were discovered not long ago. From these records the numerical proportion of the Slovaks and Ruthenians who took part in the Hungarian war of independence emerges clearly. Of the 200.000 warriors who fought in the Hungarian army 40.000 were Slovaks or Ruthenians. The significance of that number is revealed by comparison with another number. For historical research shows that Hurban, the commander of the Slovak mercenaries who fought in the Austrian army, was not able to recruit more than 2000 men. The first figure clearly proves the spell exercised on the Slovaks by the aims of the Hungarian war of independence and the second as clearly shows that Hurban's attempt to recruit an army for an Austria bent on oppressing the Hungarian nation, was a failure.

At present much research work is being done in Slovakia to throw light on Slovak military virtues and traditions. On 14th March the semi-official "Slovak" published a bulky issue in commemoration of the second anniversary of Slovak independence. Many of the articles contained in that number deal with Slovak military traditions.

And what depressing reading those articles make!

The present Slovak ideologists attribute the origin of Slovak military traditions to Hurban's action. They describe that attempt, which was not only unpopular with the Slovaks, but also presented them in a reactionary light to the nations of Europe, as the beginnings of their military traditions.

The articles in question are illustrated with pictures. One of these pictures shows Baron Lewartovski in uniform as the first personification of Slovak military tradition. But who was this Baron Lewartovski? None other than the commander-in-chief of Hurban's mercenaries paid by Austria. As for his nationality, he was an Austrian subject of Polish birth.

At present public life in Slovakia is being reorganized on a purely ethnic basis. Everyone who does not conform a hundred per cent to Slovak ethnic standards is excluded from public life. It would be a good thing if Slovakia's present ideologists were to apply this principle more strictly to their work of unearthing Slovak military traditions.