

Hungary & Eastern Europe - Sixty Years Ago A Press Review by a Hungarian Refugee

Hungary's Chiefs Submit to Queries
1956. 08. 1-15.

- Hungarian Aide Tells Of 'Excesses'
- Matyas Rakosi
- Hungary Jails 12 for Treason
- Hungary's chiefs submit to queries
- Hungary Pledges Bishop's Retrial
- Briton Held as Spy Admits Passing Rumors in Hungary
- Hungarians Snarl U.S. Envoy's Trip
- Hungary Slows Collective Pace
- Exodus from Budapest

Post

1956

VIII. 1

Hungarian Aide Tells Of 'Excesses'

BUDAPEST, Hungary, July 31 (AP)—Hungary's Chief Prosecutor publicly conceded today that thousands of people had been imprisoned or executed unjustly in this country under Communist rule.

Prosecutor Gyorgy Non promised in a speech before Parliament that "Socialist legality will never again be violated in the future." At the same time, he warned that nobody was going to be allowed to "incite" against the Communist system.

Prosecutor Non, 35, had worked under Matyas Rakosi, recently deposed party leader. He told Parliament:

"Our legality will give freedom of speech and freedom of assembly—but not as those things are meant in the bourgeois West—because freedom of speech and assembly cannot be used here for inciting against the people's democratic system."

Non said numerous police and legal excesses had been committed. He claimed that remedies began in 1953 when curbs were placed on the secret police.

He reported that 23,000 persons had been amnestied since 1954. He said Hungary's prison population had been cut from 37,000 in 1955 to 27,800 at present.

Wall Street Journal
1956 VIII. 3

* * *
Matyas Rakosi, Communist strong man in Hungary, may be the next victim of the Kremlin's anti-Stalin campaign. Reports reaching London said he has been summoned to Moscow to explain why his country hasn't adopted a "collective leadership" policy.
* * *

Times 1956 VIII. 4

Hungary Jails 12 for Treason

MOSCOW, Aug. 3 (Reuters)—
Sandor Mezoe, alleged to be an
"imperialist" intelligence agent,
was sentenced today to life im-
prisonment by a Budapest mili-
tary court, according to the So-
viet news agency Tass. An
accomplice, also convicted of
treason, was sentenced to thir-
teen years' imprisonment, and
ten others received terms rang-
ing from one to six years, the
agency said. *Times Aug 4*

HUNGARY'S CHIEFS SUBMIT TO QUERIES

Regime Answers Questions
by Deputies in Parliament
Amid Stir of Excitement

By JOHN MacCORMAC

Special to The New York Times.

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Aug. 3

—The Hungarian Government submitted itself today to questioning by ordinary members of Parliament.

The only contentious question asked in the Assembly session concerned the right of parents to have their children receive religious instruction in schools. The Government's answer, given by Premier Andras Hegedus himself, was that parents had been able to exercise this right without difficulty in all but a small minority of cases and that even this minority would be corrected.

Other questions put to the leaders concerned such matters as the employment of adolescents in night work, the price of potatoes sold by farmers to the Government, the incidence of tuberculosis, the heavy load of paper work in agricultural collectives and the uneven quality of Hungarian bread.

For a Government to be required to give information on such subjects is a routine matter in a Western legislative body. But in Budapest it was considered an exciting novelty and a great step forward on the road to democratization of the regime.

When one woman member expressed herself as dissatisfied with the Government's attitude toward the employment of minors in night work there was a buzz of excitement in the applause.

The art of interpellation, or formally seeking an explanation of a Government policy or ac-

tion, was so new for deputies long subjected to Stalinist conceptions of the functions of parliament, that the chairman of the Assembly, Sandor Ronai, had to instruct them frequently. An interpellation is not meant to be a proposal or even a long speech, he explained.

Behind the chair from which Mr. Ronai issued his admonitions was a representation of the arms of Communist Hungary—a golden hammer and a sheaf of wheat against bright blue backgrounds. On his right was a painting of Emperor Franz Josef receiving from a cardinal the crown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and on his left one of Lasos Kossuth, leader of the Hungarian independence struggle in 1848, addressing the old Hungarian Parliament.

The incongruousness of the picture of Franz Josef in the chamber was diminished somewhat, perhaps, by the fact that the Hungarian Government today, on the basis of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's having been a signatory to the Convention of 1888 on the Suez Canal, claimed the right to be invited to the conference to be held in London on Aug. 16 to discuss the canal's future.

The questioning of the Government on religious instruction in schools was done by Gyorgy Parragi, editor of the newspaper Magyar Nemzet and former member of the Small Landholders party. He said that Western tourists, now coming to Hungary, should not have occasion to see even the smallest infraction of the constitutional rights of parents to have their children receive such instruction.

Premier Hegedus agreed. The Government and the Hungarian Communist party, he said, are in accord on this question. The Roman Catholic bench of bishops has called his attention to cases where administrative officials intimidated parents to keep them from exercising their constitutional rights, the Premier declared, and the Government completely disapproves of such infringements.

Times 1958 VIII. 5

HUNGARY PLEDGES BISHOP'S RETRIAL

Times Aug 5
Chance for Clearing Ordass,
Lutheran Convicted in '48,
Disclosed at Church Talks

By JOHN MacCORMAC

Special to The New York Times.

GALYATETOE, Hungary, Aug. 4 — The World Council of Churches announced today that the Hungarian Government had agreed to retry the case of Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordass.

The Bishop was convicted and imprisoned for alleged currency offenses in 1948. His only real offense is said to have been that, alone among Hungarian Protestant Bishops, he fought the Communist Budapest Government.

The Council had intervened in his case at the time. Today's announcement crowns eight years of effort on behalf of a Bishop who has been sometimes called the Protestant Mindszenty. Jo-



Bishop Lajos Ordass

seph Cardinal Mindszenty, Roman Catholic primate of Hungary, was convicted in 1949 of treason charges.

The Hungarian Government's

decision was announced here by the Rev. Dr. Franklin Fry of New York, chairman of the World Council's ninety-man Central Committee. The committee ended its conference here today, the first it has held in a Communist country.

Dr. Fry, who also is president of the United Lutheran Church in America and vice president of the Lutheran World Federation, said conversations had been held between representatives of the Hungarian Lutheran Church and the Hungarian Bureau of Church Affairs. These talks, he added, looked toward Bishop Ordass' rehabilitation and eventual restoration.

A statement issued on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation expressed appreciation of the fact that the legal process for the Bishop's rehabilitation in the eyes of civil law had begun, with every prospect of a favorable result. This would mean restoration of his reputation for integrity and compensation for his sufferings.

A statement by the Hungarian Lutheran Church said that, if rehabilitated, Bishop Ordass might become either a bishop in

retirement or Professor of Theology.

When a deputation representing the Lutheran World Federation visited Bishop Ordass this afternoon in the Budapest apartment to which he retired after his release from prison, the former Bishop indicated that he wanted his future status to be made clear.

Pending this, however, he authorized the federation to execute an agreement with the Government on his behalf.

In another development, the World Council's Central Committee approved a proposal to meet a delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church. The object would be to discuss the possibility of entry into the Council.

Dr. Fry and Dr. W. A. Visser 'tHooft, general secretary of the Council, were named to the delegation that was to meet with the Russians. This conference will probably be held in Paris next January.

Dr. Fry is to appoint an advisory group to select other members of the delegation. Each delegation will consist of three to five members.

Informal conversations have already been held by Dr. Fry

with Metropolitan Nikolai, second-ranking prelate of the Russian Church. The Russian Church has expressed a desire "to discuss the findings of the Evanston, Ill., assembly of the World Council held in 1954 and discuss peace but not in the political context."

The World Council's Central Committee has been meeting for a week here in the Matra Mountains northeast of Budapest. Besides deciding to open talks with the Russian Orthodox Church it has approved a visit by its representatives to Chinese Christian churches when a chance is offered.

Sta 1956 VIII. 6

Sta Aug. 6

Briton Held as Spy Admits Passing Rumors in Hungary

CLACTON ON SEA, England, Aug. 6 (AP).—Edgar Sanders, 50-year-old Briton imprisoned by Hungary as a spy in 1949, acknowledged yesterday that he passed on rumors to the British Embassy in Budapest.

"I do not think I was a spy," Mr. Sanders told a reporter.

At the time of his arrest, Mr. Sanders was working in Hungary as an accountant for the American-owned International Telephone and Telegraph Co. Robert Vogeler, former American manager of the company, was also arrested and charged with spying, but later released.

In retaliation for the 13-year sentence handed Mr. Sanders,

Britain imposed severe economic sanctions on Hungary.

Mr. Sanders was freed in 1953. Now he is a bus driver working for 12 pounds (\$33.60) a week.

"I never was a paid spy—or an unpaid spy," Mr. Sanders told a reporter. "I did no more than any other British person in a foreign country.

"I heard rumors of things happening—possibly soldiers passing from one town to another. I passed the rumors on to a friend of mine who was a British military attache in Budapest.

"I never went out of my way to seek information.

"I merely told him in conversation what I had seen and heard in usual, everyday things."

Hungarians Snarl U. S. Envoy's Trip

VIENNA, Aug. 5 (AP)—Christian M. Ravndal, United States Minister to Hungary for the past five years, left Budapest today under difficulties.

Hungarian Communist authorities grounded a special United States military transport plane sent to fetch him, and Ravndal had to motor his way to Vienna. Ravndal remarked wryly as he left: "They (the Hungarian Communists) want to make a pleasant last impression on me."

The action followed a farewell party Ravndal gave at his luxurious home outside Budapest Friday. Leading Hungarian officials had been invited, but only a deputy premier came.

American observers here said it was a characteristic farewell for the outspoken Ravndal, whose first task in Budapest was to negotiate the release of four captured American fliers who were forced down in Hungary in 1951.

The Hungarians gave as reason for grounding the United States plane the argument that flying was dangerous because of the presence in the air of many balloons carrying anti-Communist propaganda leaflets.

By the time the Hungarians decided to let the plane go, Ravndal had gone by auto to Vienna. The plane was to fly him to Bremen, Germany. Thence he will sail to the United States before taking over his new post as Ambassador to Ecuador.

Times 956 VIII. 12

HUNGARY SLOWS COLLECTIVE PACE

75 Per Cent Fewer Peasants
Joining as a Result of
Rakosi's Resignation

By JOHN MacCORMAC

Special to The New York Times.

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Aug.

11—The first effect of the resignation of Matyas Rakosi, Hungary's long-time Communist boss, has been to reduce the rate of collectivization of Hungarian agriculture by three quarters. This result, though in a lesser degree, has been similar to that which followed Mr. Rakosi's temporary dethronement in 1953 by Imre Nagy.

The Hungarian central Communist organ Szabad Nep this week noted that in the first two weeks of July only 528 families had joined cooperative farms compared with 2,134 in July, 1955, when Mr. Rakosi was pushing collectivization.

These families brought to the collectives only about one-fourth as much land as those of a year ago. Jozsef Tissa, secretary of Cooperative Farms Council, announced that only 327 cooperative farms and cooperative farm groups had been formed in the country so far this year. He explained that "Development on a larger scale has been halted by the uncertain political atmosphere."

Concessions To Cooperatives

This falling off in the rate of collectivization has occurred despite the fact that to halt it the Government has announced substantial concessions to the cooperatives. They will, for one thing, be given more freedom to do their own planning. Only the obligatory area which must be planted with bread grains will be prescribed.

Otherwise the cooperatives

may grow anything they desire. They will be permitted to quarry stone, to make bricks, to cut their timber and in some cases to join with other cooperatives to establish processing plants for their products. They will be given more favorable long-term credits at low interest rates.

Since the collectivization of agriculture always has been an Achilles heel of Communists, the authorities are naturally concerned that one of the first results of "democratization" has been to check its progress.

Szabad Nep, speculating about the causes, noted that after the issuance of resolutions recently by Communist central leadership defining the new Government's policy the peasants and operative farms only voluntarily, since the party says no force must be allowed in organizing them."

The newspaper said the peasants were correct, but that district councils and party organs that had concluded that the peasants were wrong. It admits ruefully, however, that one thing that has kept the peasants from joining the cooperatives was that "too many outsiders have been sticking their noses into the affairs of the cooperatives."

Apparently Communist organizers who have been using one kind coercion or another to force peasants into collectives are finding it difficult to discontinue the practice. The Communist organ in another issue related how some of them had been using what it called the "permanent agitation" method. This meant that they would call in relays on a peasant and subject him to a sort of third degree that went on hour after hour while his crop lay neglected in the fields or his cows went un milked.

"That was how the New Life cooperative came into being," according to Szabad Nep. "Now that it has been set up no one bothers about it any more or investigates its complaints."

Tribune 956 VIII. 14

Exodus From Budapest

To the N. Y. Herald Tribune:

Mr. Harry Heintzen wrote in a recent issue about Raoul Wallenberg, heroic defender of the Budapest Jews against the Nazis. According to Mr. Heintzen, Wallenberg, during his one hundred days in Budapest, evacuated children to Switzerland and sent 12,000 Jews to Sweden. The truth is that during that time not one child was evacuated to Switzerland and not one Jew went to any other country, Sweden included. Up to now only 1,000 Hungarians have gone to Sweden—Jews and Gentiles—and these all after the war. Wallenberg did everything he could and saved many lives but it was impossible at that time to send Jews to Sweden. Jews at that time could leave Budapest only via deportation.

ROBERT MAJOR,
Former counselor, Hungarian
Ministry of Justice.
New York. Aug. 8, 1956.