

WHY ARE THE ROMANIAN REFUGEES LEAVING HUNGARY

Hungary is endeavouring to make up a "photogenic appearance". The mass-media are "rummaging" in the domestic resources and are collecting all kinds of "favourable" data, wishing to make up out of them a sort of "magazine with nice pictures".

They constantly speak about measures, reforms that are due to ensure a climate of economic prosperity in this country.

They also speak about the political liberalization. A part of the western press has also joined this game. The public opinion is told about a modern Hungary with aspirations worthy of this end of century.

There are some citizens in the weigh bouring Romania - most of them of Magyar origin - who, being allured by this vivid propagandistic campagne, managed to believe this miracle. Thus, they left behind their houses, jobs, friends, relatives and some of them left even their families and took the road to Hungary.

According to the Hungarian statistics, there are about 13,000 people who left Romania with lots of hopes, with dreams, with habits passing to Hungary. But they didn't find the paradise they were looking for "The magazine with lots of nice pictures" was quite different from what they found there.

It was like expecting to see a nice complexion, but, when one gets closer to it one can see its wrinkles. This fact made them wake up from their nice dream. This is because Hungary has its own problems to solve and it can't deal efficiently with others' problems. And, as Hungary has its own unhappy citizens it's difficult to ensure the happiness of those who crossed the border.

In January, 9th, this year, the Hungarian realities imposed another price increase. This measure met a wave of ptotests. People even organized some strikes "of warning" which were also mentioned in the official comunicués. The working people were demanding the government a more equitable devision of the burden of price increases for consumming goods among the state, the economic bodies and population.

Because, at present this burden is strongly felt only by the citezen and his pocket. And even if, in an interview given to "Nepszabadsag" newspaper by the Hungarian prime-minister, MIKLOS NEMETH, he was asserting that the political efficiency is much too complex to be expressed in forints and he had to admit that in essence, the level of living is in a deadlock and, for numerous groups of people, it is worsening.

The political state of mind is unfavourable in Hungary. People are

expressing more or less openly their troubles. The trade unions are asking the government to examine the possibility of stopping the increases of prices. All over the country people think that the present increases of prices which are applied without taking any steps for the economic reorganization do not lead to any economic improvement. Such measure lead to a continuous pauperization of the population. More and more categories of the working people have difficulties in earning their living. But, those who are no longer employed have even greater difficulties. Because, this year, too, tens of thousands of people are menaced with unemployment.

Alarm signals are sounded. The Hungarian society is in lack of financial means. Certain social programmes are not fulfilled for lack of funds. The state should spend 200 billion forints annually for subsidizing the unefficient enterprises. The economic difficulties lie heavy on people's mind. This reality turns into a handicap for the whole society.

GARAI LASLO, a counsellor in the Institute of psychology within the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was expressing this opinion in the daily newspaper "Nepszava", saying that "the mental condition of the contemporary Hungarian society is extremely serious". He added to this assertion that "the reason is not simply poverty". According to the quoted expert, the main reason is that more and more people are going down on the social scale, they are simply sliding downwards. The unemployed are losing their position in society. Even the position in the hierarchy of power becomes slippery and uncertain.

But the lack of the Western currency is most of all felt. The race for dollars, for marks is suffocating. They are searching for ways of getting it. In this race one can also include the agreements with some western, European countries that are accepting Hungarian citizens to work for them. These citizens are sending back home the foreign currency. Hungary has reportedly to its number of inhabitants and its possibilities of repaying, one of the most overwhelming foreign debts in the world.

The Romanian refugees are rather lured for economic purposes than for political ones. By this "gesture" which Hungary doesn't stop calling (it) "a charitable one", she wants only to get some support from the High Commissariat for the Refugees, in order to mitigate her needs of hard currency.

The Hungarian hospitality is false, too. In reality, the refugees are kept in the periphery of the society from all points of view. If the Hungarian citizen who is at home, feels that he is "simply slipping", the unwanted guests coming from Romania have still a more powerful feeling of the same kind.

Out of the 300 billion forints, the fund voted by the Hungarian Parliament for their support, only an insignificant sum was spent. At the same time, the consistent aid in dollars which has been sent by churches and western charitable associations has not arrived at them. Although the Parliamentary Commission dealing with the refugees' problems received lots of assurances that

these problems would be solved, in reality, things remained unchanged. The refugees were given neither lodgings, nor employment and the effects of the increases of prices are even more serious in their case. To all these, one can also add the hostile attitude of the local population.

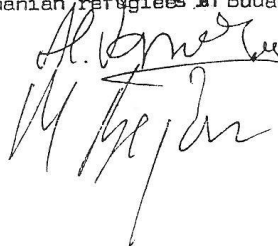
These are only some of the causes that make the Romanian refugees want to leave Hungary. But it is not quite easy for them to do it. The Hungarian authorities hinder them realizing that the refugees leaving means losing a source of hard currency. Recently, a young refugee, LUMINITA PAUNESCU, was threatening with hunger strike. She was writing: "If the support means only clothes, some food and several forints, this is not a real support. The distance from words to facts is huge". Due to the unbearable situation to which the refugees are subdued in Hungary, many of them decided to leave this country for the Western World. In spite of the difficulties, hundreds of them are already in the camps of Austria, Switzerland or Denmark. Due to the difficulties created by the powerful exodus of those who flee from Hungary, Denmark had to reintroduce recently the entrance-visa for the people originating from Romania.

The refugees in Hungary have understood from their own troubles and sufferings that they had to endure that they were tempted by a propaganda that aimed at nothing else but at making up a nice "complexion" for Hungary, making her look like a magazine with nice pictures. In reality, the refugees are at present just a means of manoeuvre used against Romania.

Nothing more than that.

Mircea Bejan
Alexandru Vasilescu

Romanian refugees in Budapest

Handwritten signatures of Mircea Bejan and Alexandru Vasilescu. The signature of Mircea Bejan is written in a cursive style, and the signature of Alexandru Vasilescu is written in a more stylized, blocky cursive style.