

MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE
HUNGARIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION

Pittsburgh, Pa.

July 31, 1942

in the office of the Verhovay Fraternal
Life Insurance Association
345 Fourth Ave.

Meeting was called to hear the reasons for the resignation of Tibor Eckhardt as President of the "Independent Hungary" movement and to discuss it. Report of Secretary and Treasurer, motions and discussions were also on the program.

Those present were:

1.) Dr. Béla Szappanyos, physician, Detroit, Mich., National President of the American Hungarian Federation.

2.) Rev. Francis Ujlaki, Toledo, O. pastor of the Hungarian Reformed Church there, President of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America (headquarters: 1726 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, D.C.), Chairman of Directors of the American Hungarian Federation, headquarters: Washington, D.C.

3.) Joseph Darago, President of Verhovay Fraternal Life Insurance Ass'n, 345 Fourth Ave, Pittsburgh, Pa.

4.) Monsignor Elmer Eordogh, Toledo, O., pastor of St. Stephen's Rom. Cath. Church, representing the Hungarian Catholic churches

5.) John Dezso, Bridgeport, Conn., Pres. of American Sick Benefit and Life Ins. Ass'n

6.) Béla Márk, lawyer, N.Y. representing Hungarian Jewish congregations

7.) Emery Király, Washington, D.C., Treasurer of Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, Treasurer of American Hungarian Federation, headq. of both in Washington, DC.

8.) Tibor Kerekes, Asst. Prof. of History, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., secretary of American Hungarian Federation, Secretary of Independent Hungary movement, American branch.

9.) Paul Nadányi, Editor, N.Y. "Amerikai Magyar Népszava" daily, representing the Hungarian language press.

10.) Zoltan Gombos, Editor of "Szabad-sag" Cleveland, O. daily, representing the Hungarian language press.

11.) Ignatz Lengyel, factory worker, Baptist lay preacher, Homestead, Pa.

12.) Martin Himler, editor of "Magyar Banyaszlap" weekly, Detroit, Mich., representing Hungarian language weeklies.

13.) Stephen Gobozy, lawyer, former member of City Council, Cleveland, Ohio.

14.) Coloman Revesz, Auditor of Verhovay Fraternal Life Insurance Ass'n, Pittsburgh, Pa., controller of American Hungarian Federation.

15.) Tibor Eckhardt, former Delegate of Hungary to the League of Nations, former member of the Hungarian Parliament, resigned President of the Independent Hungary world movement, as guest. (Present until noon recess.)

Chairman: Rev. Francis Ujlaki.

Chairman Ujlaki greeted Mr. Eckhardt in the name of assembled, expressing the "painful surprise" which his resignation created. He stated that he is absolutely sincere when he expresses the hope that Eckhardt will again assume leadership of the movement in the interests of Independent Hungary.

Eckhardt answered with a long speech. He emphasized that the movement is not of personal interests- persons are unimportant and if some members of his committee resigned they did it because of differences of principles and not for personal reasons.

When he arrived in the US he came first to this group. He does this again this time.

He came to US in 1940 and in 1941. In 1940 he came to see whether American viewpoints are in harmony with the interests of Hungary. He saw Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt. The latter said to him: "Whenever you come, you will be a welcome guest".

When he left Hungary the second time in March 1941, the international situation was different. He tried to do everything to counterbalance the growing nazi menace in Hungary, but the time came, when he could do no more. Papers refused to print his articles and the American Minister advised him to leave the country. (John F. Montgomery.)

His purpose was to create an organization of Hungarians that would stand on the side of the democracies when Hungary eventually will sever all connections with US and will be tied to the Axis. The fundamental principles of this organization would be (1) that leaning on the US, Hungarians of entire world be joined to the allied nations. (2) Leading the

people of Hungary over to the allies, without revolution. Regent Horthy was willing to give the power over to those who could perform this with guarantee of success. (3) The Hungarians of US to be included in this world movement.

He tried to convince US gov't that there are anti-nazi elements in Hungary's population who are willing to endorse a movement like this.

**territorial* Before launching the movement, he asked Undersecretary Sumner Welles whether US is or isn't committed to any after-war promises with the allied nations -- (and this is absolutely confidential and not for publication, - emphasized Eckhardt, looking significantly in direction of the newspapermen members of the meeting) -- and Welles' answer was: No. When he spoke to Welles again the last time, not long ago, he asked, whether there is any change in this respect. The answer was again: No.

He naturally had to respect first of all the wishes of US Gov't. This gov't's approval seemed to be certain and later the government's benevolent attitude became even more pronounced. However, gradually a marked change had made itself felt on the situation, on account of the British government's shifting interests.

The British Government knowing that the danger for Britain is closer and more real, than for US, is much closer to the Soviet. The Czechs, having been subservient to the Soviet's interests during the entire life of their republic, and having even now a secret treaty with the Russians, naturally are influencing the British Gov't in the Soviet's behalf, - and for this reason the attitude of the British Gov't toward the Independent

Hungary movement became considerably modified, unlike the American Government's attitude which remained unchanged.

The result is that the attitude of US and British Gov't is not identical toward the movement, which, starting out in Britain and US could progress satisfactorily only in case its branches in US and England could perform entirely similar work. Under the changed circumstances this is impossible at the present time. So the best step seems to be to suspend the activities of the movement.

It is easy to understand the resignation of Executive Member Zsilinszky. He lives in London where naturally he has to govern himself according to the dictates of the British Foreign office. The resignation of Executive Comm. Member Balasy is different. He lives here but still follows the British viewpoint.

The movement as a political action will be suspended temporarily, but the date of its new start will possibly be December, this year. Until then the newly created "Cultural Committee" will work in cooperation with several eminent writers and artists of Hungarian origin.

He resigned the presidency of the movement and will not accept leadership even if it will become active again.

Paul NADANYI spoke first after Eckhardt finished. He emphasized that he and his paper enthusiastically supported the MOVEMENT, even before Eckhardt's arrival. They are and always were fully and unreservedly loyal to the cause, recognizing that persons are really unimportant. Eckhardt said that even the noblest purposes can be

ruined by employing wrong methods. Would it not be a wrong method (1) to put the movement on ice now, thus trying to conserve it for possible future use, instead of reorganizing it right at this moment? And (2) wasn't that a wrong method that the movement never made an unmistakably straight forward and complete pronouncement in behalf of the democratic principles? Would not this occasion be the best time to correct this with a new, complete and all-inclusive platform or program?

ECKHARDT'S answer:

(1) In his opinion the only possible solution of the situation is the temporary suspension of political activities, and (2) "We presented a program at the start. How could anyone expect a new program from us, at the time when we are going into temporary inactivity?"

The release sent out in the Hungarian Language by the Office of War Information (Elmer Davis, Director) was presented to the meeting.

The circular, sent to every Hungarian paper in the US, quotes a recent letter of Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, saying that the Independent Hungary movement never enjoyed the public or private blessing of the State Department.

The release, issued July 27, 1942, says in English:

"A special release, intended to clarify a situation long confusing to Americans of Hungarian extraction, is enclosed.

We hope you will publish it. Please send me a marked copy of the issue of your paper in which the release appears.

Very truly

Elmer Davis,
Director

The Hungarian text says: (translation from Hungarian):

Undersecretary Welles of the State Dep't in his letter published July 23, in New York, announced that the "For Independent Hungary" movement never enjoyed the "semi-official blessing" or "the silent approval" of the American government.

Welles' letter was answer to those protests, sent to Washington, according to which Tibor Eckhardt and the American Hungarian Federation allegedly emphasized* that the American Government supports the movement.

Welles' letter to a labor committee in New York, dated July 14, 1942, says the following (translation from Hungarian):

"I received your letter, dated July 3, about the committee of the Independent Hungary movement. The Department's stand decidedly is, that true to the American traditions of free speech, many enjoy the hospitality of this country, but this does not mean that they enjoy the "semi-official blessing", or the "silent approval" of the Government. We announced this stand of the Department which could not have been misinterpreted.

(Signed)

Sumner Welles
Undersecretary of State
Dep't of State,
Washington, D.C.

Martin HIMLER remarks ~~and~~ indignantly that it was the State Dep't which sent over to a meeting of the Federation in Washington a certain Mr. Williamson, who told us "that Eckhardt is the man we should follow" and they will give the support of the State Dep't.

* in pamphlets and announcements

Now Mr. Williamson is gone, Mr. Hoskins is gone also and we are left in the ditch.

Paul NADÁNYI points out that there were publications of the Federation which claimed the State Dep't's recognition. Eckhardt himself claimed this a few weeks ago in Chicago. When the State Dep't was asked whether they want the continuation of the movement, they said: Yes. And now I called Mr. Cannon of the State Dep't up yesterday, asking him point blank what is their wish about these movements and he said:

(Mr. Nadanyi reads the following in English)

"The State Dep't gave no instructions, it never gives instructions in such matters. I spoke to several people since Mr. Eckhardt's resignation, I believe I saw Dr. Kerekes too, and I gave them the same advice, that is, these are no times to do anything else, for American citizens just as for citizens of other countries if they are in the United States, - than to concentrate all their efforts to winning this war. Instead of activities in behalf of free movements they should concentrate on activities in behalf of our war effort. About a week or so ago we were discussing a release to this effect regarding not only the Hungarians but all free movements, dr. Kerekes was probably told about this, therefore he must have used this word, but this statement was not made till now and I do not know when it will come out. I believe the American Hungarian Federation should stop all activities in behalf of the free movement and should concentrate on the war effort."

Mr. NADÁNYI pointed out that this announcement is in contrast with dr. Kerekes' circular invitation to this meeting, in which he says that he will interpret here

the "instructions" of the State Dep't given through him.

Martin HIMLER presents a prepared and mimeographed resolution, saying:

(Translation from Hungarian)

"The American Hungarian Federation, foreseeing the critical situation confronting the world as early as Jan. 7, 1941, when our country and Hungary still maintained diplomatic relations, - stated the following in its memorandum submitted to Pres. Roosevelt:

'We..the Executive Committee of the American Hungarian Federation, as representatives of American citizens of Hungarian origin, through whom also, we sincerely believe, the silenced people of Hungary convey their thoughts and desires, consider it our sacred duty to lead a movement for the preservation of an Independent Hungary and for the freedom of its people, within the limitations of the Constitution and laws of the United States.'

The American Hungarian Federation supported the Independent Hungary movement started by citizens of Hungary, under the leadership of Tibor Eckhardt, Sep. 27, 1941, by virtue of this declaration.

The Directors of the American Hungarian Federation on its meeting today take cognizance of the fact that the executive committee of the Independent Hungary movement suspended its activities and makes the following resolution:

1.) The American Hungarian Federation firmly stands by its program, submitted to and accepted by Pres. Roosevelt on the 7th of January, 1941.

2.) We support the fight of our country

and President against our enemies and Nazism, without reservation, with all of our hearts and soul.

Federation

3.) The American Hungarian Federation reserves its full freedom of action to work incessantly in the service of above mentioned aims and in the spirit of the Atlantic Charter, through our government promote the existence of an independent, democratic and free Hungary.

Mr. NADANYI: He is not satisfied with this resolution, because it is not saying enough and does not emphasize with sufficient decisiveness that the Federation is going to throw all its strength to help the United States war effort. He presents an amendment to Par.No.2. of this resolution, viz.:

"We support the fight of our country and our ALLIES against our enemies, among whom we number not only the present Nazi system of Germany and her allies, INCLUDING THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF HUNGARY, BUT THE ENTIRE NAZI IDEOLOGY, which with its racial theory, the use of brutal force, the trampling on international law and justice, of religion and morals is an absolute denial of all those democratic principles of that spirit of human equality which permeates us and the benefits of which we enjoy as loyal citizens of this country. In this spirit we resolve that we will do our part with all of our strength in order to bring about the victory of the allied nations."

Meeting appoints a committee to draft a final resolution using the original resolution and the amendment presented by Mr. Nadanyi. Members of the committee are: Messrs. Darago, Kerekes, Király, Himler and Mark.

(After noon recess)

Meeting resumed after lunch, without the presence of Mr. Eckhardt. Committee presents the following resolution:

The original resolution remains unchanged except Par. No.2, which is proposed to be modified thus:

"2.) We support the fight of our country and HER ALLIES, without reservation, with all of our hearts and soul. Our enemies are not only THE PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM OF GERMANY, AND HER ALLIES, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT OF HUNGARY, but the entire Nazi ideology."

Long discussion followed the presentation of this amendment which took almost three hours and occasionally became very heated.

Rev. UJLAKI states that there is absolutely no need for the amendment and demands acceptance of the original resolution. If we are talking about the brutal excesses of the nazis, we should talk about those committed by the communists also.

Mr. Ignatz LENGYEL: The working people are not willing to listen to any proposal about cooperation with communists.

Mr. Emery KIRALY: Amendment is entirely unnecessary.

Msgr. Eordogh: In his opinion the amendment is absolutely correct, he approves it entirely. It should be accepted.

Mr. Bela MARK: Let's accept the amendment.

Mr. Joseph DARAGO: Seconds this.

Mr. John DEZSO: Seconds this.

Rev. UJLAKI: Amendment is antagonistic to Hungarian people.

Mr. John DEZSO: But we are Americans above all.

Mr. Zoltan GOMBOS: No need for the amendment. Condemnation of Nazi ideology is superfluous, we have said it already.

Dr. Bela SZAPPANYOS: The original resolution says much more than the amendment.

Mr. Coloman REVESZ: Seconds this.

Rev. UJLAKI: He is in complete accord with Mr. Gombos.

Mr. Paul NADANYI: This compromise resolution will not satisfy the liberal element, including Mr. Balasy.

Dr. TIBOR KEREKES (jumps up): Who is that Balasy anyway? He is not even an American citizen. He has not a single follower.

Mr. Paul NADANYI: I assure you, gentlemen, that he has more followers than all of you put together. I am not going to sign this.

CHAIRMAN puts the resolution to vote. Result: all for it, except Mr. Nadanyi.

Dr. Tibor KEREKES: Mr. Nadanyi as representative of the press has no right to vote.

Mr. Paul NADANYI: THIS is true.

All present sign the resolution which is put before Mr. Nadanyi also.

Mr. NADANYI: I am not going to sign this.

Mr. GOMBOS: This is an impossible situation. We are attacked from the outside and here, among us also are people who are willing to start disunion.

Mr. Emery KIRALY: We must pour clear wine into the glasses. Who is not with us, is our enemy. I want to know if Mr. Nadanyi is a friend of ours or our enemy?

In the accompanying turmoil Mr. NADANYI makes this remark: "I am going to attack this resolution".

The turmoil reaches its height after this remark.

Mr. NADANYI: I am sorry that being highly indignant and excited, I made this unfortunate and entirely involuntary remark. What I meant to say is that others will attack this and as usual, I am going to be the one who has to defend you. Well, be certain about it that I am going to defend your resolution, which I will sign but with reservation.

Mr. KIRALY: I confess that I always suspected Mr. Nadanyi, but now when he is willing to sign our resolution, my suspicion will disappear.

Msgr. Eordogh: I would have felt badly if Mr. Nadanyi would have persisted in his decision not to sign the resolution, because this possibly would have meant that he is going to attack it. Now I feel certain that he is willing to help the Federation and the movement.

Mr. NADANYI: (after signing the resolution) Yes, I have signed it, but not gladly, and I am going to defend it.

After discussing several subjects of minor importance a resolution, offered by Mr. HIMLER was accepted, that:

No member or members of the Directorate of the Federation will be permitted to participate in discussions with persons or groups about merger or fusion of the Independent Hungary movement with other movements.

Remarks:

The directors of American Hungarian Federation are entirely sold out to Eckhardt. The Federation now is much more closely tied to the "dead" Eckhardt than it was to the "living" one. They succeeded in putting E. and his movement on ice, for future use, and in blocking the possibility of forming an other movement.

That the talk about the "unimportance of persons" is absolutely unsincere was demonstrated by the meeting, and a remark made a few weeks ago by dr. Francis Deak (Columbia Univ., one of the secretaries of the Indep. Hungary movement) to Paul Nadányi, that: "No Eckhardt means no movement".

Outside of meeting Eckhardt made these interesting remarks:

"Sumner Welles fixed a certain date when this Independent Hungary movement will be fully recognized by the State Department and given EXCLUSIVE approval." (He probably was talking about this when he said in the meeting that the probable date of the movement's new start is Dec, 1942.)

Eckhardt said also that : "He is willing to give it in writing that inside one year the Soviet and Germany will sign a separate peace and joined, both turn against democracies."

Eckhardt emphasized in a very decided manner that he is going back to Hungary by any means and what he is doing here is not American, but exclusively Hungarian politics.

In May, 1942, talking to Antal Balasy, he asked him about the rumor that Pres. Roosevelt and Churchill secretly are negotiating with Mussolini about a separate peace with a view of using Italy as base for military operations.

Balasy's answer was: He absolutely refuses to believe anything of this sort. It would be a complete about-face to Atlantic Charter and denial of the spirit of democratic fight. Public opinion would sweep away anybody attempting anything like this.

Eckhardt: "Yes, these are pretty words, of course, but a practical politician must be an opportunist."

Balasy can't conceal his contempt about the cynicism of such "practical politics" and about those who profess and practice it.