

# A CRY FOR FREEDOM

Katalin Bogyay



*Reflections on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution  
at the UN and Beyond*



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Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations  
2017, New York

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Reflections on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution at the UN and Beyond

Concept, compiled and narrated by Katalin Bogyay

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*It is with great pleasure that the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations presents this book as a summary of our remembrance of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution at the UN. I would like to thank Professor Ferenc Mészlivetz, founder, director, and Jody Jensen fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg (iASK) for their collaboration in creating this book. In addition, my sincere appreciation goes to the participants of our panel discussions and all the contributors to this volume.*

*Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogyay  
Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations, New York (2015–)*



*Quatrain*

*by János Pilinszky (1921–1981)*

*Nail asleep under frozen sand.  
Nights soaked in poster-loneliness.  
You left the light on the corridor.  
Today my blood is shed.*

*(1956)*

(translated by Ted Hughes and János Csokics)



Budapest by Lehel Ürményi-Hamar

# *I. Prelude*

*Sándor Márai, the world-renowned Hungarian novelist and playwright, celebrated author of Embers, fled Hungary because of the oppression of both the fascist and communist regimes. After his forced emigration, Márai was one of the intellectual leaders of Hungarians resisting communism. He continued to write in Hungarian, though his writings could be published in Hungary only after the downfall of the communist dictatorship. Márai never went back to Hungary; he committed suicide in 1989 in the US, just before we, in Hungary finally became free. After the crushing of the revolution at Christmastime in 1956, he wrote a poem titled Herald Angel. I asked Peter Zollman in 2006, in London, to translate this poem.*

Sándor Márai

## Herald Angel

*Fly, herald angel, fly speediest,  
fly to burnt-out, bleak Budapest  
where tanks of Russian occupiers  
stifle the church-bells in the spires,  
where Christmas night is dark and cold,  
no Christmas trees, no stars of gold,  
just hunger, frost as all went wrong.  
Come, herald angel, sing your song.  
Herald angel of Bethlehem,  
sing of the wonder, sing to them.*

*Open your great wings, speed through the air,  
they wait for you impatiently there.  
Don't sing to them of some ancient rites,  
well heated rooms and candle-lights,  
of tables groaning under the feast,  
or eloquent sermons by the priest,  
expensive presents, expressions of love  
long words of wisdom from high above,  
or of sparklers spangling, glittering:  
Sing them of the wonder, Angel, sing.*

*Sing of the wondrous great occasion:  
The Christmas tree of a poor nation  
lit up the Silent Night's domain  
and people crossed themselves again.  
This marvel is watched in every land,  
some are confused, some understand,  
some are dismayed, some bleary-eyed,  
some pray and others are terrified,  
for it's not sweets that hang on the tree  
but the Christ of nations: Hungary.*

*A great multitude comes, marching past:  
The legionary who stabbed him last,  
the Pharisee who set his price  
the person who denied him thrice,  
the one who shared his Easter meal,  
when thirty silvers were the deal  
the one who said His name was mud  
who ate His body and drank his blood.  
The crowd is now idle, staring grim,  
but no-one dares to talk to him.*

*No-one is blamed or vilified,  
He gazes like Christ before he died.  
Weird Christmas tree this, who can tell  
is it from heaven or from hell?  
And those who cast lots on what he'd left  
don't know the meaning of their theft.  
They are only guessing, groping, gleaning  
the night's important secret meaning.  
Hungarian Christmas. It is our nation  
that's hanged for Christmas decoration.*

*The world speaks of a wonder, true,  
the clerics clack of courage too.  
Statesmen mention these words, finessing,  
His Holiness too, gives his blessing,  
and all sorts of people try to guess  
what was the purpose of this mess?  
Why did those men have to disobey?  
Why didn't they simply pass away?  
Why the sky was suddenly rent?  
A nation spoke up: "This is the end!"*



*The people just gaze there, mystified.  
What drives this ocean's almighty tide?  
Why has the cosmos run a-riot?  
A nation rose. Then all was quiet.  
But people ask: What was it we saw?  
Whose flesh and bones have changed there the law?  
People born free in their native land  
falter because they can't understand  
the fact that we will always recall:  
Freedom is the greatest gift of all.*

*Herald Angel, send word from the skies.  
From seas of blood new life will arise.  
Child, ass and shepherds have met before  
in faraway mangers in the straw,  
where Life in its wondrous nursery  
creates a new life's mystery.  
They guard the wonder, alert and still,  
their breath is the faithful sentinel.  
The Star is bright, the dawn will break,  
sing Herald angel, for their sake.*

*New York, 1956.*

*(Translation by Peter Zolmann, August 2006)*



*General Assembly Building United Nations Headquarters, New York  
Photo by Marianna Sárközy*

## II. Preface

*Ludwig van Beethoven is recognized as one of the greatest composers of all time. In the music of the Egmont Overture, Op. 84., Beethoven expressed his political concerns through the exaltation of the heroic sacrifice of a man condemned to death for having taken a valiant stand against oppression. It was composed during the period of the Napoleonic Wars, at a time when the French Empire had extended its domination over most of Europe. The subject of the music and dramatic narrative is the life and heroism of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Dutch nobleman, the Count of Egmont.*

*The Egmont Overture, Op. 84., became an unofficial anthem of the 1956 Hungarian revolution. The Secretary General of NATO at that time called the Hungarian revolt “the collective suicide of a whole people”. It was a spontaneous nationwide revolt against a communist dictatorship – the government of the Hungarian People’s Republic and its Soviet-imposed policies – and lasted only from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October until the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1956.*

*Despite the failure of the uprising, it was highly influential in changing the world order of the Cold War years. It is less known than the other historical event we, Hungarians celebrate on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October; namely, the 1989 revolution, the eventual completion of the goals and dreams of the 1956 Revolution. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 1989, the new Republic of Hungary was proclaimed.*

*Our 1956 revolution has a very special relationship with the United Nations, which Hungary joined in 1955. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1956, when it became clear that the revolution would be crushed by the Soviet military forces, the renowned Hungarian lawyer and political theorist István Bibó, then Minister of State in the revolutionary Government of Imre Nagy, decided to stay in the Parliament building “as the only representative of the existing legal Hungarian government”. He wrote a proclamation entitled “For Freedom and Truth”, in which he turned to the UN and the international community for assistance:*

“My Fellow Hungarians!

When the Soviets attacked at dawn today, Prime Minister Imre Nagy went to the Soviet Embassy to negotiate and was unable to return. Besides Zoltán Tildy, who was already in the Parliament building, only ministers of state István B. Szabó and István Bibó could attend the Council of Ministers’ meeting convened this morning. When the Parliament was surrounded by Soviet troops, minister of state Zoltán Tildy – in order to avoid bloodshed – came to an agreement with them, according to which the soldiers would occupy the Parliament and allow all civilian personnel to leave. Under the provisions of this agreement, he then departed. Only the undersigned, István Bibó, remained in the Parliament building as the sole representative of the only existing legal Hungarian government. In these circumstances, I make the following declaration:

Hungary has no wish to pursue an anti-Soviet policy: On the contrary, Hungary’s fullest intention is to live in the community of those free Eastern European nations which want to organize their societies on the principles of liberty, justice, and freedom from exploitation. Before the whole world, I also reject the slanderous accusation that the glorious Hungarian Revolution has been soiled by Fascist or anti-Semitic excesses. The entire Hungarian nation, without class or denominational differences, participated in the struggle. It was moving and marvelous to witness how humane, wise, and discriminating the behavior of the insurgents was, and how they were able to limit their outrage solely towards the oppressive foreign army and the local executioner-commandoes. The recently-formed Hungarian government had the ability to put an end to incidents of street justice that repeatedly occurred during the past few days, as it would have been

able to halt the emergence of the unarmed arch-conservative political elements. The claim that a huge foreign army had to be called, or rather recalled, into the country to accomplish these objectives, is both frivolous and cynical. On the contrary, the very presence of this army is the major cause of the current tensions and disturbances.

I call upon the Hungarian people not to consider the occupying army – or the puppet-government, which that army is likely to set up – as legal authority and to utilize against them every means of passive resistance, except those that would endanger the essential supplies and public utilities of Budapest. I cannot issue an order for armed resistance: I have been participating in the government’s work for one day only, and I am not informed about the military situation; thus, it would be irresponsible of me to dispose of the priceless blood of Hungarian youth. The people of Hungary have already sacrificed enough of their blood to show the world their devotion to freedom and truth. Now it is up to the world powers to demonstrate the force of the principles contained in the United Nations’ Charter and the strength of the world’s freedom-loving peoples. I appeal to the major powers and the United Nations to make a wise and courageous decision to protect the freedom of our subjugated nation.

I also declare at this time that Hungary’s sole authorized representative abroad, and the senior member of the country’s diplomatic corps, is Minister of State Anna Kéthly.

May God protect Hungary!”

Available at: [http://www.bibomuhely.hu/articles/bibo\\_palyakep\\_56.htm](http://www.bibomuhely.hu/articles/bibo_palyakep_56.htm)

*Also at that time, young students in South Korea turned to the then Secretary General of the United Nations – Ban Ki-moon – who was 12 years old at the time of the revolution:*

It was 1956, and people in Hungary were facing a violent suppression of their aspirations. We wondered: What could we do? How could we best express support from our far-off corner of the world? Then it came to us. We

will write to Dag Hammarskjöld! As the student chair, I read the letter to my entire school at an assembly. “Dear Mr. Secretary- General,” we pleaded, “help the people of Hungary so they can have freedom and democracy.”

*Despite many powerful pleas for help, the UN was unable to take the timely and decisive action that would have been necessary to ensure our country’s freedom. While the Security Council was unable to act, the General Assembly adopted a number of resolutions in 1956, which unfortunately had no real effect on the actual course of events. Nevertheless, it was precisely the relentless disregard for the resolutions that finally induced the General Assembly to establish a Special Committee to study the Hungarian problem: the “Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary”. The Committee, with representatives from Australia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Denmark, Tunisia, and Uruguay, conducted hearings in New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna, and London. Over 100 refugees were interviewed, including ministers, military commanders and other officials, workers, revolutionary council members, factory managers and technicians, communists and non-communists, students, writers, teachers, medical personnel, and Hungarian soldiers. Documents, newspapers, radio transcripts, photos, film footage, and other records from Hungary were also reviewed, as well as written testimony of approximately 200 other Hungarians.*

*The Special Committee, which established the study of the Hungarian problem, operated for several years and produced two impressive reports. While the first focused on explaining the causes that had led to the outbreak of the revolution and outlining the events that had actually taken place, the second, a complementary report, reviewed the period of retaliation, which followed the crushing of the revolution. The chairman of the Committee was Alsing Andersen, a Danish politician who entered Denmark’s UN delegation in 1948. The second secretary of the committee was Poul Bang-Jensen, a former Danish diplomat, who refused to share the names of the secret witnesses in order to protect them and their families from any possible retaliation.*

*When I arrived at the UN as Permanent Representative of Hungary in January 2015, I knew, of course, the story of Bang-Jensen who, in Hungary, for his courageous actions, has been considered a real hero. I also knew that during my tenure, I would like to remember this great Danish diplomat. I asked French-Hungarian Artist Lehel Ürményi-Hamar to create a painting, which would become our symbol during the year of remembrance. This, we also put*

*on the cover of this book. Lehel left Hungary in 1956, after his friend was shot next to him at the Parliament square. He never saw his father again. I also contacted French sculptor Hedva Ser, whom I have been working with on the Tree of Peace project since my UNESCO years. Hedva is a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Artist for Peace and Special Envoy for Cultural Diplomacy. I told her the story of the flag with a hole. The revolutionaries cut out the Stalinist emblem and used the resulting tricolor with the hole in the middle as the symbol of the uprising. I told her that our short revolution was a CRY FOR FREEDOM, and I would like to see this flag with the hole as a bronze statue. I also knew that, while it may sound surprising to many of my colleagues and UN officials, the UN Archives and Columbia University kept numerous documents, many of which were still classified, concerning the 1956 Revolution and the following events. I wanted to open up these files. András Nagy, the author of Povl Bang-Jensen's life, has unsuccessfully applied to the UN to obtain such access since the beginning of the 90's.*

*It is important to know that the killing of political prisoners continued until 1963, when finally a mass amnesty was introduced in Hungary, in exchange for the removal of the Hungarian question from the agenda of the UN, and the international recognition of the Kádár Government in the UN. Historical research on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution – this outstanding moment of our history – is of utmost importance for us. On the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we requested the declassification of these files and making them available for scientific research.*

*The UN Secretariat has made the important decision to open up more than 400 pages of classified documents for research purposes. Moreover, more than 1000 pages of UN documents kept at Columbia University (the so-called Andrew Cordier papers) have also been declassified, and are therefore available for public research. We are very grateful for these significant decisions, and would like to thank the UN Secretariat and especially Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for their openness, support and cooperation on this matter.*

*Hungary joined the UN in 1955. On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our membership, we stressed our commitment to the efforts of the international community to achieve peace in every region of the world. We can see that, despite all of the significant results and robust efforts made by the international community to have peace all over the globe, the rising number and alarming dynamics of the conflicts can still be seen in several regions. We believe that the UN has a unique, unquestionable role in maintaining world peace.*

*This book provides insight into how we commemorated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the glorious days of the 1956 uprising at the New York Headquarters of the UN.*

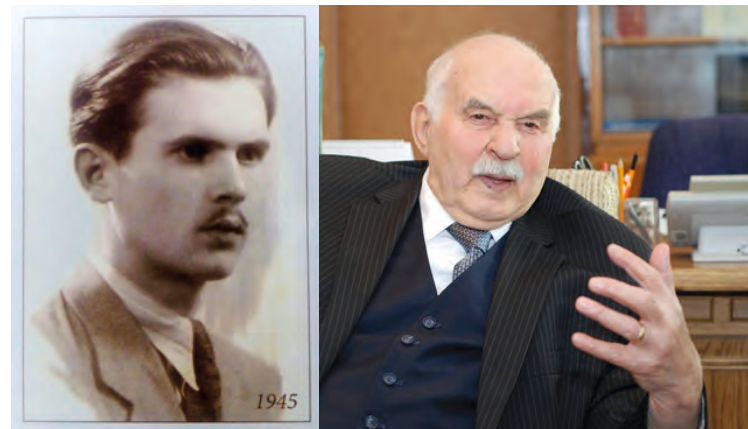
### III. Organizing an inventory

*Before anything else, I wanted to listen to a key witness of the revolution and of the hearings at the UN. János Horváth, an economist and politician, was born in 1921. He became a member of the Provisional National Assembly from the Smallholders' Party in 1945. In 1947, he was arrested and sentenced to four years of forced labor. After the suppression of the revolution, he left Hungary, became a founding member of the Hungarian Revolutionary Council in exile, and helped in organizing witnesses for the UN hearings; he also knew Poul Bang-Jensen in person. Later, he became a distinguished scholar and member of the U.S. House of Representatives before returning to Hungary in 1997, and becoming a member of the Hungarian Parliament again in 1998, on the national list of the Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance). His memory is crystal clear.*

#### *János Horváth: Hungarian Revolution at the United Nations revisited*

Like a comet across the global horizon, the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 created blinding mirrors and glaring windows. As for myself, having been a witness as well as a participant in the events, I still respond with personal recollection of those circumstances and happenings. Ever since, I have been sharing explanations, interpretations and documentation with researchers, and, over time, with the fact finding apparatus of the United Nations.

Due to the fact that the pursuit of the theme necessitated passing through uncharted territories, it became practical to employ — instead of chronological or topical treatment — another method; namely, to begin with



*H.E. Dr. János Horváth in 1945 and nowadays.*



*Budapest, October 23, 1956  
March on the Chain Bridge  
Photo by Tamás Munk (MTI Fotó)*

statements, such as “Summary and Conclusions” or “The Findings.” Accordingly, instead of conventional procedures of material collection for data analysis and hypothesis testing. I seek to decipher, unravel and resolve the progression, the evolution and even anterior information bundles. The events and facts of causation that spread illumination and disseminate insight.

The United Nations Special Committee on Hungary was constituted in response to the daily unfolding events. The revolution of October 23<sup>rd</sup> reached stability and global approval, on the one hand, but the Soviet Union’s reversed position soon regressed into armed attack and occupation. The Soviet military operations during the days of the revolution in October, and the freedom fight in November caused thousands of deaths and injury. Although this Special Committee’s mandate concentrated on the revolution and freedom fight, nevertheless, its activities reached occasionally beyond the limits of those targets.

Fact-finding hearings provided information, which almost routinely begot another line of questioning. The investigation opened doors and frequently diverging avenues for additional paths to probe. Such shedding light on the context could stimulate the delving into a further appealing field or shaded corner. Hungary’s gloom-ridden history during the twentieth century not only allows, but necessitates such an unconventional approach. The complexities of the subject matter reach deeper and higher than the method of counterfactual simulation (“what if”), history or dynamics of conflict resolution.

The hearings arranged at the New York United Nations Headquarters and other locations in Europe recorded oral testimonies and statements in writing. Military battles and street fight struggles attracted ample attention.





*Budapest, October 23, 1956  
Peaceful protesters in front of the Hungarian Parliament.  
Photo by Sándor Bojár (MTI Fotó)*

What kept motivating detailed scrutiny and elaborated descriptions were the surrounding situations, and by all means, the immediate background. The Committee, composed of ambassadors representing countries on each of the five continents, brought together intellectuals of geopolitical competence.

The testimonies given by around 50 persons included recognized leaders in the revolution as well as people from everyday walks of life. Among leaders, the most attention was accorded to Anna Kéthly, the Social Democrat Minister in the Imre Nagy Prime Minister's cabinet, and Sándor Kiss, the Independent Smallholders Party leader,



*Budapest, October 23, 1956  
Hungarian flag with a hole in the middle, the symbol of the Revolution.  
Photo by Ferenc Fehérváry (MTI Fotó)*

elected Secretary General of the Hungarian Revolutionary Council. As a matter of fact, the Committee Members asked targeted questions for clarification or out of scholarly curiosity.

The Hungarian Revolutionary Council played pivotal role in paving the way for witnesses to the UN Special Committee. It came into being in a manner its name indicates. Revolutionary. When arriving from the Soviet besieged Hungary to Vienna mid-November, I sought access to the public opinion maker media and diplomats. To up-build momentum some organization was needed. Prompted through similar thoughts, we, acted. While debating ways and means, I wrote on a sheet of paper the words Hungarian Revolutionary Council (Magyar Forradalmi Tanács) and signed it first, to be followed by seven other signatures. With the momentum, we made impact. I travelled to Paris, Washington, New York and back to Europe.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 1957 in Strasbourg, we constituted the Hungarian Revolutionary Council as a legitimate organization for recognition's sake. Nearly 100 persons representing credible groups of the revolution, this time in a free symbolic European city, manifested for freedom. The coherent recapitulations of workers' council demands, student declarations, and stabilizing government programs all repeatedly revealed Hungary's plea for peace.

Indeed, our Strasbourg appeal served one effective exploratory framework of the United Nations Committee.

During the year 1957, with full dedication and in significant measures beyond, I was with associates organizing an inventory of the causes of the 1956 Hungary uprising. I wrote hundreds of pages of observations and substantiations, which were recycled into the documentation and text of the Committee's report. The official written material actually contains numerous passages of drafts, which can be found in my current files. These were processed by Povl Bang-Jensen, the Danish diplomat employed as the Special Committee's secretary. With him, I interviewed prospective witnesses. He often chose to confront the editorial staff about attempts to soften certain drafts.

The chronicles of history do bring forth revelations about the subject, which enhance the existing store of valuable information. More than two generations after Hungary's 1956 hard times, one may recognize as asset, which was regarded as a liability before.

Nowadays, among the offsprings of 1956 remain the soul-search of just how truly and to what extent the Hungarian people recycled the heritage. Recalling and recollecting the knowledge of yesterday's reality recreates possibilities, since whatever existed, may be acknowledged as possible.



*Poul Bang-Jensen (1909-1959)*

## IV. Remembering Poul Bang-Jensen

*I contacted the Permanent Representative of Denmark, Ambassador Ib Petersen, at the beginning of my tenure as Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations in 2015, and asked him to join forces in a remembrance of the brave Dane Poul Bang-Jensen. The result of our joint efforts was embodied in a unique day. Not only did we organize a panel discussion at the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations with distinguished panelists, but we also managed to get access to the roof terrace of the United Nations Headquarters, where Poul Bang-Jensen allegedly burned the list of names of Hungarian witnesses who testified at the UN about the Soviet invasion of Hungary, to protect their families from any possible retaliation back in Hungary. We remembered a diplomat who lost his job and later his life because of his moral values and conscience.*

*Who was this brave Dane?*

*Poul Bang-Jensen (1909–1959) studied law and economics at the University of Copenhagen from 1927 to 1933, and received an LL.D. in 1933. He continued his studies at the London School of Economics and in Germany, in 1933, preparing a legal-economic book, *Mindstepris og Undersalg (Price-Fixing and Price-Cutting)*, which was published in 1934. The book was awarded the Ørsted Gold Medal, a Scandinavian prize for works in the legal and economics fields, a prize that had only been awarded a few times in the previous 100 years. While in Germany, he became involved in anti-Nazi underground work. From 1933 to 1938, Mr. Bang-Jensen anonymously wrote a monthly article on foreign affairs for a Danish business magazine. He wrote frequent articles for newspapers (including *Politiken*) and magazines concerning political, legal, and economics subjects.*

*He practiced law in Copenhagen from 1934 to 1938, focusing on corporate and general business law, and served as a member of the board of directors for companies in the publishing, real estate, and movie industries. The government also assigned him to be the defense attorney in more than a hundred criminal cases. From the beginning of 1938, he undertook further research in Oslo, London, and Paris, preparing a book titled *Sociology of Law* (a research that*

was later “temporarily” postponed by the war). He arrived in the U.S. in 1939 to continue his research (primarily at the University of Chicago), with the intent of returning to Denmark to practice law. In the summer of 1939, he took an automobile trip through 41 states and Mexico.

With the outbreak of the war in Europe, he volunteered, in September 1939, to serve the Danish government at the Danish Legation (later Embassy) in Washington, D.C., for the duration of the war. From 1939 to 1949, Mr. Bang-Jensen served as counselor and chief assistant to Ambassador Henrik Kauffmann (later minister) at the Danish Legation in Washington, D.C. Upon the German occupation of Denmark, Ambassador Kauffmann declared that the Danish government was operating under duress and the Legation would no longer take direction from Copenhagen. The Legation served as a *de facto* Danish government-in-exile with assumption of authority (*negotiorum gestor*) to negotiate and enter into treaties and other obligations such as the agreements with the U.S. government concerning the defense of Greenland, the re-flagging of Danish merchant ships to serve the Allied cause, and the disposition of Danish funds in the U.S. He was a co-drafter of the “Greenland Agreement” of April 9, 1941, which was signed by Minister Kauffmann in the name of the King of Denmark. Under the agreement, air and naval bases in Greenland were placed at the disposal of the U.S., with the concurrence of local officials in Greenland. With Greenland cut off from Denmark, the Legation also had to make arrangements for all supplies for Greenland and the sale of products from Greenland.

Mr. Bang-Jensen spent four months in London in 1942 to establish connections with Free Danes there, and with underground forces in Denmark. In 1943, he also simultaneously served as *chargé d'affaires* for the Danish consulate in Mexico and nine Central American nations. In the immediate postwar years, a primary task of the Legation in Washington, DC was working in conjunction with Danish companies to expand Danish–American commercial ties. Mr. Bang-Jensen also participated in the negotiations that led to the signing of the NATO Pact in April 1949. In the postwar years, he continued as counselor and acted as *chargé d'affaires* for long periods in the absence of Ambassador Kauffmann.

Mr. Bang-Jensen worked for the United Nations from 1949 to 1958 as a senior political officer in the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. He also served as the secretary for various UN committees, including the Peace Observation Committee, the Balkan Sub-Committee, the Good Offices Committee on South Africa, and the Palestine Conciliation Committee. He served as Deputy Secretary of the UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary. Three books and numerous articles have been written about his work at the UN regarding the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

*In 1959, he worked for C.A.R.E., a leading international humanitarian group.*

*In the years following his death, he was honored by the Hungarian government and others for his work at the UN. In 1989, an honorary gravestone with his name was placed in Parcel 301 in Budapest, near the grave of Prime Minister Imre Nagy and the other graves for those executed following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. In 1991, in the Hungarian Parliament, President Árpád Göncz awarded Poul Bang-Jensen a posthumous decoration. The Hungarian government has erected a bust of Poul Bang-Jensen in both in Budapest, in the lobby of the Foreign Ministry, and in Copenhagen. A street in District XI, Budapest, Poul Bang-Jensen utca, was named after him. There is a plaque dedicated to Poul Bang-Jensen at an important '56 Budapest site—Corvin Cinema. A memorial has been dedicated in the Poul Bang-Jensen Park in Enying, Hungary.*

*András Nagy, a Hungarian author, has been researching the life of Poul Bang-Jensen since the beginning of the 1990's. His book "The Case of Poul Bang-Jensen: '56 in Western Headwind" was published in 2005.*

## *András Nagy: Poul Bang-Jensen's Delayed Victory*

### *The Crises Begin*

It was a little more than quarter a century ago when finally the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, a turning point in our history as well as that of the Cold War, was first told in its entirety. It had been forbidden in Hungary to keep its memory alive during the decades of communism. After 1989, the recollections of participants greatly contributed to scientific research focusing on the history of Eastern Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, creating a new 'narrative' of our past. 1956 was a point of reference for our new democracy as well, identifying with its tradition, recalling the magic moments when our county tried to shape its own future, and remembering the few days in world history when Hungary was the focus of attention.

It was also a process of rehabilitation, symbolically starting with the reburial of Imre Nagy and his fellow martyrs of the Revolution, to give them the final honor that was

brutally denied when their lives were taken when they were executed. At that cathartic event on Budapest's Heroes' Square, people paid their delayed final tribute to the leaders of the Revolution, and to its martyrs by reading all the names of those who gave their lives for the freedom and independence of Hungary.

At that time, one name was missing – that of Poul Bang-Jensen, the Danish diplomat, involved in the investigation of the United Nations concerning the Hungarian Revolution – who tragically died three years after the events in October 1956. Yet a symbolic grave was assigned to him in the cemetery next to the prison where those executed were buried or rather dumped in the soil unidentified for decades, as if he was one of them.



*On November 4, 1956 the Security Council voted on the Hungarian Question.  
UN Photo*

Was he really? What happened to him and why did it happen? These questions posed 28 years ago inspired a research that started in 1992 and concluded first in a documentary movie and then in a book; yet the more we learned about Bang-Jensen's fate, the more questions were posed; and we are not at the end yet.

Povl Bang-Jensen was the Deputy Secretary of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary, an investigative body established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in January 1957. Its task was to reveal and to report to the community of nations about what had happened in Hungary in 1956, why it happened and how the international organization should deal with it. Bang-Jensen, like many Hungarians at that time, believed in the principles of the UN as a source of hope in the unforgettable days of the Revolution and also later, in

the tragic moments that followed its defeat. His idealism, based on historical experiences and moral obligations, was extremely appealing to the Hungarians who met him and generated a deep sympathy and gratitude. This provided a very special place for Bang-Jensen in the memory and in the hearts of many Hungarians.

To understand the situation in its complexity, it is important to remember that Hungary became a member of the 'family of nations' in 1955, as earlier applications were rejected due to the country's role in the Second World War that was followed by the frozen conflicts of the Cold War. When Hungary finally joined the UN, many Hungarians enthusiastically expected that the Charter of the organization would be observed by those in Budapest who had actually signed it. However, other hopes of a very different nature contradicted it, as the communist secret services were deeply involved in the process of joining the UN and diligently worked to obtain new possibilities for their espionage activities.

The demands of the 1956 Revolution shared several similarities with the principles of the UN Charter, for example, those that referred to human rights, to the equality of nations, to freedom and independence. The UN was aware when these demands were written down on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and events began to accelerate. After the first Soviet invasion, the Security Council put the Hungarian situation on its agenda. The first hopeful days encouraged the leaders of the Revolution to negotiate directly with the Soviets. Therefore, the Hungarian UN delegate on October 28<sup>th</sup>, following the governments' instructions, referred to the events of the Revolution at the Security Council meeting as internal affairs of the country. Very soon after that, however, it became tragically clear that Moscow would



not let Hungary go; on the contrary, the new and final invasion was being prepared. Once this became clear to the leaders of the Revolution, the UN was addressed by cables from Prime Minister (and acting Foreign Minister) Imre Nagy asking to acknowledge Hungary's hastily declared neutrality and its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. It was too late, however, and the 'family of nations' was neither prepared nor willing to change the Soviet politics, particularly since, at the same time, the 'Suez crisis' threatened world peace.

In spite of several efforts of the UN to solve the 'Problem of Hungary', the results were politically futile. On other fronts, like providing relief to the suffering country and receiving refugees in Austria and in Yugoslavia, the international organization was more successful. Yet for those who shared a common belief in the UN, expectations were high that not only the symptoms of the crisis would be dealt with but the substance as well. For a while, the UN did not spare efforts to find a political solution that became more and more unlikely as time passed. Yet the issue remained on the agenda from 1956 until 1962, but the approach soon changed from being proactive to passive.

It was particularly painful for the Hungarians to compare the inaction of the UN in Hungary with its effective actions in the Suez at the very same time. The Soviet military machine was addressed by the UN rhetorically, while in the Suez, a whole army was organized in no time and shipped to the crisis location. The conflict in the Middle East was solved both politically and militarily, even though two members of the Security Council, Britain and France, were involved, unlike in the crisis in the middle of Europe. Hungary was in the Soviet bloc and



*On November 3, 1956, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld conferred with the U.S. representative, Henry Cabot Lodge, as the Security Council debated the Hungarian situation.  
UN Photo*

had to remain there, the obvious and repeated violations of the UN Charter resulted only in verbal condemnations and General Assembly resolutions and, months later, the Committee was established. This is where the story of Bang-Jensen became a part of the history of our country.

### *Povl Bang-Jensen and the Special Committee*

Povl Bang-Jensen's role in the Special Committee as well as in the UN was crucial regardless the formal position he held. He was a lawyer by training and a devoted liberal democrat whose past determined him to act as he did at the UN. He was part of the Danish government in exile in 1940, when Denmark was invaded by the Nazis and the Embassy of Denmark in Washington declared itself independent of occupied Denmark. Bang-Jensen played an extremely important role during the Second World War, and a few years later, he joined the United Nations. In the Special Committee, he was involved in several aspects of the investigations: gathering evidence about the events in Hungary, and then writing the Report as a basis for future UN resolutions. As the Committee was not recognized by the Soviet-installed Kádár regime, entry into Hungary was denied and, therefore, only those participants of the Revolution who had left the country were able to testify, provide evidence, and answer questions posed by the Committee.

Bang-Jensen's assignment included contacting witnesses, arranging their appearances to testify, obtaining their visas and tickets, paying their per diem and pre-interviewing them to determine if new information could be offered by the candidate. His sympathy, energy and devotion to the Hungarian case was critical, as many of the witnesses were deeply disappointed in the UN and some of them did not trust the organization or its leaders. But they did trust Bang-Jensen, who was the only person who knew all their names, as many of them provided testimony secretly or anonymously, as they were afraid that the communist secret services would identify them and exercise pressure on them or on their families back home.

This pressure could prove fatal, as Bang-Jensen understood, and as archival evidence now proves.

Bang-Jensen had some experience working against totalitarian powers and the concerns of security were fundamental for him. The UN, however, did not assign a security officer for the very sensitive investigation process that included taking testimonies in Geneva, Rome, London and Vienna. Vienna had only been left by the Soviets a short while previously, in October 1955. He was also concerned by unauthorized personnel working with the Committee, and worried that information could be leaked out of the UN that would endanger the lives of those who trusted him.

The witness testimonies, collected orally and then transcribed into documents, together with other documents the Committee received, became the basis of the Report that was written as a conclusion to the investigation. Bang-Jensen was extremely instrumental at each step of its creation, but he became increasingly uneasy about the possible outcome. His concerns remained mainly unanswered or were attributed as 'baseless' by the UN officials. When Bang-Jensen had concrete proof of omissions, mistakes and distortions in the drafts, his criticism was flatly rejected, but he did not give up, even when he was instructed not to work on the Report any more.

The situation was even more difficult at the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, responsible for the work of the Committee. This was headed by a Yugoslav, whose predecessors, as well as future successors, were all Soviets, as well as many of the colleagues working in the Department from the Eastern Bloc. Archival evidence suggests that in the critical days of the Revolution, the reports and summaries informing the Secretary-

General of the UN by members of this Department followed the lines of Soviet propaganda, and this remained so until mid-December.

When the Report was submitted to the UN and published in June 1957, in spite of the problems, Bang-Jensen was convinced that the Special Committee had to continue its work, as the General Assembly's resolution clearly referred to 'supplemental reports'. This was even more important since the events described in the Report could not be changed, but the lives of those suffering from reprisals of the Kádár regime needed to be saved or protected by the UN's constant attention. It was particularly painful to see how information flowed from Hungary, often smuggled out at great risk. It provided a very worrying picture about the post-revolutionary terror. These documents, however, did not arrive to the members of the Committee but were filed away and only lists with references to different items were circulated. It was not at all clear what the documents actually contained, hidden as their content was behind the enigmatic titles. While UN officials formally acknowledged the receipt of these messages, the very same information was obtained by the communist secret services working inside the UN who profited from the easy access to these documents.

Bang-Jensen's concerns and conflicts originated during the investigation, grew when writing the Report, and peaked when, following an administrative request, he was instructed to turn over the names of witnesses to his superiors. Bang-Jensen had very good reasons to decline and the Hungarian revolutionaries were shocked even by the idea that their names would be deposited in an office of the UN. Although this conflict was resolved, and the list was finally burned, UN 'disciplinary actions' started



*On November 5, 1956, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles discusses the crisis with Australia's Permanent Representative to the UN, Dr. E. Ronald Walker.  
UN Photo*

against Bang-Jensen that were neither impartial nor legally correct as archival evidence prove. Three different committees worked on the 'Bang-Jensen Case', focusing exclusively on administrative matters to avoid facing the substance of the concerns he raised. Finally, the Under-Secretary-General of the UN declared that Bang-Jensen's accusations were completely unfounded, as there had been no leaks at the UN. Disciplinary proceedings concluded in the dismissal of Bang-Jensen on June 16, 1958, the very same day Imre Nagy and other leaders of the revolution were executed in Budapest. The letter of dismissal remained unsent for two weeks, to avoid any unwanted connection between the two events.

Bang-Jensen did not give up his battle outside the UN, even if it was hard for him to prove without access to all



*Seen here at the rostrum is Mr. Imre Horvath, Hungarian Foreign Minister, who said that the question was before the Assembly despite repeated and categorical protests by his government.*  
UN Photo

the documents, what became evident by our research more than half a century later. We now have proof that a large number of sensitive documents were smuggled out of the UN, and that the communist secret services had easy access to classified files. As a result of carelessness on the part of leaders of the organization, people in Hungary were identified by the secret services as sources of information for the UN and severely punished, imprisoned and executed. When fired from the UN, Bang-Jensen continued to focus on the problems he was concerned with. In November 1959, Bang-Jensen was approached by a still-unknown person who promised to provide final proof for Bang-Jensen's arguments. Shortly later, he disappeared. Three days later he was found dead in Alley Pond Park on Long Island, New York. Until today, we do not know if he committed suicide or was killed, even if there is no doubt that regardless who pulled the trigger, it was murder.

#### *The Results of New Research in the Opened Archives*

When our research started in 1992, colleagues, friends and politicians put together the pieces of the puzzle of this story. Documents became available from different archives, but other archive access was flatly or bureaucratically rejected; most surprisingly, many files from the UN Archive remained closed. Documents about the 1956 Revolution and about the UN were available, but folders about the work of the Special Committee and particularly about the 'Bang-Jensen Case' remained inaccessible for decades. Paradoxically, the denial of access supported our hypothesis that the issue is much more complex and much more significant than expected. It was the more disturbing that from other sources we could put together the pieces of this puzzle, as not only different archives

were opening up, like that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hungary and later in Denmark. The Historical Archive of State Security Services in Hungary also declassified a great amount of relevant evidence that proved to be crucial for our research, but so-called 'private collections' proved to be extremely rich in UN documents.

The most important of these private collections was that of Claire de Hedervary, a junior colleague of Bang-Jensen and, at the time, a technical assistant and translator for the Special Committee. She was an expatriate Hungarian living with a Belgian passport, a Harvard graduate with a degree in economics and characterized (even by the communist secret services) as 'very intelligent'. She was aware of the importance of the role the UN played in and after 1956 and kept track of all that happened. She collected all the documents of the Special Committee and later of the Special Representatives dealing with the Hungarian question. Her devotion resulted in a collection of more than eight thousand documents. For a long time, she kept these in her office and later in the corridor (used by Soviet Bloc UN employees as well), and she finally removed them from the UN and kept them in her small flat in Manhattan.

Ita Pásztor was the administrative assistant for the secretary of the Special Committee, William Jordan, and she first fell in love, then married a Hungarian refugee, Tamás Pásztor. The charismatic and handsome ex-politician had left the country during the Revolution and had assisted the UN in Vienna by obtaining documents and testimonies, despite his reputation as a prison informer in the early 1950's. When the UN regulations demanded the review, eventual removal and shredding of documents no longer used by the Special Committee, Ita Pásztor called

a leader of the refugee community to collect the papers with a pickup from the garbage area of the UN to save them for the future. Thousands of documents, including very sensitive ones, were stored at the American-Hungarian Foundation's archive in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

It is hardly surprising that many confidential documents ended up in different official archives, not only British, American, French diplomatic collections but in Hungary as well, as they were available for the communist secret services. Investigations were held not only at the UN in New York at the time, but also in Hungary by the communist authorities, though not with the intention to chronicle what happened in 1956, but to identify and severely punish those who participated in the Revolution. The UN documents were immensely useful to the officers of revenge, as all the names, data, facts, details were the center of their interest.

#### *More Files are Made Available for Study*

The randomly available files created even more interest for the study of relevant UN documents in a more systematic manner. From 1992 on, renewed attempts to access to these documents repeatedly failed, either for bureaucratic reasons or with the excuse of protecting the rights of the people involved. It was particularly frustrating that probably the most interesting files, the so-called 'Cordier Papers', were deposited at the Columbia University's Rare Books and Manuscript Library and had double protection; besides a UN permit, the Library's special consent was also needed. It was even more intriguing that Cordier was the driving force behind the UN actions against Bang-Jensen, as he had emphasized that no leaks from the UN occurred. He himself preferred the Archive



*On September 10, 1957, the General Assembly reconvened to resume consideration of the Hungarian situation. From left to right: Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, Prince Wan Waithayakon, Mr. Andrew W. Cordier, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General.*  
*UN Photo*

at Columbia University (of which he was the dean and then president) to that of the UN, when deciding about the location of his sensitive documents.

The situation regarding access to the UN Archive finally and significantly changed for the better after a two-year process, thanks to the unwavering efforts of the Hungarian Ambassador to the UN, Katalin Bogyay. She understood the importance of these documents as being critical for understanding a very important part of Hungary's and the UN's history. She raised the issue of declassification at the highest level of the UN and accepted no excuses for denying access. She contacted all the people involved, began to successfully lobby the heads of departments, and created sympathy for her efforts, requesting the assistance of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry as well.

Finally, her diplomatic skills, charisma and the strength of her arguments bore fruit. Access was given to UN archival documents, many of which had not been available elsewhere for nearly 60 years.

Despite the long-lasting secrecy, it was hard to believe how thoroughly and professionally the UN followed the events in Hungary, and how many efforts and actions were taken. Several thousands of declassified documents finally 'narrated' the story from the angle of the UN, regarding the UN's responses to the Revolution and to its untimely defeat. Reprisals and revenge were also carefully documented and closely observed, until after the last executions in 1961, when the 'Hungarian Question' was removed from UN agenda.

One of the most important revelations was to understand the organization's enormous role in collecting and shipping relief to Hungary, and in assisting the refugees, trying to do everything for those in need. The UN did not 'advertise' its huge and successful efforts in these fields to avoid any political conflict with those in power in Budapest, as they harshly criticized the UN's political actions as 'interference' in Hungary's internal matters. It was a heroic task, muted and with logistic virtuosity, and masterfully executed throughout the most critical months. The magnitude of the undertaking is still hard to believe, with 200,000 refugees arriving to poor and unprepared Austria, finding ways to enter a war-torn Hungary with thousands of tons of food, coal, and medical supplies.

At the same time, however, the documents also demonstrate the UN's difficulties in dealing with the Hungarian government's representative – the Minister of State of the Imre Nagy government. Anna Kéthly immediately flew to New York from Vienna, with the intention of

addressing the UN. She was not, however, received by Hammarskjöld and was not allowed to speak in the General Assembly; at the same time, János Szabó, who had excellent ties to the Soviets, and was approved paradoxically by Imre Nagy, was allowed to speak at the UN GA, as well as the representative of the Kádár government, the ex-Stalinist Minister of Foreign Affairs, Imre Horváth. Anna Kéthly could only sit in the balcony as the guest of the Danish Delegation to the UN. The UN's space for maneuver was obviously limited. Rules and regulations of the organization did not allow avoidance of procedural matters, even on moral grounds. At the same time, pragmatism also demanded that the UN deal with the Kádár government when discussing relief needs, since the legal government was not in a position to negotiate. Imre Nagy and several members of his government had found refuge at the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest.

The indirect recognition of the Kádár regime overlapped with a political solution, and Kádár rejected any political intervention by the UN. Early on, the Secretary-General offered to visit Hungary, but was not allowed to enter. Later, his designated observers were also denied entry. In January 1957, when the Special Committee was formed, this situation was accepted by the UN, and the Report was written without visiting the country in focus. Real action should have taken place after the Special Committee and the Report. Bang-Jensen was not the only person to want to follow Hungarian developments with supplemental reports; each member of the Committee had the same intention. The most disturbing revelation, based on the new archival evidence, was the reconstruction of bureaucratic manipulations to convince the members of the Special Committee not to opt for a supplemental report, even if it was in the GA resolution, even if it was definitely



*Members of UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary, June 21, 1958  
Dr. E. Ronald Walker (right), Australia's Permanent Representative to the UN;  
Mr. R.S.S. Gunewardene (left), Permanent Representative of Ceylon to the UN;  
and Mr. V. Duckworth-Barker, the Committee's Information Officer.  
UN Photo*



*The United Nations General Assembly concluded its debate on the situation in Hungary on December 12, 1958. On the presidential rostrum from left to right: UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, Assembly President, Dr. Charles Malik (Lebanon), and Mr. Andrew W. Cordier, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General.  
UN Photo/MB*

needed for Hungary and they were aware of this need. The documents show that William Jordan was tasked with the assignment to circumvent the fulfilment of the UN General Assembly resolution to produce further or 'supplementary' reports. This was probably not his own idea (as referred to in letters), but the consequence of a decision at the highest level, that was not communicated in writing to anyone. Bang-Jensen rightly used the world 'sabotage' in his criticism of the UN's dealings with Hungary, and those who punished him violated the resolutions themselves.

As the decision to give up on Hungary politically was not communicated, the UN kept the issue on its agenda. Many people believed that informing the UN would help to stop the terror. Detailed and exact information was sent regularly to New York from Hungary about trials, imprisonments, executions as well as about different aspects of the hardships in everyday life, from the reorganization of the *kolkhoz* system of state collective farms, to the total control over the media, demonstrating in every part of society, the neo-Stalinist terror. The Special Representatives, nominated by the General Assembly were formally tasked, but the information was just 'filed away' with no action was taken. Comparing the risk of smuggling out information from Hungary to the effect the information had in New York, is tragic. Four executions resulted for 'high treason' from informing the UN, and probably many more tragedies followed in a 'smaller scale'.

Bang-Jensen tried to provide security for those who had trusted the UN, to keep the issue on the UN agenda, and

to focus on the current situation in Hungary, not only to document the historical facts, but also to attempt to save lives once the Revolution was defeated. The indifference of the UN, if not cynicism, and the hidden complicity with the Kádár government are particularly striking, as documents now show, when compared to the enormous amount of UN energy dedicated to denying and rejecting Bang-Jensen's concerns and accusations. The UN committees investigating Bang-Jensen seemed to serve like judges at the show trials in the East Bloc. Investigators focused on the dismissal of Bang-Jensen without examining the allegations and statements that had been submitted by UN witnesses for his lawyer for cross-examination. He lacked access to UN documents, and facts just did not matter; judgement had already been made: he had to be dismissed and so he was. Even after his death, the UN kept publishing papers on Bang-Jensen, distorting the truth, whitewashing its irreparable harm and discussing issues that could no longer be answered by the person concerned. At the same time, cables were sent to his widow expressing the condolences from Hammarksjöld and Cordier.

Bang-Jensen tried to keep the focus on Hungary and to save people, if possible. The research on his activity resulted in much more than justifying his concerns. It provided a better picture of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and of the reprisals the UN was aware of, and what he had tried to avoid. He was defeated, as the Hungarians were defeated, but defeat was brighter and more triumphant than any victory could ever have been.



## *Panel Discussion on Poul Bang-Jensen*

*December 5, 2016.*

*Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations, New York*

*I chaired a panel discussion about the heroic life of the Danish diplomat Poul Bang-Jensen. I was very happy to organize this special event with my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN, Ambassador Ib Petersen. Back in the spring of 2015, I succeeded to get the support of Bang-Jensen's family for our remembrance. So, I invited Per Bang-Jensen, the son of Poul Bang-Jensen, to the panel discussion, together with two historians and writers who both have dedicated a great part of their lives to researching the life of Bang-Jensen. One of them, Bo Lidegaard, wrote a book about him in Danish and the other one, András Nagy, in Hungarian. Before our panel discussion, in the morning, we got access to visit the Roof Terrace of the UN Headquarters, where Poul Bang-Jensen, instead of handing over the list of the names of the witnesses to the UN Secretariat, allegedly burned the envelope with the names inside to keep their families safe back in Hungary. To understand the situation of those times: one of the witnesses who gave his testimony to the Special Committee on February 26, 1957, returned to Hungary and was imprisoned and executed. But we will talk about the envelope later...*

*Let me introduce the members of the Panel:*

### *PER BANG-JENSEN*

*(Poul Bang-Jensen's son)*

*Per Bang-Jensen has worked to accumulate a large collection of reference materials relating to the Hungarian Revolution from archives in Europe and the United States.*

*In 2005, he presented the National Széchenyi Library with duplicate copies of over 25,000 pages of photocopied documents and over 12,000 pages of microfilmed documents relating to the Hungarian Revolution and its aftermath, that had been declassified.. He has given many speeches regarding the Hungarian Revolution. In 2007, he was awarded a decoration from the Hungarian government: the Officer's Cross Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.*

*Mr. Bang-Jensen received a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Dartmouth College and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. He was a captain in the U.S. Army Adjutant General Corps. He has also been a director of various nonprofit organizations, including those involved with the international campaign for a landmine-free world, homeless shelters, and historic preservation. Per Bang-Jensen has worked for the last 30 years for an invest-*

ment company in Warrenton, Virginia, specializing in technology projects, real estate, and infrastructure construction. Previously, he was deputy chief executive of a Singapore-based international construction company working in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and South America. He also served as chairman of the holding company.

#### **BO LIDEGAARD, PH.D.**

*A Danish historian, journalist, former editor-in-chief of Politiken, and award-winning author of the book *The Highest Price: Poul Bang-Jensen and the UN, 1955–1959*, Bo Lidegaard has published a number of awarded volumes on contemporary history, the development of the welfare economy, and international affairs, including his 1998 book, *The Highest Price*, on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the United Nations, seen through the lens of Poul Bang-Jensen, the deputy secretary of the UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary. Dr. Bo Lidegaard (born 1958) is a writer and strategic advisor, formerly a diplomat. He has served in the Danish Foreign Service (1984–2005), as the top international and national security and climate change advisor to consecutive Danish prime ministers (2005–2011), and as executive editor-in-chief at Politiken, the leading Danish daily (2011–2016). Bo continues to publish weekly columns in Politiken and contributes op-eds to international media, including *The New York Times* and *Financial Times*. Since 2011, Bo has been the chairman of the Danish national committee to the Trilateral Commission, working closely with leading industrialists, bankers, and politicians. He advises national and international organizations on sustainability, impact, and communication.*

#### **ANDRÁS NAGY, PH.D.**

*András Nagy is a Hungarian playwright, author, and interdisciplinary academic. Even before obtaining his university degree in Hungarian literature, he had already published his first book, a work of historical fiction that was followed by 16 more volumes, including novels, essays, dramas, and academic studies. Several of his plays were performed both in Hungary and abroad, and some of his screenplays were turned into movies. He was also involved in producing documentary films. He has taught at various universities both in Hungary and abroad. Currently, he is an associate professor at Pannon University in Veszprém, Hungary, in the Department of Theater Studies.*

#### **H.E. IB PETERSEN** Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, New York

*Ambassador Mr. Ib Petersen is the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations in New York as of August 1, 2013. Before taking up this position, Ambassador Petersen served as State Secretary for Development Policy of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2009. Prior to this, he was State Secretary for Development Cooperation, Middle East, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United Nations (2007–2009). Ib Petersen has held several senior management positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Under-Secretary for Bilateral*

*Development Cooperation (2004–2007), Head of Department, Policy and Planning (2001–2004), and Deputy Head of Department, Development Policy and Planning (1998–2001). From 1995 to 1998, he served as Deputy Head of the Danish Embassy in Zimbabwe and from 1988 to 1991 as an advisor to the Nordic Executive Director on the Board of the World Bank in Washington, D.C. He joined the Danish Foreign Service in 1985. He has also served on the boards of Danish international investment funds: the Industrialization Funds for Developing Countries, the Investment Fund for Central and Eastern Europe, and the Investment Fund for Emerging Markets. Ib Petersen is married with two sons.*

*H.E. Katalin BOGYAY: Today, we would like to honor and remember a very special person who is a national hero in our country. When I came to New York, as the Ambassador of Hungary nearly two years ago, in 2015, I thought everyone would know him. I soon realized this was not true. We still need to tell this important story. It is a great*



*Group photo with the Bang-Jansen family after the panel discussion.*

*honor for me that I can welcome here the Permanent Representative of Denmark, my dear friend, H.E. Ib Petersen, whom I visited immediately after my arrival. I told him that it would be a great idea to talk about Mr. Bang-Jensen together. Before I say anything more, I would like to ask the Ambassador of Denmark to say a few words.*

H.E. Ib PETERSEN: Thank you, Katalin. Thank you for making this evening a reality. Friends, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be here, and I can confirm, Katalin, that at our first meeting almost two years ago, you brought up this issue, and I know it has been extremely important for you to realize this evening, as well as the fantastic concert you hosted in October. There may be many people who really don't know a lot about what you were talking about, but I knew instantly. I was born four years after the uprising, and I think for most Danes at my age, growing up we remember that our parents talked a lot about the '56 uprising in Hungary, the fighting, the anxiety, the hope that a lot of people had for the Hungarian people, and the disappointment and really the anxiety when it turned out the way it did.

I also think that most of us heard that this was the first time that Danes came together in mobilizing support for victims of an unjust conflict. Fundraising was done for the Hungarian people, and refugees were aided with resettlement in Denmark. I think all of us, at least in my hometown, remember taking in Hungarian refugee families. They were integrated, and then became part of our community.

I also knew about Bang-Jensen, not least thanks to my good friend and former colleague, Bo Lidegaard, who is a fantastic writer and storyteller. I knew the story's background, the outcome, and all the things that are related to it; and I would agree with you that perhaps Danes should know a bit more about this story as well. It tells a lot about how Denmark, from the beginning in the UN, has tried to play a role in the organization. For Danes, the UN was and is a very important organization. You may recall that the chair of the Committee was a Danish parliamentarian, Alsing Andersen, and I think that is also a reflection of the fact that Denmark, together with the Nordic countries, often tries to be a mediator in the UN, trying to bridge the different positions in the UN. We hope we sometimes have an impact through these efforts.

I thought the idea of this evening was very good. It is not about blaming; it is about commemorating Bang-Jensen. It is also, as Bo writes in his book, about looking at the dynamics driving the development. How do we end up in situations like this? What were the premises for the decisions and conclusions that people made? We need to understand this also today. We are facing a lot of challenges. The Security Council today discussed the Syrian situation with a very depressing outcome. We, therefore, need to study and learn from the past, and that is also what this is all about.

I am proud as a Dane, and as the Danish Ambassador, to be part of this evening; proud to see the Danish flag here as well, and I really look forward to listening to the panelists. Thank you.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Thank you so much. Let me just give a brief introduction to this evening and to the story we would like to tell. Of course, the Ambassador knew all about Bang-Jensen, but I was very sorry to learn that here in the UN, people don't really understand what he did. In Hungary, we have statues of him; there are streets named after him, and just last week, I invited the President of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson, to pay his respects to Mr. Bang-Jensen in Budapest. I told him the story, and what it means to ask for a special session of the General Assembly. As you may know, our Revolution 60 years ago was a nationwide revolt against communist dictatorship, the government of the Hungarian People's Republic and its Soviet-imposed policies, and it lasted only from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October until the 10<sup>th</sup> of November. Despite the failure of the Uprising, or the Revolution or the Freedom Fight, whatever we call these special days in our history, it was highly influential in changing the world order during the Cold War.*

*Our revolution has a special relationship with the United Nations. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1956, when it became clear that the Revolution would be crushed by the Soviet military forces, the renowned Hungarian lawyer and political theorist, István Bibó, the Minister of State in the revolutionary government of Imre Nagy, stayed in the Parliament building, in Budapest, as the only remaining legal representative of the existing Hungarian government. That evening, Bibó wrote his famous proclamation in which he turned to the UN for help.*

*The concert we organized on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 was dedicated to all those in the world who have been the victims of their fight for freedom and human rights. As the Ambassador said, of course, we know the Security Council was paralyzed, and despite Bibó's and many others' pleas for help, the Council was unable to take the timely and decisive action that would have been necessary to protect Hungarian lives and ensure our country's freedom.*

*The General Assembly was much more active. It adopted several resolutions, both at emergency and regular sessions. In one of these resolutions, adopted in January 1957, the General Assembly decided to establish the so-called 'Special Committee' on the Problem of Hungary, to investigate and gather evidence on what happened during and following the Hungarian Revolution. In addition, the General Assembly, in 1957, designated a special representative on the question of Hungary, first Prince Wan Waithayakon of Thailand, and then, for several years, Sir Leslie Munro from New Zealand. The Special Committee was composed of five state representatives from Australia, Denmark, Ceylon/Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Uruguay. There were 111 witnesses in New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna and London, among them ministry representatives, military commanders, and other officials; workers, revolutionary council members, factory managers and technicians; communists and non-communists; students, writers, teachers, medical personnel, and Hungarian soldiers. The Special Committee operated for several years and produced two impressive reports. While the first one focused on explaining the causes that led to the outbreak of the revolution, outlining the events, the second complementary report reviewed the period of retaliation which followed the crushing of the revolution.*

*Here we come to our hero, to Mr. Poul Bang-Jensen. The Deputy Secretary of the Special Committee was a courageous Dane, a former diplomat who, before joining the UN, served at the Danish embassy in Washington, D.C. We are here today to remember and to thank him. Poul Bang-Jensen had to make some very difficult decisions in those months, for which he paid the highest price. First, he lost his job, then, on 25 November, 1959, he was found dead in Alley Pond Park in Queens, New York. For his courageous efforts, Poul Bang-Jensen was decorated posthumously by the President of Hungary in 1992. In 1989, Hungary erected a memorial to Mr. Bang-Jensen beside the grave sites of Imre Nagy and other leaders of the 1956 Revolution, and, in 1999, a bust of Bang-Jensen was set up in the lobby of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

*Only two weeks ago, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2016, on the initiative of the Hungarian government, the first statue of Bang-Jensen was erected in his home country, in the Solbjerg Park Cemetery in Copenhagen, where Bang-Jensen is buried. The statue was inaugurated jointly by the Danish Minister for Culture and Church and the Hungarian Minister of State for Culture and Science Diplomacy.*

*This evening, we will hear about Poul Bang-Jensen's life and work at the UN, before and after the revolution, from the most renowned Danish and Hungarian experts. I would like to welcome Dr. Bo Lidegaard, Dr. András Nagy, and it is a great honor and privilege for me, for Hungarians, to welcome the family of Mr. Bang-Jensen, his son Mr. Per Bang-Jensen who is on the panel, his other children, and grandchildren. We started this work together in 2015, when I invited Mr. Bang-Jensen to my residence with András Nagy to discuss what we could do together.*



*From left to right: Ambassador Ib Petersen, Bo Lidegaard, Per Bang-Jensen, András Nagy, Ambassador Katalin Bogayay*

*Apart from welcoming the family members, I would like to welcome the members of the Special Committee, our diplomat friends, and of course the members of the UN Archives, with whom we started a special journey last year. With the support of H.E. Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations, and with the amazing work of the UN Archives, we have managed to reach the point where boxes of files have been opened. With us is András Nagy, who wrote a book on Bang-Jensen in Hungarian. Mr. András Nagy wanted access to these files for more than 20 years, and we are very happy that this was realized in the past year and a half. The files have been opened, not only in the UN Archives, but also the court files at Columbia University. I had the full support from the Hungarian Government to this diplomatic odyssey.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends, thank you very much for coming to this special evening. With us tonight are not only the members of the Bang-Jensen family, but also two men, one Danish and one Hungarian, who dedicated several decades of their lives to telling the story of this remarkable individual. The question I would like to ask them is what motivated them to devote so much time and effort to this project?*

Bo LIDEGAARD: I wrote my doctoral thesis on the Danish Ambassador to Washington during the Second World War, Henrik Kauffmann, because I wanted to explore the special ethics around a civil servant caught between what his government or superiors believe his duty is and what he himself believes he must do. Working on this theme, I came across Povl Bang-Jensen, who worked closely with Mr. Kauffmann at the Danish Legation in Washington, when he was a very young man.

Bang-Jensen clearly was driven by his own sense and conviction, and already at this early stage of his career, he experienced the eternal dilemma between personal ethics and duty as an official. After the war, Povl Bang-Jensen got a position in the newly established United Nations, and I noticed, that some years later, he ran into a similar conflict with even wider implications.

I decided that once I finished my thesis, I would go back and explore how Povl Bang-Jensen handled this dilemma, and what actually went on in the UN in connection with the Hungarian Revolution. Why didn't the UN help? What prevented the UN from doing what one would suppose it would do? And then, what was the role of Povl Bang-Jensen? I soon realized that the origins of the conflict between Bang-Jensen and his superiors was mostly hidden in a thick fog of myths and misinformation, and I decided to go to the archives to try to establish the crux of the matter and lay bare the nerve of the schism which is neither trivial nor clear cut – but represents a real dilemma.

*Katalin BOGYAY: This is how you started; and what about Dr. András Nagy, who wrote about Bang-Jensen in Hungarian and is passionately engaged in telling his story?*

András NAGY: I think 1956 is an extremely important point of reference for Hungary, and I am very grateful to be here and for all the efforts to open the files. I was born in 1956, and raised under communism, and it was a kind of a taboo topic. You could not speak freely about the Revolution, about the heroes of the Revolution; on the contrary, the whole establishment suppressed discussion of the Revolution. Hungarians felt abandoned, alone, and that nobody cared; and in a sense, they really were, both during and after the Revolution. We were encouraged by major states to stand up for freedom and when we did, no one helped! It was probably not possible to help, but there was one institution, which Hungary joined in 1955, which we ardently hoped would help – the United Nations. It was a magic moment in Hungarian history that signaled that we would finally be equal. We were on the wrong side in the Second World War,

so we could not be part of the nations who were united against the Nazis. But now, we could open a new chapter, and then, when 1956 happened, the last hope was that the U N would help.

We could not, unfortunately, defeat the Soviet army, although we tried hard. The UN, as we understood it, was very pragmatic. Hungarians were not pragmatic, and Bang-Jensen, in that sense, was not pragmatic. He had moral standards. There was major disappointment in Hungary that the United Nations could not help and did not help. It was not only István Bibó but also the Minister of State, Anna Kéthly, who immediately flew to New York, and wanted to present the situation of the Hungarians – the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution at the United Nation General Assembly. She was not allowed to speak in front of the General Assembly, and was not even received by Dag Hammarskjöld. Meanwhile, the Stalinist secret agents who were representing Hungary spoke freely.

As he withdrew from Budapest, Béla Király the head of the National Guard, stopped at the United States Ambassador's residence and asked, "Is there any chance the UN will come to help?" At that point the hope still remained. Then there were all these very important moments, with the Special Committee, with the resolutions and so on; and there was some help the refugee crisis from the part of the UN. This came as an enormous relief. I even got powdered milk as a child, thanks to the UN. The political solution was hopeless, but the Hungarians could not accept this hopelessness, neither could Bang-Jensen. I think that was the root of our very deep sympathy for Bang-Jensen. We began the research in 1992 that is still unfinished today.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Yes, it was in 1992, as I said, when Bang-Jensen was posthumously decorated by our late President Árpád Göncz. Please tell us, briefly, how did you get started on this endeavor?*

András NAGY: Árpád Göncz was a writer and a playwright and my original profession is something similar. Then, I met with four members of the Bang-Jensen family who received his prize. I was also fascinated by Povl Bang-Jensen's morality. President Göncz suggested that he, like me, was interested in Danish affairs, and that I should talk to these people, and that's how the whole story started.

*Katalin BOGYAY: As a diplomat, I am always thinking about ethical and moral questions or dilemmas. As Mr. Bang-Jensen's son, do you think you could shed some light on your father's way of thinking? Do you think it was the Danish cultural ethic? Or was it more personal? What do you think gave him the strength of his convictions?*

Per BANG-JENSEN: Denmark was invaded by Germany on April 9, 1940. As a result, I think that later my father and other Danes could easily relate to Hungary in 1956 – when a small country was invaded by a much larger neighbor-



ing country. I agree with what András and Bo each discussed from their respective books. During World War II, my father had a unique experience working for Ambassador Kauffmann, who himself was a unique person. In early 1939, my father, 30 years old, traveled to the U.S. to conduct research for a book. In September, with war developing in Europe, he went to the Danish Legation in Washington, D.C., and volunteered to work for free. Although not a trained diplomat, he later became the Legation's legal counsellor and still later, Chargé d'Affaires. On the night that Denmark was invaded, he was the senior officer on duty at the Legation in Washington. As previously decided by Ambassador Henrik Kauffmann, if Denmark were invaded, no one at the Legation in Washington was to take any more orders from the Danish Foreign Ministry, since the Ministry would be operating under duress. Everyone at the embassy agreed; although, I think, subsequently, two Legation employees did return to Denmark.

A year after the date that Denmark was invaded, the Legation in Washington signed a treaty with the United States. This was eight months before Pearl Harbor, so the United States had not yet formally entered the war. Under the treaty, the Legation, in the name of the King of Denmark, leased Greenland to the United States. The Legation certainly did not have permission from either the King or the Danish government to do so. Ambassador Kauffmann took that extraordinary step and he was, I believe, the first Danish ambassador to be found guilty of treason in a thousand years. After the war, he was honored by the Danish government. I think we all tend to repeat what worked for us in the past and try to avoid what hasn't worked for us. I believe my father learned the lesson that when faced with a moral dilemma, you do what is right, as Ambassador Kauffmann had done. That learned lesson, I believe, deeply influenced the actions my father took at the UN following the Hungarian Revolution.

In addition, my mother at that time was working for the Committee to Aid the Allies, which was trying to get the United States to back Britain and the other Allies prior to Pearl Harbor, and so my parents both had very similar views on these issues. They later had five children, four of whom are here tonight.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Earlier today, we visited the rooftop of the UN Secretariat Building, the very place where Mr. Bang-Jensen burned the envelopes containing the names of all the Hungarian witnesses. He remained firm that he would not give these names to UN officials, to his bosses, or to anyone, because he was so concerned that if they found out who these people were in communist Hungary, their families would be persecuted. Now, that was a real moral dilemma, wasn't it?*

Bo LIDEGAARD: Perhaps I should elaborate this situation a little bit. After the Revolution had been crushed and no intervention or even attempts to intervene to stop the Soviets had been mounted by the UN, or by the U.S. or by anyone else, there was this attempt from the new government in Hungary to blur what had actually happened. The government installed by Moscow presented what had happened as a fascist riot that had been crushed by the friendly

help of the Soviet Union – and a lot of confusion ensued. There was a strong desire to establish the facts about what actually happened in Hungary during those two weeks when the Revolution went from not being there to exploding, to overthrowing the communist regime, to establishing a democratic system with hopes of freedom, to declaring itself free and neutral and withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact, and then to be crushed – all in just two weeks. History moved very fast in those days. Later, there was an attempt, authorized by the UN, to try to establish the facts. That was the purpose of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary.

One of the tools to lay out this story of the Hungarian revolution was to ask a wide range of refugees for their testimony, and many came to testify before the Special Committee. They did so in Vienna, in London, and here in New York. Many of these individuals bore witness to their own personal experience and role in the uprising and revolution. The testimonies were very difficult because the witnesses knew repression in Hungary was extremely tough and many had families and relatives left back in Hungary. Many had reason to fear that their testimony could be held against their relatives in Hungary. They were asked to give their testimony conditioned on their real names not being made public. Povl Bang-Jensen, who served as the Deputy Secretary of the Committee, was the one who, in practical terms, had the direct contact with these people. He was the one who organized the hearings; he screened those who wanted to witness; and he was the one who faced this dilemma of persuading them to give their testimony while promising them on behalf of the UN, to protect their anonymity. And he did so. For practical reasons, he kept a list of their real names with a key to a cover name they had in the hearings and in the reports, so he was the one at the Secretariat who actually knew who was who, and thus knew the real names of these witnesses. Years later, when he had developed a conflict with the Secretariat for a number of reasons that we shall elaborate later on, he was asked to hand over that list of witnesses for safe deposit within the UN Secretariat. He then explained to his superiors that he did not feel entitled to do that, as he was not satisfied that the security of the list would be safe in the hands of his superior, the first of whom was a Yugoslav, so part of the Eastern Bloc.

Then, a conflict of principle evolved. The UN held the position that he, as a civil servant of the UN, authorized to conduct these hearings and mandated to promise not to reveal the names of the witnesses, of course had to hand in this official document to safe deposit in the Secretariat. From a normal formal point of view, that would be the procedure. Bang-Jensen, on his side, felt strongly that he had not only given personal assurances to the individual witnesses that he would not give in their names, but also that when some of them had asked whether he would in any situation hand in their names to his superiors in the UN, including to the Secretary-General, he had, on a personal basis, reassured them that he would not. On that basis, they gave their testimony.

This position of course implied that Bang-Jensen did not trust the security of the UN secretariat. Therefore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, instructed Bang-Jensen to hand in the list, “and if you don’t, you will be fired. It’s not your document, it’s not your private property, it’s not secure in your possession and you can give it to me personally.” Povl Bang-Jensen then responded that, no, he could not do that because he had promised,

at the specific request of witnesses, not to hand the list to Dag Hammarskjöld, because they did not trust that he would not pass on the names to the Soviet Union. When he wrote that in a memo, he really questioned the integrity not only of the UN secretariat but also of the Secretary-General personally whom Bang-Jensen implied was compromised by Eastern Bloc agents. This could not be tolerated within the system and it became imperative for the people close to Dag Hammarskjöld to establish that Bang-Jensen was completely out of his mind.

A very strong disagreement followed on what to do with the list and later to the case against Bang-Jensen within the UN system. After many diplomatic twists and turns, he was fired and escorted out of the UN. He had been thrown out of the UN and barred from even entering the building. Still, as part of a compromise, it was agreed that the disputed list of witnesses should be burned by Bang-Jensen in the presence of UN security staff. So, Bang-Jensen was allowed back into the UN together with his

attorney. He presumably had the list in an envelope. Together with senior staff from the Secretariat and Security, he climbed to the rooftop of the UN building on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 1958; they lit a fire, and Povl Bang-Jensen took the envelope supposed to contain the list of witnesses from his pocket and burned it. In that way, the issue of contention was removed; but of course, the matter of his disobedience and his accusations that the security of the UN Secretariat was compromised were not resolved. The real showdown was only about to begin.

This afternoon we went up to the roof of the UN building to look at the place where the list of witnesses was finally burned. I guess for all of us, it was a very special feeling to see that place, even if Bang-Jensen later claimed that he had actually burned the list the same morning in his own garden because he did not trust that the UN would not seek to extract it from him – and that the envelope thus contained nothing but old newspapers.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Going to the roof was not only special, it was moving for all of us. Now, of course these files, these transcripts, you can read them today in the Blinken OSA Archives in Budapest. How did they get there? Did we ever learn the names of these witnesses?*



*Discussing the heroic life and personal struggles of Povl Bang-Jensen.*

András NAGY: That is a very important question and I think that we can read about it not only in the Open Society Archive in Budapest, but in the Secret Service Archives in Budapest and probably in Moscow, which means that Bang-Jensen had good reasons to doubt that it would be safe in their hands. Plus, it was very important that the Hungarian witnesses who testified did not trust the UN. In a sense, they were disappointed in the UN and they trusted Bang-Jensen. They said, “You can trust this Dane,” and “this Dane” was Bang-Jensen and not Alsing Andersen.

Bo LIDEGAARD: Alsing-Andersen was the Danish chairman of the Special Committee.

András NAGY: That is also a very controversial issue because of Alsing Andersen’s past and the accusation that the Hungarian Revolution was a fascist revolt. Bang-Jensen’s role was extremely important because he made these people speak. He was in a sense also pre-interviewing witnesses, so those who then gave testimonies were somehow selected by Bang-Jensen. The report of the United Nation Special Committee covered various areas to explain what happened before, during, and after the Revolution, at least to the end of January 1957. It was, therefore, extremely important that the people were able to speak. This was not just a list of names, but also verbatim records which means that all of their testimonies were first taped and then typed. You can now read them at the OSA partly because there was a junior assistant of the Special Committee on the panel of Hungary. She was a wonderful young lady and she knew that it was a very important historical moment, so she kept copies of each of the documents, including 70 hours of taped testimonies.

She was Hungarian, Claire de Héderváry, who lived in Belgium and graduated from Harvard; she spoke French, English, Italian, and Hungarian. She worked with the Special Committee and after the whole process was completed, she had collected 8,366 items that she kept in 26 whiskey boxes – so much for the security of the UN. In addition, you can also find wonderful resources at the State Security Archive. This is because when Hungary joined the United Nations in 1955, which was a major diplomatic success, it was even more a secret service success.

There was a Stalinist spy and intelligence center in Washington. Washington is a relatively small town and for the FBI it was very easy to follow and to control all the East European diplomats. Because of this, it was decided to move this spy center to New York, because in New York it is easier to move around, and there are certain privileges for UN employees that are not given to those who are diplomats from Eastern Bloc countries. It was a major operation of the secret services to establish a spy center under the cover of the United Nations Mission of Hungary to the UN. This was an extremely cynical step, and we have all the documents regarding who arranged this set-up. At the time, the Hungarian Ambassador to the UN was immediately called back by Imre Nagy during the days of the Revolution because he protested against the fact that the Hungarian issue was to be taken up by the UN since it was considered an internal affair of Hungary. He was actually a secret agent who, although representing Imre Nagy, disobeyed him because he had much better connections to the secret service and the KGB. When Imre Nagy sent his desperate cables on the first and second of November stating that Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact and be neutral, and pressured the UN to put

Hungary on its agenda for immediate decision, this representative simply did not forward the message to the General Assembly because he disagreed with it. He knew that a new government was being formed in Budapest on November 3rd, and even the members of the government didn't know if they had been appointed because the message from Moscow about their nomination arrived in New York before it did in Budapest where they were hiding.

At the time, the UN was totally infiltrated by communist agents, and actually in the case of the witnesses, two witnesses who gave testimonies in London were ex-communists. It was very interesting for the Special Committee that they were communists, intelligent and spoke fluent English. They may have known something that we don't, that is, why Hamarskjöld posed a security risk at the UN, which is more than paradoxical.

*Katalin BOGYAY: When you went back to the family archives, how did you analyze and evaluate the actions of your father?*

Per BANG-JENSEN: My father and mother didn't throw away any documents, so basically, we have all his documents. More importantly, after he left the UN, there were Secretariat staff members at the UN who sent him documents in UN envelopes. Going back to the witnesses, one of the things the UN did was to send a cable to some witnesses, in the name of the UN Under-Secretary-General Protitch and in my father's name, which stated "Could you appear as a witness before the Special Committee, if desired anonymously...." There were three types of witnesses at the UN – 'open', 'secret', and 'anonymous'. The identities of three key leaders of the Revolution (Anna Kéthly, Béla Király and József Kóvágó) were so well known both inside and outside of Hungary that they faced little additional risk by testifying and giving their names in open sessions at the UN. The media was present and the sessions received wide international coverage.

The UN decided to have future witnesses testify secretly. 'Secretly' meant they had to give their names to the Special Committee and their names would appear in the verbatim transcripts, but would not be released publicly. Many witnesses did not even want that; they wanted to testify anonymously. 81 witnesses were given anonymous designations 'Witness A', 'Witness Z', 'Witness AA'" finally arriving at 'Witness XXX'. There was a distinction, at least in my father's mind, between someone who testified secretly and someone who wanted to testify anonymously.

The reason that he kept their actual names was because he was charged with paying witnesses a per diem of about \$8 per day and to reimburse their travel expenses and he needed to be able to re-contact them if additional testimony or clarification were needed. For the 111 witnesses, per diem and expenses totaled about \$2000, so it was a relatively small amount of money.

I think it's worthwhile reading a few extracts of the testimony of witnesses from the verbatim transcripts which are the part of the „Héderváry Collection.” These reluctant witnesses were the people that my father had to persuade to testify. The following extracts reveal their very real concerns and fears:

‘Witness PPP’ in Geneva: “I would like to remain anonymous because my immediate family is still in Budapest and, knowing Russian methods, I fear for their safety. If my name should become known as a result of the testimony I am about to give, I shall report to the Committee any harm which might come to my family as a consequence.”

‘Witness I’ in New York: “What I have to say here might bring misfortune – even death – to my relatives including my mother, and no influence that could be exerted here could protect them. However, in the interest of my homeland, I am prepared to answer any question you may put to me to the best of my knowledge.”

The Committee Chairman, Alsing Andersen, was sympathetic to the Revolution and very compassionate with the witnesses. He asked ‘Witness P’: “I understand from the summary that I’ve received that you’re a very close colleague, or collaborator with Prime Minister Imre Nagy.”

‘Witness P’ in New York: “Before answering that question, I would like to say that I received information that the AVH has been and still is questioning my sick wife, whom I had to leave behind in Hungary. If there are any representatives of the press or any photographers here, that would endanger the life and security of my family.” “When I was in Vienna on 12 December, I narrowly escaped being kidnapped by informers of the AVH who came to my apartment. This is because on the day I left Hungary an order for my arrest, as a confidant and secretary of Prime Minister Imre Nagy, was issued. ... I do not wish anything to happen to my wife and family before I can ensure their safety.”

It is clear that these witnesses understood and feared the potential life-changing and life-threatening risks to their families. It is not surprising that they wanted and needed to testify anonymously. These were not theoretical risks—in one case the witness knew that the secret police had already been and still was questioning his wife.

In a large proportion of the other verbatim transcripts, either the witnesses or the Committee Chairman specifically stated that the witness wanted to testify anonymously.

*Katalin BOGYAY: So the questions remain, do we actually know the names or don't we? Where are the names? What was in the envelope on the roof, after all?*

András NAGY: There was no list of names in the envelope. It was a dummy because Bang-Jensen was afraid that there would be a last-minute attempt to get the envelope out of his hands, so he burned it very early that morning in the presence of his wife and they signed a statement about that. He was extremely smart because he knew that the most important thing was to save the witnesses at whatever price. We started to put together a kind of a preliminary list of the witnesses. Certain names are very easy to identify because they very clearly gave their profession, where they were born, what they did, and so on. That way, based on the verbatim records, it was very easy for the communist secret services to identify who was testifying. It was enough to have the verbatim record and not necessarily have the list of names because investigations of the activities of the revolutionaries after '56 was vehemently going on in Hungary. We can put together many names with great probability. I think, half of the witnesses can be identified now, and with further efforts, based on the verbatim records, this can be reconstructed. However, even we, working on this for many years, cannot find all the names, so that means that Bang-Jensen did a wonderful job.

*Katalin BOGYAY: If there were no names in the envelope, then where were the names?*

Bo LIDEGAARD: The assumption is that he did burn it on the same morning in his garden together with his wife. If there ever was a list, which is not absolutely certain, it has never been recovered and I think it's pretty safe to assume that if there was a list, it was burned that morning and that is why we've never found it.

Per BANG-JENSEN: In addition to the three 'open' witnesses, there were 27 witnesses who testified secretly and gave their names, which were included in the verbatim transcripts and the UN's expense reports. There are another 81 who wanted to testify anonymously and they were identified with letters such as 'B', 'GG', and 'RRR'. András and I met quite a few of them. Two of them had copies of their verbatim testimonies. Some of the witness could be



*With Bo Lidegaard*

identified from their testimony. When a witness says that he was educated in the Sorbonne for 2.5 years, was sentenced as a communist in 1932, worked for Count Michael Károly during World War II, and after the war for the Ministry of Agriculture, it appears that 'Witness UUU' was most probably Béla Szász. If the AVH had copies of the verbatim transcripts, more, but not all, of the witnesses could have been identified. The goal of the Committee was to get testimony from a cross-section of the population – including those who were important players in the Revolution as well as ordinary citizens. András can tell us about the people who showed up in Vienna with disguises, sunglasses, and false mustaches.

András NAGY: That is because they really were afraid that they would be identified. If you read the five-year work plans of the secret services, it includes for example people to bring back to Hungary either by their own volition or by force. Kidnapping, therefore, was also on their list, even political murder was in the work plan of the AVH at that time. People had good reasons to be afraid. Vienna was probably extremely infiltrated. The withdrawal of the Soviet Army followed the Treaty of Austria only in 1955. The Special Committee also had difficulties when they had the hearings there, so the witnesses were extremely afraid that they would be identified. Plus, all this happened in Wallnerstrasse 6A, which is also the place where the Hungarian repatriation committee had its session very close to the Hungarian embassy which was packed with secret service agents. People very often put on sunglasses, had fake mustaches, hats, and so on. They were afraid that photographs were being taken from the opposite building. It was really like a spy story from the hardcore Cold War time and people were concerned, the Hungarians were concerned, Bang-Jensen was concerned, the UN was not concerned. When I could finally open up all the files that I was given, it turned out that no security officer was assigned to the Special Committee. In London, there was one, because in London they were very careful; and there was someone in Italy who also helped the Hungarians and who was also extremely careful about protecting them. In other places, there were no security arrangements whatsoever and Bang-Jensen had reason to complain that sometimes his table or drawers were searched and other strange incidents happened during the hearings. This was something that people were afraid of for very good reasons and we now know the results, even if not all the secret service files are open. What I have seen is quite shocking.

*Katalin BOGYAY: You mentioned that, obviously, when you started to read about Bang-Jensen and his story, you were very interested in what the UN did and did not do and what really happened. Of course now, as the Ambassador said, we are witnessing many similarities and parallels with current events. For us, for Hungarian diplomats, it is an especially important story because as we live and work in the UN today, we see the same Security Council, the same P5, the veto powers, the same cul-de-sac, in difficult situations and, of course, we also see the power and the limits of the General Assembly and, so on. So after 60 years, it seems the story of '56 was a test case of how to handle or how not to handle a situation. Of course, for us Hungarians, it was romantic to think that the UN would come and help us. We actually believed that they would arrive by parachute and really save us.*



Bo LIDEGARRD: I have two remarks, first on the time pressure and second on the ability of the UN to act. When you look back at the time, it is very hard to imagine how intensely the developments evolved during those two weeks because we have been speaking only about developments in Hungary. From a Stalinist, stable, completely monolithic society, where the regime was in complete control of everything, every aspect of society controlled by the government and the secret police, the whole system fell apart in the course of one week – from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October to the 1<sup>st</sup> of November. The entire totalitarian society fell apart extremely fast. Meanwhile, during the very same days, another international crisis developed. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of October, there was a meeting in the Security Council on the situation in the Suez where President Nasser had nationalized the Suez Canal. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, Israel, having plotted with France and Britain, attacked Egypt. Two days later, France and the UK attacked Egypt to assist Israel and to regain control of the Suez. This occurred during the same days and hours when the Hungarian Revolution came to a climax. This war in the Middle East evolved and the Security Council met in special sessions to resolve, not the Hungarian Revolution, but the Suez crisis. Everyone's capacity was limited. That limit was overstretched during those days of late October and early November 1956 – not only for the UN leadership, but also for the US administration.

My second point is about the ability of the UN to act. What the new Secretary- General, Dag Hammarskjöld, realized was that when France and Britain blocked a decision in the Security Council, he could actually take the issue to the General Assembly and try to overrule the Security Council. But, as you know, you can only do that in practice if the two super powers (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) allow it to happen, and they actually did. This was the one moment when the US and the Soviet Union sided with each other to overrule a veto by the two small veto powers, Britain and France. That allowed Dag Hammarskjöld to establish the first UN peacekeeping force.

This occurred during the same hours on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, when the Hungarian Prime Minister, Imre Nagy, desperately appealed to the UN and to Dag Hammarskjöld to intervene in support of Hungarian neutrality. In those very days and hours, the General Assembly was in constant special session to establish the first peacekeeping operation of the UN. While we have no testimony from Dag Hammarskjöld on his calculation, my interpretation not of what he said, but what he did, was that he felt “I have a chance to create now a United Nations that can act in the world if it can persuade the two superpowers to give the mandate. The price I have to pay is to not help Hungary, and that is a price I will have to pay because I could not help Hungary even if I wanted to. Hungary – despite all sympathy – is a lost cause, because then the Soviet Union will veto and the US will remain completely passive.” Therefore, he felt that rather than trying to do something that he and the UN could not do, he would use the opportunity to do what it could do, but had never been done before – to establish the mandate for the UN to act in a conflict like the one in Suez. He did so successfully. The drama is that he paid the price of literally closing his eyes and ears to developments in Hungary. He did not pick up the phone or read the telegrams coming in from Budapest desperately asking the UN for assistance. They not only did not get assistance, they did not even get an answer.



*On the rooftop of the UN Headquarters, New York  
From left to right: Per Bang-Jensen, Ambassador Katalin Bogyay,  
Ambassador Ib Petersen, Bo Lidegaard, András Nagy*

András NAGY: This is very important. Not only the UN was influenced by the Suez crisis, but Moscow as well, because there was one magic moment on the afternoon of October 30<sup>th</sup> when there was a meeting in Moscow. There the decision was accepted that Hungary and all the satellites might have a larger space for maneuver, in fact agreeing to stop with Stalinist practice, giving them a bit more freedom. A statement was even published in Pravda the next day. On the day following the published statement, however, it was totally reversed because the Suez crisis broke out and everyone was afraid that a new world war would break out, and then the Soviets could not let Hungary go. On the very day when the Pravda statement was published, the military preparations to crush the Hungarian Revolution were made.

Bo LIDEGARRD: I would just like to add one detail that I find extremely interesting in this story on how the Soviet leadership reversed its decision, from not intervening to intervening. They seem to have believed that not only France and Britain were in on the plot in the Suez, but also the US. They were afraid that the military intervention in the Suez was the first step, and step two could very easily be Hungary. That was part of the reason they revised their decision not to intervene in Hungary.

András NAGY: There are very famous, handwritten notes made during this session, the so-called Malin-notes. The other important moment relates to Dag Hammarskjöld who was regularly informed about the Hungarian Revolution. The tone of the newly opened files shows how similar they were to the Soviet propaganda. All the reports that Hammarskjöld actually received on his table about what was happening in Hungary spoke of fascism, fascist gangs, nationalistic feelings and so on. So it was probably not by chance that in the Secretariat, someone whose voice was very strong, was not too sympathetic to Imre Nagy. Actually, for the Americans, for the US, Imre Nagy was not trusted for a long time. They said that he was actually a communist returned from Moscow; maybe he would rule Hungary better, but that is again a long story. There is a thin folder at the United Nations with a written message from rebel forces and there is a little sticker on it with an 'H' for Hammarskjöld, and "He did not seem to be interested in it". However, even if he was misguided, even if he didn't seem to be interested, he made several attempts to help to pacify the situation. He offered to visit Hungary. People in Hungary actually waited for his boat to arrive in international waters. They hoped

he would help to negotiate between the Soviets and the revolutionaries. It turned out that he never seriously intended to come to Hungary. That was revealed by his deputy who did come to Hungary secretly at the beginning of January and negotiated with Kádár and with others. This is because Imre Nagy had already been kidnapped by then and Kádár was actually the ruling power. That was again a very important moment in the sense that they accepted this illegitimate power when they discussed the real issues.

*Katalin BOGYAY: I would like to go back to the purpose of this special Hungarian Committee because, after all, we lost the revolution. The UN did not do anything; yet, there was still strong political pressure, and that helped the Hungarians and Hungary in the long term. This is the issue again when we ask what the General Assembly Special Committee was good for. What was its purpose? In a way, they managed to keep the Hungarian problem on the table for quite a long time. It is, therefore, an example of how the UN can operate.*

Per BANG-JENSEN: I think on that note, one of the underlying terms of the General Assembly resolution of January 1957 was that the Special Committee was to report on the Revolution and to present the report to the General Assembly and issue subsequent reports as needed. The main report, issued in June 1957, was excellent and widely translated; it was sold throughout the world. After the report was done, Alsing Andersen, as chairman, strongly wanted to have further reports. András and I went through both the American and UK archives. From the British archives, it was very clear that all five members of the committee wanted to do supplemental reports, because the UN was receiving information smuggled out of Hungary about the ongoing arrests, trials, imprisonments, and executions.

Through June 1957 executions totaled 33 people. Tragically, that was not the end of the executions. After June 1957, when the UN stopped doing special reports, 195 more men and women were executed. The information about the arrests, trials, and executions was circulated among the Committee and filed; but nothing was done, and no supplemental reports were issued. Archives indicate that the imputes to not have any more reports came from the Secretariat rather than from the five-member Committee or the General Assembly.

The report issued in June 1957 was to be presented to the General Assembly in September. At the same time, Dag Hammarskjöld was up for reappointment as Secretary-General and the Soviets could have effectively vetoed his reappointment. Hammarskjöld's deputies definitely worked hard to get him reappointed. We have a declassified US State Department file that said that Hammarskjöld didn't want to have supplemental reports that he stated would only serve to beat up on the Russians as opposed to protecting the people in Hungary.

In the fall of 1957, Pál Maléter's first wife and his children came to the UN. Maléter was the commanding general of the revolutionary forces in Budapest. His son, who is now 70, sat on Hammarskjöld's knee. Mrs. Maléter was assured that

the UN would look into her husband's case; however, very little was done. There were continual reports that Maléter was going to be executed and, in fact, he was executed in June, 1958, along with Imre Nagy and their associates. The mid-August 1957 decision made to not have supplemental reports prevented the UN from effectively focusing international attention on the perilous plight of those still being arrested, imprisoned, and executed.

Earlier, on August 6, 1957, George Heltai, probably one of the three most important witnesses, sent a cable to the UN from Brussels saying that General Pál Maléter's bodyguard was available to testify. The bodyguard had been present when Maléter was arrested. At that time, the bodyguard was also arrested, transported to Russia with other prisoners, returned to Budapest, and then escaped to Belgium. The UN did not interview the bodyguard who could have helped focus attention on the plight of Pál Maléter and others. While the five-member Committee wanted to continue their work, and publish supplemental reports, the Secretariat did not. The Committee members were not advised by the Secretariat staff that this potentially important witness was willing to testify. I think that was a lost opportunity especially since people in Hungary were risking their lives by smuggling information from Hungary to the UN.

István Bibó's papers are a good example of the risks taken. As Ambassador Bogyay previously indicated, Bibó was the last Minister of the Revolutionary Government in the Parliament Building where he wrote a proclamation asking the UN and the great powers to protect the freedom of Hungary in accordance with the UN Charter. The proclamation was eventually smuggled out of Hungary by a young Budapest intellectual via the Indian embassy and then also through the British embassy. In 1957 that young intellectual was arrested and then sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of appeal. In 1963, he was released from prison. In 1990, this man, Árpád Göncz, was elected President of Hungary. People had been sentenced to prison for many years or even with life sentences just for smuggling information out of Hungary. In a few cases, smuggling information to the West was one of the charges that lead to actual executions.

*Katalin BOGYAY: How would you evaluate the real role of this Special Committee? Did it do any good? How do you see the role of the Special Committee in Hungary? In Hungary, we believe that they at least put political pressure on the Kádár regime, and by the end of 1963, they had to free the political prisoners.*

*In addition, I would like you to say a few words about this new opportunity of opening the files, which were closed for nearly 60 years. I would like to ask you, because we are towards the end of our story. Was it worth it for Mr. Bang-Jensen to dedicate his life, his will, his activities, everything, to the Hungarian cause?*

Bo LIDEGAARD: I agree very much with what has been said. The report that was made was good. It was thorough; it was well done, well researched, and it had a huge impact because after the publication of that report, it was no longer possible to deny the nature of the Revolution and sort it into a fascist uprising or anything else. It was actually perhaps one of the most rapid democratic revolutions we have ever seen. It served a very important purpose. It is also true that

since it was not followed up, this had the opposite effect of not keeping up the pressure. But the report was there, and it is still today one of the best-written accounts of what happened, partly because it bases itself so much on first hand witnesses testifying to the Special Committee.

András NAGY: Thanks to the files that were opened, we can very clearly see now that the Report was really an excellent piece of writing; it is a historical chronicle of what happened. Perhaps supplementary reports could have increased pressure to stop the kind of immense revenge, the executions, imprisonment and internments. The UN failed to do that. Even the report that was supposed to be introduced to the General Assembly in early 1957 was strangely postponed and postponed. The report was ready in June exactly when vacations started. Then when there was some attempt to have an emergency session to discuss it, they could not find it. In the recently opened files, we see that the secretary had tried to convince Prince Wan Waithayakon, Thailand's Foreign Minister, not to be in such a hurry, "let's have it in September." We know for Kádár's consolidation of power that time was his best ally, because nearly a year passed from the Revolution until it went onto the UN agenda. Then again, the further supplementary reports were kind of sabotaged in spite of the wishes of members of the Special Committee. Now we have all the papers and it is very clearly documented how they were manipulated not to want a second or a third report. Imre Nagy's execution was totally unexpected for the United Nations, even though they had been provided with all the information. Communications received were just listed and filed away. These communications are easily accessed by the secret services. Revenge and executions followed for all those who smuggled that information to the UN because the United Nations was considered an enemy and it was high treason to inform the UN about the repression in Hungary. Imre Nagy was executed on June 16, 1958, the very same day that Povl Bang-Jensen's letter of dismissal was issued by the Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld wanted to avoid any kind of connection between the two, so he did not mail the letter to Bang-Jensen until two weeks later.

Then Bang-Jensen was fired and there was a second report about the Imre Nagy execution written by the people on the Special Committee. Half of the report was busy explaining why nothing had been done, what was tried and always failed because it's so hard dealing with the Soviets and the Hungarians who actually undermine the credibility of the Report. For the Soviets and the Hungarians it was definitely not convincing. This was a fascist revolt according to Soviet propaganda and the UN was the puppet of the Americans and so on. That is again a very painful moment and at the end it is very sad to see that in Hungary, both after the Report and the Imre Nagy execution, the pressure the UN put on Hungary was very often counterproductive. Kádár's mentality was to confront the international community alongside the Soviets, expressing the idea that "We shall show the world that we don't care what the international community says". That was horrible because executions lasted until 1961. Five years after the Revolution people were still killed in the Budapest prisons, and there was no hope whatsoever that anyone would stand up for them. I don't blame the UN because that was our responsibility; our leaders did that. But I wonder if in another scenario, if Bang-Jensen had a better possibility to act, it may not have been so tragic for us.



Per Bang-Jensen

Per BANG-JENSEN: I'm not sure I can really assess what my father was thinking. I think it would be like asking a fireman why he went into a very dangerous, burning building to rescue people. He might not do it the next time, but maybe the third time he would. I think that people do not really know what they might do until they are actually faced with that type of situation. I do believe that the easy decision for my father was on the witnesses list. He felt that the witnesses had a contract with the UN – if they agreed testify to the UN, they had the right to do so anonymously. He, as a UN official, had made this promise to the witnesses and they testified based on this. He certainly thought he was authorized to do so since the cables to some prospective witnesses had been co-signed by the UN Under-Secretary-General. But even if he wasn't authorized, the UN could not unilaterally void a contract. He, as a lawyer, believed that there was a valid contract between the UN and the witnesses.

*Katalin BOGYAY: On November 25, 1959, as I said, Mr. Bang-Jensen was found dead in Alley Pond Park in Queens, New York. It was officially recorded as a suicide. I'm sure we will soon be reading new books, new papers, and watching new movies about this story. He is such an inspirational person, who gives us great strength through his example. We wanted to remember him and thank him for what he did. He probably didn't really know, but the way we think about him in Hungary is that he saved many lives in our country.*

*I would like to say to you, to your sisters and brothers and family, first of all, thank you for coming and being with us here; we are very privileged. We feel as brothers and sisters to you as well, because we feel very*

*closely linked to Mr. Bang-Jensen. We will continue the story of 1956 in January, when we will be talking about the link between 1956 and political changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe; that will be our next chapter. But now, I would like very much to thank you, Mr. Bo Lidegaard, for coming. I could listen to you for weeks. Thank you very much, András, for being so persistent and we are waiting for your new book and papers. I'm so happy that the film crew from Denmark is here with us, and I'm looking forward to a new suspense film. As I told you, I really love your movies. Thank you very much for being with us from the beginning. I know you have dedicated many years and decades to understanding, to preserving the story of the great example of your father, thank you.*

Per BANG-JENSEN: I want to thank Ambassador Bogyay for her great effort and very successful work during the last year and a half to open more files in the UN Archives regarding the Hungarian Revolution. I also want to thank András Nagy and Bo Lidegaard for writing two excellent books that have very aptly uncovered, documented, analyzed and preserved a part of Hungarian, Danish, and UN history.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Thank you very much. I would like to thank Ambassador Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark, for preparing this Panel discussion together. I think it was a major step; let's continue.*



*First row from left to right: Mrs. Marijke Thomson, H.E. Peter Thomson, Mrs. Ivonn Szabó, H.E. Dr. László Szabó, H.E. Ban Ki-moon, Mrs. Ban Soon-taek, H.E. Katalin Bogyay, Dr. Tamás Lőrinczy, H.E. Jan Eliasson | Second row from left to right: Mr. Tamás Sólymosi, H.E. Cristina Gallach, Mr. Kálmán Szennai, Ms. Andrea Rost, Mr. László Boldizsár, Mr. Gerald Schwarz, Mrs. Jody Schwarz*  
*Photo by Anabella Veress*



## V. *Freedom First*

### ***The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in the UN***

*It was a great honor for Hungary, in 2016, to co-host the UN Day Gala concert with the Secretary-General in the General Assembly Hall. The annual concert is always a celebration of the birth of the United Nations. But every year, it has a special focus. Honoring the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, I suggested that the UN focuses on “Freedom First,” which was the worldwide message of our revolution. We invited not only Hungarian artists stressing the universal power of “Freedom First”, but also musicians from different parts of the world. We introduced traditional music, while stressing the power of the constant rebirth, presenting contemporary musical messages inspired by the fight for freedom.*

*We started our celebration at the UN Headquarters Delegates’ Lounge in the Turtle Bay overlooking the East River and Roosevelt Island with our National Remembrance Day. Then, we moved to the grandiose space of the UN General Assembly Hall, where we built a stage and not only welcomed our colleagues from 193 member states and Observer Missions but also opened the door to the City of New York. While the Zoltán Zsikó Folk Band introduced the traditional melodies of Hungarian folk music of the Carpathian basin, the Hungarian State Opera, conducted by Kálmán Szennai, played a selection of the classical music of the famous Hungarian composers Franz Liszt, Ferenc Erkel, Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, and by international composers who were influenced by Hungarian music, such as Johannes Brahms and Johann Strauss. The guest star of the evening was the world-renowned soprano Andrea Rost, who performed with tenor Boldizsár László along with international guest artists Gerard Schwarz (USA), Rohan De Silva (Sri Lanka), Oh Land (Denmark), David Yardley (Australia), and Jennifer and Angela Chun (Republic of Korea).*

## ***Hungarian National Day Reception***

*October 17, 2016*

*United Nations Headquarters*

*Speech by H.E. Dr. István Mikola*

*Minister of State for Security Policy and  
International Cooperation,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary*

Your Excellences,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and a great pleasure to address you all exactly 60 years after Hungary's Revolution and freedom fight started. I used the term "started" because we all know that, even though our fight for freedom was crushed in a blood-soaked offensive in November 1956, in the minds of the Hungarian people, the fight for our freedom did not end until Hungary became the fully independent, democratic, and sovereign country it is today. Being the spiritual children of 1956, we should respectfully bow to the heroes, known and unknown, who fought, suffered, and sacrificed their lives for the freedom that we enjoy today. We Hungarians are a nation that especially appreciates and strives for its freedom. This long struggle is a very important element if one would like to understand the essence of the Hungarian character. We Hungarians know exactly what freedom means, having been forced to fight for it so many times throughout our history.

This is one of the reasons we have become advocates for all nations' right to decide on their own independence



*H.E. Dr. István Mikola at the National Day reception.*

and fate. Hungarians are also highly aware of the importance of international cooperation and unity as essential means to enjoy prosperity.

There isn't any country in this world, no matter how developed or sovereign it is, that could exist completely independently from the rest of the nations. As Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, once said, "We must all hang together, or, assuredly, we shall all hang separately." Under the bipolar world order, back in 1956, the challenges did not have a chance to be addressed globally. Not today. In our time, we have a chance and an obligation to meet the challenges on the basis of an ever-growing international cooperation.

As you all know, one of the major contemporary global challenges affecting human lives and societies as a whole

is migration. This issue requires global responses, responsible, sustainable, and fair solutions. Unfortunately, lately, we often hear declarations and allegations that are drawing parallels between the exodus of two hundred **thousand Hungarians in the aftermath of the defeated revolution** and the current migrant crisis. Drawing parallels between profoundly different historical and geopolitical situations can prove misleading.

I firmly believe that the Hungarian refugees of 1956 showed the right example to the world with their conduct. Today, Hungary wants resolutely to be part of the efforts to address the challenge of mass migration. The focus point of these efforts shall be the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are aware that whatever we do today does matter for our children and will be highly appreciated by the following generations. In this spirit, we have to accelerate the efforts seeking consolidation in the crisis-hit regions of the world. We need to address the root causes of the migration phenomenon through concentrated and effective international development action. And we also have to be mindful of the human rights aspect of the various crises.

To promote the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the major objectives of Hungary's bid for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period between 2017 and 2019. As a former co-chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Hungary has a firm and longstanding dedication to contribute at all levels to the realization of this universal and ambitious roadmap. The role of the Human Rights Council will be substantial regarding the solid human rights dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In its voluntary pledges, Hungary stated its willingness to contribute to the effectiveness of the Council and its mechanisms, notably through leading and sponsoring initiatives in national capacity in a number of thematic issues, such as promotion of minority rights, the independence of the judiciary, the responsibility to prevent reprisals against individuals cooperating with the UN, and many others as a member of the European Union. Hungary is willing to engage in the work of the Human Rights Council by sharing the best examples of full cooperation with its mechanisms and special procedures. We are also active in the field of exchange of views and disseminating knowledge about the Council and its mechanisms. For example, for the last eight years, we have been organizing the annual Budapest Human Rights Forums, of which the next edition will take place on 17 and 18 November 2016.

With a flexible, open, and attentive approach to all views and opinions represented in the Council, we will strive for consensus building on issues like women's rights and women's empowerment, gender equality, children's rights, minority rights, the fight against all kinds of discrimination, and the protection of vulnerable groups and economic, social, and cultural rights. These are of utmost importance in the forthcoming period, particularly in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. On this basis, we count on your kind support for our Human Rights Council candidacy!

I'm wishing you all a memorable celebration of freedom tonight, filled with meaningful and pleasant discussions that can further shape and strengthen our future cooperation. Thank you for your kind attention.

## ***UN Day Gala Concert***

*Co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the UN*

*October 24, 2016*

*United Nations Headquarters*

*The UN Day concert marks the birth of the United Nations in 1945 through the universal language of music. The desire to protect human rights has always been at the heart of the work of the United Nations, and therefore, I chose as the theme of the concert “Freedom First”, which was the title of our remembrance year worldwide. In his speech at the event, the Secretary-General recalled the moment 60 years ago when he sent a strong message, on behalf of his elementary school students, to then-Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, in which they called for the urgent support of the Hungarian people, who lived under oppression at that time.*

“It is fitting that the theme of this year’s concert is Freedom First. This is the final time, the last time I will enjoy UN Day as Secretary-General with Hungary’s leading role in tonight’s concert. I vividly recall the moment, 60 years ago, when I was just 12 years old, and I read out a strong message on behalf of my elementary school students to then-Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. As you may know, the people of Hungary were under communist oppression at the time, and I thought that we should send a strong message and raise urgent support for all those people. I didn’t know that, 60 years later, I would be elected as Secretary-General, and I told the General Assembly that, while serving as Secretary-Gen-



*From left to right: Dr. Tamás Lőrinczy, H.E. Katalin Bogyay, H.E. Peter Thomson, Mrs. Marijcke Thomson.  
Photo by Anabella Veress*

eral, I hoped that I would not receive such an appeal from young students to save them. Sadly, unfortunately, I’ve been receiving many, many such letters even today, from many young people from around the world. Many young people are still suffering from many crises happening in South Sudan, Yemen, and elsewhere ...”

## *Message of the Secretary-General on United Nations Day*



*H.E. Ban Ki-moon at the UN Day Concert on October 24, 2016.  
Photo by: Anabella Veress*

“This year’s observance of the United Nations Day occurs at a time of transition for the world and for the United Nations.

Humanity has entered the era of sustainability – with a global commitment to fulfil the great promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this, the Organization’s 71<sup>st</sup> year, we have 17 goals to propel us towards a better future for all on a healthy planet.

The world is also moving at long last beyond the mindset which viewed the burning of fossil fuels as the path to prosperity. At a time of record heat, Member States have embraced the Paris Agreement on climate change in record time. This landmark measure will enter into force on 4 November. Across that historic threshold lies our best chance for greener, cleaner, low-carbon growth.

The United Nations is also in transition, from its eighth Secretary-General to the ninth. I have been honoured to serve „we the peoples” for the past ten years. Together, we have put in place some solid foundations for shared progress – which we must build on by working even harder to empower women, engage youth and uphold human rights for all. But we have also suffered enormous heartbreak – including unresolved conflicts causing immense suffering throughout the troubled Middle East, South Sudan, the Sahel and beyond. On these and other frontlines of violence and disaster, courageous UN staff continue to rise to the occasion and respond to the plight of the vulnerable.

I thank people across the world for their support – and urge all to give their full backing to Secretary-General-designate Antonio Guterres in continuing our global mission of peace, sustainable development and human rights.”

## *Remarks by H.E. Dr. László Szabó*

*Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and Trade of Hungary*

Excellences,

Mr. Secretary-General, Mrs. Ban Soon-taek,  
Mr. President of the General Assembly, Mrs. Thomson,  
Madame Under-Secretary-General,

It is an honor to be here. Please allow me to welcome you on this very special occasion when we celebrate the 71st anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations' Charter. This charter is not only a simple founding document of the greatest international organization of mankind's history but it's the source and symbol of the core values of the United Nations. Since its foundation, the United Nations has played a significant role in protecting and promoting peace and security, development, and human rights.

Hungary is very proud to organize this gala concert as an active member of the United Nations since 1955. Our commitment is to act in the spirit of dialogue, openness, inclusivity, and bridge-building in achieving the goals of the United Nations. We are also pleased that this evening commemorates a historic event. Sixty years ago, the Hungarian people rose up against the communist dictatorship and made it clear that freedom comes first. In 1956, the entire world learned about the heroic fight, and despite the failure of the uprising, it was highly influential to the outcome of the Cold War. We believe that eventually, these events led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the Iron Curtain.



*H.E. Dr. László Szabó during his speech at the UN Day Concert.  
Photo by Anabella Veress*

I would like to also thank the UN Secretariat that it has made the important decision to open up more than 400 pages of classified UN documents that are now ready for research purposes to get more details about the 1956 revolution and the comments made by the Hungarian Committee in 1956–1957. We believe that this step contributes to transparency and further cooperation between our nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight, we can also pay tribute to the legacy of His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who will end his term at the end of the year, after serving the United Nations for 10 years. We thank him for his efforts at making the Agenda 2030 a reality and for being the Secretary-General of all seven billion people of the world.

I wish the United Nations a happy birthday. I wish you health and peace.

## *Connected through Music*

*by Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogyay*

*President of the General Assembly and Mrs. Thomson,  
Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon and  
Mrs. Ban Soon-taek,*

*Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary  
Dr. Szabó and Mrs. Szabó,*

*Your Excellencies, Dear Friends, Dear Guests,*

*UN Day gala concerts celebrate and reflect the work of  
the United Nations through the universal language of  
music. It is a great honor for the Permanent Mission of  
Hungary to co-host the UN Day Gala Concert in 2016.*



*Designed by the Graphic Design Unit, Department of Public Informations,  
United Nations*

*In the practice of international relations, it is common to look at the world as divided into the developed and developing, democratic and democratizing, rich and poor, North and South. Putting countries into distinct and simple categories serves as a conceptual tool for academicians and politicians alike. It also obstructs our vision of the true diversity of humanity, and prevents us from understanding the shared values that make us one human family. As 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet and Islamic scholar Jalal al-Din Rumi wrote:*

*“Half of me comes from here, half from everywhere. Half of me comes from the pearls of the sea, half from distant shores.”*

*I invite you all on a musical journey tonight which will prove by the end of the evening how interconnected we all are.*

### ***“Freedom first”***

*The theme of tonight’s concert is Freedom First. The universal aspiration for fundamental freedoms and human rights, which are also enshrined in the UN Charter, is one of the main purposes of the Organization. We Hungarians deeply cherish freedom and independence, having been forced to fight for these so many times throughout our history. At the same time, we strongly believe in international cooperation and unity to ensure that everyone enjoys these universal principles and rights.*

“

...I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb...

Nelson Mandela / Long Walk to Freedom

”



“

My guiding philosophy has always been the idea of different nations uniting into brotherhood, in spite of all the wars and hostility. I have tried to serve the aims of this idea, as best as I can, in my music! So for that reason I do not shrink away from any influence ... no matter the source, as long as it is pure, natural and vital.

Béla Bartók

”

Photos by Anabella Veress / Illustrations designed by the Graphic Design Unit, Department of Public Information, United Nations



*Tonight, we remember through musical pieces the heroes all over the world who devoted their lives to fighting for fundamental freedoms, or who had to leave their countries because of political persecution.*

*As one of the true heroes of 'Freedom First', **Nelson Mandela** writes in his book *Long Walk to Freedom*: “**I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb...**”*

*This is a lesson we should always remember!*

*In the first part of the concert, you will hear pieces about love torn apart by persecution, love destroyed by foreign occupiers, love for freedom, and a march against oppression. In our musical journey you will meet the musicians, dancers, and artists of the Hungarian State Opera, which was opened in 1884.*

*The Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, is Hungary's oldest functioning orchestra, going back more than a century and a half. Its first concert was given in 1853, under the baton of Ferenc Erkel, who went on to conduct the orchestra's next 60 concerts. The greatest Hungarian composers like Erkel, Liszt, Goldmark, Dohnányi, Bartók, Kodály, and Weiner wrote many pieces for the orchestra, and world renowned composers – such as Brahms, Dvořák, Mahler, Mascagni, Prokofiev, Ravel, Respighi, Strauss and Stravinsky – also frequently introduced their works with the Philharmonic Orchestra.*

### **“Only from the clear Spring”**

*We Hungarians have always tried to preserve our culture, yet were forced to absorb other cultural influences because of our history and geographical position in Europe. In the end, I feel this cross-fertilization with others has proven to be our strength. It has enabled us to be bold and creative like the great Hungarian 19th century musician Franz Liszt, who recognized that he had developed his creativity through his contact with the world at large and that his music was at the service of all humankind. Throughout his career he travelled more widely than any musician of his time and in his final years wrote: “My only remaining ambition as a musician is to hurdle my lace into the boundless realm of the future.”*

*In the coming segment of our program, I invite you to listen to the dialogue of musicians coming from different parts of the world.*

*This dialogue is based on the message of 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian composer Béla Bartók: “**My guiding philosophy has always been the idea of different nations uniting into brotherhood, in spite of all the wars and hostility. I have tried to serve the aims of this idea, as best as I can, in my music! So for that reason I do not shrink away from any influence ... no matter the source, as long as it is pure, natural and vital.**”*

“

No culture can live  
if it attempts to be exclusive

Mahatma Gandhi

”



Photos by Anabella Veress / Illustrations designed by the Graphic Design Unit, Department of Public Information, United Nations

*I have invited artists from countries which played a very supportive role here in the United Nations towards my country 60 years ago. Those countries were members of the United Nations General Assembly Special Committee on the Hungarian problem. I am grateful to my fellow ambassadors and the Permanent Missions of Denmark, Sri Lanka and Australia who are collaborating with us on tonight's program.*

***“Diversity: a source of inspiration”***

*I see our world as a global cultural space, a multi-layered treasure, a magic box full of undiscovered jewels. The process of inspiration followed by the creativity of people working together is, to me, the most beautiful aspect of this varied cultural space. For a culture to open its doors wide, it must believe in its own strength, knowing that it is rich enough to nourish other cultures, yet sensitive enough to benefit from foreign influences. Hungarian culture has always been open, welcoming, and at the same time strong enough to inspire other cultures. Diversity, for me, is not a burden but a source of inspiration! I truly believe in what **Mahatma Gandhi said: “No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.”***

*So let us celebrate the power of inspiration and joie de vivre, with Brahms, Johann Strauss and Kodály in their effort to understand and share the music of the ‘other,’ which is the base of their musical messages.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Sixty years ago, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, was a sixth grader in rural Korea. It was 1956, and people in Hungary were facing a violent suppression of their aspirations.*

*He wondered: “What could we do? How could we best express support from our far-off corner of the world?” Then it came to him, “We will write to Dag Hammarskjöld!”*

*As the student chair, H.E. Ban Ki-moon wrote a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.*

*“Dear Mr. Secretary-General, help the people of Hungary so they can have freedom and democracy.”*

*Mr. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,*

*At the UN Day Gala, we would like to thank you for this letter and your service in fighting for peace, freedom, security, development and human rights all over the world!*



Prise de Conscience by Lehel Ürményi-Hamar

## VI. *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Democratization Processes*

*Could we say that 1956 changed the Soviet Union? What was the lesson of 1956? These are the questions I asked many times of eyewitnesses all over the world. We tend to think that 1956 signaled the beginning of the end. Let me quote some of the people I interviewed in the past.*

**László Péter, historian, UK:** “It was a learning process for the Soviets. Hungarians came out of the war as a desperately pessimistic people. Suppressed again and confined to the Trianon borders, Hungarians lost self-confidence. That self-confidence was rebuilt through those marvelous days of the Revolution. That was psychologically important.

1956 was part of a learning process for the Soviet Union that included Berlin, East Germany in June 1953, Poznan in March 1956, Hungary in October 1956, Prague in January 1968, and Solidarnosc in 1980 in Poland. A learning process through which the Soviet Union had to face up to the fact that at some point they had to abandon their Eastern European empire.”

**Peter Medák, film director, U.S.:** “I think it proved that you can’t oppress people. And that it’s important to say what you believe in. And that one person can make a huge difference in a country because the revolution was started by one person, then another and another, and it just grew into this volcanic eruption. So, you cannot repress people. Humanity is incredible.”

**Bob Schulz, film producer, Canada:** “I think it proves that the Soviets were vulnerable. Today in Hungary, a lot of people claim that it was their revolution. It wasn’t. It was very spontaneous; we had no leaders. A lot of people who came along and fought were heroes, maybe from the opposite sides, but on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, in the morning, we had no idea that we were going to start a revolution

and what the outcome of it could be. It made a huge difference to what Europe is today, what the European Union is today.”

**Peter Sásdy, film director, UK:** “I think that if we put it into a global perspective, what happened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October created an awareness of a small European country. A minority of people had heard about Bartók,

maybe, or something about the national football team in 1952, but the awareness of a country that had actually done something that led directly to the fall of the Berlin Wall and to changes such as the destruction of the Soviet Union. It all started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October [... it] is what the Hungarian uprising started.”

(Excerpts from the book *Voice of Freedom*, 2006. London)

*I asked Professor Ferenc Miszlivetz, director and founder of the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg, iASK, sociologist, and doctor of international studies, to give his thoughts about the legacy of 1956.*

### *Ferenc Miszlivetz: The Long Term Message of the '56 Revolution*



*Professor Ferenc Miszlivetz  
Photo by Anabella Veress*

Ten years ago, commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hungary’s 1956 revolution and fight for independence, the European Parliament expressed its respect for the “perseverance of Hungarians who in spite of the lack of military assistance from the West, and the sweeping military intervention of the Soviet Union, continued their fight for freedom, national independence and civil rights.” The vast majority of MEPs shared the view that the Hungarian revolution could be viewed as an attempt at reuniting the divided continent and, therefore, it would always remain a cornerstone of Europe’s common historic heritage. More than that, they believed that the revolution contributed to the establishment of the European Community in 1957 and was a forerunner of the democratic political turn-around in East and Central Europe in 1989-90 that opened the way for the peaceful re-unification of Europe. The Parliament paid tribute to the courageous men and women of Hungary who, by sacrificing themselves, gave hope to other people suffering

under communist dictatorship. The European Parliament expressed its respect for Imre Nagy, who recognized the will of the people as prime minister in 1956 and agreed to lead the uprising for freedom and democracy. The former communist became a martyr for freedom in 1958, in the shadow of the gallows, when he refused to condemn the revolution.

The direct consequences of the Soviet military clamp down and the restoration of the communist regime are known: about 2,700 people died in the fighting, the puppet government executed another 228 people between 1956 and 1961, arrested more than 20,000 and discriminated against many others during the following decade. Close to 200,000 people fled the country in 1956 and 1957.

#### *How Did It Begin?*

The roots of the Revolution are found in the coercive nature of the communist rule. After a couple of years of fake coalition (1947-1949), political power fell into the hands of the Communist Party (“Party of Hungarian Workers”), led by a group of faithful communists who came back from emigration to Moscow. The facade of pluralism was incorporated in the 1949 constitution, but in fact, the division of power became part of a cynical one-party institutionalized hypocrisy. In the light of an emerging Cold War confrontation, Moscow needed a super-safety belt in East Central Europe. The monolithic power structure was born in Hungary.

The Communist Party, led by the Moscow émigrés, viewed the overwhelming majority of Hungarian society as the enemy. Mátyás Rákosi, the general secretary of the party, complained that he had to build socialism

with 10 million fascists. As a consequence, the state security authorities and the police opened files on about 1.3 million citizens. 387,000 were sentenced for various reasons; 22,000 were deported; and 60,000 were kept in custody or in concentration camps without having been legally sentenced. By 1955, almost 500 people had been executed for political reasons.

#### *Why was the '56 Revolution Unique?*

In his essay on '56, “The Meaning of Destiny,” Raymond Aron argues that:

“No event has moved the conscience of the free world as deeply as the Hungarian revolution of 1956 ...

When the ... revolution erupted, and for a few days, appeared triumphant, it seemed nothing short of a miracle ... (It) reminded us of a simple truth we had almost forgotten.

A totalitarian regime is also vulnerable. In Hungary it crumbled in the end because it was abandoned by the intellectuals, the men in the street, the party members and even the army” (Király, et al 2006: 610).

1956 was indeed a revolution of morality. And as Aron points out, it was also a classical 19<sup>th</sup> century revolution realizing Marx’s dream: having the intellectuals as its head and the proletariat as its heart. At the same time, it undermined conventional wisdom and theory about revolutions, since its privileged class abandoned the ‘cause’ because it felt it was morally untenable.

It was also the revolution of wide-spread hope in the Soviet bloc countries and elsewhere in Europe since it her-

alded that the process of de-Stalinization would continue and the re-unification of the continent was not impossible.

Similar to Raymond Aron, Hannah Arendt stressed the morality and the defense of universal values as the uniqueness of '56.

“What happened in Hungary, happened nowhere else ...” (Király, et al 2006: 623)

“Not the underprivileged, but the over privileged of communist society took the initiative, and their motive was neither their own or their fellow citizens' material misery, but exclusively Freedom and Truth ... The voice from Eastern Europe, speaking so plainly and simply of freedom and truth, sounded like an ultimate affirmation that human nature is unchangeable, that nihilism will be futile ... that a yearning for freedom and truth will rise out of man's heart and mind forever.” (Király, et al 2006: 627)

Arendt's sharp eyes discovered another unique feature of 1956, namely, the capability of the revolutionary society to spontaneous self-organization in all spheres of life: on the political, social and economic levels. Insurgent people instinctively organized themselves into revolutionary and national committees, and workers' councils. This self-organization started with the Petőfi Circles, then continued with the Alliance of Hungarian Students of Higher Education. After the revolution broke out, the party-state collapsed within a few hours, but the society did not fall into chaos or anarchy. Councils, committees and alliances were formed by writers, city and village inhabitants, soldiers, civil servants, factory workers, etc. Indeed, the networking system of mushrooming councils is a clear sign of social and political creativity and innovation-capacity as well as a genuine uniqueness of the 1956 revolution.

The revolution in the countryside was completely controlled by the self-organizing national committees. The rural society and the society of smaller cities showed a much higher degree of cohesion than today. The participation of workers, young people and army officers was significantly high in the countryside in national councils and committees in almost every single settlement. Altogether, the countryside revolutionary committees put enormous pressure on the Imre Nagy government, refusing to compromise their revolutionary goals: national independence, a democratic political structure, and the maintenance of social achievements.

The workers' councils were indeed spontaneous forms of self-organizing basis democracy. Communists and anti-communists, party members and experts with bourgeois backgrounds were elected equally into the leading bodies according to the needs of factory production and management. Their real political role started after November 4<sup>th</sup>, when the armed resistance collapsed due to the second and fatal Soviet invasion. Still the Greater Budapest Workers' Council was established on November 14<sup>th</sup>, against the will and counter-measures of the new puppet regime. The Kádár government needed the friendly help of the Soviet army to prevent the uncompromising leadership of the Budapest Workers' Council from organizing the National Workers' Council on November 21<sup>st</sup>. The workers' answer was a successful general strike.

The well-organized and disciplined workers' councils appeared as insurmountable ideological and political obstacles for the new regime that identified itself as the 'revolutionary government of workers and peasants'. Searching for legitimacy, any violence against the only legitimate organization of the working class seemed lethal.



Calling the workers, or even their leaders, fascist criminals or anti-socialist elements was impossible, since they presented themselves as the fundamental institutions of democratic socialism.

Their collective self-management, based partly on the Yugoslav model, can be called a utopian 'third road'; nevertheless, in the case of Hungary, it was a genuine product of the anti-totalitarian revolt of the working class, an attempt that for a while successfully combined the goals of the revolution with the management of factories.

### *The Long Term Message and Impact of '56 on Democracy*

The message of Kádárism, the lesson its apparatus and ideologues delivered on a daily basis to their fellow-citizens was clear and simple: if you keep yourself out of and away from political debates about the issues that you can't change anyway, you'll have a calm and decent life with some modest material progress. Silence in exchange for no harassment sounded like quite a good deal for those who experienced the terror of the Rákosi regime and remained in Hungary after the clampdown of the Red Army on November 4<sup>th</sup> and were not executed, tortured or imprisoned by the communist regime.

The compromising but successfully muddling through little man of 'Uncle János' (e.g. János Kádár) became the symbol of the system that identified itself as the most cheerful barracks of the communist camp. This pseudo-cheerful socialist development from the early 1960's until the end of the 1980's, also known as 'gulash communism', made Hungary a favorite of the Western world. It seemed that the Hungarians and East Europeans had learned the

lesson of '56 and finally had accepted the unchangeable nature of the bipolar world system and its military logic. At the moment, however, when the Kádárist consensus was broken by a severe economic crisis, civil society and democratic movements arose. From the 1980's onwards, they clearly demonstrated that these assumptions and expectations were wrong.

The spirit of '56 never fully disappeared, neither in Hungary nor elsewhere in the Eastern bloc. The reason for this is very simple: freedom, the feeling of belonging to our fellow citizens and the values attached to them are as important as our material well-being and everyday existential security.

### *Beyond Communism and Capitalism: The Search for a Third Way*

According to the great political thinker István Bibó, the Minister of State in the Imre Nagy cabinet, the Soviet tanks destroyed the most exciting socialist experiment of the century. He believed that abolishing the 'third way', or third alternative, was a big mistake that could result in a final bipolarization, not only in world politics, but in the world's moral conscience. For Bibó, this 'third way' synthesis was the greatest achievement of 1956.

"If ever, anywhere, then certainly in the Hungarian Revolution this 'third way' alternative wanted to come to life constructively ... The active forces of the Revolution had no intent to liquidate the genuine achievements of socialism ... (during the revolution) ... a broad and quite definite public consensus emerged without any difficulty regarding the methods for maintaining a socialist society combined with the Western techniques of freedom, through

a multi-party system limited to parties that accept socialism as a common platform. What is more, when it comes to the workers' councils, these ideas would have meant the strengthening of democracy and socialism with new techniques" (Bibó 1991: 339).

Bibó strongly believed that even if the 'third way experiment' was defeated in Hungary in '56, it offers valuable lessons for the West, the communist world, and the peoples of the colonies, former colonies and semi-colonies – alike. As a Minister of State of the revolutionary government of independent Hungary, Bibó's appeal to the Hungarian people and to the United Nations remains a document of an unexpected and unique moment in the history of freedom and truth worldwide even today:

#### *Bibó's Proclamation for Freedom and Truth*

"The people of Hungary have already sacrificed enough of their blood to show the world their devotion to freedom and truth. Now it is up to the world powers to demonstrate the force of the principles contained in the United Nation's Charter and the strength of the world's freedom-loving peoples. I appeal to the major powers and the United Nations to make a wise and courageous decision to protect the freedom of our subjected nation" (Bibó 1991: 325-326).

In the absence of wise and courageous steps, the quisling-Kádár-regime, backed by the Red Army, continued arresting, executing, and promising pardons and the withdrawal of Soviet troops and democracy. The Workers' Councils were revoked, their leaders arrested and executed. Many

of those who fled believed the promises of pardon and were arrested after returning home. Executions continued until 1961. After the execution of Imre Nagy in 1958, the country was effectively silenced. By 1963, Hungary had completely changed. The Kádár method – promise and punish – seemed to have succeeded.

The 1956 October Revolution in Hungary was one of the greatest revolutions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not only because it was the greatest challenge the Soviet Union and the bipolar world order ever experienced, but also because it was a victory over fear and humiliation. It was unique in the sense of uniting the various groups of a suppressed, terrified and fragmented society, from workers and peasants to students and intellectuals. This unifying force was based on a clear expression of the universal values of human dignity, freedom, hope and solidarity. As Albert Camus expressed it: "The untiring insistence upon freedom and truth, the community of the worker and the intellectual ... and, finally, political democracy as a necessary and indispensable condition of economic democracy – this is what Budapest was defending." Camus in Congdon, Király and Nagy 2006: 583-584.

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*Panel Discussion on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Democratization Processes*

*January 17, 2017,  
Permanent Mission of Hungary to the UN*



*Ambassador Bogyay opens the Panel Discussion.  
Photo by Anabella Veress*

*I wanted to discuss the legacy of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution as well as its international context in public, so I chaired a second panel discussion in January 2017, 60 years after the UN Special Committee was set up by the General Assembly and the cover of Time Magazine named the Hungarian Freedom Fighter its Man of the Year. Let me introduce the members of the panel.*

**MARK KRAMER**

*Mark Kramer is Director of Cold War Studies at Harvard University and a Senior Fellow of Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies. He has published extensively on a wide range of topics. Originally trained in mathematics, he went on to study international relations as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University and an Academy Scholar at Harvard. In addition to teaching at Harvard, Professor Kramer has taught as a visiting professor at Yale University, Brown University, Aarhus University in Denmark, and American University in Bulgaria.*

**FERENC MISZLIVETZ**

*Ferenc Miszlivetz is a sociologist, author, and Jean Monnet professor. His research interests include de-*

*mocracy, civil society, regional and European Studies, globalization, and sustainability. He is a scientific advisor at the Institute for Political Sciences of the Hungarian Academy. He has taught and carried out research at various universities in Europe and the United States. He is a permanent professor at the University of Bologna. In 2012, he was a Deák Visiting Professor at Columbia University in New York. He is also the founder and director of the board of the Institute for Social and European Studies Foundation (a Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence) and holds a UNESCO Chair in Cultural Heritage and Sustainability in Kőszeg. Since 2012, he has served as the president of the Social Sciences unit of the Hungarian UNESCO Committee. He is a university professor at the University of Pannonia. He is founder and director of the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg (iASK), a research institute focusing on transdisciplinary research.*

### **JODY JENSEN**

*Jody Jensen is a Jean Monnet Chair at the University of Pannonia Kőszeg campus, where she directs the graduate program in international studies. She is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Political Sciences at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg (iASK), she directs the Polányi Center. Her areas of research at the iASK include contentious politics, growing global inequality, and new social and political movements, looking at the conjunction of the social and natural sciences in the study of complexity as it translates to social phenomena and change; she is also very interested in the transformation of the social sciences in response to global challenges.*

### **ATTILA PÓK**

*Prof. Attila Pók is the deputy director of the Institute of History at the Research Centre for Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, vice-president of the Hungarian Historical Association, senior researcher at the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg, and recurring Visiting Professor of History at Columbia University in New York. His publications and courses cover three major fields: 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century European political and intellectual history, the history of modern European historiography with special regard to political uses of history, and theory and methodology of history.*

*Katalin BOGYAY: Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Guests and dear Friends. As you may know, the symbol of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution is a Hungarian flag with a hole in the middle. The picture you see hanging above us was painted by the French-Hungarian artist Lehel Ürmenyi-Hamar. He left Hungary in 1956, after his best friend was shot just next to him, in front of the Hungarian Parliament. He said, “Something is not right here, if this has happened to my friend.” Of course, as it happened to so many Hungarians, his mother told him, “Go, go.” He was 18 or 19 years old. He became a painter. He went to study in Rome and Paris, but in his heart, he remained a Hungarian.*

*Two years ago, I came here with a mission. I knew that there were still classified files at the United Nations about its own connections with Hungary and the 1956 Revolution. Of particular interest was the Special Committee on the Hungarian Problem, and its second secretary Poul Bang-Jensen, a Danish diplomat who died mysteriously in 1959. It was very important for us that we finally obtained access to the classified documents about 1956. Almost 1,500 pages of UN documents have been declassified and opened for research after nearly 60 years. They can be currently found in the UN Archives and at Columbia University. Prior to the Bang-Jensen panel discussion that we had last December, we commemorated, through different activities and events, galas and concerts, what happened in Hungary during this very special period of our country.*

*When you are an ambassador at the UN, you know exactly what works and what does not work there. The Security Council was and still is fraught with sharp disagreement. Earlier today, we had a very interesting debate on the Israeli-Palestinian and Middle East situation, and the Security Council could not agree on or do anything. Similarly, in 1956, the P5 could not agree on what to do with Hungary. Of course, we know that the Security Council could not do much. This was the time of the Suez crisis, and the UN and Secretary-General had shifted their attention and energies to that issue. A year later, however, in 1957, the General Assembly decided to set up the Special Committee on the Hungarian Problem. They investigated and gathered evidence on what happened during and after the Hungarian Revolution. In a way, this international investigative mechanism served as an early model for the various commissions of inquiry established in recent years, and of the independent, impartial, and international accountability mechanism the General Assembly decided to establish last month to assist the investigation and documentation of the crimes committed in Syria. Therefore, whenever we talk about the role of the Security Council and the General Assembly in 1956, there are links and bridges to current events today.*

*Tonight, we have a very distinguished panel of historians and political scientists, who will share their thoughts on the events of 1956 and its effects. They have come from different parts of the world to discuss with us what we Hungarians consider to be the great and influential Revolution of 1956. The first question I would like to ask is whether what happened in Hungary was really as significant as we Hungarians think it was? Professor Kramer.*

Mark KRAMER: The year 1956 was a momentous one, a turning point in the Soviet bloc, which could never be the same after Nikita Khrushchev delivered his secret speech at the 20<sup>th</sup> Soviet Party Congress. Of all the major events that occurred that year, the revolution in Hungary was the most dramatic, symbolizing the pent-up discontent with Communist autocracy. But if you look at all of the circumstances that came together, Hungary was only one of the major events occurring. The Suez crisis was mentioned, but in 1956 in East and Central Europe, the upheavals began not in Hungary but in Poland, at the end of June 1956 in the western Polish city of Poznań, at that time, a city of about 360,000. Roughly, 120,000 people went out into the streets to protest, and in the space of two days close to 120 were

killed. The uprising was suppressed by the Polish army and state security, not by Soviet forces. Ten thousand troops and several hundred tanks were sent to accomplish this task. If you look at the photographs that exist of the street battles, you can see that extremely intense fighting took place. In that sense, the 1956 crises in Central Europe began in Poland, and Poland remained very volatile into October and November. As probably everyone in the room is aware, the Hungarian Revolution itself started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October in part in solidarity with what was going on in Poland; therefore, Poland was certainly a major factor at that point and should not be overlooked.

In addition, not only Suez, but other things were going on in US-Soviet relations and Soviet foreign policy at that point. Soviet leaders in October 1956, at the very time that the revolution was beginning in Hungary,

were meeting with Japanese leaders to discuss the status of the four islands that are still in dispute between the two countries to this day. This was the one time that Soviet leaders made a concession to return two of the four islands, and neither the Soviet government nor the Russian government has ever returned to that position since then, so the opportunity for a potential compromise after further negotiations was missed.

US-Soviet relations were affected by two major internal events that were then going on. The US presidential and congressional elections during early November 1956 need to be taken into account in assessing US and, in general, western policy toward what was going on in Hungary. This inevitably affected how those events were viewed. Similarly, in Moscow, there was quite a fierce internal struggle going on. Even though Nikita Khrushchev had consolidated his position, he was still challenged by hardline elements in Moscow, like Vyacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, Kliment Voroshilov, and others who posed a direct challenge to Khrushchev in June 1957 when they tried to remove him. As Soviet leaders were confronting what was going on in Hungary in October and early November 1956, they were mindful of their own internal positions. For most participants in October and November 1956, there were a lot of other things going on. However, once events got underway in Hungary, the dynamics changed. In particular, let me mention Poland. Just before the revolution began in Hungary, the Soviet Union secretly sent a delegation to Poland on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October to meet with Polish leaders, the new Polish leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka, and the previous Polish leader, Edward Ochab. The two sides met and talked about the situation in Poland, and the Soviet delegation came away very



*From left to right: Ferenc Miszlivetz, Attila Pók, Jody Jensen, Mark Kramer, Katalin Bogyay.*

*Photo by: Anabella Veress*

dissatisfied. When they returned to Moscow, they discussed what to do about Poland, and clearly one of the options was to send troops into Poland to restore orthodox communism there. The threat to Poland diminished, though, with the outbreak of the revolution in Hungary. From then on Khrushchev was eager to achieve a settlement in Poland that would be short of military intervention because he was focused on what was going on in Hungary. That remained the case until the 4<sup>th</sup> of November when Soviet troops reentered Hungary *en masse* to suppress the revolution. During that time, the Soviet Politburo was called the Presidium. If you look at the declassified records of the Presidium, and some of the declassified notes of senior officials from that point, it is very clear that Hungary was a preoccupation for them. They felt the need to resolve it because they were fearful that if they did not the unrest could spread to other countries. There were in fact outbreaks of mass protests supporting the Hungarian revolution in Czechoslovakia, in Slovakia, in the ethnic Hungarian region with several hundred thousand ethnic Hungarians, and in Romania where the even larger Hungarian population lives in Transylvania.

Most important of all, in the Soviet Union itself, in northwestern Ukraine, where there was an ethnic Hungarian community of about 150,000, declassified KGB (state security) records indicate that a wave of demonstrations and protests began in support of what was going on in Hungary. For all of these reasons, it is understandable that Hungary became a preoccupation for Soviet leaders. Looking at the Soviet decision to suppress the Hungarian revolution through military force, in contrast to the political settlement that was achieved in Poland, although it was quite a precarious one, ultimately did mean that for the next 33 years there were no more violent challenges to Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. In that respect, I do not agree with those who maintain that the Hungarian Revolution was the first nail in the coffin for the Soviet Communist bloc in Central and Eastern Europe. The rebels in Hungary fought valiantly, but ultimately they did not succeed, and that meant that for the next 33 years the challenges that came to Soviet domination in the region were peaceful. The Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was entirely peaceful, but it, too, was suppressed by a Soviet-led invasion, and then mass, peaceful unrest in Poland in 1980 and 1981 was suppressed by martial law. Those challenges did not take the form of a violent uprising like those that occurred first in Poznań in June 1956 and then again in Hungary a few months later. In 1989 as well, the unrest again was peaceful except in Romania. There were a few instances of violence, but the end of communism was brought about almost entirely peacefully. In that sense I think that the 1956 revolution was of major significance because it illustrated that violent efforts to break away from Soviet domination probably would not work. The subsequent challenges were not successful in the first few iterations, but in 1989 they ultimately were.

*Katalin BOGYAY: We would like to know what these young Hungarians were thinking. What did they actually hope for?*

Ferenc MISZLIVETZ: The first big issue is whether or not this was an exceptional event. I think it was for several reasons. The two super powers who, instead of uninterrupted ideological fights, were cooperating quite well on managing the world. They shared a common doctrine, namely, that you can keep peace only by permanently threatening



one another in military terms. This was a dangerous military doctrine. As a consequence, they built up their military industrial complexes and subordinated economic and social development to the logic of an escalating arms race. In the western part of the world, there were many uncertainties. The United States was afraid that the Russians were unpredictable and might penetrate further militarily in Europe. At the same time, Western Europe was shaky. Coming out of the nightmares of WWII, the Communist parties were especially strong in France and Italy, and there were a lot of sympathizers, so-called fellow travelers, among intellectuals throughout Western Europe. So the US had to develop a new strategy. The new strategy was a combination of a quick recovery in Western Europe along with an ideological-political indoctrination of the moral supremacy of the West *vis-a-vis* the East. This was approached through the daily propaganda of 'rolling back' communist dictatorships, which included the liberation of the 'enslaved countries' in East and Central Europe. The American propaganda was more successful than the Soviet propaganda in convincing satellite countries to become members of the 'coalition of the willing', for example, NATO members. There was less success convincing East European satellite countries about the merits of socialism and as a consequence none of them were eager to join the military alliance of the Warsaw Pact. The eastern military block was constructed through coercion under the dictatorship of Communist parties controlled by Moscow.

Immediately after WWII, there was a lot of enthusiasm among young people about radically changing the half-feudal social system in Hungary. Many young Hungarian intellectuals became communists or sympathizers for several reasons. The country had a gruesome 20<sup>th</sup> century history: the humiliation of the devastating lost world wars, red terror, white terror, anti-Semitic *numerus clausus* bills, Nazism, and finally the holocaust. It is no wonder that many of the young people loved to sing the communist songs about abrogating the past and turning around the world. The lack of progress in the Hungarian countryside was especially painful and anachronistic. One hundred years after the bourgeois revolution there was still no land reform in Hungary. The communists pushed for land reform, and this made them very attractive among the peasantry as well as among students and urban intellectuals. The need for more social justice was in the air and the communists seemed to be the only radical and capable agents supporting it. However, most of the expectations proved to be illusions and the communist camp sympathizers shrank fast with the strengthening of hard core dictatorship. By the early 1950's, the younger generation including young workers and party members, became the silent reserve army of anti-communism and anti-Soviet sentiments. The death of Stalin was a big relief everywhere in the Soviet bloc, and the first time the soviet communist leadership introduced a self-critical political discourse, blaming Stalin for the sins of the 'personality cult'.

Historians know very well that upheavals or revolutions do not usually break out when tyranny or dictatorship is at its height, but rather when it begins to loosen its grip. Khrushchev and his followers within the Soviet leadership wanted to create a new, more appealing image of the Soviet Union. As a consequence, after 1953 the hard dictatorship loosened and gave space for a different political tone expressing more interest about peoples' needs and for further reforms. Ironically, the sentiments and moral judgement of previously true believers also surfaced and a new atmosphere of moral resistance gained momentum.

Then the communist leadership made a big mistake. They became afraid that they had gone too far, but they were unable to put the genie back into the bottle. Some of these true believer young communists who turned against the oppressive regime became public intellectuals or professors fighting against the communist dictatorship up until its final collapse. Most of them could never forgive themselves for having supported a brutal and inhuman dictatorship. They understood they were participating in what they themselves called 'crimes against the people', and that provoked a very serious and lifelong crisis that sometimes concluded in suicide. There was a big turn-around in the working class as well. At the beginning, young workers were also very enthusiastic about the new perspectives offered by the communist ideology. Many of them came from the peasantry. Their parents had moved to the big cities and they became proud young communist workers. By the time of de-Stalinization, however, they perfectly

understood that the promises of the communist party were, in fact, cynical lies. So by 1955-1956 we have young, disillusioned communists, students, intellectuals and workers, and then we have the loosening of the dictatorship. The failed attempt at putting the genie back into the bottle ended in a great explosion.

In reality, of course, it was more complex. I think there are still certain layers of the '56 revolution that we need to study and understand. We still need files opened and further documentation about the entire complex story embedded in the international context of the time. Another question that arises is why so many intellectuals, great minds of the western world, were so enthusiastic about '56? People like Raymond Aron or Jean Paul Sartre who was still a communist at that time and remained a communist even after '56; or Bang-Jensen who hadn't had anything to do with Hungarians before – a Danish post-Hamlet figure who could not forget or forgive the injustice inflicted by great world powers and the UN concerning the Hungarian uprising. This story has many different layers and the availability of hitherto classified and secret UN files opens up a new period for research and for public discourse about responsibilities.

Having said this, I must emphasize that there was no master plan for this revolution, no clandestine preparation. No one believed that it was going to happen with the speed, enthusiasm and profundity that it did, but there were signs and signals we can retrospectively identify. Poznan was very important; before that was East Berlin in '53. So there



*Photo by Anabella Veress*

were signals that the iron cage of the Eastern Bloc was not necessarily functioning too well, but no one could have imagined what happened on October 23<sup>rd</sup> when the Hungarian society erupted. The uprising soon became a war for freedom and national independence, and then in the third phase it turned into a huge workers' resistance movement. The workers' resistance in the factories lasted almost until mid-January of 1957. These communist/ex-communist workers organized themselves in a very unusual way. First, they participated in the street fighting, helping students and young intellectuals, and they were the last ones to give up. After the second Soviet military intervention, they stopped fighting with weapons, but kept control of the factories, and they had, historically speaking, exceptional moral and political *haltung*. They said "we don't want to give back the factories to the capitalists, but we don't want the Stalinists or the communists to come back again either". They made very clear points. They wanted the Russians to leave the country. In a very unique way, the Hungarians were able to create, not just nation-wide solidarity, resistance and war for a couple of days or weeks against the strongest army in the world, they managed to try and construct a new version of a 'third way', an alternative to both Soviet-type dictatorship and capitalism. This 'third way' was celebrated by several thinkers, like Milovan Djilas, for example, who was Tito's main ideologue. Impressed by the '56 revolution, he became very much an anti-communist. Many intellectuals in the East and West saw the Hungarian experiment as a new vision, the nucleus of a new social order that would never, however, have been accepted, neither in the communist East nor in the capitalist West. Except for the Hungarian working class, nobody was truly interested in real alternative solutions at the time.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Did the revolution occur as a conscious decision of the people, or did it just happen because, as events accumulated, people's dignity was hurt?*

Attila PÓK: I think the 1950's furthered the possibility for change. Professor Kramer has talked about what took place in 1956, but let me refer to an event that took place the year before. In 1955, the Austrian State Treaty opened up the possibility for substantial change in that Soviet troops might be withdrawn and the status of a country might undergo a fundamental transformation. This was not just day dreaming about change, but what had occurred already in a neighboring country.

Returning to the original question, what made these young people go out into the street, I think that not only the young people, but practically all groups of the Hungarian society felt that they had been hurt in the deepest layers of their identities, in their national identities, and in terms of their human dignity. This is a very important point, because the best skilled workers were called 'the working class aristocracy'. The best people in agriculture, the best farmers were called *kulaks*. Those who achieved something were not praised, but rather considered to be bourgeois elements in a socialist society. The powerful presence of Soviet examples in all fields of life deeply hurt various groups in society. In a new book my colleague, Mr. Rainer, calls the course of events a reactive type of revolution. Everything started with peaceful demonstrations. Even before October 23<sup>rd</sup>, we have students peacefully demonstrating, strangely enough not in Budapest but in Szeged in the south, and then this continues with student demonstrations at the Technical Univer-

sity in Budapest. It would probably never have come to a confrontation if the demands of the people who went to the Hungarian radio building had been met. They demanded that the declaration of solidarity with the Poles be read on the radio, as well as demanding political pluralism and Hungarian independence. This did not happen. This is why there was a confrontation at the radio that brought about a completely different twist to the series of events.

It is very interesting to look at the many pictures of the people at the rallies. There are children and some of the people demonstrating are extremely well dressed, at least by the standards of the time. Today you don't go to the streets in a suit and tie to change a political system, but they did because that reflected their dignity and was part of their behavior. People demanded respect for themselves and they respected each other by dressing properly. Originally, the protests were orderly, reflecting the participants' view that political change had to come about in an orderly way. They did not want to substantially change the overall framework, but wanted to regain freedom and human dignity.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said about 1956, "Africa's present ferment for independence, Hungary's death struggle against communism, and the determined drive of Negro Americans to become first class citizens, are inextricably bound together." Jody Jensen, we are talking about a global affair here.*

Jody JENSEN: I think you asked an important question about the uniqueness of '56 and how it can still have relevance and resonate today. I want to bring up a colleague and a friend who recently died, Zygmunt Bauman. I am sure that many of you know of him. He talked about human beings' choice between freedom and security; we all have aspirations for both, and it is very difficult to balance those two desires. Infrequently, and I would say uniquely, in human history, it sometimes occurs that people will choose freedom over security, and I think that is one of the reasons why the '56 revolution was so unique. I also think that is why the civil rights movement in the United States was so unique. People came to a point where they could no longer go along with the system, live within a system of lies that rejected human dignity, and determined there was no longer a choice. They came to the point where they would sacrifice their lives on the chance that they would become free instead of living in that lie and losing their dignity. That is why we can make a connection between those two kinds of movements and why I think it is important today.



*Dr. Jody Jensen  
Photo by Anabella Veress*

What I see in my own work on global civil society and growing dissent and the contemporary global situation, are increasing movements of people like the Indignados in Spain, like people in Greece, trying to recapture the dignity that they have lost because of extreme austerity measures. I believe we are going to be seeing more kinds of social unrest, maybe not the same kind of uprising as '56 because we are in a completely different historical context today; but we are seeing more and more kinds of movements with aspirations for democracy, freedom and justice. I think very often in our intellectual pursuits we underestimate the power of, or the importance of dignity in human relations, that when it is lost, people will fight to regain it. I think that '56 has a very relevant and resonant message for what is happening in our very uncertain world today.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Professor Kramer, you were talking about the events eventually leading to the Hungarian uprising. I am not a historian, so please allow me to ask an unhistorical question: did these people have a chance at all? What were they thinking when opposing the Soviet empire?*

Mark KRAMER: I would just pick up and strongly endorse what my colleagues have said. Attila pointed out the Austrian State Treaty in May 1955 that established Austria as a neutral state. Austria then adopted its own national legislation that provided for a neutral status, reinforcing the implication of the treaty. At the same time, Imre Nagy was writing about neutrality for Hungary after he had been temporarily removed by Mátyás Rákosi, but he was not able to do this officially. Nagy's writings about this question were published posthumously in the west, but he had in mind some intriguing ideas about neutrality. So given that neutrality had just been achieved in Austria where Soviet troops had been present from 1945 until May 1955, and that simply by agreeing to the arrangement the Austrians had been able to get rid of those Soviet troops, it wasn't naïve for the Hungarian revolutionaries to think they might be able to extricate Hungary from the Soviet bloc. The difference, though, is that Hungary had a Communist regime in place, whereas Austria never did. Austria from 1945 to 1955 was under a broadly democratic government. The Austrian government was not perfect, but it was broadly democratic and that meant that for the Soviet Union there was inherently less at stake in Austria than there was in Hungary. However, that is easy to say in retrospect. At the time, people were operating on the basis of what they saw around them, and I think it was not at all naive for people in October 1956 to have some hope that they could perhaps achieve what the Austrians had, or maybe even more.

Returning to what has already been mentioned, it was actually a Soviet decision that changed the dynamic of the Hungarian Revolution because on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, when the unrest broke out in Hungary, there was almost no debate in the Soviet Presidium about whether to send in troops. There was just a brief discussion with no options weighed. There was not a discussion about what would happen next. Instead, Soviet troops were just impulsively sent in, and that changed the whole nature of the Hungarian Revolution, which was transformed from an anti-Stalinist uprising to a war of national independence. It then became an international conflict because Soviet troops were not sent in in adequate numbers at that point to suppress the uprising. Instead, the limited Soviet intervention merely inflamed the

uprising and spurred the rebels on, and the situation from Moscow's perspective deteriorated so rapidly that a much larger invasion on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November was needed to restore Soviet control.

**SPEAKER1** (commenting from the audience): I would like to ask something, if I may. I arrived in the US two years before all this happened. At the time, however, the way we all saw it was that the Americans had promised assistance to the Hungarians and they let them down. I remember telegrams sent to President Eisenhower requesting he do what had been promised. If he had, there would have been an entirely different outcome. I would love to hear your opinion of what you think would have happened if they really had kept their words?



*Interactive dialogue.  
Photo by Anabella Veress*

*Katalin BOGYAY: Plus, as an 11-year-old boy, our former Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, wrote a letter to the then-Secretary-General of the United Nations asking the UN to help the Hungarian people's aspiration for freedom and democracy. We will discuss the UN later; now let's talk about the U.S.*

**Ferenc MISZLIVETZ:** We had a bipolar world system. Cynically-speaking, the United States subcontracted the Soviet Union to keep the world in order. The eastern part was controlled by the Soviet Union and we belonged to the Eastern part. The ideology emanating from the US was that they did not want East European countries to live in slavery and wanted to help the 'enslaved nations' to roll back the Iron Curtain. That message was projected permanently for eight years, day and night, first from Radio Free Europe, and from the Voice of America. Of course, after long repetition even the most skeptical people in Hungary believed that there must be something in it. The miscalculation was that with the bipolar world order, it could never happen because the Soviet Union held a very strong upper hand. If by chance, something occurred, Khrushchev just called the White House. Historians can explain this more accurately, but basically Khrushchev was assured that there would be no repercussions. There was a hope, because Khrushchev and the whole Politburo were not completely sure that military intervention was the only way to solve the Hungarian crisis. Events, however, progressed too fast. We should not forget the military industrial complex behind the scenes, and that is an important topic for future research. The military industrial complex worked very well in the United States; and was successfully emerging in the Soviet Union as well. The military was very strong, and they pushed hard for military solutions.

During the revolution, the UN had a chance, for a couple of days at least, to raise its voice and that was the real hope of the revolutionaries. Hungarians did not believe that there could or would be a third world war because of their actions; but they did believe for many days that there would be a strong voice coming from the UN. There is a big difference between doing nothing or sweeping everything under the carpet. This should be researched by historians. There were opportunities that were not exploited by the United Nations. There were individual voices, of course, like Nehru who spoke at the UN and UNESCO. He was an ally and supported by Moscow, but he found a way to send a message to Moscow to say that the situation should be confronted in a different way. He supported the Hungarians as much as he could, and was able at least to save the lives of Árpád Göncz and István Bibó through informal channels.

Mark KRAMER: There are two issues here. One of them would be the contextual issue, what had been going on. Both during and after the 1952 U.S. presidential campaign, senior figures in what became the Eisenhower administration. John Foster Dulles, in particular, proclaimed their commitment to liberation and rollback rhetorically, and tended to castigate the previous administration for having put up with the entrenchment of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. Dulles talked about rolling it back, but that rhetoric was already exposed as hollow in June 1953 when the very large uprising in East Germany occurred and western governments did nothing. Therefore, at least for most people who were watching, you could already see major flaws in the rhetoric but it continued over the next few years and did not abate. In fact, if anything, talk about rollback intensified after 1953 as it became clear that things were changing in the aftermath of Stalin's death.

The second issue deals with what western governments actually did during the Hungarian revolution. In particular, I know Radio Free Europe has often been blamed for having incited the revolution or for having led the revolutionaries to believe that they were going to get western aid. I have looked at all of the transcripts of the RFE Hungarian-language broadcasts during the revolution and listened to the many hours of tapes, and I can attest that there are relatively few that are inflammatory. To be sure, the broadcasts were often shrill, in a few cases irresponsibly so, especially those denouncing Imre Nagy, saying that it would be unacceptable to keep him and encouraging people to overthrow the communist system altogether. But whether the people who were actually fighting in the streets ever heard these few scattered broadcasts is questionable. The events of 1956 came long before the age of 24-hour news, the Internet, and hand-held devices. Attempts to listen to shortwave radio broadcasts had to be done at home, not out in the streets where the fighters were. Through more than 100 interviews, I did my best to try to find evidence that people out in the streets were actually listening to those broadcasts, and at best I found it very difficult to determine. You can find plenty of people who in retrospect say that they heard them (perhaps with memories influenced by what they later learned and heard), but there is very little evidence at the time that the broadcasts actually changed peoples' minds. I think to attribute it solely to RFE, or to give a large share of the burden to RFE for having inspired the revolution, really underestimates the agency and initiative of the Hungarians. It was an anti-Stalinist uprising that became a war of national independence, and they didn't need RFE to tell them to do it.

SPEAKER 2 (commenting from the audience): I was there during the revolution. I lived through it and only once went out to demonstrate. My job was to listen to the radio, for the simple fact that I knew English. I listened to what Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America were saying. The youngsters who were demonstrating on the street came to me and asked: “Are they coming?” and I said: “They are promising, but I’m telling you, nobody is going to come to our aid. We are not important enough. We are a very small country. Neither the United States nor Western Europe has anything to gain by coming to our aid.” They were very disappointed, but alas, I was right.

SPEAKER 3 (commenting from the audience): I am 85 years old and I was 25 when the revolution happened. I was in front of the parliament and I saw people shot. Gerő gave a speech on the radio in the early afternoon and people who were perhaps not generally interested in the revolution, got up and went to the parliament inspired by his speech, so the radio had a very strong influence.

Mark KRAMER: Ernő Gerő had been outside the country for almost three weeks on vacation in Yugoslavia, as I recall. Even though he had been warned that things were becoming very volatile in Hungary and might spark a rebellion, he still went off. When he came back, he really had no sense of the magnitude of what was getting underway. Therefore, his speech on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October was about as inappropriate as you can get. I should add, though, that then Imre Nagy came, and you would have expected that he would rise to the occasion and make an uplifting speech that would seek to marshal peoples’ energy in support of the uprising that would try to bring democracy to Hungary, but unfortunately he did not give that kind of speech. In fact, in retrospect it is really disappointing to look at what he said, which basically reverted to a lot of the old Marxist, Rákosi-era slogans. Later, in the final days of the revolution, he did play a much more positive role, but at that crucial moment on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, it wasn’t just Gerő, it was also Imre Nagy who really spoiled what could have been an opportunity to achieve more.

Attila PÓK: Let’s return to the original question, to what extent we could blame the United States for not keeping its promise. Far be it for me to defend the United States policy at this time, but the rhetorical message heard was: “We are going to liberate the captive nations as soon as the possibility arises.” American policy, based on the experience of 1956, focused not on roll back but containment; so the main purpose of their Soviet policy was not to let the Soviet Empire expand. The other issue, from the average Hungarian citizens’ perspective, was that after so many years of total separation of the East and the West, it was very difficult to interpret what they were hearing. America was like the moon, so from an average Hungarian perspective, it was something very far away, and it was quite natural to expect some kind of miracle. I think the real expectation of the majority of the population at that time was not so much the appearance of American parachutes, but to have an opportunity to live as they wanted to. This is one of the greatest achievements of the Hungarian revolution. A lot of tribute has been paid to the young people who were fighting in the



streets, but the majority of the society was trying to create a new society, a new state, and a new administration. This is the real democratic legacy when you have a power vacuum, when there is no central government. Instead of civil war, people tried to construct something new. This is the wonderful legacy of the Hungarian revolution.

*Katalin BOGYAY: You already mentioned, Professor Miszlivetz, the UN could have or should have done more. In my introduction, I said that the Security Council was paralyzed. Afterwards, the General Assembly set up this Special Committee. That was all. In the newly opened files, we found letters sent to the then-Secretary-General of the United Nations, asking him to send parachutes to Hungary. The Hungarians really believed that the UN would eventually help in the freedom fight. There was an amazing romanticism in the idea that Hungary would receive help from United States and the UN, but I guess there is probably romanticism in every revolution.*

Ferenc MISZLIVETZ: It was at the same time realistic, because these freedom fighters said: “We are actually fighting for your cause, your purpose. We have, and you have a UN Charter.” Of course, there is hard politics, but the spirit of the UN Charter was very much supportive of the Hungarian cause. Hungary had just joined the UN, and people were aware of the possibility that the General Secretary would raise his voice. In the case of Suez, it was very efficient. It is very interesting to consider why the UN was so efficient in the case of Suez and why they didn’t do anything at the same time for Hungary. The expectations were not just romantic. They were trying to create a democratic society and independent state, and wanted to be acknowledged by the UN. I think it was also realistic.

Jody JENSEN: I was sitting in on a Security Council meeting this morning for a couple of hours and I was absolutely fascinated by the discussion going on. What came up was the reading of the UN Charter, beginning with the purposes and principles defined by Article 1, including maintenance of international peace and security in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, and upholding the right of people to self-determination. The Security Council’s commitment to the Charter means the Council cannot remain a spectator that simply observes without taking action. We are still discussing this issue; it could have been about 1956. Now we are discussing it in relation to the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. It could also be applied to the Syrian conflict. I do not know how far we have come. I don’t know if we have moved forward on these issues at all.

I want to bring in another dimension and discuss what happened after the Hungarian refugees started to leave the country, because one of the things I found exceptional were the actions on the part of the Austrians. Austria was just emerging from the devastation of World War II. They were not the rich and prosperous country we know today. They were also worried about Soviet invasion, because the Soviet troops left Austria only in 1955 and were stationed right at the border; but faced with those challenges, they rose to the occasion to an extraordinary extent when they accepted all of the refugees that crossed their borders. Of course, there was international help at those points after the refugees

crossed over, but they did not hesitate to give their all. So where are we today in Europe and the world, concerning refugees?

*Katalin BOGYAY: They indeed managed to give a timely answer to the challenge of the refugee question of 1956, applicable to the situation of that time by creating an international and global support system. Refugees had to wait in the camps until they were offered places voluntarily by different countries. In the newly opened UN files, we can find a lot of information about how support was organized.*

Attila PÓK: I would like to remark on the romanticism and realism issue. It was a legitimate assumption that you could become independent from Soviet control without Soviet troops intervening, because there were no Soviet troops in Bulgaria after 1947. From 1945 to 1968, there were no Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. After 1958, there were no Soviet troops in Romania. It seemed, therefore, to be a legitimate assumption that you could come to some terms with the Soviet Union, preserving a certain Soviet influence, but at the same time having a national independence as well. This was not just daydreaming.

Mark KRAMER: I would like to make a quick point about the UN. There was in people's recent memory the UN involvement in Korea from 1950 to 1953. It was primarily a US operation, but it was under the auspices of the UN. This was a unique circumstance through the Uniting for Peace resolution, but still people in Central Europe did have that in mind. In fact, in June 1953 in East Germany, quite a few of the protestors explicitly referred to Korea as something that they hoped to accomplish when Soviet troops began suppressing the uprising. That still seemed plausible in 1956 as well, and the paralysis on most issues by the UN was not as obvious to people then as it is nowadays.

*Katalin BOGYAY: When we are talking about the democratization processes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the real role and impact of the 1956 Revolution, I have a final question to ask: What have we learned, what can be useful to us?*

Ferenc MISZLIVETZ: I would like to read something from the philosopher Raymond Aaron. He criticized the language of politics and political science, which he called a poor language because it impels us to counter-pose means and ends, cost and profit. It ignores the essential moral significance, the value of symbols, the attribution of greatness, greatness of men, and greatness of nations. He says, "No one has the right to incite the people to greatness when it costs so many sacrifices and ends in martyrdom. But when in a sort of heroic madness a people chooses the destiny of greatness, when it sacrifices itself to bear witness, it is the duty of the analyst to realize the limits of the interpretation." So Hungarians *vis-a-vis* the Poles did not have enough readiness for a sober compromise in '56 as was the case in Poznan.

I am not belittling the incredible Polish determination to get rid of the communist system, and the two super powers had to start to learn what it means to face the power of powerless. Their doctrine was that nothing could happen as small, rather insignificant nations wanted, so just forget about them.

When I came to the US in 1989, my first shock was not culture shock, but rather a kind of academic shock. After a seminar where I spoke about the new alternative social movements in East and Central Europe, I was told that we should be careful because we would not receive help if Russian tanks invaded our country again. Imagine, this was in 1989! I was very enthusiastic about what was happening in Eastern Europe in the spring of 1989. People at universities in the US nodded and said: "Please just cool down, young man." A few years earlier, in 1987, I had a seminar with the American political scientist and World War II historian, John Lewis Gaddis, who wrote the book called *The Long Peace*. In the seminar, I challenged him asking about the war between Hungary and the Soviet Union in '56. He told me: "I hope that the Hungarians learned the lesson of '56." I have thought ever since that there is no hope that the super powers learned the lesson of '56. A moral human greatness, or madness in Raymond Aron's words, arose in 1956, and of course we East Europeans did learn the lesson. In physical terms, you cannot go very far up against the strongest army of the world with rifles or heroism. People started to act differently, pushing the communist power into the corner through non-violent means. A new way of thinking emerged that resulted in the end of communist rule. The Soviet Union dissolved. Now we have something similar happening in the West. Democracy as we knew it is over, and the western domination of the world, as we knew it, is over. The problem revealed by the Hungarian Revolution is that you need to democratize international relations otherwise so-called national democracies cannot prevail. To democratize international relations is extremely complicated. We tried to create democracy on the transnational level in the European Union, but it unfortunately failed. Now the UN has a slim chance to transform itself. We need a more democratically governed world. This will not happen overnight, but if we don't try, we will submerge in chaos as has happened before in Eastern Europe.

Attila PÓK: I would also like to read a short quote from a young US senator from Massachusetts who, on the first anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution, said the following: "October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1956 is a day that will live forever in the annals of free men and nations. It was a day of courage, conscience and triumph. No other day since history began has shown more clearly the eternal unquestionability of man's desire to be free, whatever the odds against success, whatever the sacrifice required." Today the most important airport of New York is named after this young senator. He realized the significance of 1956. I should like to point out a strange contradiction as far as the significance of 1956 in the history of political thought is concerned. We all know that after 1956 politically, the international position of the Soviet Union became substantially stronger. Among the peoples of the Third World, the Soviet Union could present itself as the supporter of freedom fighters like in Egypt. However, in terms of political thought, the prestige of the Soviet-type of political system substantially decreased, so there is a contradiction between the great power of imperial influence and the prestige of the Soviet-type of political system. From this perspective, 1956 is a major turning point in the his-

tory of political thought, because whereas before 1956 quite a number of western intellectuals were very much impressed by the Soviet model, from various points of view during the economic crisis of 1920 until 1933, and even later, this was no longer the case.

Mark KRAMER: I would like to respond to the question of the lasting political impact on the western far left that I think should be seen as extremely significant. There were four major periods in which the western left had to reassess its views. One was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, 1939 and over the next 20 months when the Soviet Union had allied itself with Nazi Germany. There were, particularly in the United States, many Communist Party members who left the party permanently. Some returned after June 1941, but most stayed out of the party. In 1956, the second major crisis for Western

leftists resulted from both Khrushchev's secret speech and the Soviet invasion, but compared to the earlier crisis not as many left the party. Until recently, I had thought more left after November 1956 than in late 1939. When I looked at the actual numbers in Italy and France, however, I discovered, to my surprise, that in fact relatively few renounced their party membership in 1956. Many other Western Communists were certainly disillusioned, but this did not result in the same sort of consequences that it did in 1939. The third major crisis for Western leftists came in 1968 when it became evident that even peaceful change in the Soviet bloc was infeasible because Soviet leaders would not permit it. At that point, significant numbers of Italian and French Communists left the party. I single out those two parties because they were by far the largest and most influential. Then in the 1980s, and particularly in December 1981, there was lasting fallout from 1968 with the rise of Euro communism. Therefore, the cumulative impact, even though there weren't as many who left the party in 1956, added up. This meant that the Soviet Union could no longer count on the reflexive support of leftists as it had been able to do since the 1920s and 1930s. That was the revolution's most lasting political impact in the international system and was therefore important.

Jody JENSEN: In Hungary today you are daily confronted with the symbols of 1956 on the streets, and in the mentality of people that you work with. I have just a short comment about something that surprised me when I immersed myself in 1956. What surprised me most was when I looked at how the workers' councils functioned and how they



*With Professor Kramer  
Photo by: Anabella Veress*

made decisions. Before 1956, Hungary had never experienced democracy, had never been democratic. Yet in this very exceptional moment, they behaved with each other in solidarity, with empathy, and democratically. They made decisions together. It was meaningful for me to think that we as human beings have something innately democratic in our makeup that may emerge when it is needed. Because I am an educator and try to prepare my students about how to live resiliently in a time of uncertainty, we need to re-enforce those kinds of behaviors that I think are extremely important today. That is one of the surprising things of the '56 revolution, how people with no experience of democracy could internalize democratic structures and behavior. I will take that away as my most important lesson.

*Katalin BOGYAY: Before we finish, I would like to draw your attention to the Time Magazine cover from January 1957. You can see that the “Man of the Year” was “the Hungarian Freedom Fighter”. This January, we not only celebrated the 60th anniversary of the “Man of the Year,” who are our fathers, grandfathers, brothers and sisters, but also the UN for finally setting up the Special Committee on the Hungarian Problem. With these words, I would very much like to thank Professor Kramer, Professor Jensen, Professor Pók, and Professor Miszlivetz for coming to New York to the Hungarian Mission and sharing their stimulating and inspiring thoughts with us.*



*Members of the Panel Discussion.  
Photo by: Anabella Veress*



*Hedva Ser, Sculptor, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Artist for Peace*

## VII. A Cry for Freedom: The Statue

*I asked Hedva Ser, a French artist, to think about the symbol of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution: the flag with the hole. I wondered what may be the message of this symbol for her.*

*I told her that the revolutionaries cut out the Stalinist emblem and used the resulting tricolor with the hole in the middle as the symbol of the uprising.*

*I told her that our short revolution was a CRY FOR FREEDOM.*

*I started to work with Hedva Ser during my UNESCO years. Her bronze statue *The Tree of Peace*, which stands in many countries of the world, is a symbol of bridging different cultures, religions, countries, and peoples. We wanted to plant many trees of peace with Hedva, symbolically and in reality, in the world to create the “forests of peace” ... Hedva became inspired by the story of our revolution and created a bronze statue of the flag with the hole.*

*Let me quote her:*

*“This banner’s wind-swept movement expresses its desire for Liberty, while its twisted fabric speaks of the pain felt by the Hungarian nation. The flag’s empty space represents the heart of the Hungarian people, as the heavy bronze whispers to us, and acts as a lasting witness to the tragic moments of Hungarians’ liberation.”*

Hedva Ser, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Artist for Peace, Paris

Statue produced by the Bedi-Makky Art Foundry, Brooklyn, New York



*Artwork designed by Hedva Ser.*



*A CRY FOR FREEDOM: the Statue.*



It was only a few weeks ago, that I received the text for the engraving. The title is “A Cry for Freedom”. Almost a year and a half ago, my father and business partner István Makky passed away. He grew up in a small town called Tejfalusziget, in Hungary. He learned his trade in neighboring Mosonmagyaróvár. He was in a metalworking school in Communist Hungary. All the work they did was reparation for Soviet Union. At a young age, my father risked his life to escape the communist oppression. Eventually, he ended up in New York, where he gained employment with Bedi-Rassy Art Foundry. In the early 1920’s Bedi and Rassy were with a group of Hungarian immigrants who worked in the art world dominated by the French and Italians. My father eventually became owner and changed the name to Bedi-Makky art Foundry. I started to work full time with my Dad, and I learned the trade and listened to stories of his life in Hungary. When I was approached for this job I knew I had to do it. A Cry for Freedom: my father risked his life for Freedom and reminded me every day not to take it for granted. My job memorializes events into bronze, a medium made to last many lifetimes. A Cry for Freedom deserves to be remembered, and I am proud to be a part of this project.

Sincerely,

Bill Makky

BEDI-MAKKY ART FOUNDRY



*United Nations Headquarters, New York  
Photo by: Marianna Sárközy*

## VIII. About the Author

Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogyay is the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations in New York (2015–).

From 2009 to 2014, Ms. Bogyay served as her country's Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and from 2011 to 2013 as President of UNESCO's General Conference. From 2006 to 2009, she was Hungary's State Secretary for International Affairs for Education and Culture, and from 1999 to 2006 the Founding Director of the Hungarian Cultural Centre in London. Prior to entering government, Ms. Bogyay had a distinguished career as an international television broadcaster, film producer, and writer.

Ambassador Bogyay holds an MA in economics from Corvinus University, Budapest, a postgraduate degree in journalism from the György Bálint Academy of Journalism, Budapest, a master of arts degree in international communications from the University of Westminster, London. She read counseling at the Westminster Pastoral Foundation, London. She was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) by Glasgow University (2012) for her work in building diplomatic links between Hungary and Scotland, as well as promoting cultural di-



*Photo by: Marianna Sárközy*

versity and cultural diplomacy throughout the world. She received an Honorary Doctorate of Social Sciences from the University of Pannonia (2016), Hungary for her international work in multilateral and cultural diplomacy.

Katalin is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (UK) and a fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science (US). She is an international advisor to the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD, Berlin, Germany) and the president of the

Cultural Diplomacy and the Arts program of ICD. She is also an International Advisory Board member of the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg, iASK, Hungary, an International Steering Committee member of the World Science Forum (Hungary, Jordan), an honorary member of the London-based Imago-International Psychoanalytical Society, a founding member of the Liszt Academy Network, London, and a board member of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra (Budapest State Opera Orchestra). She is a member of the Foreign Policy Association (FPA, New York) and an honorary member of the Foreign Press Association (FPA, New York). She is also an International Gender Champion (Geneva-New York).

Ambassador Bogyay is a recipient of several high honors worldwide, including the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary for her services to Hungarian and international culture and innovative work in cultural diplomacy (2014), the Tree of Peace of UNESCO for her leadership in political, intercultural, and interfaith dialogue (2014), the Nehru Gold Medal of UNESCO for her presidency in UNESCO (2013), the Special Trophy of the International Fair Play Committee for promoting sports diplomacy (2013), the Chain Bridge Award for her services to Hungarian foreign affairs (2013), the Grand Cross of the Order of Sahametrei by King Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia for intercultural cooperation (2013), Officer of the Order of Leopold by King Albert II of Belgium (2008), Aphelandra, a humanitarian prize (2009), and the Knight's Cross Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary for her contribution to international culture (2005). Ms. Bogyay was awarded a Diploma of Honour by the member states of UNESCO for her services in the development of international understanding.

She received the Global Citizenship Award from the James Jay Dudley Luce Foundation (2016). She was also given special recognition by NGOCSW-NY for her contribution as a woman leader in the UN (2016). She is the recipient of the 2017 Women of Distinction Award by Celebrating Women International, Nassau.

#### Other Books by the Author

She has authored several books and publications, including a biography on Hungarian actress Margit Dajka (1989, Officina Nova, Budapest) as well as another biographical work on János Pilinszky, a Hungarian poet (1990, Officina Nova, Budapest), *Találkozásaim a nagyvilágban* (My Encounters around the Globe), a collection of interviews with internationally acclaimed artists, writers, and scientists (1996, H.G. & Co., Budapest), and *The Voice of Freedom—A szabadság hangja* (2006, HCC, London), a compilation of interviews on the subject of the 1956 revolution. In 2007, Ms. Bogyay was selected by the London School of Economics and Financial Times Business as one of the Top 50 Thinkers for their publication *EU—The Next Fifty Years*. In an interview book, *A Magyar kultúra szolgálatában* (Serving Hungarian Culture, interviewed by Hedvig Dvorszky) (2010, Kairosz, Budapest), she gave insight into her professional life. *The Art of Cultural Diplomacy: Panorama of the Presidency* (2013, Espace Cinko—UNESCO, Paris) encompasses her work as the President of UNESCO's General Conference (2011–2013), and *Elnökségem története* (My Presidency) (2014, Holnap, Budapest) includes essays, interviews, and speeches about her presidency of UNESCO's General Conference. In 2017, it was published in China by Yilin Press, Phoenix Publishing.

## *IX. Acknowledgment*

*I would like offer my special thanks to:*

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*I thank the work of my colleagues at the Hungarian Mission, especially Lilla Osztrovszki, Zoltán Turbék, Dóra Kaszás, and Sára Zsófia Farkas.*







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