

Free translation from Ukrainian.

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The author: Rev. Ivan HRYNIOCH
Dr. of Theology, Univ. of Innsbruck
- in 1945» Councillor on the Staff of the Arch-bishop
of Lviv, Galicia, graf Andrew Sheptyckyj
member, Supreme Council of UPA (Ukrainian Partisan Army).
The author is the last surviving member of a 3-men mission to Budapest which,
in NOV - Dec. 1943 took part in negotiations between the Supreme Council
of UPA and the Government of Hungary.

The Head of -the Mission was Myron LUCKYJ,
a wealthy land owner and a former officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army,

The 5-rd member of the team was EUGENE WRECIONA,
-a former officer in the short-lived Army of the Carpatho-Ukraine,
-who, in March 1939 was taken prisoner by the Hungarian Army and,
after savage beating was thrown in a concentration camp which he
miraculously survived. (This fact, however, was not revealed
to their Hungarian hosts.)

With the exception of WRECIONA, who spoke some Hungarian, all 5 were fluent
in German and had a good knowledge of the Hungarian history and culture.

HOW IT ALL STARTED:

The whole episode started in -the summer 1943 when a Hungarian Army Division, dispatched to Ukraine on guard duties (district of VOLYNIA) , was ordered by Germans to conduct punitive actions against local population for disobeying German orders. UPA retaliated and, in one such skirmish, the entire Divisional HQRS Staff (including the general) were taken prisoner by the local UPA field commander.

This extra-ordinary situation made the local UPA commanders realize. that a MODUS VIVENDI must be worked out with the Hungarians in the interest of both parties.

After all, UPA was not at war with Hungary, and Hungarians were acting on German orders against their own will.

Thus, the captured Hungarian officers were given a lecture on UPA aims and objectives, and released to their unit with a firm proposal to establish a-permanent LIAISON of the 2 forces to prevent any such incidents in the future,

The proposal for mutual co-operation and consultation was accepted by the Hungarian field commanders and, soon after, a number of agreements were concluded, with benefits to both parties. Judging by the field reports arriving at the UPA HQRS, the individual agreements worked out at the local level worked surprisingly well. From time to time, shooting confrontations were arranged, at which both parties were shooting in the air to keep the Germans in the dark,

This followed by the Hungarian Army formal request for talks with UPA to be conducted at the highest level in Budapest - on condition, that the UPA representatives must reveal their true identities and, that their names must be confirmed by the Arch-bishop of Lviv and Metropolitan of Galicia, graf Andrew Sheptyckyj, with whom the Hungarian Government maintained contact through emissaries of the External Affairs Dept. disguised as war correspondents. It was also emphasised that UPA representatives would be granted full diplomatic recognition and protection by the Gov't of Hungary.

After completion of preliminaries, the 3 delegates showed up at pre-arranged time and location, from where they were taken by Hungarian Army personnel to the Army HQRS in Lviv. They were met by general staff officer, col. PADANY, who was in charge of the arrangements. Once there, they were told to change into Hungarian Army uniforms and, under the watchful eye of col. Padany were driven in Hungarian Army staff cars to a German air field near Lviv, where a Hungarian Army plane was already waiting to fly them to Budapest,

IN BUDAPEST.

Late in the evening the plane landed in Budapest. At the entrance to the airport building the 3 delegates, accompanied by col. Padany, were surprised by a large reception

committee of Gov't officials and high-ranking Army officers. A general staff major stepped forward and welcomed the Ukrainian delegation in the name of the Hungarian Government. The 3 members of the delegation were deeply moved by the Hungarian hospitality.

Apparently, the Hungarian Army Command - Ukraine, when notifying Budapest of the forthcoming arrival of the Ukr. delegation, failed to warn the War Ministry of the clandestine nature of the mission. Fortunately, nobody spilled the beans and the Germans never learned about it.

Once in Budapest, the delegates were taken care of by the commanding officer of the Military Airport, general staff major KORPONAY who, on orders from his superiors, put his luxurious villa at their disposal. There, they changed, from their Honved uniforms into civilian clothes and made themselves - comfortable in the new quarters.

Next on-the agenda were talks with Gov't officials under direction of the chief of the General Staff, gen. SOMBATAY (Szombathelyi). However, it just so happened that a few days before the arrival of the Ukr. delegation gen. Szombathelyi was called by Hitler for talks at his Field HQRS. For the -next 2 weeks, while gen. Szombathelyi was away, the Hungarian hosts did their best to entertain the Ukrainian delegation and to show them the highlights of Budapest. They were taken to first-class restaurants, night-clubs, and private parties attended by high-ranking officers and their wives. They were shown historical monuments, military installations, -air-traffic control center, "air-raid warning center, anti-aircraft batteries, etc, Budapest was a beautiful city. While war was raging all around, there was not a sign of war here. At night, the city was fully illuminated, the cars moved with blazing headlights, and restaurants and night clubs were full of people. The Hungarian hosts told the author that Hungary was never bombed by the Allied Air Forces, which frequently flew over the Hungarian air space to and from their German targets. It was indicated to the author that a secret agreement existed between the Gov't of Hungary and the Western Allies to this effect. At times, air raid sirens would start wailing and anti-aircraft artillery would go into action - but this was merely a mock-battle to prove to the Germans that Hungary is playing its part as a German ally.

One day, the Ukr. party was entertained at the home of dr. SHALAY, chief war correspondent for the Army and liason officer to the Ministry of External Affairs. Dr. Shalay, being a journalist himself, invited a number of his journalist -colleagues and promptly introduced the 3 Ukrainians as members of the official diplomatic mission for talks with the Hungarian Government. This statement almost blew the cover of the mission. Fortunately, no mention of this event ever appeared in the local press. This incident prompted major KORPONAY to say later that newspapermen are "ZEITUNG HUREN" (Newspaper whores) i.e.; persons who would sell any news item to make money. However, in this case, maj. Korponay's remark was unwarranted, for no news was ever published of this event,

THE POSITION PAPER OP THE UKRAINIAN DELEGATION.

Before its departure to Budapest, the Ukr., delegation was instructed by the then Chapman of the Supreme Council of UFA, Nykola (Nikolaus) LEBED, to take the following position vis a vis the Hungarian side:

1. The Head of the delegation is Myron LUCKYJ (LUTZKYJ) -
2. The delegation represents the SUPREME GOVERNING BODY OF THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE, which is still in its formative stage, but which has been recognised by all political parties, military detachments, and the majority of the Ukrainian people. Due to circumstances, the entire mleadership must act underground.
5. We are at war with communist Russia and Hitler's Germany.
4. We see no point in continuing a struggle agains Hungary, whose Army, stationed in the Ukraine, became a tool in Hitler's hands.
5. We strive to organize a common front of small nations to fight the 2 totalitarian forces, who are enslaving us.
6. Therefore, we consider it to be a nonsense for Hungarians, being a sovereign nation, to be drawn by Hitler into a war with the Ukranian people. Being neighbours, we should be able to settle our differences ourselves.
7. We suggest to the Gov(t of Hungary to cancel all agreements with Hitler's Germany and to declare war against both totalitarian states.
8. We propose to the Government of Hungary to sign an agreement with us, Basically, these were our maximum proposals in principle which we presented to the Hungarian side at the meeting in the Ministry of War. However, we knew that some of the proposals, particularly No. 7, could not be accepted due to circumstances.

Apart from proposals mentioned above, we were also instructed to present a number of proposals of a more practical nature, which we discussed at length at the Ministry of War meeting:

- a) All problems, such as boundaries, minorities rights, etc., shall be settled after the war by the sovereign governments of both nations.
- b) The Gov't of Hungary shall order its troops in Ukraine to stop all actions against the Ukrainian people. The Supreme Command of UPA will reciprocate by similar order to its troops to stop all actions agains Hungarian troops.
- c) The Hungarian Army shall supply to UPA;
- arms and ammunition,

- communications^equipment
- instructors for officers'and non-comm. officers' schools of UPA.

d) Assuming, that the advance of the Red Army will be halted at the Carpathian Mountains, the Gov' t of Hungary shall put at the disposal of UPA the region of Carpatho-Ukraine as a base of operations against the Russians for:

- arms & munitions depos
- medical treatment centres for wounded
- training centres for troops.

e) The Gov't of Hungary shall accept refugees from Ukr. territories '- occupied by the Red Army.

f) An UPA Liason Officer shall be attached to the Hungarian Army High Command.

g) The substance of all talks and future agreements shall be kept secret by both parties.

AT THE MINISTRY OF WAR.

It was middle of December 1943 when gen. Szombathelyi returned to Budapest from a visit to Hitler's HQRS. The conference was set-for 10 A.M in-the imposing building of the War Ministry. It was a calm sunny day. We arrived there by car with our host, maj. Korponay at the wheel. The car 'stopped at the bottom-of a massive flight of stairs leading to the building.

We got out of the car and started climbing the stairs. Two rows of officers in parade uniforms flanked the stairsand greeted us in a military fashion. The reception was overwhelming . We felt elated ! We realized that, the great honours bestowed on us were actually ment for our nation locked in mortal combat with 2 largest empires in the world.

At the entrance to the building we were received by col. Padany who took us to a magnificent reception hall, where gen. Szombathelyi was already waiting. with his staff officers.

The conference started on the informal note. After customary introductions and greetings we were seated at tables and the conversation drifted towards the past, common to both nations. The topics ranged from King Danylo, the XIII century King of Galicia and his family connections to the rulers of Hungary - to a mental walk through the enchanting Carpathian Mountains and, of course, to the good old days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After all, the Head of the Ukr. delegation started his carter in the K. und K. Army - and so did gen. Szombathelyi and his senior staff officers.

Both sides did.their best to emphasise the positive factors in the common past of the nations, and to carefully avoid any mention of the more drastic neighbourly interactions and disputes, such as the behavior of Hungarian troops in Galicia in World War I, and the annexation of Carpatho-Ukraine in March, 1939.

Eventually, the formal conference began, with gen. Szombathelyi in the chair. The Ukr. delegation presented its views item by item, in accordance with the instructions received at home. It is the impression of the author that the Hungarians were genuinely inclined to meet Ukrainian requests. the problem was mostly how to implement them without evoking the wrath of the Germans, for the shadow of Hitler hung heavily over the conference room, like a dark cloud.

However, when the Ukrainians raised item 7 on their list and asked the Hungarians to declare war on Germany, everybody held his breath, and all eyes. turned on gen. Szombathelyi. The conference room sunk in a complete silence. After a pause, gen. Sombatay broke the silence: "I have two alternatives", he said. "To be shot by Hitler, or to be hanged by Stalin. I prefer to be hanged by Stalin."

For a while, nobody dared to say a word. The general was visibly shaken. After his last visit to Hitler's HQRS he was virtually a prisoner of Hitler, but did not want to go down in history as a man who betrayed his ally. We were sorry for the proud general who carried an enormous load on his shoulders and saw no solution to his problems. The author learned after the war that gen. Szombathelyi was, indeed, hanged by Stalin (actually by Tito).

PLYING BACK HOME.

After the conclusion of talks at the Ministry of War we were flown back home the same way we arrived in Budapest. Before our departure, each member of the delegation received presents from our hosts. The author received (among other things) a portable typewriter made in Switzerland, which was a personal gift from gen. Szombathelyi. However, the author's pleasure was short lived; the typewriter fell a prey to Gestapo during a raid on , a safe house.

LOOKING BACK: ONE YEAR AFTER THE MEETING IN BUDAPEST (1944)

Due to German retreat in the East, and the rapid advance of the Red Army through Romania, the Hungarians lost the hope that the Western Powers guarantees would stop the Russians from occupying their country. Budapest itself was under threat of the Russian occupation, and the Hungarian Army High Command was moved to Balaton.

Under these circumstances, there was no point in establishing an Ukrainian diplomatic mission in Budapest.

Of all the items discussed at the Budapest meeting in Dec. 1943 only 2 could be implemented:

1. Appointment of capt. Andrew DOLNYTSKYJ as an UFA LIAISON OFFICER, attached to the Hungarian High Command in Balaton.

(Translator's note: The activities of -this officer are described in THE ANNALS OF UFA, Volume 5, Book 5, all in Ukrainian, with English Summaries at the end of each chapter.)

2. NON-AGGRESSION PACT (of sorts) originally initiated by the local field commanders in the district of Volynia, in the summer of 1945
This "PACT" remained in force till the end of war. However, incidents and transgressions still occurred, particularly when the Hungarian troops tried to requisition cattle and foodstuffs from the farmers, and the farmers in turn called upon UFA to intervene.

At the end of 1944 the author made one more trip to "the Hungarian High Command in Balaton. The purpose of his mission was to iron out an infraction of the NON AGGRESSION PACT, for which the Hungarians blamed the Ukrainian Side. The subsequent meeting started on a sour note, but after a good supper all the differences were washed away with a bottle of wine.