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## Interview: Victor Szendi

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# OSI aiding communists, IMF in battle for Hungary

*Victor Szendi is the son of Joseph Szendi, a Hungarian-American who in June was stripped of his U.S. citizenship and deported by the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) of the U.S. Department of Justice. He is involved in an effort to clear his father's name and see that justice is done. The interview was conducted by Dave Kilber on July 29.*

**EIR:** Your father, Joseph Szendi, a Hungarian-American, was just stripped of his U.S. citizenship and deported in June after being accused by the Office of Special Investigations of being a Nazi war criminal. There have been a series of victims over the past several years of an OSI witchhunt against eastern Europeans, the most notorious being the Demjanjuk case. Tell us about your father and how this all came about.

**Szendi:** He was a member of the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie which I think he joined in the late 1930s. The Gendarmerie had been established in the 1800s as an elite force. During wartime they served as a military force, and during peacetime as a police force similar to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He went through the training and ended up becoming a sergeant.

The war intervened, and in war, as a soldier, he went where he was commanded. He served in a small post in what is now part of Romania. When the German troops occupied Hungary, the Hungarian forces were put under their command. Then, when the Russians broke across Romania, the Gendarmerie ended up being almost regular Army troops for a while.

He had said that his most distasteful assignment was to guard a truck convoy of alleged illegal immigrants who were Jewish who had come into Hungary from Galicia. They were taken to the Ukrainian border and told not to return.

He was fighting against the Soviets in Budapest, was wounded, and was decorated for bravery on the spot. He was put into a military hospital which, with the Soviet takeover of Budapest, became a prison. He escaped and returned to his home village.

He was later arrested by a Soviet patrol in Romania when he went back to get certification that he had not been involved in war crimes. He was handed over to Romanian secret po-

lice, interrogated, beaten, and tortured. He was able to escape again.

He was arrested again in Hungary by the communist regime and put on trial. His background was investigated. They couldn't find much on him, so they charged him with instigation against the state and sentenced him to a year in prison. He got out in 1948 and continued to live in Hungary, always being persecuted.

When 1956 came, he participated in the revolution. In February 1957, we left Hungary and went into Yugoslavia. From there we emigrated to France.

My parents always wanted to come to the United States, and we finally came to Syracuse sponsored by the Episcopalian Church. My father brought with him all his papers which had been at the U.S. Embassy in Paris which showed that he had been in prison for a year. Everything related to that went to the U.S. Embassy from the World Council of Churches. I have letters and original documents. So they knew that he had been arrested and spent a year in prison. They knew he was a Gendarme.

Dad was very active in the United States and Canada in Hungarian Veteran Association affairs. He was acknowledged for receiving the Order of Heroes for bravery at the Battle of Budapest. He was an active anti-communist and wrote articles and gave speeches; so, he was fairly well known.

**EIR:** How did the attack on him begin?

**Szendi:** He used to tell everyone the war stories, whenever people got together. He decided to write a book so that his grandchildren could read what their grandfather had done. He found a publisher in Hungary and published his book.

One day in 1990 as he listened to a radio program in Hungary, a man named Gado, who is a member of Parliament and, I believe, the editor of a Hungarian Jewish paper, lambasted the government for allowing such a "fascist and Nazi-toned book" to come onto the market. The radio stations and newspapers carried this, and the books were confiscated by the government. A warrant was put out for the author for "inciting against the people"—just like 35 years

before. While they said they couldn't find anything specific in the book, it was just the "tone of the book." This was 1991.

Right after that, Charles Thomas, the U.S. ambassador, gets into the fray. There was a fairly pro-communist magazine, *168 Hours*, which interviewed Thomas. The subject of the book came up. The reporter asked how "such a person could get into the United States." Thomas stated that my father had probably lied on his immigration papers because the United States would never allow such a "war criminal" in. I was very perturbed when I read this, and wrote a letter to Thomas and his boss, and to this day I have not received a reply.

One day in July 1992, three people showed up at my father's door. They said they were INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] agents and just wanted to ask him questions. For three hours they pumped him with questions and wrote everything down. By the way, he doesn't speak English well or understand English well. They asked him to sign a statement, and only as they were leaving did they admit that they were from the Justice Department Office of Special Investigations. Never any mention of counsel or anything. It was total entrapment and denial of due process.

**EIR:** What exactly was he charged with by the OSI?

**Szendi:** The main charge of the OSI was that he lied on his INS 400 form and did not disclose his wartime activities, and that he did not disclose that he was a member of the Order of Heroes, that he was a member of the Arrow Cross Party. He was not a member of the Arrow Cross Party. No member of the Gendarmerie could join any party.

**EIR:** And the government had access to all this information?

**Szendi:** The government had access to all this information not just through the embassy but through the Hungarian government and the Romanian government.

**EIR:** He was beaten, persecuted, arrested, and imprisoned by the communist government. Why not admit that in his application for U.S. citizenship?

**Szendi:** They had all the papers, and he applied as a political prisoner who had fought against the communists. He also never thought of himself as convicted of a crime. Plus, all the papers were given to the embassy in Paris, which we have proof of. By the way, he did not fill out the INS form himself. It was an American friend of ours.

**EIR:** In the accusations and complaint against him by the OSI, they accuse him of things which are not in the agreement. What was admitted in the signed agreement with the OSI, was that he was a sergeant in the Royal Hungarian Gendarmes and had been ordered to accompany a "convoy

of trucks containing Jewish residents of Hungary alleged to be illegal aliens who were being deported" across the border to Ukraine. This seems very flimsy. Could you comment on that, and also on why he decided to sign the agreement with the OSI to give up his citizenship and be deported?

**Szendi:** This was the best the OSI could do. There was no evidence linking him to anything of what they claimed. The only thing they could use against him was what he mentioned in his book.

**EIR:** Why did he decide to sign the agreement?

**Szendi:** He was 78 years old. He'd already had one stroke. He didn't want to go through a lengthy ordeal. He was also very concerned about the impact it could have on my brother's career. And he did not want to jeopardize his Social Security.

**EIR:** They made an agreement to allow him his Social Security. It demonstrates how weak their case was.

**Szendi:** Absolutely! But I must reiterate that I was from the start against any agreement. I knew that this could be won.

**EIR:** How do you compare this to the Demjanjuk case?

**Szendi:** The tactics and method that the OSI used were very, very similar. In the Demjanjuk case, they brought war criminal charges against him and extradited him to Israel. And even against Demjanjuk they didn't have much, but were able to do it. It just shows you how weak this case must have been. It was just pure propaganda.

**EIR:** Do you think that the current political situation in Hungary had anything to do with the targeting of Joseph Szendi as a Hungarian-American?

**Szendi:** Without a shadow of a doubt. There is a struggle going on right now for the heart and soul of the Hungarian people. There is a struggle involving the forces of the left, including the communists and ultra-left liberals, outside forces, such as the IMF [International Monetary Fund], and outside forces of a subversive nature trying to exert control, such as George Soros. There are people like Rep. Tom Lantos [D-Calif.], who has no business sticking his nose into another country's affairs.

**EIR:** Congressman Lantos and speculator George Soros have both attacked Istvan Csurka and other anti-IMF Hungarian leaders as anti-Semitic and representing "neo-fascist" tendencies in Hungary. Did they have anything to do with the OSI operation against Joseph Szendi?

**Szendi:** I cannot say to what degree, because in the OSI papers we have the names are crossed out, but I would venture to guess that they were. The situation, with Csurka being labeled as an anti-Semite and a neo-fascist and everything else, serves a purpose. Since he is anti-IMF, anyone oppos-

ing that force will be dealt with harshly, and any mudslinging and smearing that can be thrown against them, will be. Whether it is the World Jewish Congress, Lantos, or Soros who have attacked Csurka — and let's bring in all the communist groups in Hungary — it seems that there is collusion with some of the departments like the OSI in our government with the communists over there to reimpose a dictatorial system of another nature on the Hungarian people.

**EIR:** Did you know that Rep. Henry Gonzales [D-Tex.] has called for an investigation of the criminal activities of Soros?

**Szendi:** I hope that he pursues it to its conclusion. It will be very interesting to see what comes out of it.

**EIR:** The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), which has worked closely with the OSI and FBI, is in big trouble and are about to be indicted in the San Francisco spy case. How much do you think the ADL was involved in the frameup of your father?

**Szendi:** I don't know. I would guess that most of these organizations are pretty well tied together. To be able to obtain the kind of information which I saw being obtained in my father's case, there has to be a very strong network of people. I would venture to guess that all these tentacles of

the octopus reaching into many parts of the world are connected to a central area.

**EIR:** What are your plans now? What can be done in your father's case, and what do you think should be done about the OSI gestapo?

**Szendi:** My father's book will be published in English, and we are working on putting a preface in explaining the circumstances. My brother and I and friends will be writing at least two chapters, starting from the time the OSI began its investigation.

Secondly, we are taking steps to extract justice, first in Hungary with the people who started this whole thing, and also the situation here with the OSI is far from finished. If they think by discrediting my father that this is going to end it and they will be victorious, I have some bad news for them.

Justice has to be done, because this is such an unjust situation, as most of the other situations where an American citizen was stripped of his American citizenship for no reason at all. I think it is a sad day in the life of this country. I served in the Army during the Vietnam era, and sometimes I really feel sad that what this country once stood for has been brought to such a low point.

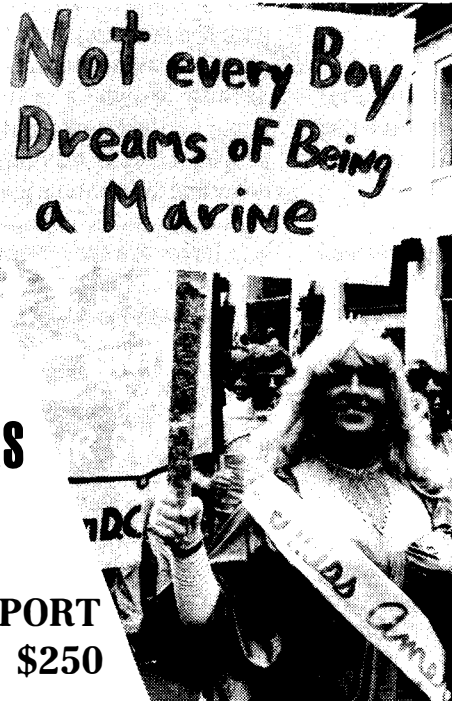
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