

## *A portrait of a controversial minority politician Iván Nagy (1904–1972)*

ZOLTÁN DÉVAVÁRI

VERITAS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR HISTORY

### I.

This study presents a brief biography of the controversial minority Hungarian politician Iván Nagy based on my research conducted in his personal papers in recent years.<sup>1</sup>

The political career of Iván Nagy, born in Bács (now Bač in Serbia) in 1904 began in the mid-1920s, when the Hungarian Party of Yugoslavia, personified by Imre Várady,<sup>2</sup> Leó Deák<sup>3</sup> and Dénes Strelitzky,<sup>4</sup> was in crisis due to the attacks of the Belgrade authorities and the power struggle that broke out in the party.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See: DÉVAVÁRI, Zoltán (2020), “Nagy Iván (1904–1972) magyar országgyűlési képviselő, emigráns magyar politikus iratai (1948–1948),” *Lymbus Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlemények* 18, 831–903; DÉVAVÁRI, Zoltán (2021), *Klikkharcok az emigrációban. Nagy Iván (1904–1972) délvidéki emigráns magyar politikus válogatott iratai (1949–1954)*, Budapest, Lymbus Kötetek 4, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Imre Várady (Katalinfalva, March 11, 1867 – Nagybecskerek, March 6, 1959) He studied law in Budapest, then opened a law firm in Becskerek. From 1905, he was a parliamentary representative of the opposition Independence Party. During this time, he established a good relationship with the Serbs in Vojvodina. In 1914 he provided legal protection for the arrested and interned Serbs. After 1918/1920 he was one of the founders of the Hungarian Party, its most influential, moderate politician. He was a member of the Yugoslav parliament from 1927 and a Yugoslav senator in 1939. He did not engage in political activity during the Second World War, and in 1945, after a short term in office, he permanently retired from public life.

<sup>3</sup> Leó Deák (Kúla/Kula, January 14, 1888 – Újvidék/Novi Sad, after November 16, 1945) obtained a law degree in Budapest and then opened a law firm in Zombor/Sombor. One of the founders of the Hungarian Party, and its secretary. Together with Imre Várady and Dénes Strelitzky, he was a member of the trio who personally went to Belgrade in the twenties, but especially in the thirties, to solve issues important to Hungarians. He was a member of the provincial assembly since 1927. He wrote regularly for contemporary newspapers, financially supported the launch of the *Vajdasági Írás* (Vojvodina Writing) magazine, and later was an employee of the influential paper, *Kalangya*. After Hungary reoccupied the territory in 1941, he was appointed chief government commissioner (főispán) of Bács-Bodrog County as a moderate politician. He was one of the first to demand an end to the 1942 Újvidék raid and an investigation into what had happened. He was removed from office after the Nazi occupation of Hungary, and on November 1, 1945, the new Yugoslav authorities sentenced him to death as a war criminal, and the sentence was executed after November 16, 1945. Although there is growing evidence that he was sentenced to death in a show trial, nonetheless his lawsuit has not been retried to date, so his rehabilitation has not taken place.

<sup>4</sup> Dénes Strelitzky (Baja, July 3, 1888 – Szabadka/Subotica, January 21, 1953) studied law in Budapest, after which he practiced law in Szabadka. In addition to the member of the board of the Hungar-

As a result, from 1926, both the right and left wings of the political spectrum of the Hungarian minority appeared, which abandoned the traditional bourgeois centrist politics of that time, which tried to include all political orientations of the Hungarian community, and which covered ideological and religious differences.

These new currents were launched by the generation that grew up in the new, Yugoslav state and was socialized there, free from the spirit of the world before 1918, its burdensome heritage, and the resulting ideological and personal rivalry. As a result, at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, a new generation appeared and demanded a place for itself alongside the “old people” fighting among themselves. This new generation not only almost immediately launched a frontal attack against the conventional world of thought and perception of the previous period, but also engaged in serious ideological infighting within its own ranks.

This was the suffocating atmosphere in which Iván Nagy, a law student<sup>6</sup> at the University of Zagreb, became the leader of the Catholic student association of Vojvodina. The formation of Iván Nagy’s political thinking was greatly influenced by the Croatian independence political movement, which fought serious battles with Belgrade, and his ideal was the pro-republican Croatian Peasant Party led by Stjepan Radić, which for him embodied the successful political struggle against Belgrade. As a result, he rejected the search for compromise with the Serbian political elite, and formulated the program of the Hungarian national resistance and the Zagreb political orientation. He included in his program the issue of autonomy for Vojvodina, which had been rejected by the Hungarian Party for tactical reasons.<sup>7</sup> He combined Christian socialist doctrines on the model of Croatian nationalism with ideas moving in the direction of German racial and *völkisch* ideology, and he believed in solving the land question with right-wing, radical means.<sup>8</sup>

Iván Nagy entered politics in 1932–1933 as a member of the Croatian Peasant Party. With his program, he managed to win the support of the Catholic Hungarian priests who had a great influence on the Hungarian masses relatively quickly – including Elemér Korányi,<sup>9</sup> who would later be part of his closest circle of friends for decades. With the support

---

ian Party, Imre Várady and Leó Deák, he is one of the outgoing politicians of the party, the head of the party’s legal protection office, and at the same time the editor-in-chief of *Hirlap*. The moderate politician did not take on a political role after the feedback, after 1945 he was one of the district vice-presidents of the People’s Front of Szabadka, and a member of the board of the Hungarian Public Cultural Community.

<sup>5</sup> See: DÉVAVÁRI, Zoltán (2018), “Viharban. A Magyar Párt története a Délvidéken 1923–1925,” *Aetas* 33, 2, 40–54; DÉVAVÁRI, Zoltán (2020), “A jog erejével, az igazság fegyverével – Jogászok a délvidéki magyar kisebbségi közösség megszervezésében (1918–1941),” in VÁRADY, Tibor (ed.), *Délvidéki (Vajdasági) magyar jogászok*, Újvidék, Vajdasági Magyar Jogász Egyesület, 61–113.

<sup>6</sup> “Meghalt dr. Nádý Iván.” *Katolikus Magyarok Vasárnapja*, 3 December, 1972, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the movement of Iván Nagy, see also: CSUKA, János (1995), *A délvidéki magyarság története 1918–1941*, Budapest, Püski Kiadó, 494–499.

<sup>8</sup> A. SAJTI, Enikő (2016), *Kisebbségpolitika és társadalomszervezés. Várady Imre (1867–1959) bánáti magyar politikusi iratai*, Újvidék, Forum, 56.

<sup>9</sup> Elemér Korányi (Szilberek, March 13, 1888 – Innsbruck, July 25, 1957.) He completed his theological studies in Kalocsa. In the First World War, he was the chief chaplain of the 68<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment. After the war, he was a religion teacher at the Zombor high school, and in 1924 he was a parish priest in Újvidék. In 1925, he obtained a doctorate in canon law in Szeged. He was the head of the foreign policy section of the *Délbácska* daily in Újvidék (Novi Sad) and then of *Reggeli Újság*. As the vice-

of this influential and strong financial background and the strongly right-wing Hungarian political and economic elite, Iván Nagy founded the weekly newspaper *Nép* (The People) on December 8, 1935. This media background, the direct cooperation with the Croatian Peasant Party led by Vladimir Maček and the alliance with the opposition Vojvodina Movement,<sup>10</sup> linked to the Serbian intelligentsia in Bácska (Bačka), gave Iván Nagy such a significant room for maneuver in a political sense. Thus, he was able to quickly and with great success reach almost all social strata of Hungarian society.<sup>11</sup>

Since the authorities still did not allow the Hungarian Party to function again – in connection with the elections – on February 25, 1935, Imre Várady invited the representatives of Hungarian public life to Újvidék to coordinate the Hungarian strategy to be followed. Although the government still did not allow the resumption of the Hungarian Party, the majority of the participants finally assured the government of the loyalty of Hungarians, requesting that the government recognize and support their cultural and economic interests. Iván Nagy was also present at this meeting, and spoke against this decision.<sup>12</sup>

However, Belgrade still did not allow the Hungarian Party to function again. This gave Iván Nagy, who participated in the 1935 elections together with the Vojvodina Movement on the list of the United Opposition led by Maček, a situational advantage. Although he won the necessary number of votes, due to the manipulations of the authorities – the falsification of the number of votes – and the violence accompanying the voting, he did not get a mandate.<sup>13</sup>

Already in the first half of the 1930s, Iván Nagy attempted to gain influence over the Népkör/Magyar Olvasókör of Szabadka (Subotica), which was directly under the control of Várady's loyal ally, Dénes Strelitzky. The control over the Népkör (People's Circle), which control large masses and therefore had a great influence on the Hungarian minority, was considered a key political issue from the perspective of the entire the Vojvodina Hungarian minority, but especially from the perspective of Szabadka.<sup>14</sup> The power struggles that unfolded in this way ultimately resulted in the ideological and political fragmentation of the Vojvodina Hungarians as a whole.

In December 1938, new elections were held in the country. The leaders of the former Hungarian Party called on Hungarians to boycott it, primarily because the government did

president of the Yugoslav Hungarian Public Culture Association (Jugoszláviai Magyar Közművelődési Szövetség), which was founded just before the Second World War, he is the actual leader of the organization. Between 1942 and 1944, member of the Hungarian Parliament, head of the Southland Hungarian Public Culture Association. In 1944, the Yugoslav partisan authorities declared him a war criminal, in 1945 the Yugoslav secret service, OZNA, investigated him in Hungary. After the war, he emigrated to Austria and became a close colleague and friend of Iván Nagy.

<sup>10</sup> The Vojvodina Movement was founded in 1925 by Serbian intellectuals from Vojvodina who were dissatisfied with the central power in Belgrade. It was led by Dušan Bošković, Žarko Jakšić, and Eugen Jocić. Initially, they demanded an independent administrative unit for Vojvodina, and after 1934 the possibility of its separation from the South Slavic state was also formulated.

<sup>11</sup> DÉVAVÁRI, *Klikkharok az emigrációban*, 15.

<sup>12</sup> A. SAJTI, *Kisebbségpolitika és társadalomszervezés*, 361–366.

<sup>13</sup> DÉVAVÁRI, *Klikkharok az emigrációban*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> For a full story, see: DÉVAVÁRI, Zoltán (2014), “Árkádia útján. Indulás és útkeresés. A *Hid* eszmé- és politikatörténete (1934–1941),” in FARAGÓ, Kornélia (ed), *Mozgalom, kultúraformálás, irodalmi gondolkodás*, Újvidék – Zenta, Forum, 13–77.

not allow the party to operate. Iván Nagy, on the other hand, did not support this decision, and by agitating for the United Opposition, he even placed himself on its list.<sup>15</sup> After the elections of December 11, 1938, the Yugoslav government, in connection with the strengthening of the improving Hungarian-Hungarian relations, appointed Imre Várady, who followed the Belgrade orientation, as a senator in January 1939. Várady's appointment resulted in Iván Nagy's relegation and isolation.<sup>16</sup>

Created by the Serb-Croat agreement (Sporazum) on August 26, 1939, the Croatian Banovina was granted legislative, administrative and judicial autonomy, thus Zagreb became a real center of power. And all of this had a significant impact on the Hungarian power space in Vojvodina. In fact, Zagreb soon used Iván Nagy and his movement in its own power games, mainly for the purpose of weakening Belgrade.<sup>17</sup> All this resulted in the growth of Nagy's influence and weight.

In the meantime, in connection with the new shifts in power relations, the flames of power struggles flared up with renewed force in the Népkör in Szabadka. In the end, the various committees which were setting up to deal with the tensions were unable to reconcile the opposing camps, so the negotiations have been interrupted in April 1939. Iván Nagy, taking advantage of his renewed strength, finally emerged victorious from the struggles taking place in the Népkör.<sup>18</sup>

In the first days of September 1939, Deák Leó and Nagy met in Zombor, where they discussed reconciliation and the establishment of Hungarian unity. However, the positions did not converge. At that point, Nagy essentially requested the retirement of Deák, Strelitzky and Várady from public life.<sup>19</sup>

In order to bring the various Hungarian political factions on a single platform, the Council of Five of the Yugoslav Hungarian Public Culture Association (Jugoszláviai Magyar Közművelődési Szövetség Ötös Tanácsa) was established on March 24, 1941, by bringing together the opposing parties. Its members were Várady, Deák, Nagy, Sándor Pummer, and Ernő Bissingen, a landowner from Temesvajkóc (Vlajovac). In principle, the Council of Five, its meeting taking place every two weeks, would have been responsible for the political, cultural, economic and community management of the Hungarian ethnic group in Yugoslavia.<sup>20</sup>

However, no meaningful work was carried out. In April 1941, with the recapture of the Bácska, an entirely new situation arrived, and thus a new era in the history of the Hungarians from Vojvodina and Ivan Nagy began.

## II.

Although after the collapse of the first Yugoslav state on April 10, 1941, Iván Nagy also aspired to the position of the rejoined Bácska's government commissioner, in the end it was

---

<sup>15</sup> A. SAJTI, *Kisebbségpolitika és társadalomszervezés*, 530.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 565.

<sup>17</sup> CSUKA, *A délvidéki magyarság története*, 467–468, 472–473.

<sup>18</sup> DÉVAVÁRI, "Árkádia útján," 61, 65.

<sup>19</sup> A. SAJTI, *Kisebbségpolitika és társadalomszervezés*, 596–603.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 724–725, 726–727.

won by Leó Deák, who was considered his greatest political opponent and enjoyed the trust of the Minister of the Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer.<sup>21</sup>

At that time, it seemed that Deák, who belonged to the centrist trend, emerged victorious from the duel. However, a delicate balance of power was created between the two rivals, which temporarily took into account the actual power relations, in which, as time progressed, Deák's influence steadily eroded, while Nagy's grew. As a result, by the summer of 1941, Iván Nagy had become one of the key actors of the Hungarian state in Bácska, and concentrated great power and influence in his hand. His influence extended to the power of the security forces and law enforcement, partly to the justice system, as well as to agriculture in Bácska and the economic and cultural life.<sup>22</sup>

After the tragic events in Újvidék on February 9, 1942,<sup>23</sup> the members of Bácska were invited to the Hungarian Parliament, on whose behalf Iván Nagy gave the ceremonial speech.<sup>24</sup> It was then that Nagy reached the peak of his influence: as a member of parliament, the gates of national affairs were also opened to him. On February 11, 1942, Iván Nagy joined the board of directors of the National Land Credit Institute (Országos Földhitelintézet) headed by Béla Imrédy,<sup>25</sup> and in March 1942 he became a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament.<sup>26</sup>

Here we must mention that the writing of Iván Nagy's biography is made very difficult by the fact that in the era, two dr. Iván Nagy were active in Hungarian public life. In the given era, the exact identification of the two persons is also made difficult by the fact that their interests and political activities show eerie similarities and coincidences at many points.

The other Iván Nagy was a member of the Hungarian Parliament since 1935 and a ministerial advisor to the Minister of Religion and Public Education.<sup>27</sup> From 1943, in parallel, he was the head of the cultural department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from 1941 to 1944, he was a private teacher at the Faculty of Law and Political Science of the Hungarian Royal Elizabeth University in Pécs. As a result of their namesakes, similar life paths and, in many cases, inextricable coincidences, the life paths of the two persons merge at many points from 1941.

After the German occupation on March 19, 1944 and the removal of Leó Deák from the position of government commissioner, Franz Ham, the leader of the local Volksbund, recommended Iván Nagy from Bács (Bač) to the German Foreign Ministry to fill the vacant

<sup>21</sup> A. SAJTI, Enikő (2004), *Impériumváltások, revízió, kisebbség – Magyarok a Délvidéken 1918–1947*, Budapest, Napvilág Kiadó, 239.

<sup>22</sup> DÉVAVÁRI, *Klikkharok az emigrációban*, 28–30.

<sup>23</sup> In January 1942, besides the restoration of domestic and public security, the Hungarian security forces held a raid in the southern areas of Bácska. The so-called Razzia demanded the lives of innocent civilian victims. In Újvidék, the Razzia began on January 20, 1942 and culminated on January 23. Most of the victims – 2578 people, came from Serbian ethnicity, but because of the 1068 Jews who lost their lives during the killings, it also had a particularly anti-Semitic edge.

<sup>24</sup> "Az országgyűlés képviselőházának 214. ülése 1942. február 9-én, hétfőn," *Képviselőházi napló*, Vol. XIII, 30–32.

<sup>25</sup> "Az Országos Földhitelintézet közgyűlése," *Új Magyarország*, 12 February, 1942, 9.

<sup>26</sup> "A miniszterelnök ma mutatkozik be a kormánypártban. Újjáalakították a Ház bizottságait," *8 órai Újság*, 12 March, 1942, 6.

<sup>27</sup> "Olasz kitüntetések az olasz kultúra magyarországi terjesztéséért," *Esti Újság*, 20 April, 1943, 4.

position. In the end, this did not happen, as the Sztójay government appointed József Piu-kovich under German pressure.<sup>28</sup>

On June 28, 1944, the new leadership of the ruling party (Hungarian Life Party, Magyar Élet Pártja, MÉP) was elected in the presence of Prime Minister Döme Sztójay and Iván Nagy also joined the narrowest leadership of the party, the presidency.<sup>29</sup> One day before the Arrow Cross Party took power in a coup, Iván Nagy had been elected to the committee of the National Association of Legislators (on October 14, 1944).<sup>30</sup> As a member of National Association of Legislators,<sup>31</sup> he followed the Arrow government to Sopron, too.

### III.

Iván Nagy experienced the collapse of the war in Austria, in the city of Rum. He again became politically active at the beginning of 1948. In September that year, he assured his support for the establishment of the émigré Hungarian National Commission under the leadership of Catholic priest Béla Varga.<sup>32</sup>

Iván Nagy had already formulated serious ambitions to be a member of the leading body of the Hungarian National Committee, the Executive Committee. Although he was unsuccessful, his goal was represent the interests of those ethnic Hungarians who lived in Yugoslavia. In the second half of 1948, together with Count Béla Teleki,<sup>33</sup> he set about forming an émigré organization called the Hungarian Christian Democratic Union (Magyar Kereszt-

<sup>28</sup> A. SAJTI, *Impériumváltások, revízió, kisebbség*, 313.

<sup>29</sup> "A leghatározottabb jobboldali politikát hirdette Sztójay miniszterelnök a MÉP értekezletén. Új vezetőséget választott a part," *Magyarország*, 3 June, 1944, 3–4; "Sztójay Döme miniszterelnök: Nekem és a kormánynak a leghőbb vágya, hogy a kívánatos egység mielőbb létrejöjjön. Új vezetőséget választott a MÉP," *Új Nemzedék*, 30 June, 1944, 3; "Új vezetőséget választott a MÉP. Vitéz Sztójay miniszterelnök beszéde," *Magyar Élet*, 1 July, 1944, 3; "Vitéz Sztójay Döme miniszterelnök az egységes nemzeti szempontok szolgálatáról beszél a MÉP értekezletén," *Pesti Hírlap* 1 July, 1944, 3.

<sup>30</sup> "A törvényhozók nemzeti szövetségének felhívása a nemzeti társadalomhoz," *Új Magyarság*, 15 October, 1944, 3.

<sup>31</sup> The National Association of Legislators was established on October 9, 1944 by 120-130 right-wing and far-right members of the House of Representatives. It was chaired by Lajos Szász, co-chaired by Andor Jaross, vice-chaired by Jenő Szöllösi, and executive vice-chaired by Ferenc Rajniss. On October 30, 1944, its sister organization, the National Association of Members of the Upper House, was founded under the leadership of Archduke József. Members of these two organizations took part in the truncated National Assembly installed in Sopron in the last stages of the war.

<sup>32</sup> DÉVAVÁRI, "Nagy Iván (1904–1972) magyar országgyűlési képviselő," 843–844.

<sup>33</sup> Count Béla Teleki (Kozsvár, May 16, 1899 – New York, February 7, 1990) Transylvanian landowner, completed his legal studies at the Ferenc József University of Kolozsvár (Cluj). He was the vice president of the Transylvanian Hungarian Economic Association (Erdélyi Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület) in 1936. He was a member of the Hungarian Parliament between 1940 and 1944, and the founder and then president of the Transylvanian Party (Erdélyi Párt). In 1944, he was one of the initiators of the Hungarian Council in Kolozsvár. The Soviets arrested him and handed him over to the Hungarian political police. He was released in October 1945 and emigrated in 1947. He lived in the United States of America and until his death he dealt with the issues of Hungarians living under the new empires.

énydemokrata Unió), which brought together Christian-based politicians.<sup>34</sup> The Hungarian Christian Democratic Union was not created as an alternative, rival organization of the National Commission, but basically as an advocacy organization of the conservative legislators of 1939. However, the Catholic and at the same time legitimist, Union had a serious challenger in the Christian People's Movement (Keresztény Népmozgalom) led by József Közi Horváth,<sup>35</sup> a Catholic priest.<sup>36</sup>

Iván Nagy was one of the leaders of the series of secret Hungarian-Serbian negotiations in Paris in the first half of 1949, which were aimed at the radical transformation of the political map of Central Europe and the creation of a kind of a federal state along the Danube. Due to the contradictions and diametrically opposed interests within the South Slavic and Hungarian emigration, the negotiations eventually stalled and were broken off in the summer of 1949.<sup>37</sup>

In the first half of 1951, Iván Nagy settled in the United States of America, in San Francisco. However, there was still no meaningful progress in the National Commission regarding the admission of Hungarian representatives who had split into the minority, but relations were also burdened by the fact that the reprisals committed by the successor states against the Hungarian minorities were still considered taboo. All this resulted in new conflicts. In this context, from 1952, the Hungarians from Transylvania and Slovakia (Felvidék) successively formed their own emigration organizations. However, Nagy, together with several other politicians, did not initially support the creation of these Hungarian organizations, because they believed that it would result in the weakening of the unified representation of Hungarian interests, and they were still of the position that the Hungarian National Commission should undertake the representation of all Hungarians.

Nevertheless, in September 1952, on the initiative of Elemér Homonnay,<sup>38</sup> who lived in Cleveland, an emigration organization called the Southland Association (Délvidéki Szövetség) was formed. However, Iván Nagy and the former parliamentarians from Bácska op-

<sup>34</sup> Gyula Borbándi mentions all of this in connection with the Group of Legislators Based on the Historical Hungarian Constitution formed at the beginning of 1949. See: BORBÁNDI, Gyula (1985), *A magyar emigráció életrajza 1945–1985*, München, Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabadegyetem, 33.

<sup>35</sup> József Közi-Horváth (Agyagos, September 25, 1903 – Oberhaching, May 26, 1988) was ordained a priest in 1927, and in 1929 he obtained his doctorate in theology at the Faculty of Religious Studies of the Royal Hungarian Pázmány Péter University. In 1935, the Archbishop of Esztergom, Jusztinián Serédi, appointed him the general secretary of the Hungarian organization of Actio Catholica. In 1938, he was one of the organizers of the World Eucharistic Congress in Budapest. He was a member of the Hungarian Parliament between 1939 and 1944. He left Hungary in 1948. He founded the Hungarian Christian People's Movement (Magyar Keresztény Népmozgalom) in Paris and was a member of the executive committee of the Hungarian National Committee.

<sup>36</sup> See more: DÉVAVÁRI, *Klikkharcol az emigrációban*, 50–51.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 49–50; 105–115.

<sup>38</sup> Elemér Homonnay (Isaszeg, November 11, 1910 – Cleveland, November 1986) studied at Budapest and Munich, then worked as a physics teacher. After the Second World War, he emigrated to Paris, then to the United States of America, where he settled down in Cleveland. He worked as an engineer at General Electric. He was a regular author of Western émigré magazines, and he dealt with the Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia and in Czechoslovakia in many of his articles. He was one of the founders and leader of the Southern Hungarian Liberation Council (Délmagyarországi Felszabadító Tanács) in October 1954.

posed the support of Homonnay's initiative due to its personal composition and political considerations. They believed that the "legitimate" former parliamentarians were called to lead the new emigrant organization.

In April 1954, Tibor Eckhardt unexpectedly resigned from the Executive Committee of the Hungarian National Commission due to internal conflicts. Thanks to the turn in the National Commission, for a short time it seemed that the way would be opened for Iván Nagy to fulfill his old ambition and join its Executive Committee by co-opting him. He was supported not only by the membership of the Union, but also by the social democrat Károly Peyer, who was ideologically on the opposite side. However, as former prime minister Miklós Kállay took a firm stand against Nagy, Peyer recanted. Kállay's rejection completely isolated Iván Nagy, and with that, the door was basically closed to all his personal ambitions related to the Hungarian National Committee.<sup>39</sup>

The creation of Hungarian National Commission for Yugoslavia (Jugoszláviai Magyar Nemzeti Bizottmány) also failed, as Homonnay bypassed the former parliamentarians and founded the Southern Hungarian Liberation Council (Délmagyarország Felszabadító Tanácsa, DFT) on October 17, 1954.<sup>40</sup>

It is known from several documents that Iván Nagy had a heart attack around that time and needed long-term hospital rehabilitation, as a result of which he also lost his job. Iván Nagy used the rehabilitation period to study and successfully passed the exam of accounting. Nagy, who spoke six languages – Hungarian, Croatian, Serbian, German, French and English –, took a job at the finance department of the California State University, founded in 1899, after his recovery, and worked there until his death.

However, his further public career can only partially be reconstructed as his personal papers only scarcely refer to the period after 1955. The available documents suggest that Iván Nagy did not completely withdraw from public life in the following period either. In the early sixties, he met Otto Habsburg in San Francisco. It is also known that he actively participated in Hungarian public life in California.

On October 23, 1972, Iván Nagy took part in the commemoration of the 1956 revolution and freedom struggle in San Francisco. He became ill that night and was taken straight from the ceremony to the local hospital. He died five days later, on October 28, 1972.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> See more: DÉVAVÁRI, *Klikkharok az emigrációban*, 58, 163–164.

<sup>40</sup> For a full story, see: DÉVAVÁRI, Zoltán (2022), "Egy elvetélt kísérlet. A Jugoszláviai Magyar Nemzeti Bizottmány szervezésének kudarca az emigrációban (1952–1955)," *Tanulmányok/Studije/Studies*, Újvidéki Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, Hungarológia Tanszak, Magyar Nyelv és Irodalom Tanszék, 57–97.

<sup>41</sup> "Meghalt dr. Nagy Iván," *New Yorki Magyar Élet*, 2 December, 1972, 9; "Meghalt dr. Nádý Iván," *Katolikus Magyarok Vasárnapja*, 3 December, 1972, 6; "Halálálhírek," *Californiai Magyarság*, 8 December, 1972, 4; "Dr. Nagy Iván – Megemlékezés," *Katolikus Magyarok Vasárnapja*, 7 January, 1973, 3.