

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

THE SENATE

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

PERSON REFERRED TO IN THE SENATE

(MR T.T. VAJDA)

(45TH REPORT)

FEBRUARY 1994

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Senator Bruce Childs (New South Wales)

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REPORT

1. On 11 January 1994, Bertock and Associates, solicitors acting for Mr T.T. Vajda, wrote to the then President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Kerry Sibraa, referring to remarks made by Senator Short on 20 May and 15 December 1993. On behalf of Mr Vajda, his solicitors requested that a response to the matters raised by Senator Short be incorporated in *Hansard*. Senator Sibraa accepted the letter as a submission for the purposes of the resolution of the Senate of 25 February 1988 relating to the protection of persons referred to in the Senate, and referred it to the Committee of Privileges on 28 January 1994.
2. The Committee decided at a meeting on 3 February to consider the submission made on Mr Vajda's behalf. In considering the submission, the Committee did not find it necessary to confer either with the solicitors acting for Mr Vajda or with Senator Short. Following its consideration, the Committee contacted Mr Vajda's solicitors. Agreement was reached to treat the submission as Mr Vajda's response to the remarks made about him, in accordance with Privilege Resolution 5, and Mr Vajda has agreed to the terms of the response. The Committee recommends to the Senate that the statement be incorporated in *Hansard* under Privilege Resolution 5(7)(b).
3. The Committee recommends:

That a response by Mr T.T. Vajda, in the terms specified at Appendix 1 and agreed to by Mr Vajda and the Committee, be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Margaret Reynolds
Chairperson

**RESPONSE BY MR T.T. VAJDA
AGREED TO BY MR VAJDA
AND THE COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES
PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 5(7)(B) OF THE SENATE OF
25 FEBRUARY 1988**

I was the subject of remarks in the Senate on 20 May 1993 by Senator Short (see pages 941 and 942) which were seriously damaging to me. As the Senator himself acknowledged explicitly (page 942 1st column, 5th paragraph), they were based on a report in the Sydney Morning Herald of 27 March 1993. My letter to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald the next day denying the allegations was not published.

On 21 June 1993 my legal representatives wrote to Senator Short pointing out in detail the many errors in the Sydney Morning Herald article, and consequently in his remarks to the Senate. Senator Short again spoke on the matter in the Senate on 15 December 1993 (pages 4740 and 4741). There are further errors in what was said on that occasion.

I had nothing to do with the arrest or interrogation of Mrs. Magda Bardy and her then husband in Hungary in 1951. Senator Short's claim that I signed the arrest document of Mrs. Bardy's husband was not correct. The documents which it appears I signed in relation to Mrs Bardy and her husband were final decrees, recording administrative decisions made by the head of the State Defense Authority, and in fact prepared for signature by my then superior, Colonel Juhasz. These documents had nothing to do with arrest or interrogation, but came into existence only after a person had been interrogated, and recorded the decision of the head of the State Defense Authority as to what next was to happen to the person.

Far from being a Stalinist "hard-liner", I was myself arrested and imprisoned in 1953 by the "hard-line" Rakosi regime as part of a "Zionist conspiracy" fabricated by the Hungarian regime following upon the notorious "Jewish doctors' trial" contrived in Moscow by Stalin. I was tortured for five months to confess to being a Zionist spy and conspirator. I was sentenced by a closed military court on other trumped up charges, not maltreating prisoners or preparing false statements.

I was sentenced to six years and served nearly four, before being released on 15 October 1956 by the moderate Kadar regime. The Russian army invaded Hungary on 4 November 1956, and far from seeking to associate with the re-instated "hard-liners", I fled Hungary on 24 November 1956.

I came to Australia on a boat with hundreds of other refugees from the Hungarian hard-line regime, and have lived in Australia under my own name, and have chosen to associate closely, both professionally and socially, with the Hungarian community in Australia, a community which of course includes victims of the sort of behaviour of which I am accused by Mrs. Bardy.

I achieved international recognition in dentistry, and have been invited to lecture at universities and international congresses in 19 countries. From 1969 I was many times an invited lecturer at the Scientific Meetings of the Hungarian Dental Association, held at the University of Medical Sciences in Budapest. Since 1969 I have visited Hungary 22 times, including occasions in 1991 and 1992 after the change of government. On all these occasions my lectures have been advertised under my name to all Hungarian dentists.

MR T.T. VAJDA