

**Attachment B**

February 26, 2005

The Manager for Victoria  
SBS Radio  
P.O.Box 294  
SOUTH MELBOURNE  
VIC 3205

Dear Sir/Madam

### COMPLAINT AGAINST THE HUNGARIAN BROADCAST

In the February 21, 2005 (Monday) broadcast the editor of the Melbourne studio read out a call made by the Hungarian fringe group "Jobbik" (pron: yobbik), to a Hungarian public figure or government minister, to apologise for referring to the date of February 13<sup>th</sup> as "liberation".

Why was the reading out of the above call objectionable? There are two reasons.

1. The group "Jobbik" is a right-wing fringe group and no self-respecting broadcast would provide them with the oxygen of publicity. I am certain that there was a policy by SBS of not to give publicity to Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party when it existed. Well, this "Jobbik" movement is hundred times worse than Pauline Hanson's party was! One would think that not even an innocuous statement, a truism would be quoted from them. (As no one would quote Hitler as saying "after rain the pavement is wet" if he ever made a statement to this effect...)
2. About the date of February 13<sup>th</sup>: On this date, in 1945, the Soviet Army completed the siege of the Hungarian capital, Budapest. The preceding weeks meant constant shelling and aerial bombardment of this city, people had to shelter in the cellars and basements of buildings, it was life-threatening to venture outside to search for food, water or medical service. In addition, members of the Arrow Cross, wearing quasi-military uniforms, roamed the streets, hunting down army deserters and Jews whom they had not had the opportunity to transport to Auschwitz. When they captured army deserters or Jews they either shot them on the spot or took them to the banks of the Danube river and shot them into the icy torrent. Knowing the circumstances before the date of February 13<sup>th</sup>, as I described above, one can say that this day was a true liberation not only for Jews but non-Jews as well, since people were able to crawl out of the cellars, food and water became available and the shelling stopped.

by reading out this call to apologise for using the word "liberation", upset and caused distress to Jewish Hungarian survivors (such as myself) of the dreadful months before February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1945. I also submit that most non-Jewish Hungarians felt a relief when everything was over.

Yours faithfully

Translation of the relevant section of the Hungarian language program played on 21 February 2005, including adjoining parts pertaining to [redacted] complaint:

...

Last question of interview by [redacted] of Hungarian Radio: The 56er Prisoner Parliament is a political organization. What can you do to make 1956 better known and accurately appreciated?

[redacted]: We refer to Hungarian cooperation that should eventually happen. After the 45 years long horror regime we are left with only terrible moral, political, economic, cultural, social and public health ruin. Therefore we have to create; we have to build a Hungary that relies on national tradition, that integrates rightfully with the European states. This is our request and this is our purpose. (End of interview)

[redacted]: Now I read out for you a history related protest memorandum:

The For a Better Hungary Movement protests most strongly against that the governing parties commemorated the siege and occupation of Budapest in 1944-45, at the Disz square of Buda, as "liberation". Even more shameful than this are the words of [redacted], who said that those who oppose this celebration are against the democratic community.

The view of the For a Better Hungary Movement is that although Budapest, in 1945, indeed got liberated from nazi rule, the place vacated by the Germans was immediately taken over by the Russians. The one year long nazi occupation was replaced by a 40 years long Communist dictatorship, that rested on soviet bayonets, and brought immeasurable suffering and destruction to Hungarians. The "liberating" Red Army viewed the country and its people as booty, its advance was followed everywhere by plunder and pillage, violence and murder. The hope of new life, as mentioned by Mr Hiller, indeed remained just a hope for hundreds of thousands of violated women, forced labour bound men and orphaned children.

For this reason the For a Better Hungary Movement calls upon the historian, Mr Istvan Hiller, President of MSzP (Hungarian Socialist Party), to apologise to those for whom 1945 did not mean liberation but repeated occupation. To apologise to the families of the deported, the raped, the murdered, and to those who were persecuted and ruined by the 40 years long Communist dictatorship. The Movement respectfully commemorates those who suffered under the German occupation and the rule of the Arrow Cross regime, but holds that 1945 was no more than the replacement of one murderous ideology with another murderous ideology. Therefore the

Movement protests most strongly against differentiating between victim and victim, against putting one suffering into the balance as opposed to the other suffering, and acquitting murderers as opposed to other murderers. Because for Mr Istvan Hiller, unfortunately, these constitute the foundation of democratic communities, in the name of several millions of our persecuted countrymen we demand his apologies.

Budapest, 14 February 2005, Mr Istvan Szavay, President of the Movement's Cabinet of National Policy

After this let us hear the Ballad of Pista Angyal, a song about a survivor of Auschwitz, who as a freedom fighter was executed during the reprisal after 1956.  
Performing: Szilveszter Jenei and Zsuzsanna Szendrei.

(Song)

13 April 2005

POSTED

Audience Affairs

SBS's Office of Audience Affairs has completed its review into your complaint about the SBS Hungarian Radio program broadcast on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2005.

You expressed concerns about two issues. The first concerned SBS's right to broadcast information about "The Movement for a Better Hungary" and the second was about your view that report does not contain any reference to those people, particularly Jews, who may have an alternative view about the events of the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1945.

On the first issue it is incumbent on SBS broadcasters to present a diverse range of opinions and views. Therefore the choice to include material about the Movement for a Better Hungary was in accordance with SBS Codes of Practice. Code 1 states:

*SBS believes that its audiences are best served by exposure to a wide range of cultures, values and perspectives. As a result, SBS's programming can be controversial and provocative and may at times be distasteful or offensive to some.*

However, Code 1 of SBS Codes of Practice also expects its broadcasters and program makers to "*remain impartial and objective.*"

In this particular broadcast, SBS considers the broadcast, despite the efforts of the broadcaster, lacked sufficient impartiality and objectivity. It was a lapse in judgement to read out an unedited statement from a minor political organisation, without appropriate context within a program.

SBS considers the audience would have been better served by a more detailed and balanced report presenting a range of perspectives on the contemporary debate within Hungary about the importance of the events on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1945.

SBS regrets any distress the broadcast caused to you personally, and more broadly, as you suggest, to the Jewish Hungarian survivors of Holocaust.

SBS Radio has examined the program and is taking steps to ensure that editorial standards within the program are reviewed.

If you feel this response is inadequate, you are entitled to take your concerns to the Australian Broadcasting Authority. SBS thanks you for taking the time to communicate your feedback and concerns.

Yours sincerely,



Sally Begbie  
Audience Affairs Manager

THE HUNGARIAN BROADCAST