



The American Hungarian Federation

Serving the Community since 1906 - Fidelissimus ad Mortem

I am a Child of 1956

A Presentation by Bryan Dawson, Executive Chairman, American Hungarian Federation, on the occasion of the 53rd Anniversary of 1956 Hungarian Revolution, National Press Club, Holeman Lounge, Washington, D.C., October 18, 2013.

I am a child of 1956...

Not because my mother was wounded, risked her life, braved bullets, bombs, soviet tanks, land mines, communist secret police, red army troops and hid from flares on cold November nights as she escaped across the iron curtain...

Not because I heard mother's stories of how she and her fellow Freedom Fighters would paint the underside of porcelain dishes in black shoe polish, placing them upside-down in the path of Soviet tanks which would stop to inspect these "land mines" only to open themselves up to a little Stalinist-named surprise: the Molotov cocktail...

Not because I am so deeply proud of her and Hungary for standing up to communist tyranny against odds so great, few have dared to attempt...

Not because of Hungary's 1000-year history of democratic tradition and struggle to maintain her unique identity and her independence....

I am a child of 56

Because in Anyuka's tears... in her struggles & perseverance...in her scars, in her eyes that exuded the sort of wisdom none should possess - I learned freedom is not free.

I am a child of 56

Because I learned that with freedom comes great responsibility. That to whom much is given, much is expected.

I am a child of 56

Because I learned that we must never forget - never forget what my mother and thousands like her fought and many died for: freedom, liberty, pluralism, democracy.

While oppressed people around the world struggle for freedom, we are not free...

While human and minority rights of Hungarian minorities are violated daily at the hands of governments that had promised to respect and protect them - their only crime being Hungarians in lands they inhabited for 1000 years and where foreign powers changed the borders around them - we are not free...

In these days of increasing polarization and renewed false propaganda machines here at home and in Hungary designed to divide us, we owe it to those who died for our freedom to insist that we treat our precious freedom and each other with the utmost respect and stand together in humility with a zealous pursuit of the truth in the same spirit of brotherhood so exemplified in 1956 Hungary.

I am a child of 1956 because I am ready to fight; eager to speak up when democracy and human rights are threatened...

I am a child of 1956 because our work is not done – join me.