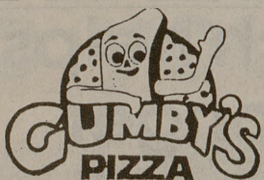


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Hungarian professor struggled against odds to preserve ideals

By Amy Young
Reporter

Dr. Andrew Garay has struggled against overwhelming odds to preserve his moral and political standards.

Garay, a professor of biochemistry and biophysics at Texas A&M, was born in Hungary in 1926, a time when the country was overcome with refugees because of its defeat in World War I. As a result, Garay's youth was dominated by social and political problems, and by the coming of another war.

"In some respect," he says, "I am a child of the war."

"We realized very early if the war broke out, we wouldn't have any chance. . . . Either Germans or Russians would eat us up—we saw that. It was no surprise."

Despite these factors, Garay says he had a happy childhood. He spent time with his friends camping, hiking and playing soccer.

"I felt the war was something beyond the circle in which I was living," he says. "But, little by little, the war penetrated into my consciousness, and when I was about 16, I had already realized something terrible was going on."

"I realized that life and death, which is probably for the average American a removed thing, is an everyday phenomenon."

Garay attended the University of Budapest, which employed good professors but had limited funds and facilities compared to those in the United States. Little was allocated toward research development, he says, and as a result, professors were forced to work on projects requiring little money, thus becoming what he describes as "very theoretically oriented, unlike A&M, which is very practically oriented."

Garay says he was forbidden to teach in Hungary because he disagreed with several political issues, and the government didn't want children to be exposed to his ideas.

After years of research, Garay rose to higher positions and was eventually named head of his department, a position that allowed him to travel (without his wife) to such places as Paris, Vancouver, Tokyo, Cairo, London and Moscow.

"Finally," says Garay, "I had moral difficulties as a person who had some influence on the politics of the country. I had an increasingly difficult time doing

what they asked me to do. Consequently, I decided I had three options: either to be a party member, to go to prison or to try to escape."

Garay says about 90 percent of those capable of escaping think about it.

In 1975, Garay opted to attempt escape with his wife and two small children by illegally crossing the border.

"We went to Yugoslavia in a half-legal way," he says. "Not with passports, since neither my wife nor my children ever got passports, but we wanted to visit someone very near to the border of Yugoslavia. We went to the Italian border and crossed it. This was risking our lives. It really was much more difficult than I had expected."

"Fortunately, and simply by coincidence, a person from Dallas was visiting there at the Yugoslavian seashore. He told me, 'You cannot do that.' It was the first time I had met him."

After Garay convinced the man he was determined to escape, the Texan offered to help get Garay and his family safely across the border.

"Without his help," Garay says, "I probably would have been shot or forced to go back to Hungary by my wife's or my own fear of being shot. However, with his help, we were able to cross the border in the middle of the night, although he was wounded—not with guns, but while fighting with the border guard. It was a desperate situation."

After surviving the trauma of crossing the border, Garay and his family were faced with adjusting to their new environment—a refugee camp in Italy.

"It was not a pleasure to be there with two small children for two main reasons," he says. "First of all, there were lots of provocations in the refugee camp. For instance, we had a Russian refugee who was killed by another Russian refugee who cut his throat. . . . No one knew the second refugee was an agent."

"Another reason was the camp had many gangsters who used the camp for recruiting young refugees for robberies, smuggling and things of that nature. I came to know, in person, some of the well-known European gangsters. They had, of course, false names such as 'Steam Engine.'"

"They tried to convince the refugees that they were hopeless



Dr. Andrew Garay

Photo by Sam Myers

and would never be accepted in the Western world. 'You will rot here,' they would tell them. Really, there were at least 20 refugees who were there 10-15 years because no one wanted them. Many of them were mentally sick. If not mentally sick, most of them were potentially dangerous."

Garay says the entire process was organized and implemented as soon as he crossed the border. He and his family were systematically investigated and placed in a refugee camp. In Europe, he says, things are more strictly organized.

"We were a little bit afraid that we would be carried back to Hungary by agents," he says, "so we always stuck together as a family. Half a year later, we got political asylum from an international body in Switzerland. We then got the entry permit from the United States."

"You wouldn't believe what a relief it was, finally, on Nov. 11, 1975, to land at the New York airport. At last we were able to get our first showers. The refugee camp didn't have good facilities, so we had gone almost every day to the seashore to take a bath there."

In spite of all this, Garay says he doesn't feel he was mentally damaged by the tragedies he survived.

"You hear lots of things about Vietnam veterans and how they need psychological care or that they are severely mentally disturbed," he says. "I agree with that,

but then 80 percent of the world is in the same situation. Every nation, except maybe England and possibly Switzerland, has been humiliated several times in their history. Americans, in and of themselves, have never suffered this kind of humiliation, whereas the Vietnam veterans did. I, however, do not feel affected in this way."

Garay says America has lived up to his expectations—and then some.

"There are billions of people who have no way out," he says. "They are boxed in. I am happy I was able to come to the United States. I love being here, and I'm glad my family is here."

When Garay decided to escape, it was with the knowledge he would leave the rest of his family, his heritage and his past behind to begin anew in a strange world where he knew almost no one.

"I miss these things, of course," he says, "but they can't be changed. We can never return to Hungary. My wife is sentenced to two and a half years in jail, and I am sentenced to three years."

"I am happy. I am close to the end of my life and I feel I have had a beautiful, full life. I have seen the happiness and the optimism of the human being under very serious and bad conditions."

"I am grateful for what happened to me. I have seen the world, and now I have the opportunity to work, especially in America, and to teach."

Soviet supplier holds contract with Kelly AFB

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A Norwegian company accused of selling the Soviets equipment to make submarines run quieter has multi-million-dollar contracts with Kelly Air Force Base, the San Antonio Light reported Sunday.

Kelly officials told the newspaper they had contracts worth \$13.2 million with a division of Kongsberg

Vapenfabrikk to manufacture turbine parts for the sophisticated F100 engine, used in the F-15 and F-16 fighter jets.

Kongsberg was accused by the Defense Department of a gross security breach after it was disclosed this summer that Kongsberg and Toshiba shipped \$17 million worth of

computer-controlled milling equipment to the Baltic Shipyard.

The equipment will allow the Soviets to make quieter submarine propellers so they can elude detection by U.S. forces, officials say.

Kelly officials defended their contracts, which were awarded in 1981, saying that the division they dealt with, Norsk Jet Air Motors, was not

involved in the submarine division.

The Defense Department has banned any future contracts with Kongsberg or any of its subsidiaries.

An official, who asked not to be identified, said the relationship between Norsk and Kongsberg still being explored. However, the current contracts will not be canceled, the official said.



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