

# The criminal case of László Draskóczi and his associates

Start of criminal proceedings

April 1948

Investigative body(ies) involved in the criminal proceedings

**Hungarian State Police State Protection Department (ÁVO)**  
**Ministry of Defence Political and Military Department**

Name of the prosecutor in charge

no data

Name of the prosecuting prosecutor's office

Budapest People's Prosecutor's Office

Date of preparation of the indictment

no data

Important details of the first instance court proceedings

Name of the court

Budapest People's Court

Nature of the trial

public

Name of the presiding judge

Gustav Tutsek

Time for judgment

11/26/1948

Judgment number

Nb. XII. 2633/1948

The legal force of the judgment

partially final

Important details of the second instance court proceedings

Name of the court

National Council of People's Courts

Nature of the trial

public

Name of the presiding judge

Bela Palosi

Time of judgment or decision

25.02.1949

Number of the judgment or decision

NOT II. 3609/1948-53

The legal force of the judgment

legally binding

The facts according to the final decision

The first nine defendants were all members of the Ragged Guard or were somehow connected to this military-type formation. Lajos Fodor served as Vannay's deputy in László Vannay's battalion from the end of 1938. As members of the Guard, several defendants participated in the invasion of the Highlands on November 10, 1938. Endre Kovács was the commander of the invading Tiszaújhely section, Antal Benkő was his deputy, and Pál Gödér was the service chief of this section. They participated in the torture and unlawful execution of at least three Czechoslovak citizens in Tiszaújhely and Tiszaújlak, accused of espionage, anti-Hungarian activity, or Czech friendship. Géza Iványi was initially the deputy commander, and later the commander, of the invading Salánk section. As a member of this department, he participated, together with Béla Hajts, in the torture and extrajudicial execution of two Czechoslovak citizens in Salánk. The members of the Guard terrorized the Jewish people living in their area, mistreating several of them and forcing them to financially support the Guard. As members of the Vannay detachment, Béla Hajts and Pál Gödér participated in the attack on the Dégenfeld farm, during which several Czechoslovak border guards lost their lives.

The other defendants participated in the anti-democratic conspiracy initiated by Lajos Fehér and István Cserháti in Budapest in 1947, which had loose connections with the ragged Guards. The stated goal was to gather young people living in the area into an organization and collect weapons and ammunition to put themselves in a position where, in the event of a possible Anglo-American-Soviet war, the members of the organization would use the collected weapons to weaken the state power of the people's democracy and contribute to its overthrow. The members collected a small arsenal of weapons and ammunition, some of whom participated in breaking the windows of a Jewish person living there on Tölcsvár Street and in damaging about 20 tombstones in the Jewish cemetery in Farkasrét. Although Károly Nagy and Imre Dévai were aware of the continuation of the organization, they did not actually participate in it.

Location(s) included in the facts according to the final decision

Tiszaújhely, Ukraine

Tiszaújlak, Ukraine

Salánk, Ukraine

Budapest,

Final decision

László Draskóczi (Feled, 1895), first-degree defendant, was sentenced to 3 years in prison for attempted war crimes.

Lajos Fodor (Kékes, 1897) was sentenced to life imprisonment for continuously committing war crimes and continuously committing crimes against the people.

Béla Hajts (Budapest, 1891), a third-degree defendant, was sentenced to 12 years in prison for repeatedly committing war crimes and repeatedly committing crimes against the people.

Endre Kovács (Szolnok, 1901), a fourth-degree defendant, was sentenced to death for a war crime he had committed repeatedly.

Pál Gödér (Kőtelep, 1899), a V-rank defendant, was sentenced to death for a war crime he had committed repeatedly.

Antal Benkő (Kétegyháza, 1907), a sixth-degree defendant, was sentenced to death for a war crime he had committed repeatedly.

István Héder (Lázári, 1919), a seventh-degree defendant, was sentenced to 1 year in prison for a crime against the people.

With regard to the defendant Béla Faragó (Dercen, 1905), the verdict of the People's Court was annulled in its entirety and the defendant was acquitted of the charges brought against him.

Regarding the IXth-degree defendant Géza Iványi (Jánoshalma, 1911), the verdict of the people's court was annulled in its entirety and the first-instance court was ordered to hold a new trial, remedy the deficiencies identified and issue a new verdict.

Lajos Fehér (Budapest, 1920) was sentenced to 2 years in prison for the crime of overthrowing the democratic republic.

István Cserhádi (Budapest, 1929), a defendant of the 16th degree, was sentenced to a total of at least 4 years of forced labor for the crime of overthrowing the democratic republic and the crime of incitement.

Zoltán Fenyőfalvi (Szolnok, 1922), a defendant of the 17th degree, was sentenced to 2 years in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic.

Ferenc Gondos (Budapest, 1929), defendant of the XVIIIth degree, was sentenced to 1 year and 6 months in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic.

Pál Cserhádi (Sóskút, 1928), a 19th-degree defendant, was sentenced to at least 4 years of forced labor for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic and war crimes.

Lajos Szűcs (Budapest, 1931), the 20th defendant, was sentenced to a total of 3 years in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic and the crime of incitement.

István Csoba (Budapest, 1931), XXI. defendant, was sentenced to 3 years in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic and the crime of incitement.

Géza Papp (Budapest, 1929), XXII. defendant, was sentenced to 3 years in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic and the crime of incitement.

László Hargitay (Budapest, 1929), defendant of the XXIIIth order, was sentenced to 1 year in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic.

Ervin Reisz (Budapest, 1929), XXIV. defendant, was sentenced to 1 year in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic.

Imre Dévai (Budapest, 1930), a XXVth-degree defendant, was sentenced to 2 months in prison for the offense of failing to report.

Károly Nagy (Nagyenyed, 1923) was sentenced to 2 months in prison for the offense of failing to report.

Gyula Hurth (Budapest, 1931), XXVIIth-degree defendant, was sentenced to 6 months in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic.

László Gálos (Budapest, 1929), XXVIIIth defendant, was sentenced to 6 months in prison for the crime of conspiracy to overthrow the democratic republic.

Person(s) who died as a result of criminal proceedings

**Endre Kovacs**

**Drive Bela**

Comment

The verdicts do not mention the defendants of the X-XIV. order.

The President of the Republic of Hungary, by his supreme decision of March 25, 1949, commuted the death

penalty to life imprisonment for Pál Gödér and Antal Benkő.

Source(s) used

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