

Letter to President Judge George Zanic

March 28, 2016

Dear Sir,

I am 85 years old, living in PA since 1957. I came to the USA after the Soviet Union crushed our Revolution in Hungary in the fall of 1956. I was fighting on the streets of Budapest after they came in with fresh Asian divisions. After two months of resisting I had to escape when the Soviets re-established the Hungarian Communist government. They began to arrest people who were known to be opposing them. Many people were taken to Siberia and never seen again.

As a child, I grew up under the Nazi system. My small country lies in the center of Europe. Germans made us into their satellite. In the summer of 1944, I witnessed the collection and deportation of Jews, and I watched as they stuffed them into cattle cars in a nearby station. I believe I even saw the infamous Eichmann on the streets of Budapest. My father died in 1945, in the defense of Budapest. Twenty-five thousand other Hungarians also died in the war. The Soviet Union "liberated" us from the Nazis. When Russians began to fight for Budapest, they raped my mother in front of me. I was 13 years old at the time.

The Soviets installed the Hungarian Communists as the government. In 1948, I was an apprentice in a one-man engraving and jewelry shop. My boss worked very hard to establish his small business. One day two Hungarian secret police, dressed like the Gestapo from years before, came in their long leather coats to the shop. They said to my boss, "This shop is now nationalized; you have to leave." In a few minutes, my boss was gone. The "police" told me to take an inventory of the tools in the shop and they told me I would have a job in the nationalized jewelry and engraving system. By that time all major businesses, banks, and mines, were taken over by the communists. This is the way it was. As a result, I have seen the arbitrary decisions made by both the Nazis and the Communists. In 1956 we Hungarians rebelled against the Soviet Union and the Hungarian Communists.

I wanted you to know all this, because now, the Sunoco Logistics company, wants to take over part of our land. We have a pond, streams, and wetlands, "in the way" of the proposed pipeline. Ducks, geese, herons, kingfishers, turtles, frogs, and fish have all found homes there. Our century old trees are homes for countless birds and mammals, including the endangered Indiana brown bat. Our forest is teeming with other wildlife, deer, bear, foxes, snakes, turkeys, grouse, that make their homes there. We have tried to live up to our promise made when we signed on to the Forest Stewardship (Clean and Green) program when we purchased our property in 1982.

We are living, breathing Pennsylvanians who have tried to preserve this land. Sunoco is a billions of dollar, faceless entity, based in Texas. The products that they want to transport through our land are not needed in Pennsylvania, or anywhere else in the United States. The rich executives of Sunoco have decided that they can make a lot more profit by selling the Natural Gas Liquids overseas. It is unjust to give them the right of eminent domain so that they can trample on the rights of the people of Pennsylvania. My wife of 40 years and my youngest daughter are distraught over your decision, as am I. Please reconsider your decision and side with the people of Huntingdon County who elected you and pay your salary.

Stephen Gerhart