

## **The Hungarian Reformed Federation is 100 Years Old**

**Vasvári Ödön: "How did our Federation get its Congressional Charter in 1907"  
Reformed News, June, 1935, pp. 45-46**

**Congressman Brick's speech which influenced Congress to vote for the charter to be given to the Federation**

**"Referring to the racial character of this organization alluded to by the gentleman from Iowa, I want to say this:**

**They have come to us to better their conditions, and I want to make them feel at home. They are here to swell the stream of our best citizenship, numbering now over a quarter of a million souls.**

**They have come to make this country their permanent dwelling place, to live and abide with us in the truest and most loyal of American sentiment and patriotism. They inhabit every state and territory of the United States, and everywhere have they entered into the very essence of our national spirit, hope and enterprise; and among other things, this organization is founded upon the lively behest of that desire.**

**Why, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members of the House: Have you read and pondered over the thrilling story of Hungary's heroic struggle, during a thousand years, for just such liberty as we possess?**

**An accurate history of Hungarian wars and their heroes would teach even the sons and daughters of the Mayflower and the Concord the awful magnificence of a martyrdom endured by a great people for freedom. These children of a heroic ancestry come to us with all institutions of our civilization implanted in their hearts through twenty generations of turmoil in the pursuit of liberty, they find here.**

**Every Hungarian in this country can look back over the red pages of their fathers' struggles and trace with boundless pride and satisfaction a strange and startling resemblance between the Hungarian revolution and our own.**

**Under Kossuth, and Bem, and Klapka, and Dembinski, what did they fight for that would make them alien or strange to us? Nothing.**

**They performed unheard of and astonishing deeds with one great idea - the freedom of independence.**

**They alone of all Europe held aloft the blazing torch of liberty with dauntless heart and unshaken hand.**

**They fought with God-like valor for the freedom of the press, a constitution, a**

ministry and a representative body to govern their own destinies. They fought for equality before the law in all civil and religious affairs - equality in taxation, trial by jury and local self-government.

These were the principles of the declaration of independence Kossuth and his followers lived and died for.

Don't you believe that the children of the great Kossuth, the Washington of Hungary; of Klapka, the Wayne of the Magyars, have within their breasts and in the bounding flow of their veins the elements of our most appreciative and liberty-loving, loyal citizenship?

Gentlemen, they are here, because they have learned to know, as one of us, our institutions and the American idea taught to them on mother's knee, in the lives of the Washingtons, the Franklins, and the Hancocks of Hungary.

They come here, as Kossuth did, driven out by a tyranny worse than was suffered by us when revolution was conceived and the republic born. I compare their great names with our own, because struggle is the mother of greatness and makes us all akin.

I say it because they have been rocked roughly by the same rude barbarous nurse, because they have been trained to hearts of oak and nerves of steel in the same strenuous war for independence, and for this reason I champion their cause.

They have my unbounded sympathy and admiration, because I believe in the cause they have so valiantly fought for, because they came to me with the same hopes and aspirations that I have myself, because I rejoice in the splendid history of their race and the genius of their sons who have enriched the world with the rarest treasures of thought.

I sympathize with and admire them, because I know Joseph Eötvös, the friend, intimate and supporter of Kossuth - poet, writer and statesman - who more than any other Hungarian influenced the course of European literature of his time; because I know Madách and have read his "Tragedy of Man," the soul of which was the clarion message of his life sent out to all eternity --struggle, man and trust;" because I know and love Maurice Jókai, the Hungarian Shakespeare, who has filled the world with hundreds of the matchless masterpieces of his mind - and, Mr. Speaker, they have my sympathy and admiration, because I know Petôfi, a "fallen star in the Magyar sea," who of all the singers of the first half of the nineteenth century, brought to poetic creation an inextinguishable glow of passionate patriotism.

He lived a life of meteoric glory that has not faded, nor will it die.

He vanished like a dream in manhood's morn.

**The spot, where he has fallen, no man knows, and the pathos of his song, the wish of his life, that when all was over flowers might be scattered where he slept, must remain forever unfulfilled.**

**But the bloom of his day shall fill the earth with the perfume of his immemorial glory.**

**Yes, Mr. Speaker, they spring from a race of unrequited heroism; a people full of the genius that touches liberty with love and the state with serenity.**

**They will people the future with a proud progeny.**

**The sons of Petôfi must, and will glorify us through the generations - of Petôfi, who smote all the singing chords of that harp of a thousand strings, the Hungarian heart with deathless strains of immortal valor:**

**Upon our graves shall dawn a brighter sun,**

**Our children rise to bless the natal earth;**

**Here shall they kneel, and when our course is run,**

**Bless the fair land that gave them a free birth.**

**By the great God of Hungary we swear**

**The yoke of slaves we will no longer bear!**

**Mr. Speaker, with that spirit in their blood, they will surely bless the fair land that gives them a free birth.**

**I ask for a vote on the bill before the House."**

**(Vasvári Ödön: "Brick képviselő beszéde, amelynek hatására megszavazták az egyesület kongresszusi charterjét" Református Ujság, 1935. augusztus, pp. 3-5.)**