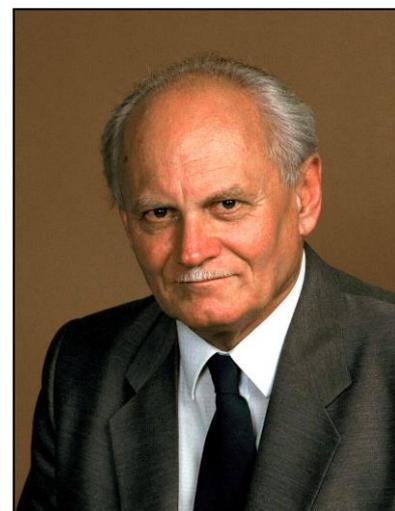




# Árpád Göncz

**Árpád Göncz** (*Göncz Árpád*, (10<sup>th</sup> February 1922 – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015)) was a Hungarian liberal politician, who served as President of Hungary from 2 May 1990 to 4 August 2000.



Göncz played a role in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. He was also founding member of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary before becoming President. He was a member of the international advisory council of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. In the Secondary Grammar School in 1932 he was involved in the activity of the Hungarian Scout Association. Scouting opened his eyes to social issues, particularly with regard to the problems of the poor peasantry.

Göncz graduated in law in 1944. During his academic years, he was exempted from conscription in the Second World War. In December, he was conscripted into the Royal Hungarian Army; however, he deserted and joined the resistance movement and he took part in partisan actions against the Arrow Cross regime and the Nazis as well in Budapest. After the war he went on to study agricultural science. Following the Soviet occupation of Hungary, Göncz joined the anti-communist Independent Smallholders' Party, which won the November 1945 parliamentary election.

In February 1947 Göncz was arrested by the communists and was detained and interrogated for three weeks before release. In 1949 he became unemployed. After that, he worked as a manual labourer (welder metalsmith and pipe fitter) and also enrolled in a correspondence course of the Agricultural University, where he specialised in soil erosion and protection. Göncz then utilised his knowledge working as an agronomist at Soil Improvement Co. until the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 against the communist rule.

In a June 1995 speech, Göncz recalled the 1956 events as a “turning point” in his life which determined his fate until the end of his life, despite the fact that he did not participate in the armed resistance and uprising. On 23 October 1956, he was present at the peaceful mass demonstration, which marched in front of the Hungarian Parliament Building. Göncz's role in the October 1956 events remained fragmented. By 29 October 1956, he assumed a political role in the events. He participated in a meeting at Prime Minister Imre Nagy's house, when Nagy was informed the Suez Crisis and the Prime Minister said “Gentlemen! From now on, we

need to discuss another thing because there is a dangerous possibility of a Third World War". Göncz worked as an activist in the newly recreated Hungarian Peasant Alliance during the revolution.

Göncz also helped to transfer a manuscript of Imre Nagy (*On Communism in Defense of New Course*) abroad,

He was arrested on 28 May 1957, and later Göncz was transferred to the prison.

In the prison, the conditions were freer; Göncz had spent the time learning to read and write English. Göncz was released from prison under amnesty in July 1963. In the following decades, he worked as a specialized translator, translating over a hundred literary works, and a writer of English prose. His most famous translation work is J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.