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Early in May, the <sup>544</sup> Association of the Free Press will hold its annual general meeting and elect a new executive committee (for background see my Memo of Dec 6, 54).

The present executive committee has the following members:

- (Dr. Z. Makra, President; *of the Association of the Free Press*)
- Mr. T. Hoeff, 1st Vice-President;
- Mr. C. Kotorowicz, 2nd Vice-President;
- Mr. J. Kowalski, 3rd Vice-President;
- Mr. Greiner, Secretary General;
- Mr. W. Bonaitis, Cashier.

This committee was elected in November 53. In March 54 Mr. Makra succeeded in receiving financial support from Prof. von Wende's office. The monthly subsidy of DM 1000.- was earmarked for the publication of an information and news bulletin "Freie Presse Korrespondenz". At the same time Mr. Makra was told that he could use part of the money for administrative expenses of the Association (rent, telephone and other office expenses). Until the end of the calendar year 54, the Press Association received a total of DM 3000.- which was used up by January 1, 1955. During January 55 no money was transferred from Dusseldorf and consequently the "Freie Korrespondenz" could not be published. Even the rent for the office in Munich was not paid on time.

Because of this alarming situation Mr. Makra went to Bonn and Dusseldorf for he had promised his executive committee during a rather turbulent session to get the monthly support. When he came back last week he had no money, but a very clear "order" from the Dusseldorf bureau. He was told that support would be continued only if no personnel changes would take place in the new executive committee and if no "undesirable persons" would be elected as officers. At the same time the planned trip of 25 to 30 members of the Association to Bonn, which was originally scheduled for January 55, was postponed until after the election. For this special project Prof. von Wende's office had approved between 2000 and 3000 DM.

In view of this "mild pressure" Mr. Makra's position as Chairman has become precarious. Already during the last meeting of the

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executive committee at the middle of January he was attacked by several members because of his "dictatorial" way to handle things. The discussion started when Mr. Horak, a member of Mr. Tokelsky's group, requested information concerning the so-called European Friendship Circles, a Düsseldorf sponsored project of Mr. Graber's IFAA and the Press Association. Mr. Makra had joined this project without clearance from his executive committee and even without informing it. In the course of the debate Makra was violently attacked by several officers including Mr. Penoff from the Bulgarian committee, Dr. Dumitrescu the former Chairman of the Association, and Mr. V. Banaitis.

Although the future existence of the Association depends entirely on financial support from Düsseldorf, Mr. Makra's originally strong position has weakened considerably. There is no money in the cashbox, the "Freie Presse Korrespondenz" has ceased publication, the trip of the journalists to Bonn has been postponed, with other words Makra cannot step before the general assembly with a report of success. Worse than that he is under pressure, a fact which is already known to the other members of the executive committee. So far the officers of the Association have always tried to avoid a reputation as being completely dependent on German support. This assertion cannot be maintained any longer after Mr. Makra has been told the conditions under which Düsseldorf will cooperate with the Association.

Despite these facts Mr. Makra probably will be re-elected because of two reasons: 1) the Association is bankrupt and has no other choice than the Düsseldorf subsidy; 2) there is no other candidate for the presidency besides Dr. Dumitrescu who even does not have the votes of his own Romanian group.

The biggest group, the Ukrainians, do not want to nominate a candidate. All they want is to be represented through a Vice-President. They are, however, determined to control Mr. Makra's activities in the future more closely. The Baltic group represented by the Vice-President Mr. Kovalevskis is also not interested in the presidency.

The most probable solution will be a new executive committee with Dr. Makra as Chairman and two Vice-Presidents, who will request from the general assembly authority to control the President's work.