

Theses of the doctoral dissertation (PhD)

of

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Networks in Scout Movement – scout networks

History of the Scout Movement from the beginning to the change of regime

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I. The preliminaries of research project and the problem

There are several books, publications and studies devoted to the history of Hungarian Scout Movement, most of which concluded the history of the scout movement until it was banned. Several important articles were published on the scattered Hungarian scout movements, which escaped to the West after 1948, but there were only a few specific publications devoted to the “secret” decades of the Hungarian Scout Movement.

The written sources of this era was not available for a long time, therefore the stories of this period was based on mainly personal memories, which were either geographically, or chronologically quite limited as far as their content was concerned.

The period of 1945-1990 of the Hungarian Scout Movement was not summarized in any kind of historical study. Only interviews with survivors, recollections, informative publications were available in the subject, which did not use, or rarely used other (written, or sound/film records) sources, all cited from private archives (not to be underestimated!) of the people recollecting stories.

The aim of the research was to find answers for the questions about the illegal survival and operation of the scout methodology, the way it was limited by the one-party headed prevention, or the operation of the secret services - based on the evident tools of historical sciences, Archives and other sources. In other words: how could such a system of dictatorship be founded and how did it work? Who were the leaders, and how did they pull the strings?

The other significant part of the research focused on presenting the re-formation of the Hungarian Scout Movement at the time of the change of regime, showing how did the leaders responsible for youth policy of the one-party dictatorship viewed their own role, how did they evaluate their own (earlier) work, what kind of solutions did they look for to get out from the social crisis which was more and more perceptible, and how did they try to prepare for the expected political transition.

During the presentation of the history of the Scout Movement, with the help of the description of the operation of networks written by mathematician Albert-László Barabási, which is applied firstly here, it becomes easier to understand why the police, controlled by the Communist Party, interfered at that particular moment and at that place. We understand immediately, how they could control quite a big part with only a few agents.

With the help of the mathematical method it is easier to see why the prevention system of Kádár was much more efficient compared to the system of Rákosi. It is also more understandable where the orders came from, which had to be carried out by the agents controlled by the support officers. In this system the agents were not aware of the great chess board in the background, and did not know which piece of information gave a momentum to the precision machinery of the prevention.

II. Sources and methodology of the research

In my work, the period of 1945-1993 of the Hungarian Scout Movement (the earlier period was only presented in order to help the understanding) was described based on primarily archive sources and personal interviews. Furthermore, the history of youth and – mainly catholic – illegal church opposition stories was also sketched with the help of archive documents mainly. It is an important novelty of the dissertation that during my research I became aware of the fact that (contrary to the popular belief) there is video documentation available on certain significant events of the scout movement from the period of change of regime. I managed to find and view them, and therefore use the details when describing the events and identifying the actors and the role they were taking.

In processing the information the recollections and the academic and scientific literature played an important role, but the dissertation is based on the documents and video records found in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, the National Archives of Hungary, The Archives of Political History and the Central European University Open Society Video archives collection.

The research discusses the history of the Scout Movement celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2012, in periods, starting from 1907.

Periodization of the history of Hungarian Scout Movement and scout methodology:

⇒ from the beginning to the world meeting of Gödöllő, 1910-1933;

- ⇒ Hungarian Scout Movement before the 2nd world war and the fullfilment of the independent Hungarian Scout Movement (trial system of Ábrahámhegy and bard scout movement), 1933-42;
- ⇒ Attempt to nationalize the Hungarian Scout Movement, 1942-1944;
- ⇒ the Hungarian Scout Movement during the threatened democracy, 1945-46;
- ⇒ the Hungarian Scout Movement in the shadow of the dictatorship, 1946-48;
- ⇒ scout life in the years of Stalin's dictatorship, 1948-56;
- ⇒ re-formation of the Hungarian Scout Association, 1956-57;
- ⇒ the survival of the scout methodology during the Kádár-era, 1957-79;
- ⇒ difficulties in the youth work controlled centrally, trying to find ways out, 1980-88;
- ⇒ the 4th re-formation of the Hungarian Scout Association (MCSSZ), 1988/89.

It is important to highlight that since the youth policy, as a historical subject is not a widely processed subject, therefore new documents are found day by day in the archives of the Communist Party and its organizations responsible for youth policy, such as Communist Youth Organisation (KISZ), Pioneer Association (Úttörőszövetség) and Patriotic People's Front (HNF). The information gained from these may provide new facts day by day for the researchers.

III. Brief summary of the research findings

The chosen task of this dissertation was to overlook the history of the scout movement, as well as to present - with the aim of mathematical graphs - how did the communist prevention took over and held the scout movement under its' influence.

At the beginning of the dissertation, the definition of the scout movement is given, in other words it is clearly defined when the paper is about the scout movement, and when it is only about parts of it, which is called scout methodology. This separation is quite significant as far as the research is concerned, since even the actors of that age had a tendency to consider it insignificant. However it is not fair to expect from the people of that age to know the

scout methodology, since the communist dictatorship banned the movement. This difficult situation is solved with writing only about the scout methodology, so this way the reader is able to identify the scout methodology, or a kind of mutation of the scout movement behind certain events and organizations.

Such organization was on a certain level the pioneer movement, which took over several elements of the previous successful scout movement, but the most important theoretical content was dismissed or changed to the complete opposite (e.g. voluntary participation in the scout movement vs. obligatory participation in the pioneer movement) in order to meet the requirements of the communist party. As a later example, based on the work of Sándor Jánosi, it is presented how the folk music dance movement can be considered as the survival of the bard scout movement, not to mention the bard pioneer movement which was started at the end of 1970s (and lead by Jánosi himself, at Csillebérc).

The dissertation highlights that one of the most important tasks of all reigning political regime is to educate its' own new generation, which enables stability and continuity throughout generations. The regime after 1920s in Hungary has quickly discovered the positive features in the scout movement as a character forming, apparently conservative (loyal to church, nation; wishing to educate “good citizens”, who are ready to accept the conditions of society) movement. The regime right from the beginning, tried to influence and control this non-governmental organization with a British origin – showing independence – and with outstanding international relations, as much as they could. However by this time the programme of the Hungarian Scout Movement was already concluded with the collaboration of Sík Sándor, Karácsony Sándor, Temessy Győző, just to name a few. These excellent teachers managed to win the support of Teleki Pál as well. The founders of the Hungarian Scout Movement has accepted the support of the society, but did not allow the regime to “nationalize” the scout movement.

The Hungarian Scout Association (MCSSZ) – gathering about 50 thousand members by the end of 1930s – have spread quickly in Hungary and have gained quite a positive international reputation as well. In 1941 the movement has lost its greatest protector, Pál Teleki. However, just before his death a new “trial system” was accepted including the flourishing bard scout movement, which created a special shell and as such managed to protect, more or less, the movement work in the scout groups. From this time on it is possible to talk about Hungarian scout movement, since using the British basis they have built a new, (especially in its leader training and educational programme) completely independent *Hungarian scout model*.

During the years of war, as a registered organisation bound by the operational permission and regulations could not, but as a movement, it managed to oppose to the militarist and extremist nationalist efforts. The scout movement was “socialized” in 1942, the commissioner of the Minister of Cultural Affairs became the appointed leader, and the chosen officer was in charge of the central administration of the movement. The work in the scout troops continued “smoothly”. It is also presented in the research how the law of the scout fraternity (i.e. every scout regards the other as a brother) overruled the Jewish Clause in 1942, since even in 1944 jewish scouts could stay in scout camps in Hungary.

The renovated scout movement faced a new challenge on behalf of the Soviets taking the rule in 1945.

Parents of the scouts grouped by occupation (%)		Scouts grouped by occupation (%)	
Factory worker	23%	Student	52,4%
Craftsmen	22,2%	Factory worker	26,2%
Deceased, disappeared	18,8%	Craftsmen	10%
Other	17%	University student	4%
Self-employed	8%	Officer	3,2%
Merchant	7,3%	Other	2,7%
Officer	3,7%	Merchant	1,5%

As the summarizing table from 1939 above shows clearly the scout movement was not a movement of the civil upper-class. It is not clear on what basis did the writer of this table grouped the people into the ‘other’, or ‘self-employed’ category, therefore we considered the “minor orders” of the society as a narrower category. These numbers altogether shows (88,6%!) that the scout movement targeted those young people who were also needed by the communist party in 1944. For this reason after the occupation in 1945 the scout movement either had to be taken over (as it happened in Poland for instance) or, it had to be weakened, and destroyed (the same way as it happened to the movements related to the Catholic Church - KALOT/KALÁSZ/EMSZO) so the members could be addressed by the communist party without any competitor, and the party could use the youth to build its power, and to create a monopoly situation for the growing generation.

As a consequence it was banned along with most of the civil movements (related to any of the Churches) in 1946, and they have only let them reorganise the movement under a completely new name, with a leadership loyal to the “people’s democracy”. Regarding this subject we examined how easily the Hungarian political life had acknowledged the total demolition of

the so far flourishing and colourful non-governmental organizations, since there were only two interpellations in the National Assembly, and in both cases, the answers given by the minister of domestic affairs were accepted by the House – meeting the requirements of the House rules at that time.

A great emphasis is placed on the role of Ervin Hollós, one of the leaders of the previously social democrat National Youth Committee (secret member of the Communist Party from 1939) making an effort to take over the scout association. Under his control, a scout working group was formed with the aim of continuously reflecting and evaluating the case of national scout association, based on the actual policy of the communist party. Even with the help of the police he kept on taking over the leadership in the scout troops, replacing them with communist leaders. The softened movement – even deprived from the triple alliance of God, Motherland and fellow-creature – merged into a new organization, called Hungarian Scout Boys Association (MCSFSZ) which at the end has decided “voluntarily” to merge into the Hungarian Pioneer Association, the organization of communist youth in 1948.

This was in other words a proscription of the movement which resulted in a unique situation. The scout methodology survived partly in the pioneer movement – as we have already pointed it out: small-group trainings, troops-meetings; uniform, even in the form of the badge; camping and the ceremonies in the camps - and partly illegally. The illegal organisations (mainly organized underground, with religious background) served as high priority target for the prevention system of Rákosi first, then after the official transition in 1956, and changes in February 1957 headed by Kádár, to the Kádár regime.

It is presented in the dissertation – through the lives of several agents – that the agents were controlled by support officers based on the *punishment policy of the Hungarian Socialist and Labour Party (MSZMP)* and not independently. It is also shown in the paper, on what a high level did the communist state security headed by Hollós apply the science of mathematical graphs as a method of prevention. In one of the methodology books on prevention a reporting police major wrote: *“the further lesson of the operative processing work is, that disorganization is gaining more and more significance in the state security work, especially that it is able to obstruct the hostile activities and destroying effect.”* This way it becomes clear, why did the state security of Kádár make such a great effort to disorganize and follow one of the narrow circles of friends (including altogether five (!) heads of families even in the

best flourishing period) presented in the essay. As we get closer to this part of the methodology of communist state security, it becomes obvious, that the social science of MSZMP did not lead to the diversification of Hungarian society, and the spreading of selfishness and individualism – even in the communist system without precedent – by accident, but it was planned this way.

There was one kind of exception from the prohibition of the scout movement, and that was the bard scout movement, which with a different name, but keeping the methodology, was built in the pioneer movement and was let to survive in the flourishing folk dance movement as well.

At the end of the 1970s, beginning of 1980s – there were more and more ideas to recreate the scout movement (controlled by HNF or the army) in a form of serving the system, and obviously without the God-Motherland-fellow-creature triad.

However the complete prohibition was still kept until 1988, when there was an attempt to take over the freshly reborn scout association carried out by national left party headed by Pozsgay Imre, and the liberal movement led by Aczél György. This took place when bard scout movement was merged into the pioneer movement, and was attacked with methods of church opposition. This is how it was possible that name and signature of Hollós appeared again on the papers written at the time of change of regime, and it was clearly identified, that the people known (and most likely controlled) by him tried to influence the recreation of the scout movement in Hungary.

This attempt of MSZMP at the turnover of 1988/89 created forced organizational diversification, which practically quite fast, but officially ended only with the dissolution of the atheist Hungarian Scout Troops Association – which was formed by former HNF activists bard scouts - in 2004.

A significant novelty in the thesis is the presentation of the 1988-1991 reformation events based on film and written documents, which were not known before.

IV. List of Publications

Studies:

1. Célkeresztben a cserkészzet. Két interpelláció a civilvilág védelmében, 1946. In: Kommentár 2013/2. 25-32.
2. Töredékek a magyarországi cserkészzet történetéből. In: Utak és útkereszteződések – Ünnepi tanulmányok M. Kiss Sándor Tiszteletére. Főszerkesztő: Kahler Frigyes, szerkesztő: Bank Barbara, Történelmi Ismeretterjesztő Társulat Egyesület, Budapest, 2013. 157-173.
3. A magyarországi cserkészzet története felszámolása és újjáalakulási kísérlete (1945-1956). In: A diktatúra évtizedei. Szerkesztő: Horváth Miklós, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem BTK Történettudományi Intézete és a Történelmi Ismeretterjesztő Társulat Egyesület, Budapest, 2013. 171-188.)

Book reviews:

4. Liberalizmus. In: Valóság 1997/4, 108-110.
5. A magyar politikai gondolkodás története. In: Valóság 1998/6, 110-112.
6. Behálózva. In: Valóság 2004/9, 103-105.

Conferences:

7. A magyarországi cserkészzet titkos története 1933-1989. INDABA konferencia, Budapest, 2003. november 8.
8. A magyarországi cserkészzet titkos története 1944-1990. PPKE-BTK-Doktori Iskola minikonferencia, 2005. május 19.
9. A magyarországi cserkészmozgalom felszámolási kísérletének regionális sajátosságai. Öregcserkész-találkozó, Budapest, 2007. november 16.
10. A magyarországi cserkészzet titkos története 1945-1990. Kagylós találkozó, Verőce, 2006. január 28.
11. Sétáló kongregáció, imádkozó cserkészzet. A Regnum Marianum 110 éve című konferencia 2008. október 4.

Popularization talk-shows in the media:

12. A magyarországi cserkészzet története. Hír TV, Különkiadás, 2006. február 25.

13. A magyarországi cserkészlet titkos története 1939-1993. Lánchíd Rádió, 2011. március 21.
14. A magyar cserkészlet újjáalakulási kísérlete 1956-ban. Mária Rádió Hazafelé című műsora, 2013. február 25.