

# WISEGRAD SCHOLARSHIP AT THE OPEN SOCIETY ARCHIVE

## FINAL REPORT

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Zoltán Zsille and the Bibó Press  (1980-91)

**Research Period: May 27 – July 26. 2014.**

### **Background and context of my research**

As I have stated it in my research plan, I want to research and document the activity of my late husband and colleague, Zoltán Zsille (1942-2002), a sociologist and journalist, in exile in Vienna and Munich between 1980 and 1991. As, unfortunately, our own records and documents have mostly been lost during the years when we changed our home several times, my access to the documents held at the Open Society Archive were of great help in my work.

The Bibó Press Independent News Agency, which we founded in 1980, led by Zoltán Zsille, considered it as its objective to inform the Western public about every kind of dissident and opposition activity and samizdat publication in Hungary and in Transylvania. It established contacts with the Central European correspondents of major news agencies (such as AFP, AP, Kathpress, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Spiegel, etc.) and communicated messages by dissident and often illegal groups to the broader Hungarian public via Radio Free Europe.

Our news editorial policy, if I can use the term here, was to create publicity for any kind of opposition activity without bias; to give public space to opposition groups and publications in Hungary, to Ellenpontok (Counterpoins) in Transylvania, to commemorations of 1956, to SZETA (the Fund for Supporting the Poor), to environmentalists in the Duna Kör (Danube Circle), to Fiala Írók József Attila Köre (the Attila József Circle of Young Writers), to Catholic conscientious objectors who defied military service, to people starting to organize activities at Lakitelek, to members of the independent peace group Salom, and so on.

While I was doing the research, among the writings of Zoltán Zsille preserved at home I found Zoltán Zsille's invitation to all interested parties in the form of a letter written on November 23, 1981, which described the model of Bibó Press as follows:

23rd November, 1981

Vienna, (name, address)

Dear Friend,

During my year-long stay here the model of the first free Hungarian news agency has taken shape, and it operates with great efficiency and reliability.

When Radio Free Europe and various news agencies and newspapers reported about events that the Hungarian authorities considered to be organized by the opposition or the enemy, to be kept unreported, as such, the Western public, readers and listeners, did not receive information from western correspondents or, obviously, from Hungarian information agencies, but from our press agency. Let me mention some of these:

the Christmas auction of artworks by SZETA, public readings to support the poor, the public letter of György Göndör demanding from the Hungarian authorities to let him go to exile (four days after its broadcast by Radio Free Europe on August 28, 1981, he was given permission to leave Hungary, and is now staying in the West), the Book in Memory of István Bibó, the vacation of Polish children at Lake Balaton, the operation of the samizdat boutique by László Rajk, its booklist and the attack of the authorities against it, home searches, the case of Tibor Pákh, the banning of the March 1981 issue of *Mozgó Világ* and the contents of the banned journal, commemorations of 1956 in Hungary, etc.

It should be noted that these pieces of news were not mere records of facts; they contained the interpretation of the events based on insider information about the circumstances and the persons involved.....

There are two important elements of this peculiar setup:

1. The more important one is that the Hungarian opposition, instead of carrying out its activity in secret, wants to come out openly to the public and inform it about the Hungarian situation and its own activity.

2. It has a contact in the West which it can trust unconditionally, knowing that a. if possible at all, the information will be transmitted; and b. its interests and wishes will be treated by utmost care and discrecy that they can only expect from friends, who are the only ones capable for it.

These two elements = a simple structure. One of the members of the Hungarian opposition, who had protested against the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Berufsverbot measures in 1973, who initiated the solidarity protest with Chechoslovakian Chartists in 1979, who was a founder of SZETA, who knows many Hungarian dissidents and is a friend of many, plus, being a sociologist by profession, has contacts with people in every segment of Hungarian society – is now in the West, staying in exile at the first station of the road leading from Hungary, i.e. in Vienna...

The main promise of the news agency is.....that it is independent from any groups in exile as well as from various Hungarian opposition groups, providing an opportunity to create a counterbalace to the impact of disadvatages and uneven information resulting from rivalries and dissent between various groups and their isolation, and even bringing them closer to one another by providing open and unbiased information without any preference for some...

I am convinced that the divisions and dissent between various Hungarian groups in exile have already been reduced and will be reduced even more by the more powerful presence of the opposition in Hungary. This is shown by the fact that the different organs of Hungarians in exile give account of the same events now and consider them the most important facts to be reported, though their commentaries may differ widely. Being multi-colored and multifaceted is the pre-figuration and reflection of, and a requirement for, a Hungary of the future to be accounted for by the democratic opposition in Hungary and in Vienna alike...

The operation of the news agency requires some sacrifice ... a fund should be created to cover our expenses. It can be supported by donations from private persons but also from the budget of institutions who carry out an activity like this professionally (Radio Free Europe, various news agencies), which have received news items and commentaries from me free of charge so far...

Please advise what you think of the plan as a whole or its details. I am waiting for your opinion, practical proposals and advice. I have approached you because I am convinced that you agree with my objective and my intention. But we must make it real!

Friendly yours

Zoltán Zsille

My research is affected by the following facts: we operated the Bibó Press news agency in Vienna until 1987. By implication, the news items and other documents we transmitted to Radio Free Europe were made use of by others at the radio.

In the summer of 1987 we moved to Munich at the invitation of Radio Free Europe, where my husband was employed as an editor and I worked as a freelancer.

Zsille edited two programs, „The World of Work” and „The Hungarian Issue”, in addition to newsreels and commentaries, in which he also tried to rely on samizdat materials that found their way to us from our friends.

While in Vienna, I took care of our collection of samizdat materials. In Munich, however, Zoltán Zsille took it to the editorial office of Radio Free Europe to be accessible while working on his programs, and placed it in a separate room that was provided, which could be locked. Of course, his colleagues also had access to these materials.

### **The results of the first stage of my research at the Open Society Archive**

I first looked for documents in the catalogue of the Open Society Archive, which could be related to Zoltán Zsille’s name.

I found three reels of films, with a few short interviews with him in one of them, namely

- Interview with Zoltán Zsille, Fekete Doboz Alapítvány (Black Box Foundation), May 11, 1989. 91 minutes (305-1-1/12)
- Portrait of György Krassó (with Zoltán Zsille appearing in it); directed by János Xantus. 1997/98. (306-0-4/25)
- Tamás Forró’s interview with Zoltán Zsille, Nap TV, date missing, early 1990s (13-3-1/319)

In the boxes of files containing paper based documents I have found Zsille ’s **writings** and **books** published as samizdat among the files of András Hegedűs, György Krassó, Gábor Demszky and János Kiss.

- In the files of **András Hegedűs**, under the heading of writings by others (361.0.8/5, 18, 26,):
  - Dr Földvári Tamás – Zsille Zoltán: Gondolatok a budapesti Ikarus gyár munkásságának életmódjáról és életstílusáról Budapest, 1976. (Tamás Földvári, Dr, Zoltán Zsille, „A few thoughts about the way and style of life of the workers of the Ikarus Factory in Budapest,” 1976. 78.)
  - Dr Nemes Ferenc: Lektor vélemény Zsille Zoltán Hegedűs Andrásal készített interjújának kéziratáról Budapest, 1989. június 28. (Ferenc Nemes, Dr, Editorial review of the manuscript of Zoltán Zsille’s interview with András Hegedűs, June 28, 1989. 5.)
  - Zsille Zoltán: Kurva anyját a vendéglátóiparnak! ( Zoltán Zsille, Fuck the Catering Industry. 6.)
  - Zsille Zoltán: Nyilatkozat, egyben válasz a Hegedűs András az Arbeiterzeitungban illetve a Die Presse december 14-i számában napvilágot látott interjújára Bécs, 1981. december 15. (Zoltán Zsille’s statement and answer to András Hegedűs’s interview in the December 14 issue of Arbeitzeitung and Die Presse. 2.)
  - Zoltán Zsille: *Ohne Spritze zum Feuerlöschen Politikon* Nr. 59. April 1978. Göttingen (3-12.)
  - Részlet; Zsille – Juhász – Ambrus – Rózshegyi: Gazdasági szervezetek és fejlődési útjaik Kutatási terv OT 1977. IV. A vállalat fogalmának forma-változásai Illusztráció és történeti vázlat (66-82. o.) (Extract from the research plan of Zsille, Juhász, Ambrus, Rózsahegyi, *Economic organizations and their ways of development*. National Planning Office, 1977, IV. *Illustration and historical outline of the changes of the notion of enterprise*.)
- In the samizdat collection of **György Krassó** (397-0-2/1, 4):
  - Kiegészítő kötet a Bibó Emlékkönyv c. kiadványhoz Magyar Október & ABC Kiadó Budapest, 1984. Zsille Zoltán: Vissza a harmadik úthoz (25-60. o.) (Appendix to the Book in Memory of István Bibó, Magyar Október & ABC Publishers. Zoltán Zsille, Back to the Third Road, 25-60.)
  - Zsille Zoltán. A létező kecske Katalizátor Iroda Budapest, 1988. (196. o.) (Zoltán Zsille, The Goat that is Real, Katalizátor Iroda, Budapest, 1988, 196.)

- In the files of **Gábor Demszky** (302-1/1,6; 302-1-5/14),

The stencil of Zoltán Zsille's articles, to be published as a samizdat in his collection of articles under the title of *The Goat That Is Real (A létező kecske)*:

- A pártbürokrácia ifjúsága 1967. (169-217. o.) („The youth of the party bureaucracy,” 1967, 169-217.)
- A fiatal diplomások esélyei 1970. *Valóság* (279-293. o.) („Chances of young graduates”, in *Valóság*, 1970, 279-293.)
- A pszichológia nyomora, avagy a nyomor pszichológiája 1971. *Valóság* (294-310. o.) („The poverty of psychology or the psychology of poverty,” in *Valóság*, 1971, 294-310.)
- Mesterséges szervezetlenség: A kontraproduktív gazdaságirányítás szociológiai modellje (311-326. o.) („Artificial disorganization; the sociological model of counter-productive economic management,” 311-326.)
- Elég a papedliből! 1972. Angolul C. Cartwright álnéven: *The Myth of the Reforms Critique Glasgow*, 1976. (327-338. o.) („Enough of Baby Food,” also published in the *Critique Glasgow*, 1976, under the pseudonym of C. Cartwright. 327-338.)
- Rongyos szövetkezet az olimpián 1974. nem jelent meg (339-392. o.) („A co-operative in rags at the Olympic Games,” 1974. Unpublished.)
- Ki fogja rendbehozni? Tanulmány feketében és vörösben 1976-78. („Who is going to repair it? A study in black and red,” 1976-8. Published as a samizdat in Budapest, 1978. Also extracts in *Párizsi Magyar Füzetekben*, 1980. 393-416.)
- Vörös és fekete krónika. Rebellió a Szabadság tanyán (417-434. o.) (“Red and Black Chronicle. A Rebellion on Freedom Farm”, 417-434.)
- Vasbeton vázlat 1978. Szamizdatban a Rajk Butik kiadásában 1980. (435-485. o.) (*A Reinforced Concrete Sketch*. 1978. Published as a samizdat by Rajk Butik, 1980, 435-485.)
- Vissza a harmadik úthoz! 1980. Bibó Emlékkönyvbe készült (486-510. o.) (“Back to the Third Road”, 1980. A study written for the Book in Memory of István Bibó. 486-510.)
- Zsille Zoltán önmagáról (511-12. o.) (Zoltán Zsille about himself, 511-12.)

- In the files of **János Kiss** (383-0-2/2):
  - Hegedűs András : Élet egy eszme árnyékában. Életrajzi interjú, készítette Zsille Zoltán  
 Kiadó: Zsille Zoltán Bécs 1985. (*András Hegedűs: Life in the Shadow of an Idea.* Life interview made by Zoltán Zsille, Published by Zoltán Zsille, Vienna, 1985.)

In the monitoring files of the **Hungarian Desk** of Radio Free Europe I have found one article by Zsille, and some reviews about Zsille's books. Zoltán Zsille, 1985-1990. (350-40-1/5, 13).

- Zsille Zoltán: Történelemből: figyelmeztetés Élet és Irodalom 1990. 7. 20. („History: a warning of failure”, in *Élet és Irodalom*, 7/20/1990.)
- Harmat Pál: Sietős önéletrajz Zsille Zoltán: Egy önhit életrajza (1956-1980. *Magyar Füzetek könyvei* 7, Párizs 1985, 288 l.) *Új Látóhatár*, 1985. 12. 15. (Pál Harmat, „A hasty autobiography. On Zoltán Zsille's *Biography of a Fait in Myself*. in *Új Látóhatár*, 12/15/1985.)
- Farkas Péter Bús magyar fiúk (Zsille Zoltán *Egy önhit története, a Magyar Füzetek Könyvei*, Párizs, 1985.) *Irodalmi Újság* 1985.3. szám 19. l. (Péter Farkas, „Sorrowful Hungarian Lads”, in *Irodalmi Újság*, 3/1985. 19.
- Lovas István (München) Zsille Zoltán: *Egy önhit életrajza (1956-1980)*. *Nemzetőr* 1985. június 15. (István Lovas (Munich), „Zoltán Zsille's Biography of a *Fait in Myself*,” in *Nemzetőr*, June 15, 1985.)
- Zsille Zoltán “Hát maguk nem tudták ezt?” (Riport az Ikarus-gyári munkások életstratégiáiról) *Mozgó Világ* 1978. április (Csak címlap. rövid életrajz és megjegyzések Zs. Z. ellenzéki tevékenységéről: Charta 77 tiltakozás 1979. 10. 29.) (Zoltán Zsille, „You sure you didn't know about it?” (A report on the life strategies of the workers of the Ikarus Factory), in *Mozgó Világ*, April 1978. Title page only, short biography and a few references to Zoltán Zsilles activities in the opposition movement: Charta 77 Protest, 10/19/1979)

In the box with the title of **Opposition** (300-40-1/250), among the monitoring materials of Radio Free Europe, I have found some documents about Zsille's news programs and some reports based on samizdat materials we and György Krassó had sent to international news agencies and to Radio Free Europe.

- Zsille Zoltán: Newsreel No. M-866 1987. augusztus 6. A Független Lengyel Szolidaritás Szakszervezet tanácskozása (The Meeting of Solidarity, the Polish Independent Trade Union, Newsreel No. M-866 6/8/1987.)
- Newsreel 1987. november 23. A kétnapos Kelet-Nyugati szeminárium budapesti sajtó nyilatkozata (Krassó György közlése alapján). (Press release of the East-West Seminar held in Budapest, based on György Krassó's information. Newsreel 23/11/1987.)
- A Történelmi Igazságtétel Bizottság nyilatkozata (emlékezés Nagy Imrére és társaira, nemzeti emlékmű terve) 1988. június 5. (Statement by the Committee of Historical Justice, commemoration of Imre Nagy and his associates and a plan for a national monument, June 5, 1989.)
- 1988. június 12. Gondos Bélát bántalmazták. (Harrassment of Béla Gondos, June 12, 1988.)
- 1988. június 16. 1.000 csendes tüntető, csak az V. kerületi kapitányságon 15 letartóztatott (1000 silent demonstrators. 15 people arrested by the police of the 5th district alone. June 16, 1988.)
- 1988. június 16-án gumibot a tüntetők ellen. 315 állampolgár tiltakozása a rendőri brutalitás ellen. Newsweek 1988. július 11. (315 citizens protest against police brutality against demonstrators on June 16, 1988.)
- A Republikánus Kör nyilatkozata 1988. július, szeptember (A Statement by the Republican Circle, July, September, 1988.)

### **Changing the methodology of research. Searching for documents by the events I remember we reported on**

As the next step I decided to change the method of my research, and searched for major events of the opposition in the 1980s, which I remembered we had reported on.

I have found several analyses by Radio Free Europe among the monitoring materials referring to 1956 and the commemoration of the execution of Imre Nagy and his associates, which rely on samizdat materials we had forwarded to them, as well as to Zoltán Zsille's interview with András Hegedűs.



## The Revolution of 1956: Special Monitoring 1956-1986

### Folder 300-40-1      Box 1313

- Alfred Reisch: Party Historian Decries ...  
Jegyzetek: 5. *Hímondó*, no. 2, 1985. 1-14. (Ref. to 5. *Hímondó*, no. 2, 1985. 1-14.  
  
7. András Hegedűs, *Egy eszme árnyékában (In the Shadow of an Idea)* (Vienna: Zoltan Zsille, 1985) 188-193., 271-273., 280-281.)
- Alfred Reisch: Oppositionists and Nonconformists Take A Common Stand  
Jegyzetek: 2. Monor "Hungarian Opposition Groups Hold Meeting To Discuss Nation's Future" 13. February 1986.
- Vladimir V. Kusin: East European Dissidents' Appeal On Hungarian revolution Anniversary
- Georg Urban: "The People Are Coming!" *Élet egy eszme árnyékában (Life in the Shadow of an Idea)* By András Hegedűs. An autobiographical interview with Zoltan Zsille. Zoltan Zsille (Vienna) (A five page analysis of the book.)
- Kevin Devlin: Party History  
In its notes quoting *Beszélő* 1984. 10. szám 58-75.
- The death on 2 January 1982 of Sándor Bali, Budapest Workers' Council Leader in 1956, and the date (January 14) of his funeral

### Folder 300-40-1 Box 1314

- J.R.'s Analysis: Five New Issues of *Demokrata* 22 July 1987
- Az 1956-os magyar forradalom előzményei, alakulása és utóélete (The antecedents, the evolution and the afterlife of the revolution in Hungary in 1956.)  
In the notes to the minutes of the meeting held in Budapest on December 5-6, there are references to  
  
35. Hegedűs András: *Élet egy eszme árnyékában*, Életrajzi interjú, készítette Zsille Zoltán, Wien, 1985. (András Hegedűs: *Life in the Shadow of an Idea*. Life Interview made by Zoltán Zsille, Vienna, 1985.)  
  
71. Hegedűs András: *Élet egy eszme árnyékában*, Életrajzi interjú, készítette Zsille Zoltán, Wien, 1985. (Same as above.) Kende Péter: Rendhagyó életút. (Péter Kende, „ An irregular career”, Selections from the issues of U.S. - *Irodalmi Újság* in 1985- Issue 6, 73.)

## **The Revolution of 1956SR 1987-**

- Executions after the revolution, based on the research of Elek Fényes, the co-workers of Katalizátor Iroda and Imre Mécs. June 16, 1988.)
- Manifesto of the Committee for Historical Justice, June 16, 1988.

I also searched for relevant documents according to the following important issues: organizing vacations for the children of the members of Polish Solidarity at Lake Balaton in Hungary (of which I had been able to place an article in Neue Zürcher Zeitung) and other manifestations of solidarity with events in Poland, Tibor Pákh's hunger strike, Gábor Demszky's harassment and beating by the police, and his trial, Demszky's case and other prosecutions, fights of the Attila József Circle of Young Writers (JAK) with the Association of Writers and the Party Center, protests against the arrest of Catholic conscientious objectors, Peace calls by Dialógus and Salom, the activity of the Duna Circle, press and literature in exile 1984-1990, and SZETA. I have found the following documents:

### **302-2-1/5. Vacations for Polish children, helping the Polish people**

- Organizing vacations for Polish children by SZETA in the summer house of Tamás Erős, interior designer, between June 10-16, 1981. Briefing by the State Security Office for the Political Committee. Seen by Comrade Miklós Óvári, August 14, 1981. ( 2.)
- Call for helping the Polish people. Report by the State Security Office, December 21, 1981.
- Report on the call to be seen by Dr Korom, Aczél, Óvári, Knopp, Dr Horváth. December 23, 1981. Zsille's name is mentioned together with Radio Free Europe. State Security Office: plans for measures to be taken against signatories to the call. (2.)
- Report by the State Security Office about the same event on January 4, 1982, mentioning the name of Zoltán Zsille and Anna Balajthy.
- The Call was also printed in a leaflet with the names of signatories full with address and phone number, and further signatories were welcome. Budapest, December 21, 1981. Names of signatories: Balczó András, ifj. Bibó István, Bouquet Gábor, Demszky Gábor, Endreffy Zoltán, Iványi Gábor, Kerényi Grácia, Krassó György, Lengyel Gabriella, Nagy András. Report of the State Security Office, January 7, 1982. (2.)
- Győző Somogyi plans to hold a puppet show at the parish church of Christ the King on January 3, 1982, the revenue from which will be used to help the Polish people. The show was banned.

- The report of the State Security signed by police lieutenant Viktor Plézer on April 23, 1982, details two ways of collecting donations by SZETA. One concerns the „Call for helping the Polish people”, and the other one concerns a piece of writing by Zoltán Zsille, titled „Let us support the poor at home”, in which he encourages people to send donations to the addresses of the activists of SZETA, which are included in the document.
- the hunger strike of **Tibor Pákh**, attorney and translator, sentenced after 1956, which he called protest fasting. His passport was withheld, and he was not allowed to travel to Poland. He was taken to the National Institute of Psychiatry, where he was drugged and force-fed. Our protest at the Amnesty International was so successful that Soviet psychiatrists quit the international organization of psychiatrists whose conference was held in Vienna at the same time, to avoid condemnation by the profession, and the Hungarian delegation was publicly challenged at the conference;

**In box 302-2-1/5      SZETA**

- series of hunger strikes by **Tibor Pákh** and his forced psychiatric treatment. Reported to the Amnesty International, Vienna, by Anna Balajthy, October 9, 1981.  
Report from London, October 19, 1981. (5.)
- AFP report on Tibor Pákh, October 14, 1981.
- Report of the III/III-3. section of the State Security Office about a telephone conversation between Krassó and Zsille on October 16, 1981. (2.)
- State Security report on the „News and Information” program of Radio Free Europe at 20:20, October 19, 1981, about the protest of 23 signatories against the forced psychiatric treatment of Tibor Pákh, which was to be joined by many others.
- Other reports by the State Security, October 20, 22, 1981.
- Reports of the State Security on the Free University on October 26 and 28. (10 members of the opposition were questioned by the police.)
- A statement by Bibó Press about the new „protest fasting” started by Tibor Pákh on November 26, 1982, on January 24, 1983.
- Radio Free Europe on the case of Tibor Pákh, July 17, 1983 (with the expert opinion of Swiss psychiatrists Professor Ch. Durand and László Luka.) (22.)
- Zoltán Zsille (Vienna), Political psychiatry in Hungary. The truth about Tibor Pákh, in *Nemzetőr*, November 15, 1983, 7.

### **Gábor Demszky's harassment and beating by the police, and his trial (302/2/2 boxes 1.2).**

We were able to win the support of the international press with the result that even the State Department of the US laid an official protest.

Regular searches by the police in the homes of samizdat writers, distributors and other opposition members.

### **302-2-2 Demszky's case and other prosecutions**

First reported by Bibó Press Independent News Agency, Vienna, followed by several Western-European and American news agencies and newspapers (Reuter, AP, UPI, AFP, DPA)

- Gábor Demszky, editor of samizdat publications, was stopped by the police in his car on September 24, 1983, and beaten. He suffered concussion. He was prosecuted on December 21. Reported by AP, Vienna, September 26, 1983, relying on dissident sources.
- On September 28, 1983, a program of Radio Free Europe, edited by L. Kasza, reported on police harassments, house searches, protests against such searches and the Demszky-case: Protests against police harassments: letter to the Attorney General on June 22, 1982 (signed by Gyula Illyés, among others); letter to István Horváth, Minister of the Interior, June 23, 1982.
- Home search at Rajk's and Demszky's home on December 21, 1982; Galamb Street is closed by police at 7:00 AM, January 15, 1983. Further searches on March 29, 1983. Demszky and Rajk are taken by the police of the 2nd district of Budapest for interrogation on April 7, 1983, and set free at 3AM.  
Summary of the case of Demszky by Zoltán Zsille. (3.)
- Summary of the case of Demszky by Zoltán Zsille in German (Der Demszky-Fall) forwarded to Austrian Chancellor Sinowatz . December, 1983.
- CN1 22 Statement by the Department of State of the USA, expressing deep concern over the prosecution of Gábor Demszky, Washington, D.C., December 19, 1983.
- March 20, 1984. Before G. Demszky's court trial, 179 people signed a letter of protest to the President of the Supreme Court and the Minister of the Interior. Reported by Radio Free Europe, edited by L. Kasza. (1.)

- May 23, 1984, a joint program of Zoltán Zsille and László Kasza about Demszky's trial before a court of appeal, (supervising editor Szabados) (16.)

We also informed the international press and news agencies about the **fight of the Attila József Circle of Young Writers (JAK) with the Association of Writers and the Party Center.**

- See a report by AFP on December 1, 1983 (300-40—1-1/574), claiming that the party leadership banned the conference planned by JAK on the prosecution of writers in 1957-58, in response to which the leadership of JAK stated that it had cancelled all of its public activities.

In September, 1983, a conference on „Minorities and the problems of nationalities in Central Europe” was also banned. Poet Sándor Csoóri, whose publications were banned, would also have participated in the conference.

The Attila József Circle had already been dissolved in March, 1981, because its members wanted to travel to Poland in order to gain information about the Polish situation.

#### **Protests against the arrest of Catholic conscientious objectors.**

The reports of Bibó Press, also forwarded to Kathpress, contributed to Austrian bishops' exercising pressure on the Hungarian church.

Several documents in boxes 300-40-1/465 **Defence** and 461 **Churches**.

- A special edition of *Beszélő*, August 17, 1984, with reports on those who defied military service.

#### **Peace calls by Dialógus and Salom (boxes 300-40-1-1/59)**

- Károly Kiszely – the Dialógus group, Independent Peace Movement. A file in the Historical Archive of the State Security Office, November 24, 1983.
- Documents about „observing the Helsinki propositions”. A file in the Historical Archive of the State Security Office, May 31, 1983
- Informer code-named „Poet” reports on the Letter to the Public by Salom, August 22, 1984.
- Péter Martos: „Friede ist manchmal mehr als ein Wort” Die Presse, December 22, 1984. (International Peace Conference in Perugia)

**Popularizing the Danube Circle's protests** against the construction of the water barrage system at Bős-Nagymaros.

As a result of our activity, some Austrian political parties protested with Austrian banks and corporations planning to participate in the project.

- Protest against the water barrage system at Nagymaros already signed by 50 well-known persons, May 7, 1984.
- November 13-14: the Letter of Protest has already been signed by 6.068 people. News of the Danube Circle, January 14, 1985.
- *News of the Danube Circle* are sold at the seminar of SZETA.  
A report by the State Security Office on June 14, 1985.

(Further documents to be found in boxes 300-40-1-1/632-637 Environment Protection and 275-285 Energy Matters, Power Stations, Water Plant, Bős-Nagymaros)

- A report of the State Security Office in May, 1984, informs about the walking tours to Transylvania and Slovakia organized by the Club of Nature-lovers of the Downtown of Budapest, where samizdat publications on the nationality issue are distributed.

**A document in 300-40-1/Box 263 monitoring the Press and Literature in Exile 1984-1990:**

*Independent Forum. Manuscripts of banned literary works of art in the Carpathian Basin (Független Fórum)*, Munich, 1985, reported in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, May 4-5, 1986. The material was collected by Zoltán Zsille, Vienna, who also co-operated with the editors. The article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* was quoted in *Nemzetőr*, 6/15/1986. I also helped my husband in collecting and selecting the materials. The book is available in the Open Society Library.

(See the contents of this publication, which gives a picture of several other important events and persons of the Hungarian opposition Bibó Press reported on in the appendix.

I have found several useful references in the files of the Historical Archive of the State Security Office (ÁBHTL) as **collected by Gábor Demszky in respect of the Fund Supporting the Poor (SZETA)**, of which my husband and myself were founding members, **and prominent members of the opposition** (boxes 302/2/1/1,2,5).

- June 9, 1984. György Krassó and Ágnes Háý arrested on charges of contacts with Radio Free Europe.
- Proposal of Almitted Way International to enter SZETA as a union. Report of the State Security, March 1, 1989.

Information about the members of SZETA, Demszky and György Krassó were submitted daily to the Minister of Interior. György Krassó, a former freedom fighter condemned in 1956, kept regular contacts with Zoltán Zsille and Bibó Press by phone. In these reports I have often found references to my husband, and occasionally to myself, when I dealt with the matters of Bibó Press.

The following report by the State Security Office underlines our success:

„Having studied the various press publications of Hungarians in exile in Western-Europe and in the United States of America, it was found that, in contrast with their former practice, right-wing exiles provide more and more publicity for the propagation of enemy views and actions of former political prisoners and so called „opposition” groups in Hungary on the pages of *Bécsi Napló*, *Irodalmi Újság* and *Nemzetőr*.

It can be claimed that various circles in exile tend to provide more publicity for the enemy actions of so called „dissidents” in Hungary in the foreign press to spread their views among Hungarian dissidents, workers and travelers in the West.”

The state security, which kept track of every step of ours, occasionally threatening us, could not stop the East-West flow of information, and the creation of a democratic public and discourse.

### **Work in other collections**

There is a rich collection of filmed and voice recordings concerning the works of Zoltán Zsille in the **Collection of Interviews of the National Széchenyi Library**, readily made available for research by the library. Though I have watched and listened to some of these materials, I will need more time to fully explore them.

The **estate of György Krassó**, which contains a substantial amount of written and recorded material, is held at **the Municipal Archive of Budapest**. I have already explored the contents of the estate and

found some references to **the name of Zoltán Zsille** in it, but it seems that the material can only be studied in site, which makes research rather time consuming.

Several years ago, I already made some research in the **Historical Archive of the State Security Office**. The materials I found there are in consent with, and supplement, the materials I found in the **Open Society Archive**.

### **Experiences while working in the Archive**

The only thing that somewhat hindered research in the archive is the fact that the name of persons or institutions cannot be searched for in the boxes in the collection of the archive arranged by themes and subjects. I hit upon a numbered issue of Bibó Press by accident among the files of Tibor Pákh (and I was very happy to find it.) I have found references to other issues by Bibó Press as the source of information, however, I could not find the documents themselves.

I have found my research conducted at the Open Society Archive highly useful.

Let me express my thanks to Visegrad Fond for the scholarship I received from them and to the archivists for their invaluable help and patience.

### **End note**

Let me finish with an anecdote, which, I think, characterizes our activity and the atmosphere in Vienna in the 1980s. A courier arrived from Budapest in the morning of December 24th with an urgent message that some ink and some large size paper clips were needed. There was an office supply and stationery shop in Mariahilfer Strasse, which was open until 2PM. However, the courier could not speak Hungarian, he knew only a few words in German or English, and, on top of it all, he forgot the type and name of the ink.

The sales woman at the stationery had a slight Polish accent. I tried to explain to her that we wanted some ink for screen printing. „Oh, yes, Ramka,” she said, and led me to a shelf, smiling and explaining how to dissolve the ink using some detergent and water, then we wished each other Merry Christmas and left.



NOTE:

I have attached two appendices to my report. Appendix 1 is the Table of Content of a major publication of the Hungarian opposition, which shows the variety of activities we also informed the Western media about. Appendix 2 is the collection of my own articles and essays, which were broadcast by Radio Free Europe.

Appendix 1

**Cover of the publication of Independent Forum**

**Banned literature in manuscripts in the Carpathian Basin**

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