

Final Report
OSA Visegrad Fellowship

Tatyjana Szafonova

Project title: Turul bird, Jurt and Kopjafa: The revival of Turanism at the beginning of the 1990s in Hungary

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My work in the research room of the OSA archive was structurally organized between biographical files which contained press clippings of the period between 1985 and 1992 and a rich archive of video materials accumulated by the Black Box project (the period of the 1992 year is the most fully documented). I aimed to learn how turanic symbols entered the public sphere during this period and those figures promoted them. Some of those personalities most prominent during the beginning of the 1990s passed away, but many younger figures have resurfaced and are playing important public roles now.

I have focused on two groups of public figures that I called the "action team" and the "folk team". Both teams do not represent consolidated groups but show that their members gravitate toward each other, share stylistic preferences, often participate in the same events, and prefer the same channels of mass media. The action team has more connections to the returning Hungarian migrants often those who left Hungary after 1956 and who were involved in the revolution. The folk team is associated rather with the local intelligentsia brought up during the socialist period often associated with the status E, a letter used to reflect their Egyeb ("other") status marked in documents as not belonging either to workers or to peasants.

The action team in my research is represented mainly by Romhanyi Laszlo, Porubszky Istvan, Boross Peter, and Pongratz Gergely. Their public appearance was often scandalous and fully performative, with the special case of Boross Peter who preferred to stay in the shadows. Romhanyi Laszlo who made his career by lending the premises of his Jurta Theatre to the opposition earlier, in 1992 was firstly involved in an intense conflict with the Mayor of Budapest because of an unauthorized installation of Szekely Kapu at Rakoskeresztur cemetery (a controversial plot where war criminals were buried together with the heroes of the 1956 Revolution). Later this year Romhanyi Laszlo was accused of murder and tried to present the prosecution as a political case. He was eventually sentenced to a term in jail. Porubszky Istvan appeared in the courtroom and supported Romhanyi, he also appeared at various other hearings, including a case of Skinheads where he positioned himself as a patron and a mentor for Hungarian skinheads, according to his words those were patriotic and well-bread young people, that were just wearing some fashionable haircuts. Porubszky appeared at various meetings and conferences, as well as rallies including famous meetings in front of buildings of Hungarian Radio and Hungarian Television. Porubszky Istvan presented himself as a hero of 1956, who returned to Hungary immediately after the change of regime. Pongratz Gergely also played this role in the public, and promoted himself as caretaker of those heroes of the 1956 revolution, who stayed in Hungary, suffered a lot, and were abandoned by the state even after the change of the regime. Pongratz Gergely organized a commemoration of the victims of 1956 at the headquarters of the Small Holders Party, where after his speech a shamanic ritual took place, conducted by an admirer of Szalasi, Horváth Karaul János who many years later became the head shaman at Kurultaj festivals. The role of Boross Peter is complicated, as he rarely acted performatively in front of the public, but maintained a role of an off-scene manipulator and coordinator, who was accused of bringing skinheads to the parliament during the ceremony of

commemoration of the 1956's victims, who whistled and interrupted the speech of the president Göncz Árpád.

The “folk team” in my research is represented by Csoori Sandor, Csurka Istvan, and Lezsak Sandor. These people were at the core of the MDF party and at the beginning of the 1990s played a prominent role in public space as cultural leaders and organizers of various events. Csoori Sandor spent a lot of effort in the organization of the Congress of Hungarians held in 1992 in Budapest. A lot of conferences, events, and welcoming parties were organized and attracted Hungarian migrants from all over the world. In frames of this congress, there was a special program for young people, at which we can witness how the first prototype of the Kurultaj festival. Lezsak Sandor was busy organizing various festivals at Lakitelek, including May days and a folk festival that celebrated the middle of Summer. These cultural gatherings became prototypes for many recent cultural initiatives, such as folk singing and dancing competitions also accompanied by such public figures as Nagy Fero. Csurka Istvan attracted attention during these years mainly for a controversial speech, which was later published as a paper, in which he mentioned conspiracy theories and antisemitic statements, arguing that foreign forces have a corrupted effect on the elites that sabotaged the real change of the regime. The paper got enormous attention in the mass media, and the political spectrum was divided into those who supported it and those who harshly criticized the paper. We may say that stylistically this paper was ahead of its time, and in modern times of populism would probably be seen as an ordinary political statement.

Both teams despite their differences in public strategies and styles, seem to be in close contact with each other, and often were playing complementary roles. Besides the interactions and collaborations between these two teams, I also followed the history of various places, that became material scenes for the enacting of public gestures and ideological statements. Among these places were already mentioned Rakoskeresztur cemetery, Jurta theatre, but also the Turul bird statue in Tatabanya, and some other places as well.

Cases that I have accumulated will be presented in a special publication, in which I plan to develop my hypothesis that the aesthetic and stylistic roots of contemporary propaganda were already formed at the beginning of the 1990s. At that time Fidesz party was not involved in the revival of Turanism and to the contrary, the slogan “Mocskos Fidesz” was then created by skinheads, who saw this party as an absolute enemy. We can see that many contemporary cultural initiatives are based on and are rooted in events supported and organized by MDF and more radical right-wing groups of those days. My additional argument is that contemporary Neo-Turanism in Hungary has more connections to the era of the change of regime at the end of the 1980s, and less with the original roots of this ideology and scientific theory popular in the 1930s.

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Materials studied in the archive:

Textual Records:

300-120-1:106/4 (Lezsák, Sándor)
300-40-5:105/1 (Kőrösi - Csoma, Sándor)
300-40-5:105/6 (Krassó, György)
300-40-5:108/38 (László, Gyula)
300-40-5:110/11 (Lezsák, Sándor)
300-40-5:158/1 (Pozsgay, Imre)
300-40-5:166/12 (Romhányi, László [1989 - 1993])
300-40-5:23/18 (Boross, Péter)
300-40-5:28/29 (Csoóri, Sándor)
300-40-5:29/18 (Csurka, István)
300-40-5:34/3 (Demszky, Gábor)
300-40-5:96/19 (Kiszely, István)
300-40-6:21/209 (Lezsák, Sándor)
302-3-7:9/14 (Szent Korona)
362-0-3:2 (Tibor Philipp Collection: Posters, Leaflets and Ephemera; Inconnu)
362-0-3:2/13 (Hungarian October Party: Program, Regulation, Leaflets)

Video records:

305-0-3:34/1 **HU_OSA_00010037** Magyar Demokrata Fórum MDF nyilvánosság fórum Jurta Színház
305-0-3:110/3 **HU_OSA_00010111** Kopjafa faragás
305-0-3.1988-023_88-23
305-0-3.1988-067_88-68
305-0-3.1988-067_88-68
305-0-3.1988-097_88-99
305-0-3.1990-074_90-74 Taxisbloká
305-0-3.1992-018_92-9 Schönauer Péter temetése
305-0-3.1992-036_92-24 301-es parcella, Rákosi Mátyás, 1988. május 1.
305-0-3.1992-044_92-32 A Történelmi Igazságtétel Bizottság TIB válsága
305-0-3.1992-049_92-36 A Magyar Demokrata Fórum MDF politikai fóruma
305-0-3.1992-050_92-37 ---
305-0-3.1992-103_92-87 Magyarok Nemzeti Szövetsége
305-0-3.1992-135_92-118 A Magyar Nemzetiszocialista Akciócsoport
305-0-3.1992-147_92-131 Hatalomátvétel a Független Kisgazdapártban, FKGP-ben
305-0-3.1992-149_92-133 A 301-es parcella
305-0-3.1992-149_92-133 Emlékműavatás a 301-es parcellában
305-0-3.1992-164_92-148 301-es parcella
305-0-3.1992-167_92-151 Megemlékezés az 1956-os forradalom mártírjairól a 301-es parcellánál
305-0-3.1992-167_92-151 A Magyar Politikai Foglyok Szövetsége POFOSZ megemlékezése
305-0-3.1992-174_92-158 A Magyar Nemzetiszocialista Akciócsoport
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305-0-3.1992-229_92-213 **A Magyarok III. Világkongresszusa**
305-0-3.1992-238_92-222 **A Magyar Politikai Foglyok Szövetsége POFOSZ tüntetése**
305-0-3.1992-247_92-231 **Skinhead per**
305-0-3.1992-251_92-235 **A Csurka dolgozat**
305-0-3.1992-252_92-236 **A Csurka dolgozat**
305-0-3.1992-256_92-241 **Skinhead-per**
305-0-3.1992-258_92-243 **Skinhead-per**
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305-0-3.1992-334_92-323 **Deviáns fiatalok konferencia**
305-0-3.1992-354_92-344 **Tatabánya, Turul-emlékmű újraavatási ünnepség**
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