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Europe from the East and the West , regarded from 1968 and from 1989

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Abstract

In Hungary the lack of dramatic collective experiences did not make 1968 to a common focal point of collective memory, like 1956 remained despite of the toughest censorship in culture and thinking of Hungarians. The general feeling was to survive with the Hungarian reforms successful an international crisis of the Eastern bloc, an idea of the “Hungarian *Sonderweg*” embodied in the personal role of the former bloody-handing dictator of János Kádár, who become in 1968 the image of being politically able to survive the special role of Hungary against the radical, but looser Dubcek in Prague. There were no strong official criticism and propaganda on the Czechoslovak experiment, being basically similar to the Hungarian New Economic Mechanism. Its failure made up an important point of internal and external legitimacy of the Kádár regime. One may look upon 1968 in Hungary as a victory of the Kádár regime, over its former anti-revolutionary , dogmatic image and over the revisionism of the Czech Party before the intervention

The period between 1968-1973 become this way an important legitimacy of the reformist character of the Kádár regime which was able to utilise it during the 1980's, in establishing new cooperation with the West and opening up the regime for economic and cultural experiences and more tolerance towards the dissent which made important preparatory steps to the system transition in 1989. 1968 stands for a victory of Kádár and of “Kádárism” which was characterised by Ágnes Heller as the “dictatorship over the needs” or by the Western publicists as “Goulash-Communism”. The regime itself booked it as silent victory, which resulted in very strong and long lasting legitimacy without discussions.

After 1989 , 1968 could not be established for alternative Hungarian historical consciousness as it become important at least in the Czech Republic, unlike the new Slovakia. In Hungary, 1956 the anti-stalinist revolution and freedom fight against the Russians and SU become the new source of legitimacy and of republicanism . We may state, that 1956 being the main and genuine contribution of Hungarians to the history the anti-socialist fights.

An irony of history, that 1968 which is an emblem for the radicalism and revolution in Western hemisphere and certain extent in the Eastern bloc too, for Hungary went into the history as associated with a “good bargaining” giving autonomy in foreign policy to the Soviets for receiving internal autonomy –for a while- in economic and social affairs, so a moment of world history of radicalism is a momentum of reformism and of clever opportunism in Hungarian history.

Many researchers and thinkers agree that the 1968 movements have changed the civil society, the movement sector and the protest culture of Western European welfare democracies. The prospect of half a century since then has justified this argument. Just as the 1789 tradition determine the uprisings, revolutions, and thoughts and researches of the following century in Europe, 1968 is also related to the subsequent development of the movements and the research of the movements in the 20-21 the centuries in Western Europe . These discourses are not exclusively, but strongly related to the ten-year anniversaries so far. 2008 was a very fertile anniversary in this respect, by the perceptible diminishing of At the fiftieth anniversary, a new series of debates will emerge on the global and the European level , which will be influenced and influenced by both the "here and now" , the state of the *Zeitgeist* in 2018, the social and political constellations of today, and especially what role the movements, the protests and the civil society play in the different regions and territories of the globe.

Of course, for us here in Hungary , very simplified, there is an “Eastern view”, but we have to deal with also how does the same subject look from the West . In this process of understanding ,a hermeneutic "merging of horizons" takes place regarding the unity of Europe , where the movement's past tradition, the today East and West European opinions, interpretations and recollections on 1968 to an interrelated and multi-level picture or rather framing process.

The Moscow-led Eastern Bloc challenged the Western democracies and suppressed autonomous social movements and civil society. However with different profiles and intensity but waves of anti-systemic protests and countercultures challenged the ruling Communist elite, which had international context as the dissent used institutions and groupings of Western democracies as resources as well as networking beyond borders with similar citizen's initiatives from other Communist countries. The uniform and rather homogeneous character of Communist political systems and the waves of protests of the Western World helped to develop diffusion processes among the opponents of the Communist systems establishing networking vis-a-vis each other and Western democracy movements and actors. Authoritarian character of Communist system put serious constraints upon the mobilisation processes, but social networks and institutions of contestation and of dissidence beyond the borders of the respective Communist states were established and preserved, so there were certain effects of the 1968 movement wave on Eastern Europe.

For the countries of the former "Eastern bloc", however, the modernization and democratization shock is not primarily the result of 1968. On the contrary 1968 is the end of the alternative experiences and a start of an era of stagnation. The change of regime, the democratization and the liberation of civil society and the movement sector as well as the protest culture succeeded in Eastern Europe in 1989. Research has repeatedly dealt with the problems of 1968 and 1989 and their interdependence and mutual relationship in the understanding of the unity of Europe today. Since both protest waves have broad and of global importance, and they are highly inter-regional, regional and intra-regional, their linkage and interaction are very complex.

. For recent developments of civil society in Eastern and Central Europe, there is an ambivalent relationship between democratization-civilisation and of nation-building in this region which is a basis of a fragmented image of Europe. The emancipation from Soviet influence in 1988-89, and dissolution of Soviet Empire opened political space for the reconstruction of national sovereignty and to develop civil society and democracy in former Soviet-dominated states. The liberation from Soviet rule, and institutionalization of new constitutional structures was a "national" and "democratic" as well as "civic" issue. National unity, democracy and civic engagement of the civil society are reaffirmed and resurrected in post-communist politics as former neglected factors. In this "renaissance" in Eastern Europe, there are very different political traditions and tendencies awakened and reconstructed. Their relationship to the values of civil society, pluralist democracy and human rights has connections to the tradition of both the 1968 and the 1989 movement waves, which is relevant for the present day development of the civil society and democracy in Eastern Europe.

The protest tradition we have in Hungary before 1989 is the one of the protest of younger, urban, professional, white collar workers, especially of students, artists, scientists, clerks, social workers, educators, the "dissent", "opposition" (Pollack-Wielghos pp. 51-73.). This social structure allowed some identification with the Western tradition of 1968, without its Marxist, or Utopian Socialist character. Hungarian opposition followed the patterns of market economy and parliamentary democracy, and rejected the criticism of the New Left on capitalism. The diffusion of protest was concentrated on the capital Budapest, and some bigger university towns as Pécs, Szeged, Miskolc. These protests of "intellectuals" grew parallel of the opening up of the systems, become internationally networked with especially Polish, and Czech dissidents but also with protests of ethnic Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia, and of course with the Hungarian emigration in the Western countries. Small scale as it was, but this protests established some skills and courage for organizing and articulation in a segment of the population, which become the part of the new political elite in the regime change.

The share of youth protest in Hungary was one of the highest among the Central European communist countries. Younger people, especially the students of the higher education are generally more likely to be mobilized in the modern societies, than established professionals with jobs and family. Younger people are more accepting risky situations, they have less boundaries, more free time and energy, than workers and employees. Like in 1968 at Western Europe students were clearly dominating protest actions in the eighties in Hungary, in ecology, peace and human right issues, although some of them were excluded from the university, hindered in traveling abroad, or had to enter military service not speaking on other, softer forms of repression. Youth and students mobilized in 1989 may have references to the Hungarian revolution of 1956 when youth and students played initiative role.

Václav Havel(1986) analyzed in his famous essay "*An Anatomy of Reticence*" the contribution of the East-West dialogue of underground movements, the difference between the Eastern dissent and Western social movements, as peace, feminism and ecology. The Eastern dissident movement had to act under political suppression and economic scarcity. This way post-material new social movements and their predecessor Leftist 1968 movements had not much influence on Eastern dissent after the Soviet intervention against the Prague Spring(Tismaneanu 1988, pp.160-183.). The historian Tony Judt in her book on the post Second World War European history, emphasized the dual, almost schizophrenic- opposite meaning of 1968 for the West as experiences with new forms of life and culture(Judt pp. 436-474) and for the East as the end of the Communist-

Socialist Utopia (Judt pp. 474-507). She emphasized the 1968 Prague Spring and its sober ending by invasion as the terminal point of the socialist alternative utopia and a new period of the stagnation in the Eastern Bloc.

For Hungary, the 1956 revolution was the main point of no return for Socialist experiences, meanwhile for Czechs the Prague Spring in 1968. Hungarian dissent focused on the tradition of 1956 as main point of reference, the Czech dissent on 1968 and the Soviet takeover. To support peace movements against the two superpowers was uneasy for Czechs with Soviet occupation, but some of the Hungarian dissent promoted Western type, but very small peace and ecology initiatives in Hungary (Tismaneanu 1990, pp.71 -118.). In 1989, in Czechoslovakia the 1968 –bound anti-communist dissent played a major role in the transition, but the peace and ecology movement of Hungary was out of the mainstream transformation in 1989. The tradition of the 1956 anti-communist revolution was one of the moving force, as positive reference in the Hungarian tradition of the transformation in Hungary in 1989.

1968 - Looking from the dissent of the Eastern Europe- Hungary

In the Hungarian dissident movements a form of ‘hidden pluralism’ thus formed, a heterogeneous spectrum of critical intellectuals ranging from reform-oriented economists to artistic avant-gardists, who predominantly adhered to the ideas of a democratic socialism and who were also able to express these ideas in various literary and other artistic forms and in scientific and cultural journals. A “culture of debate” in the frame of repressive tolerance was established, meaning the party did not maintain the right to the only opinion but to the final decision. There were not, however, great public protests in this period, a time which brought the Hungarian population considerable social improvements and a distinct increase in personal freedoms.

The year 1968, in Hungary as elsewhere, was one of drastic changes that would strongly influence the later development of dissidence and opposition. The reform wing within the Hungarian Communist Party leadership succeeded in implementing relatively extensive economic reforms through the so-called New Economic Mechanism (*Új Gazdasági Mechanizmus*). The sector of the centralized state-planned economy was limited considerably in favour of supporting a ‘second economy’ to be regulated by market mechanisms. There were also further steps towards liberalization in the political sector, steps which clearly improved the structural conditions for critical political engagement. At the same time, the defeat of the Prague Spring and the participation of Hungarian troops in the Soviet intervention led to the loss of faith by many critical intellectuals of the will for democratization of the Kádár regime, seeking more and more public dissent. The turning point was a call by members of the *Budapest School*, the Hungarian pupils among the internationally known philosopher living in Budapest after the Second World War after his emigration in Moscow again, *Georg Lukács*, for solidarity with the Czechoslovakian democracy movement. ‘This was the first public protest by Hungarian intellectuals since 1956’ (Dalos, 1986, p. 19). With the declaration in the island Korcula, in former Yugoslavia, where some of the Hungarian philosophers participated, started the history of Hungarian dissent. The supporters did not emigrate, but returned to Budapest, with the may be under contemporary eyes naïve faith, that they can still change the course of history, which despite of the signs of preserving the reform course, inevitably pushed Hungary as a satellite of Moscow into a follower of the anti-reformist course of Brezhnev.

Communism was the dominating ideology in Hungary established by state terrorism after 1947, but different countercurrents were established under the “repressive tolerance” of the Kádár-regime after 1989. While the conflicts continued between orthodox Leninists, Kádárist and economically liberal Reform Communists within the Party leadership, a new movement of dissidence and opposition formed outside of the establishment after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, within which the following currents may be distinguished:

(i) After 1968, a current of *liberal-democratic orientation* emerged from the milieu of the Reform Communists. It consisted primarily of Budapest intellectuals who turned to liberal and communitarian ideas after the Prague Spring. Among its most prominent representatives were György Lukács’ students *Ágnes Heller*, *János Kis* and *György Bence*.. From this current, also called as the ‘Urbanists’, came the Hungarian samizdat in the 1970s, and later in 1988 the party Alliance of Free Democrats (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége - SZDSZ*).

(ii) A second source of dissidence was formed by *nationally-oriented Populism*, which has influenced Hungarian literature and art up to today and which developed in its own direction within the opposition and dissent after 1968. The Populist opposition, among whose most important representatives were the writers *Sándor Csoóri*

and István Csúrka as well as the historians József Antall, Csaba Kiss, György Szabad and Lajos Für (all prominent politicians of the post-Communist era), led to the founding in 1988 of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum* - MDF), party which won the first free elections in 1990.

(iii) Following the revolution of *counter cultures* in 1968 a *youth protest scene* developed among students and young intellectuals in Budapest, like the writers György Dalos and Miklós Haraszti. Other youth subcultures were seeking expression above all in rock music and other forms of non-conventional, but a-political group behaviour. A reform-oriented student movement was not formed in 1968, but in connection with “cultural Revolution” in China, individuals and groups engaged for Communist radicalism a democratization of the Communist youth organization connected with this youth protest milieu of the young artists and students.

Although there were latent differences between liberal-democratic and national-conservative oppositional currents in other countries, in particular in Poland, the rivalry between Populists and Urbanists was of singular intensity in Hungary and formed a trademark of the Hungarian opposition. The roots of this rivalry may be followed back to the Hungarian national movement against the Habsburg monarchy, within which similar conflicts continued for decades, similar to those between the *Narodniki* and the *Zapadniki* in Russian history. The Populists (*népies*) advocated the idea of a particular national path between East and West, an ‘organic’ alternative beyond Western modernism. Their central terms were *nation, identity and community*. Developing in parallel, emerging from the milieu of the urban bourgeoisie, was a current that felt itself indebted to the *liberal and universalist values* and the orientation towards progress of the *Western European Enlightenment* and which oriented itself along the lines of Western conceptions of *market economics and parliamentary democracy*. The cleavage between the Urbanists and the Populists from the 1960s onward formed the dominant principle structuring the latter development of Hungarian opposition. The Communist party leadership likewise differentiated its political strategy on the opposition along the lines of the two currents, identifying the former as ‘the bourgeois’ (*polgári*) and the latter as the ‘radical Nationalists’ (*nemzeti radikális*) (Csizmadia, 2001, p. 71).

Further I will refer to the ideas of some of the dissidents in the pre- 1989 Hungary, members of the former *Budapest School* of Georg Lukács, regarding their interpretations of 1968. The revisionist Marxist transformed to social liberal thinkers during the crisis of Eastern Bloc and its transformation, so they changed their mind on 1968 too (Falk, pp 257-313.). Lukács himself kept distance to the student movement and the New Left of the West, and compared them to “pure negation “ of the capitalist system as the “luddites” of the 19th century English working class, as product of the crisis tendencies of capitalism. He excluded the existence of similar tendencies in the Socialist system (Lukács 1988 pp. 57-58). His younger students were inspired by the 1968 movements like Ágnes Heller, or János Kis or György Dalos, and followed certain tendencies of the everyday cultural revolution (Heller 1999 pp.220-234), theory of the new working class, or even Maoism (Kovács 2004). Disillusion with the Brezhnev era brought members of the Budapest School near to a new type of social liberalism, which was embodied at the party Alliance of the Free Democrats, *Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége*, SZDSZ 1988-2010 an important actor of the Hungarian politics.

I will refer to some of their ideas, that I think are important for us today, at the 50th anniversary to show a Hungarian/Eastern standpoint of dissident thinkers. Mihály Vajda, philosopher in his essay "*1968: End and Begin*" (2008), interprets the 1968 movements as a termination of an era and as an introduction to a new one. Ágnes Heller, also member of *Budapest School* (1998), she describes the 1968 movements as a wave closing up modernity and introducing post-modernity. As the ultimate utopian movements, with the great ideologies and universalist ideals, and they were followed by pragmatic, project-bound movements that transformed the everyday life. Heller believes that the ‘68 movements are of a dual nature, and have the traditional Left-wing elements of ideology, such as the revolutionary class, the antagonistic conflict, the myths of the conquest of the party and of the state, but combined with the new ideas of the cultural revolution of everyday life, of all social relationships, images of the representation of human body, family relationships, and building new type of anti-authoritarian relationships within the politics, the economy and the cultural systems.

Vajda expressed the above thesis in this way;

"In the movements of 68, we can see something other than the last great wave of 'modernist' movements wishing to make a rational-minded society as a project of modernity. Movements '68 ... they carry a new kind if you like germs of 'postmodern' movements. Movements that do not reject the 'existing' forms of socioeconomic and political organization: freedom of individual initiative, economy and production based on this 'alienated' social relations, and 'alienated' representative forms of political democracy. Within this framework of existing system and organization they want to change the everyday life, publicity and culture -in the narrower sense of the word,-...the basics of the existing society and culture. I am thinking here of ecological movements, women's movements, movements of sexual and racial minorities, etc. Movements that not only present a singular-, though

complex,- goal, but they put these single issues , ... but and assume that they can be implemented without a total transformation of the existing society "(p. 24).

András Kovács, a philosopher and sociologist, a younger member of the dissident Budapest school , published a study entitled "Had Hungarians 68 at all ?"(2008) in a conference volume of 10 years ago, and took into account the different attempts to interpret the '68 movements, and he identified seven types of argument e.g. interpretations (p.198-201.);

1. "Enforcing and completing the modernization process ... abolished the modernization deficit and created the possibility of creating a new middle class. "

2. "Its function was actually to overcome democratic deficiencies arising from the normal functioning of the institutional system of liberal parliamentary democracy, but in order to overcome this, the institutional system of parliamentary democracy itself is not suitable".

3. "It was a radical criticism of modernity ... elaborated the post-industrial values and set them in the centre of the economy, of society and of politics."

4. "Basically changed the norms of everyday life and the way of life in a radical way, and made life forms that were already existing, but rather deviant and marginal, generally accepted."

5. "Creating a new social sensitivity ... The creation of a sensitivity to the problems of the poor, the migrant minorities, the patients of psychiatry, the people with disabilities and the other stigmatized or marginalized groups, and making all these to political matters was the most important achievement of '68".

6. "68 is due to the development of tolerance for ethnic and cultural diversity, the development of political aspirations and methods for the understanding and full recognition of minority cultures, the establishment of institutional forms within the great institutional system of politics which enable the cultural presence of minorities, collective and enforcing your individual rights. All of this required a complete change in attitude towards cultural, racial and ethnic minorities. "

7. "'68 was nothing more than a serious breach of generation conflict."

Slavoj Žižek, a Slovenian philosopher and sociologist (1988, p. 113), a critical thinker on both Capitalism and Socialism emphasizes the ideological-political conflicts of the interpretations and memories of '68 , and the aspiration of hegemony in their conflicts. At the same time he compares 1968 and 1989 as the turning points of different social and political perceptions and interpretations (p. 124);

"The protest wave in '68 in May politically failed (capitalism was victoriously returned) and at the same time the capitalism was socially reformed by different social innovations (capitalism was expropriating a significant part of the social 'gains' by the transformations : the sexual revolution, the new individual freedoms, the improving of women's position within the society, but at the same time, there were emerging new post-patriarchal forms of the authority and the domination). The anticommunist revolution of '89 was politically successful (communism failed) but lost socially (the new post-communist societies are not structured by the ideas of the former anticommunist opposition and dissent). Those who are a kind of 'bridging "between the two opposite movements (of 1968 and of 1989-SzM.)('68 was anti-capitalist and criticized the parliamentary democracy, while '89 stood for them), they usually point out, that both share the commitment to the liberal values of individual freedom and they were both engaged against all the forms of social restraint and repression ... ('68 was quickly overthrown by the ruling ideology, so its ultimate aftermath was not the overthrow of capitalism, but the fall of the enemy of the capitalist' free world ' of the , ' existing socialism ').

New issues and themes emerged, with the movements of '68 and the protracted wave of protests were also embodied in new civil society and movement mobilizations in Hungary and in Eastern Europe. Vajda and Heller speak of the "postmodern movements" that replace the "modern" movements, the traditional civil, liberal, and socialist movements, in such a way as to preserve the traditions of social and liberal values, but with new thematic, organizational form and values, as ecological, feminist, counter-cultural, etc. movements as well as within the opposition and dissent of Eastern Europe with a different emphasis and interpretation. We may discuss a combination of the 1968 Western and Eastern traditions of a new type of Social Liberalism emerging within the 1989 democratic transformation in Hungary and elsewhere.

Hungarian Experiences with 1968

Social and Political Framework

In Hungary, as in other countries of the Eastern Bloc, a totalitarian Stalinist regime was established in the second half of the 1940s under decisive Soviet influence. The change away from such a regime began earlier in Hungary than in other Eastern Bloc states. By 1953, hardliners and softliners within the Communist elite were already clashing irreconcilably. This inner battle between opposing wings of the party served at the same time to open opportunities for the articulation of critical or otherwise nonconformist political movements by actors outside of the Party leadership.

The defeat of the revolutionary uprising in 1956 by Soviet military a wave of repression followed, continuing through 1958, succeeded in breaking the acute resistance against the regime, but it could not suppress anti-totalitarian thought critical of the system – including within the Communist party – in the long term. Discussion of the ‘Hungarian way to Socialism’ began. New conflicts emerged within the Party leadership, resulting in the long term in improvements of conditions for the articulation of dissidence. Prominent critics of the system were indeed in part forced out of government or chose the exit option for themselves, as did András Hegedűs, who had been Prime Minister in 1956.

The Kádár regime defined its political strategy as a ‘struggle on two fronts’, henceforth to be directed not only against the Revisionism represented by Imre Nagy, leader of revolution but openly and to the same extent against the Stalinism symbolized by Mátyás Rákosi, former Communist leader, who was expelled to the Soviet Union until his death in 1968. The orientation towards the securing of power through repression was rolled back in favour of a strategy of ‘legitimacy through consumption’; as a result, the consumer wishes of the population received increasing attention in economic and social policy which resulted in the period of New Economic Mechanism(1968-1973), including elements of market into a centralized and planned economy. The strategy against non-conformist thought was corrected to ‘soft’ methods; show trials and prison sentences against dissidents were ended.

International Framework

The dominating foreign policy line in Hungary as well in the Eastern Bloc was compulsory Anti-Americanism and pro-Soviet orientation. This common orientation of the Bloc countries received some support and legitimacy by the revolutionary and student movements in the West and outside Europe in 1968. The influences of Castro, Guevara and Mao as thinkers and their “revolutionary” strategic orientation as well as the protest against the Vietnam war received some support among the youth subcultures in Hungary. Actual events in Vietnam, the assassination of Martin Luther King and of Che Guevara opened up opportunities for the official Marxist-Leninist ideology and foreign policy to deepen its support among the youngsters. The Western popular culture, the US originated protest songs and the provocative style of the hard rock and free jazz/Black Music supported also the protest against the US dominance. However, a mass admiration for the well being and technological development of Western and especially of American consumer society and mass culture were there, and as a result in 1968 the production and distribution of Coca-Cola, one of the symbol of the rejected Western consumer society was started in Hungary.

The critical currents of Western and of non-European Marxism(Marcuse) condemned and criticised the SU for its bureaucratic despotism and betrayal of real Marxism and revolutionary prophecy and Utopian path. However, until the invasion in Czechoslovakia, compared to the US, the Soviet Union embodied for many in Hungary as well in other Bloc countries the better alternative, or rather the lesser evil. The military invasion against the Prague Spring with participation of Hungarian troops triggered some protest against this decision, but much more disillusion and passive resistance towards Communism/Marxism/SU in Hungary. Some dedicated Communists committed suicide, and a group of activists took the initiative to protest publicly against the intervention of the SU, but they did not receive as many support as latter protest actions of the 1970's. The military intervention had much in common with recollections of 1956, which had a painful memory in Hungary and massive violence after made up its preventive-disciplinary effect against the majority of Hungarian society. Another typical motif for Hungarians distancing from anti-Soviet protest and pro-Czechoslovakian or Polish activities was its risky character for the prospects of the Hungarian economic and social reforms, which enjoyed

support among intellectuals .The reforms went further on until the dictum of Brezhnev for more loyalty to the roots of the Socialism which was followed by stopping its own reforms by János Kádár in 1973 .

Protest and counter culture in 1968 did not have yet its own alternative models of European order, except some isolated thinkers as István Bibó that time, who, as well as the Czech thinker Jan Patocka that year, investigated in his writings the meaning of European history and the prospects of Europe in a new world order beyond Cold War. Hungarian dissent that time generally shared the view of being in the best possible barrack of the camp, and exerted some self-control avoiding the critics on the SU to secure further prospects on Hungarian reform. The non-European models of alternative movements in 1968, the revolutionary Cuba and the cultural revolution of Mao and the Western protest of the New Left were very far away from Hungary both in geographical and cultural-intellectual terms, being here not more than an intellectual and symbolic challenge . The system of Cold War in Hungary remained unchallenged in 1968. The leading alternative Marxist thinker , Georg Lukács expressed at the occasion of his rehabilitation by the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party, that the "worst Communism is better than any type of Capitalism". The logic of the Bloc confrontation of Cold War was deep in the mind of even the critical intellectuals of that time, intertwined with hopes on an alternative Communism, meanwhile masses had a joyful a-theoretical convergence expectation, that we will be like they are both in the generation of parents and of teenage children using their own point of references in the West .

1968: Key Events

The main event for Hungary that year was the starting of the New Economic Mechanism on 01.01. and the participation within the Warsaw Pact invasion in Czechoslovakia 20-21.08.. Both had as effect calming down and demobilisation of any protest in political sense for Hungary . The general intellectual and cultural mood was the expectation towards the dynamics of the reforms in economy and society, and only very few people were clear about the long term effect of the intervention as a basic stop of all reformist attempts . It is an irony of the history, that the two Bloc members, Romania and Yugoslavia, who condemned the intervention and took an autonomous course within the foreign policy against the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, on the longer run blocked their own economic and social reforms or were not able to cope up with their unintended consequences. On the contrary, in Hungary a reform orientation win over the dogmatism in internal affairs for the prize of being loyal to the SU and the Warsaw Treaty. Some hardliner bloc countries as well the leadership of the GDR and of Bulgaria had in mind Hungary too, when condemning the reforms Czechoslovakia.

The Reform-communist softliner direction win in Hungary over the anti-reform hardliners against internal transformation and following Soviet foreign policy. Among the protests, the key event is the protest letter and declaration of Hungarian philosophers, mostly followers of Georg Lukács condemning Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. The Communist leadership reacted, compared to the warlike situation, relatively smoothly on this protest action, they could continue teaching , research and publication within Hungary until the 1973 breakdown of reforms. Georg Lukács himself, who was the leader of the Budapest School, solidarised with the protesters, and made a type of Denkschrift on the issue of Czechoslovakia, maintaining a compromise with the acceptance of the already done intervention, and with a maintenance of demand towards a Socialism with democracy and "human face". This ambivalence was characteristic for the whole of the attitude of Hungarian critical Marxists currents.

The regime could identify other enemies on the ideological and political field where the limits of tolerance were lesser. The revolutionary leaders in Cuba and China enjoyed some sympathy among Hungarian Leftist students. The conflicts in Vietnam, or at the US and Western Europe or the nearest in Greece, the military coup , made revolutionary New Left-type groups emerge in Budapest. Some Greek Communist emigrants were also involved in the tiny network, which was keeping contact with the embassies of China and Albania in Budapest. The network produced some programmatic documents and made leaflets as well as organised gatherings and marches , for example at the Greek embassy or on other public spaces on the anniversaries of the Hungarian and international Communist upheavals. The group was sentenced in the so called "Maoist process" and the sanctions were , related to the situation of armed intervention relatively low, however heavy enough for the participants. The activists landed in longer run within the Hungarian dissent or left the country to the West.

Potentially more dangerous challenge of the regime was the un-political but very wide diffusion of new cultural and life-style orientation among youngsters rock music on the front line coupled with Western type costumes and spontaneity and freedom in communication and especially sexual and leisure orientation. The "phenomena" of youth subculture was object of harsh criticism by Communist dogmatism, but the main line of official attitude

was a commercial institutionalisation of an a-political but new “youth style” co-opted by the way of official recordings, competition , festivals etc. The institutionalisation meant control in manifest and formal way , as giving permit to musical activities and to individual songs and events , as well as on informal , hidden way of state security control. The rock musicians and their social networks as well as the hard core of fans and the main meeting places and concerts were under strict control of the state security using a wide range of informants. As an effect, the “Socialist” rock culture and youth culture was adopted as a new mechanism of control on dissent with some confrontations. In 1968, as a hippy march in Budapest downtown was dissolved by the police. An informal circle of “hippies” in Budapest was sentenced after because they sung fascist marching songs, but within the process , which was demonstratively under the eyes of the official public, the deviant lifestyle and symbolism as well orientation of the group members were condemned officially, in some sense it was also a “show process” although some of the members may have committed “real” crimes,as sexual and drug abuse.

Forms and Tactics of Protest

Regarding this field, we have to reconsider the heavy forms of manifest and latent repression against all types of protest and dissent in Hungary after 1956 and after the military intervention in 1968, and the curious mixture within political opportunity structure in Hungary between reformist and repressive orientations within the ruling Communist elite. The intra-elite conflicts were more or less present in the Hungarian regime after 1956 and in 1968 their tension reached a focal point. The strength of the role of János Kádár , which made him an unchallenged ruler from 1956 until 1989 was, that he could handle this tensions constantly taking the role of an oscillating facilitator centre among the two conflicting lines, and the same time ensuring the background and support of the Soviet leadership which he received until 1988 since he accepted the role of the role of the main pro-Soviet agent within Hungary after 1956.

Violent protest forms were absent in Hungary in 1968. The repression after the 1956 revolution blocked this way of strategy among Hungarian dissidents, and the current, 1968 reformist perspective of the party as well. Protest disturbing public order as march, blockade etc. were avoided or only used by marginal and radical groupings, like some un-official demonstrations of the Leftist group condemned in “Maoist” processes. The main bulk of the protest had a symbolic , cultural, discursive and communicative character . Dissident intellectuals produced critical , or from the party condemned essays, poems, analyses etc. which were than excluded from publicity and criticised publicly by partisans of the regime.

Protest had its widest form as the change of the life-style and cultural orientation towards Western youth subculture, to search “easy jobs”-there was no unemployed legalised in the Communist system- securing a maximum of uncontrolled leisure activity in youth culture, especially music and in sexual contacts without family and institutional responsibilities. Symbolic for this “hedonism” was the introduction of Coca Cola as refreshment and of the first legal preservative ,

Only a tiny minority of students, young intellectuals and artists went further acclaiming free and autonomous spaces and relations for their alternative life style and creativity. Some of these initiatives crystallized among alternative theatre and ballet, like the groupings of Péter Halász and the Orpheo group, or among other , especially decorative art and construction and design, Miklós Erdélyi, or Galántai as well as underground music groups as Syrius, Kex etc. These Western-type groupings had certain publicity in youth centres and festivals , however political control was exerted over them continuously and in case of stable and “dangerous” groupings effective administrative interventions with sanctions were made. There were some overlapping among the alternative Marxism of the Budapest school and the Western type artistic experiments but this was not institutionalised as a social movement with a division of labour of movement intellectuals and activist. On the long run, many artist were forced to leave the country by repression Péter Halász, Miklós Erdélyi, or Baksa Soós , or they remained and existed further with uncompromising attitude within the alternative subculture .As a general trait we can state that the Westernised, so called “urbanist” protest tradition of Hungarian protest culture developed further towards philosophical, political and artistic radicalism . But the populist direction made no real appearance that time yet in the protest scene, it preserved as an intellectual protest potential as latter development has shown

Transnational relations

1968 meant a world connected with endless fades of electronic communication a world of MacLuhan, where television and broadcast diffused images of protest embodied in the heroes and stars, the marches and riots, and the actions to suppress them by police and military forces even in the controlled mass communication of the Eastern Bloc. Thus personal mobility by tourism and commercial mobility by trade and black trade made symbols and mood of protest common all over the Eastern Bloc, as through the trade of jeans, records, fun objects, drugs,

diffusion of behavioural patterns. Hungary was a country relatively open among the Warsaw Pact, not reaching the openness of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia or Poland of that time, but being much more open than Bulgaria, Romania and the GDR. Western consume and mass culture was not excluded and condemned as such, but imported or let in on a controlled way. Western type of Marxism was in the shop window of Eastern regimes being a radical criticism of capitalism, US imperialism and consumer society, but blocked and rejected as radicalism, demand for more democratisation and autonomy. Forms of official solidarity could conclude in non-intended consequences of diffusing oppositional solidarity, like the un-official Vietnam-committee, which crystallized the networks of New Left in Budapest. The regime condemned China, Marcuse and student radicalism, but supported the cult of Castro, Guevara and Angela Davis, as well as the popular forms of an anti-war sentiment against Vietnam. Relations to Western Marxism and student movements were there, but restricted on the very tiny groups of dissenting intellectuals enjoying some freedom of travelling abroad. The experiment in Czechoslovakia and dissenting policy in Romania and Yugoslavia were widely known, even by the fact that millions of ethnic Hungarians live in the respective countries, who enjoyed under the reform era considerable cultural autonomy which resulted in a huge amount of newspapers, book editions and broadcasting in Hungarian language which could be received and bought in Hungary as well. Travelling to and from this countries was less restricted as to the Western countries. Even China lunched through Albania Hungarian broadcasting and printed Hungarian propaganda material which reached the radical student groups. There were broadcasts like Radio Free Europe and BBC, or Voice of America in Hungarian which covered dissent and protest, if it had anti-communist character. Hungarian emigration in the West did not have a leftist, but rather nationalistic-populist character so it was not preoccupied with the issue of Western radicalism too far.

All in all, people in Hungary could reach a wide range of official and un-official information sources. Active solidarity connections with the radical movements were restricted to some elite dissent intellectuals and artists, being adopted some sympathy with the New Left, or Western youth-artistic radicalism. But the occupation of Czechoslovakia, with quite strong participation of Hungarian army as well as the international press, broadcast and TV covering of the intervention made it to an experience of the general Hungarian public. Discussions and tensions within the Communism following the intervention were of course presented in the official media from the Moscow-friendly point of view. Hungary was much more moved by that conflict within the Eastern Bloc in 1968 than with the student protest, or Black rioting or anti-colonialist struggle. To interpret it in the context, we have to consider beyond geographical the socio-cultural distance of a country never having any colonial past, and this way without any post-colonial sensibility, and the handicapped situation of a Leftist-Marxist protest in a society, where Communists suppressed nationalism and national identity as well.

Consequences, Narratives and Politics of Memory

The situation in Hungary was different very much to the countries of the West with upheavals and turbulences, and the countries of the East where mobilisations and elite changes occurred as Poland, Czechoslovakia, China and Romania/Yugoslavia. Hungarian intellectuals and artists, especially their younger, Western-oriented groupings were following the conflicts and fights in abroad, and latter some of their experiences were recollected in their creation and reflexion, like films of Miklós Jancsó, novels of Tibor Déry, György Dalos, György Konrád, within the philosophy of György Lukács, Mihály Vajda or Ágnes Heller and of social thought of Hungarian sociologists as András Hegedűs or Iván Szelényi or within the creative Hungarian rock music.

However, the lack of dramatic collective experiences did not make 1968 to a common focal point of collective memory, like 1956 remained despite of the toughest censorship in culture and thinking of Hungarians. The general feeling was to survive with the Hungarian reforms successful an international crisis of the Eastern bloc, an idea of the "Hungarian *Sonderweg*" embodied in the personal role of the former bloody-handing dictator of János Kádár, who become in 1968 the image of being politically able to survive the special role of Hungary against the radical, but looser Dubcek in Prague. There were no strong official criticism and propaganda on the

Czechoslovak experiment, being basically similar to the Hungarian New Economic Mechanism. Its failure made up an important point of internal and external legitimacy of the Kádár regime. One may look upon 1968 in Hungary as a victory of the Kádár regime, over its former anti-revolutionary, dogmatic image and over the revisionism of the Czech Party before the intervention. Kádár and its performance in reforming Hungarian economy received many Western and internal social and political support and legitimacy being for change and establishing it in the framework of the Eastern Bloc.

This honeymoon period lasted until 1973, when under the pressure of the SU and the internal opposition of the reform, the experiment of the New Economic Mechanism was abolished, leading politicians supporting lost their positions, and compared to 1968 a much more cruel and defensive policy towards the established intellectual dissent was formulated and implemented. The period between 1968-1973 became this way an important legitimacy of the reformist character of the Kádár regime which was able to utilise it during the 1980's, in establishing new cooperation with the West and opening up the regime for economic and cultural experiences and more tolerance towards the dissent which made important preparatory steps to the system transition in 1989.

This way 1968 never became that eminent role of historical consciousness, neither before nor after 1989 as it has in the history of Czechoslovakia, to make it a point of reference. 1968 stands for a victory of Kádár and of "Kádárism" which was characterised by Ágnes Heller as the "dictatorship over the needs" or by the Western publicists as "Goulash-Communism". The regime itself booked it as a silent victory, which resulted in very strong and long lasting legitimacy without discussions.

After 1989, 1968 could not be established for alternative Hungarian historical consciousness as it became important at least in the Czech Republic, unlike the new Slovakia. In Hungary, 1956 the anti-stalinist revolution and freedom fight against the Russians and SU became the new source of legitimacy and of republicanism. We may state, that 1956 being the main and genuine contribution of Hungarians to the history the anti-socialist fights overshadowed 1968 in its meaning within the international and internal discussions on the 20th century post-war history in Hungary.

An irony of history, that 1968 which is an emblem for the radicalism and revolution in Western hemisphere and certain extent in the Eastern bloc too, for Hungary went into the history as associated with a "good bargaining" giving autonomy in foreign policy to the Soviets for receiving internal autonomy –for a while- in economic and social affairs, so a moment of world history of radicalism is a momentum of reformism and of clever opportunism in Hungarian history. Not surprising that 1968 could not make out a point of general reference in contemporary historical research in Hungary.

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