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## Arguments against Hungarian accession to NATO

“The issue of NATO membership is something so important and so comprehensive that society shouldn’t just entrust it to politicians and generals”. (Gábor Miklós, the daily Népszabadság, June 15, 1993)

According to a recent public opinion poll, 16 per cent of the Hungarian population opposed Hungarian accession to NATO and a further 40 per cent of the population was completely uncertain concerning the issue of joining the organization. Therefore, the situation is quite paradoxical: despite the fact that the public is more informed about the advantages of accession to NATO, only a smaller portion (44 per cent) of the population is unequivocally in favor of NATO.<sup>1</sup> Since it is mainly the advantages of the accession that are well known, I am of the opinion that it is also important to summarize the counter-arguments to accession.<sup>2</sup> I have taken into consideration seventeen sets of arguments against NATO membership. They are as follows:

### I. Ecological-economic counter-arguments

There are direct and indirect ecological-economic counter-arguments to accession to NATO.

#### *Direct counter-arguments:*

1) Modernization, development at all costs, maintaining the level of consumption characteristic of the welfare state and the intention to spread the consumer model worldwide all lead to ecological disaster. Forced economic growth and the capitalist model of society that brings along a destruction of the environment are not the means to resolve the world’s ecological problems. From the ecological and economic points of view, it has a detrimental effect if regions on the periphery strive to move into the center: it ties development and living to an antiquated form of society. NATO, which is often named as a means of modernization, is a symbol of this antiquated model.

2) Another argument that can be raised here has as its starting point that NATO protects the welfare and consumer world against the poor and the immigrants, among others. Therefore, NATO is an efficient means in maintaining exploitation, inequality and social injustice between territories, zones, regions, countries and nations, the perpetrator of the North-South problem and the political and economic division of the world.

#### The *indirect* ecological-economic counter-arguments to accession.

1) NATO as a military structure is one of the most monumental institutions causing environmental damage. The production, transportation, deployment storage and regular replacement of conventional and nuclear weapons, as well as training, military exercises, training flights and the regular use of military technology result in a substantial volume of environmental damage, while training grounds are considered areas of increased pollution all over the world. The environment-friendly destruction of outworn military technology, missiles and nuclear weapons is an unresolved problem.

2) Since Hungary is not averse in principle to the deployment of nuclear weapons on its territory, the country must face all the environmental problems of the transportation, deployment and storage of nuclear weapons, and it also increasingly exposes the country’s population to the danger of a nuclear accident and all the damaging consequences of a possible nuclear attack.

## II. Transcendent-religious counter-arguments

The common starting ground in transcendent approaches could be that life on the Earth can be interpreted not only in this life theory, there exists another world that goes beyond and 'reconsiders' this world. Pursuing material goods belonging to this world, securing them for all contingencies and guaranteeing them at the expense of violence cannot be of primary importance. On the basis of all this, the following approaches against NATO accession can be listed, among others:

1) Structures based on violence do not advance the development of humanity, power-enforcement organizations materialize and do not spiritualize the world, formations, on the basis of being threatened, kept in fear and under the power of physical force, are not suitable for resolving the problems of humanity (views of pre-historic cultures).

2) You cannot create peace with weapons, violence produces violence. Integration on the basis of the power of weapons cannot bring lasting security and peace. The civilization of love based on the teachings of the Bible is not able to welcome an alliance based on principles contrary to its own (partly the views of the established churches and religious views based on Biblical arguments).

3) The existence of armies, troops and military alliances runs totally counter to the teachings of Jesus. Denying the necessity of the military, refusing military service is the only attitude one can undertake (the views of peace churches, 'pacifist' religious groups)

4) According to the views of prophets, future seers and insiders, the end of time is drawing near. They believe they can fit into this vision the idea of joining a military alliance and that of the world being parted (apocalyptic, eschatological religious views, 'New Age' teaching).

## III. Counter-arguments stemming from the problem of 'being different'

In constitutional monarchies and in international agreements concerning human rights, you can find the different minority rights and regulations proclaiming the equality of minorities in a declared and emphasized form. In the civilized world, it is an accepted attitude to respect 'otherness'. What is more, it has become an important degree of judgement of a given society or community what its attitude is like towards people of different ideology, religion, culture, political view or lifestyle. However, the principle of respecting 'otherness' cannot be implemented in practice:

1) The North Atlantic Treaty Organization expresses, symbolizes the false idea of supremacy of the western world, a civilization based on the Jewish-Christian culture and the white race by way of using its weapons to keep away 'others' not belonging to the western culture.

2) NATO protects the western world from the immigrants and from the situation that people living in other areas, that is, strangers, settle down in the protected zone. NATO helps to implement the procedure of intentionally keeping away orthodox Catholics and the Muslim followers of the true faith, that is, those 'others' living in non-western cultures, civilizations.

3) Those believing in this concept view NATO as a structure that is building barriers, that restricts the prevailing of the freedom of movement, ideology and religion, the free flow of ideas, religions and the prevailing of equality of rights for people.

#### IV. Communicational, social-psychological counter-arguments

Around 1991, the Hungarian political elite signed its own agreement concerning NATO issues. It was the very rare situation of all six parliamentary parties agreeing on an issue: the opposition had the same idea on this important matter as the parties of the governing coalition.<sup>3</sup> For the main forces formulating public opinion, the intention to join NATO as a full member was evident, a pan-national interest beyond all doubt. Since there was a complete identity of views 'in the elite', counter-arguments to accession could not even emerge. The issue of joining NATO is not talked over, the sets of arguments for and against accession are unfinished, the set of conditions and schedule of NATO accession is unknown but Hungary's leaders have already decided on this issue.

In this social-psychological field, communication vacuum, any sort of questioning NATO accession equals – in the eyes of the political elite – to questioning the six-party consensus and the competence of the political elite. Not being able to identify oneself with the unified opinion of parliament and the country's leadership hurts the parties and the politicians in their self-esteem; questioning their standpoint emerges as an issue of trust, legitimization and prestige.

A communication disturbance came about in which those raising this issue are classified as the opponents of development, democracy, integration, and welfare, and they are labeled as nationalist, pacifist, utopist and the friends of the Russians, instead of being accepted as an equal party to discuss the issue with.<sup>4</sup>

The communication disturbance is further intensified by the fact that those on the extreme left and extreme right of the political spectrum, parties not represented in parliament and the left-wing political youth organizations are all against NATO membership.<sup>5</sup> The political elite and the public rate the views on NATO of these organizations at their 'place value' rather than the weight of their arguments, and consider the anti-NATO opinion of the extremist organizations as non-presentable in the first place.<sup>6</sup>

#### V. Socialization counter-arguments

1) Up until the 1990s, NATO was to be hated, the task of the Hungarian military was to preempt and fend off NATO strikes, professional soldiers having taken an oath to fight 'NATO as the enemy' trained hundreds of thousands of conscripts for the war against NATO de facto and 'in spirit', too. Although, this is a different world and a different NATO from what they were before 1989, this anti-NATO sentiment stemming from this socialization is still alive.

2) Soldiers who are for NATO accession are used to existing within a military bloc, this experience determines their thoughts, they are loyal to the idea of blocs and they do not want to, they cannot or they do not dare to conceive the idea of a self-supporting and independent Hungary.

3) What one could experience concerning the changing of military alliance, could even be called as an amnesia process. However, it is the most similar to what George Orwell described that at one time, Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with East Asia, and then the other way round, while the official propaganda said there had never been a change of partnership.

## VI. Psychological counter-arguments

Hungary is unable to face its historical fears. Instead of turning against fears that are deep inside us, we try to escape them by turning to someone stronger than us. The traditional fears we have are the following:

1) We must definitely integrate ourselves to the West, enter NATO so that we can become Europeans because we are afraid that – under our current circumstances – we are not part of Europe, we are not Europeans.

2) We are afraid of the Trianon sense of guilt of the neighboring countries, that is, that the new proprietors of the territories ceded by Hungary would threaten our lives because of their qualm of awareness. We are afraid that we will not be able to settle our common issues with the neighboring countries because these countries seem to be unable to settle disputed matters, including the issue of minorities. Therefore, we will – sooner or later – start a fight with them, irrespective of the existence of bilateral state treaties.

3) Hungarian society is not capable of comprehending that since the Treaty of Trianon, the Carpathian Basin has been divided into numerous parts even from the viewpoint of statehood, and that Hungary has lost – along with its geopolitical abilities – the cultural and economic opportunities which could empower or entitle it to play some sort of leading role in the region. Therefore, it has lost its characteristic of being a middle power – if it has ever had such a status. It has lost its ‘cultural supremacy’ and has become a small state in the region. The umpteenth factor creating fear is therefore the fear of being a small state; the desire for NATO membership also feeds on awareness of inferiority.<sup>7</sup>

4) We are afraid of Russia, we are afraid of the return of the Soviet system but we are also afraid of the Slavic peoples joining forces and that we are going to be left alone – surrounded by hostile Slavic peoples.

5) We are afraid that we have to create the conditions of existence, the security for ourselves. We feel we are in a situation of being left in the lurch for eternity, and we rather blame the West than ourselves for the situation we are in. We are afraid of being independent and of admitting our own mistakes. Resulting from this state of awareness in society is an escape effect, the intention of belonging somewhere, no matter what, and that is what motivates accession to NATO. (Of course, some of our fears – at the same time – are the fears of our region, as well. The need to belong somewhere stems from the common historical fear of the region: belonging to one superpower or the other and not seeking ‘integration’ with each other as a solution).

## VII. Historical counter-arguments

1) It is true that the countries of our region like to enjoy the protection of superpowers, but it is also true that they had suffered a lot for achieving their independence. It is a historical tradition that they wish to remain within the circle but at the same time show that they are outside the circle. In the course of the 1848-49 revolution and freedom of independence as well as the 1956 revolution, one of the most important objectives was to achieve Hungarian independence and Hungarian neutrality. (One of the 12 points of demands of the 1848 revolution, quoted so many times on the anniversary of the event on March 15, says: our soldiers should not be taken abroad and foreign troops be removed from the territory of our country).

2) Hungary took part both in the First and Second World Wars as a member of a military alliance. In both wars, Hungarian soldiers fought and let their blood for allied (foreign) interests, as well. In spite of belonging to an alliance, the country was on the losers' side. In both cases, we suffered serious military-political defeats as allied partners of certain western superpowers of the time, and – as a result – we lost two thirds of the territory of the country.

3) Traditionally, Hungary belongs to the sphere of interest of Germany rather than that of Russia, unlike Poland, for instance. In this respect, the past fifty years constituted an exception. Unfavorable experiences in the recent past do not provide a foundation historically for us getting stuck in the Russian sphere of interest, and they do not provide sufficient justification for accession to NATO, either.

4) The history of the recent past may also provide counter-arguments to joining NATO. The country's independence as an objective was included in the election campaign program of all six parties the voters sent into parliament at the 1990 general elections. Four of the parties (Young Democrats, Smallholders, Hungarian Democratic Forum, Hungarian Socialist Party) concretely mention the need to achieve neutrality, as well. Three parties (Smallholders, Hungarian Democratic Forum, Hungarian Socialist Party) also said they would like to see the simultaneous dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and NATO.<sup>8</sup>

The 1989 program of the major party of the current government coalition has the following to state: "Our goal is that NATO and the Warsaw Pact become redundant and possible to dissolve simultaneously as early as in this century"<sup>9</sup>

Several other parties and social organizations (Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Society, Homeland Party, Hungarian Health Party, Hungarian Independence Party, Hungarian Liberal Party, Hungarian People's Party, Hungarian October Party, Hungarian Social Democratic Party, Hungary's Green Party), almost forgotten since, spoke of independence and neutrality with unambiguous statements similar to those of the parliamentary parties.<sup>10</sup>

Those referring to historical traditions can draw from all this several direct counter-arguments to accession:

1) Accession to military alliances cannot provide an ultimate and unequivocal security guarantee, either.

2) Although, we receive protection upon being attacked, in case of NATO membership, we are also obliged to make sacrifices if another member country is attacked (Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty). What have we got to do with possible military conflicts in North America, North or Southern Europe, etc.? Hungary has already made enough sacrifice for Europe.

3) The security of the country and that of the region cannot be guaranteed at the expense of giving up national independence.

4) Military blocs cannot be capable of 'melting memories into peace'.

5) NATO membership means the subordination of the traditions of 1848 and 1956 to political realism, or – with another approach: the betrayal of the goals of those revolutions.

6) For us, joining the West militarily is not less dangerous, at all, than belonging to the East or stay 'in the middle'.

7) If the political parties are capable of stating the opposite of the same thing so quickly, but at least once in every four years, then the trustworthiness of the parties can be questioned.

8) One does not necessarily have to give credit to arguments for accession. One must not trust in two statements that contradict each other.

## VIII. Ethnic counter-arguments

1) It is almost certain that Romania cannot be a full member of NATO the same time as Hungary, and it is also a question whether Slovakia is going to be included in the first phase of NATO enlargement. Ukraine does not have much chance to join and one can presumably exclude the possibility of warring Croatia and Small Yugoslavia becoming NATO members in the short term. Therefore, Hungarian accession to NATO cannot help resolve the problems of ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, Ukraine, Croatia and Small Yugoslavia. NATO will be able to 'protect' only a part of the native Hungarian population living in the Carpathian Basin. What is more, since the NATO frontier is likely to coincide with the Hungarian border, there will be a dividing line even bigger than before. For those thinking in terms of the entirety of the native Hungarian community, it means that a part of this community is saved while the other part – definitely smaller in number – will be 'sacrificed'.

2) There is no talk of NATO admitting all former members of the eastern bloc or the successor states of the Soviet Union with a desire for accession. This means moving ahead at the expense of others, rubbing shoulders with those in better condition and turning away from those less fortunate. Hungarian accession to NATO shows the lack of almost compulsory solidarity stemming from the common fate.

3) Those referring to historical counter-arguments concerning accession to NATO may reckon to discover – in this respect, too – a parallel between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. If the issue of national minorities could not be settled during the fifty years of the existence of the Warsaw Pact, then another military bloc will not be able to do that, either.

4) The argument referring to national reconciliation is similar to that argument for maintaining the general compulsory military service which says that compulsory military service is necessary so that young people learn proper behavior in the army and that the military finally make men of them (the educational, socialization function of the military). However, those opposing accession do not believe that the peoples of East Central Europe should be conscripted into a military alliance being above nations so that they do – by command – what they are not able to do by themselves. NATO is not capable of educating 'decent nations'.

## IX. Sovereignty counter-arguments

1) Without Hungary being forced by anyone militarily, we give up our national interests as Hungarian military forces would be placed under joint (foreign) command.

2) Accession to NATO means new dependence. By joining NATO as a full member, Hungary would undertake it in writing that it subordinates the country's interests to the interests of superpowers.

3) One of the four minimum requirements of NATO membership is civilian control over the military completely prevailing.<sup>11</sup> While we comply with this expectation, real control is taken out of our hands, with the supervision of the national decision-making process and the political control being exercised in Brussels.

4) Following the loss of economic sovereignty, accession would now result in losing political and military independence, as well.

5) The North Atlantic Treaty Alliance serves Euro-Atlantic and not European interests, reflecting the political, economic, military, cultural, etc. interests of the Americans. NATO is the tool to convey American interests and values. This way, Hungary's development would be based on non-European values and this would threaten national identity.<sup>12</sup>

6) NATO member countries are not equal de facto. The ordeal concerning the accession process well demonstrates that there are important, not so important and not important NATO members whose opinion carry different weight. Hungary as a full member of NATO could expect to have a second- or third-class status, Hungary is going to play a walk-on part within NATO.

## X. Economic counter-arguments

The costs of accession to NATO are not known. The expectations and the resource of expenses incurring in connection with the fulfillment of these expectations are also unknown. However, it is known that 20-25 billion forints are needed to meet the military requirements of the accession, and 10-12 billion to carry out the reform of the military forces with a budget of 80 billion forints planned for 1996 and along with a weapons import of 300 million US dollars received as payment against the Russian debt to Hungary.<sup>13</sup> There is no information to be quoted on how money has been spent already in order to achieve accession. The only piece of information known is that 493 million forints had been earmarked within the 1995 military budget for NATO's 'Partnership for Peace' program.

Hungary's economic integration ought to be achieved by economic means. Political-military integration cannot substitute the economic one, NATO cannot be entitled to compensate for a program financing the rebuilding of Eastern Europe. There may be points of connection between the two kinds of integration but the contents of the two are not the same. The enlargement of NATO equals to admitting that the West is not willing to finance a second, much more expensive Marshall Plan and that it settles for a secondary solution of supplementary characteristic.

It is expressed in the West's position that the West does not want full integration except on the level of words, it wants to integrate this region as much as it is unavoidable, as much as it is necessary on the *limes* [=limits, frontier] which guarantees its security, and as much as it is desirable on the periphery of an economically developed area.

On the part of the West, NATO's eastern expansion is nothing else than an action necessarily resulting from its selfish economic interests, some sort of compensation supplementing real help. At the same time, it is an amiable and hypocritical process, which forces the east European countries to eat humble pie.

Taking all this as starting-points, counter-arguments to NATO, on the basis of economic considerations, are the following:

1) The influx of Western capital (income), expected from NATO membership, depends – irrespective of accession – on several other factors. It is completely uncertain and its volume is unpredictable. Therefore, hoping for the return of the investment (that is, the money spent on gaining membership) raises false expectations in the population and it is nothing else than wishful thinking.

2) It is not proven that NATO membership would guarantee economic growth or that membership would result in the automatic achievement of the living standards of the welfare states. (The object lessons here are Portugal and Turkey).

3) The costs of accession are not known, either, and for lack of this figure we simply do not know what we undertake. Defense budgets continuously increase and the costs of the military reform (which has been delayed for five years now), the modernization of military equipment and making the Hungarian army NATO compatible all get mixed up with one another in an undistinguishable way.<sup>14</sup>

4) Since NATO requires from its member countries the maintenance of an army capable of defending their own country, one can presume that – after gaining full NATO membership – Hungary will have an expensive army, even more expensive than before.

5) Under the current economic circumstances, we cannot make more sacrifices for increasing the defense of the country, making the country's army NATO compatible or buying the latest military technology.

6) Making the military NATO compatible can be realized only at the expense of diverting funds from the civilian sphere (e.g. healthcare, education, culture, social services).

7) Hungary as a NATO member will lose the possibility of making a decision on its own – depending on the changing economic indicators or resources – how much it wants to spend on the military. We undertake to spend possibly more on weapons than we can afford and this may lead to running into debt on the principle of 'arm yourself now, pay later!'.

8) It is not a realistic concept that the Hungarian military industry can be put back on its feet and make it competitive with NATO help and this might be economically beneficial for Hungary. NATO membership projects just the opposite: systems, supplying NATO, seek markets and not rivals in the region, they will be the ones who impede the development of national military industries.

9) NATO cannot only provide a guaranteed background for the influx of capital but it could also be an efficient tool in maintaining Hungary's economic subordination. Economic development is uncertain but the conservation of the periphery role is certain.

10) While there are no guiding figures on the 'profitability' of accession and membership, we should not speak about accession as if we wanted it under all circumstances, that this was worth every penny and that the country could only profit from it.

## XI. Political counter-arguments

According to a famous saying by Lord Ismay, NATO's mission can be summarized as follows:

1) Well, those voicing political arguments against accession to NATO think that – following the Cold war and at a time when Europe is striving for union – it is not necessary to keep the Americans in Europe by means of NATO, and keep the Russians outside NATO, the Germans are 'up there', anyway. NATO, which was established in an

atmosphere of distrust after the Second World War, has by now lost the foundation of its creation, that is, distrust. It no longer has the mission put into words by Lord Ismay, NATO is not capable of defining either its objectives or its tasks, it is moving in a void as far as its activity is concerned and has identity problems. Political-military alliances are always established and maintained in somebody's interest and against somebody, and – despite all the propaganda claiming the opposite – they do not manage without a potential enemy. Therefore, NATO cannot form the primary structure framework of relations between West and West, East and West, East and East, Hungarians and Hungarians.

2) The enlargement of NATO means the declaration of new borders for spheres of interest, drawing new borders for Europe and the division of Europe. And this contradicts the processes of integration as well as the European intention to unite.

3) NATO enlargement cannot only decide the fate of east and central European countries joining the organization but also that of the non-joining east European countries and the successor states of the Soviet Union. This way, something that means belonging to the West on one side, will mean, on the other side, dropping behind the West for good and being classified into the Russian sphere of interests. The direction of integration for the Baltic states, Ukraine, Belarus and Bulgaria will be pre-determined, with the chance for their eastern integration increasing. The West almost offers the territory beyond the area NATO enlargement to Russia.

4) Ukraine is not on the list of NATO enlargement. This is despite the fact that the political-military affiliation of this country, which counts as a middle-power, is of high importance in international relations because it has the second largest national army in Europe, it is a nuclear power and is situated on an area of special geostrategic importance between the enlarged NATO and Russia. Leaving Ukraine out of the enlargement process would be all grist for Russia's mill and make the still wavering Ukraine a natural ally of Russia. Should these countries form an alliance, then a strong military power would suddenly appear on NATO's border. And in that case, we are where we used to be: Russia and Ukraine together are a definite superpower.

5) Lasting security for Hungary can only be guaranteed by keeping an equal distance from the superpowers, or rather being equally 'near' to the superpowers. NATO membership means anchoring on one side, belonging to one of the spheres of interest, which unavoidably raises displeasure on the other side.

6) Russia disapproves of NATO enlargement. It would like to avoid its former allies join its former enemies in a military bloc along its former borders. Russia considers it a distrustful, hostile and dangerous step. It is not desirable to lose the friendship of Russia that is still considered a military superpower.

7) NATO's enlargement does not help the development of Russian society, it strengthens the Russian military lobby and gives a serious chance to stratocracy to survive the cold war. Therefore, NATO enlargement continues to hamper or even block for good Russia's democratic transformation.

8) NATO's eastern enlargement creates a situation that brings about danger; it increases threat in the region rather than decreases it. For Hungary, the region, Europe and the world, NATO enlargement is a larger threat than its cancellation. In this case, Hungary becomes the ally of the party that increases the danger, decreasing the country's security. It is better to stay out of military blocks in a calm Europe than being a member of a military bloc in a tense international situation.

## XII. Geopolitical counter-arguments

1) Hungary has always been directly on either side of the fence; with accession to NATO, we can be the southeastern bastion of the western bloc instead of the south-western bastion of the eastern bloc.

2) In case of war, Hungary – whatever happens – will be a military springboard, standing on the side of whichever military bloc, Hungarian soldiers and the population can only play the role of the bullet-shield. (It is well known that the task the Hungarian army was expected to perform within the Warsaw Pact was only to stop the enemy for a few minutes, that is, being a shield against enemy attack, annihilation until the Warsaw Pact prepares for defense).

3) Accession to NATO does not eliminate the transitional status, uncertainty, the awareness of lagging behind and the eternal need for modernization – all being characteristics of this region.

4) Belonging to the European Union – and the fulfillment of Western European economic expectations required for membership – can only be expected after NATO enlargement, that is, military integration, which requires a fundamentally political decision. We will not be able to achieve the western European standard of living, etc. for a long time but we want to meet the military expectations as early as possible, that is, now. Accession to NATO does not follow organically from the development of the country.

5) What follows from our geopolitical situation is not being made a satellite state again but a characteristic east central European development ‘in the valley of the river Danube’. For those believing in the so-called ‘third way’, which is very hard to define precisely, accession to NATO rules out the possibility of a national development.

6) Finally, the geopolitical argumentation also takes into an account the advantages of the unchangeable situation. Mediation between spheres of interest, the bridge role mentioned by many, standing on not one but more pillars economically, cultural diversity and the possibility of establishing friendly relations in all directions are all factors that increase security themselves but they do not require membership to any military alliance.

## XIII. Integration counter-arguments

1) Integration is a pressure applied by strong countries and regions. There is an integration pressure in the world because the world’s leading international companies need to create such large units in order to secure constant development and the maintenance of an economy built on profit, interest, investment and market. In this worldwide process, an integration competition (strong countries strive for integrating the small ones, and the small countries cannot do anything else but wanting the integration) is created on one hand, and there is a competition between the integration processes, on the other. NATO is one of the key organizations of this integration process.

2) Integration does not occur on the basis equality, trust and mutual benefits. The supervision of the integration process and the re-distribution of material goods remain in the hands of the ‘integration elite’.

3) The establishment of the different forms of integration does not point in the direction of a global democracy but the creation of global security forces.

4) Europeans have a 'Europe-myth' living in their minds. The gist of it is that Europe must regain the central position, it is entitled to, in the world. Europe believes that being a superpower is its natural position.<sup>15</sup> NATO is one of the tools in reviving this false Europe myth.

5) According to a ecological-moral argumentation, partly related to the Europe-myth, since the geostrategic control of a united Europe equals to control over Eurasia, as well, and all this happens under the guidance of the United States, NATO is destined for guaranteeing the global superiority of the West.

6) Primarily, it is the achieving of integration between non-military spheres that must be pursued, and these non-military sub-systems that should, first of all, be brought up to a certain level of development at which integration would be possible for us and desirable for the western part of Europe.

7) As it is well known, the need to join the European Union and NATO appeared in the region at the same time. However, the reality – not concealed by politics, either – is that the realistic goal is to achieve NATO membership first, the possible chance to join the European Union as a full member can come only afterwards. EU membership is tied to NATO membership and the other way round. This order of integration is unacceptable.

8) There is also an expressly anti-America 'line' in the sentiments against integration and NATO accession. The permanent military presence in Europe by the United States hampers European integration, Americanize Europe and makes NATO member countries the servants of American global policy interests. The representatives of this view wish to join an integrated European force but not a NATO under American influence.

#### XIV. Counter-arguments by the civil society

1) NATO enlargement is in the interest of the international military lobby; on one side, it means an enlarged market for arms, and provides the foundation for the existence of the stratocracy on the other. The map of the new Europe is drawn by military people rather than by civilians.

2) In Hungary, the most substantial supporter of accession to NATO – apart from the political elite – is the Ministry of Defense. (It has increasingly been so since the last change in government). The Hungarian military expects that accession to NATO will resolve all of its problems. The military lobby sees NATO as the tool to enforce its interests as NATO forces the country's economy to pay more for military purposes as required by conditions for accession and full membership. Accession creates an opportunity to raise the standard of living for the professional staff and the army, itself.

3) For the army, accession to NATO means modernization, which cannot be achieved in any other way, that is, it is the military sphere that gets modernized within the society. It is the military society and not the civilian society that gets the opportunity to be integrated first, while the army itself admits that the country is not under threat.

4) The will of an army that is becoming unmanageable for society, and that serves its own interests, this time coincides with the will of the political elite in the matter concerning NATO accession. Politics and the military have found each other and are 'pushing' society from two sides towards NATO membership – one bidding over the other. In the eyes of the public, political and internal military interests appear together, one using each other's arguments to justify the importance of accession. This way, unlike in constitutional democracies, the necessarily hierarchic relation between politics and the

military is turned into a coordinate relation and the military is able to present itself as an independent force to formulate politics. The army has developed a disproportionate role in action, politics and decision-making. The military is able to 'sell' its interests, stemming from its internal logic, as the common interests of society. The military becomes the 'driving force' of belonging to Europe, and the token of western integration. It is able to present itself in a progressive role and its requirements continue to be met – irrespective of the country's economic and security conditions. Accession to NATO happens to be the opportunity for the military to avoid full civilian control, which is otherwise one of the conditions for membership.

## XV. Security policy counter-arguments

The term 'security' is not limited to military security but it means much more than that. That is because the term 'security' has at least two dimensions (the threat-free, stable, still situation, and the individual, social, sentimental evaluation of the situation). Furthermore, there are primary (political, social, military, ecological, internal security) and secondary (technological level, demographic stability and growth, geographical-climatic factors, currency stability, monetary situation, security of ownership) elements. To achieve the level of security interpreted on the basis of all these elements, Hungary does not need to join NATO. The country's security is not threatened by the existence of national and ethnic minority problems or appearance of the migration phenomenon, international crime, terrorism, Mafia and drug-trade, either.<sup>16</sup>

As a result:

1) The non-military elements of security can be more determining than the military ones, and the existence of the non-military elements of security can provide better security guarantees than military security, itself.

2) The non-military elements of security are much less expensive than military security and can ensure the country's security, the survival of the nation and the improvement of the quality of life for the population on a longer term.

3) The security of the country and the population is threatened primarily by the lack of security elements. Those calling for accession enforce one element of security at the expense of the other elements.

4) Limiting the term of security to the term of military security is suitable for manipulating people's sense of security, creating the sense of danger and insecurity. At the same time, it is also suitable for 'diverting' the sense of insecurity so that it does not 'spread' or reach the critical level where it is not desirable or even unmanageable (e.g. healthcare, social sphere, demography, standard of living, debt accumulation).

5) Finally, there exists a security policy approach, as well, that does not fit into the outlined system but is noteworthy. Namely, if it is true that NATO does not threaten anyone, then let us support accession for our neighbors and let us not enter ourselves. If the other countries of the region become NATO members, then the presumed Slovak or Romanian threat is eliminated and we do not have to fear the Russians, either in the neighborhood of NATO. By staying out of NATO, we can enjoy the benefits of security without taking our share of the burden of membership and losing our independence.

## XVI. Military security counter-arguments

One of the starting points is based on the denial of the statement that our region is in a security vacuum. On one hand, Soviet occupation did not mean security, therefore, its coming to an end could not result in a vacuum. On the other hand, the term 'vacuum' supposes a force, in the first place, which is ready to fill this vacuum, thus, creates, in the first place, the sense of being threatened.<sup>17</sup> The expression 'we cannot be no man's land', which was also brought up as an argument for accession to NATO, indicates aversion to sovereign existence, the attitude of 'looking for a good master' and the fear of Russia.<sup>18</sup>

The other starting point: our country is not threatened by the danger of a military attack. Russia lost its superpower status and its former role in international relations, there is no economic power behind its rhetoric. (Today, the Russian GDP is one third of what the Soviet GDP used to be, 13-18 per cent of the American GDP and even much less than that of China). At most, Russia has a chance to integrate the 'near foreign countries' politically and economically and not to run them over.

Since Russia is not only a European but an Asian power, as well, and since 25 million Russians live in the successor states of the Soviet Union outside Russia, it must pay attention to several directions at the same time and primarily to its neighbors. The military potential of Hungary's neighbors, except for that of Austria, exceeds ours, but individually it does not provide the three-fold, or even larger, superiority in troops and equipment that would ensure the success of a quick military aggression.

The economies of the former Socialist countries are in a shape similar to ours, a substantial increase in their military budget, that is, the change of the current situation can be ruled out on the long term. Romania has to concentrate on conflicts along its southern and western borders (Moldavia, Serbia, Kosovo, Bulgaria), while the military force of Small Yugoslavia, which is on the brink of economic bankruptcy, anyway, is tied up in the war there.

The policy of Hungary and its neighbors is not aimed at occupying territories, there is no indication of any behavior, whatsoever, referring to military attack. According to public opinion polls, 12 per cent of the Hungarian population is not, while 38 per cent is not really afraid of events in the former Yugoslavia threatening the country. (8 per cent of those polled said 'I don't know'.) 37 per cent of the population are of the view that Hungarian accession to NATO would increase the danger of getting involved in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Since 32 per cent said 'I don't know', only 31 per cent of the population expects increased security from accession to NATO.<sup>19</sup>

On the basis of all this, the military counter-arguments to NATO accession are as follows:

- 1) The appearance of totalitarian, expansive powers on the Hungarian border can be ruled out completely in the short and medium terms, and can be ruled out with high probability in the long run.

- 2) In our neighborhood, there is no political intention, and the ability going along with it, which would threaten the country's military security.

- 3) It might be dangerous if the conflict in the former Yugoslavia expands but it is likely to happen within the boundaries of that former country. Hungary may be affected by the war in terms of border incidents or subversive groups, the danger of a total war can be ruled out.

4) A situation without threat has come about. The countries of the east central European region are not threatened by either super- (Russia) or middle-power (Ukraine) ambitions, and – in addition – Hungary is not threatened by its neighbors, either.

5) With its eastern enlargement, NATO would have in its possession two thirds of all the weapons in Europe. This quality predominance would only increase a potential military threat to Russia.<sup>20</sup>

6) Public opinion poll figures suggest that NATO is not a determining factor from the point of view of people's sense of security.

7) Concerning the issue of accession to NATO, the public is not by far not as united as the political elite. Those formulating public opinion are not willing to take notice of the large number of people opposing Hungarian membership in NATO and the media do not reflect this division of the public.

## XVII. Pacifist counter-arguments

The pacifist argumentation, in part, summarizes the arguments so far, and, in part, creates an independent set of arguments by adding new considerations to the previous arguments. Primarily, the pacifist argumentation sees the gist of the problem in that Europe and America do not know what to do with the situation that just suddenly came by although it had been long expected: the political-military-economic victory and the cold war coming to an end.

In reality, NATO enlargement is a symptom of crisis, the moral, intellectual and economic crisis of the West as well as the failure of flexibility and that of the ability to change, the sign of thinking in terms of established patterns and paradigms: the modern times symptom of the long-lasting crisis of a civilization, a culture. The West, that has the world's largest economic and military force, wishes to follow a line of causality whose causes were eliminated while the West itself came out the winner and unhurt in this worldwide struggle.

The arguments, point by point, are as follows:

1) With its enlargement, NATO recreates itself. This is nothing else but the pregnant appearance of the phenomenon, well known in the West, which is called cold war tendency. It is the survival of the effect mechanism, built intentionally for decades, in the underlying structure of society. Which effect mechanism continues to have an influence, as a result of its force of inertia, and its objective is to prepare for the unavoidable clash. The point here is not the danger of the military lobby, the military-industrial complex gaining too much power but the social processes and institutions being impregnated with military preparations, and a development of society determining the character and driving force of society (exterminism), as well as the mutual correspondence between the inter-related civilian and military spheres (isomorphism).

2) NATO enlargement is not based on the actual behavior of the former opponent but on its supposed future, aggressive plans, supposing the 'worst scenario'. Deterring Russia, the 'Evil Empire', lurks behind the enlargement process, while NATO tries to convince Russia not to worry. Now, the West does not understand what it had not accepted from Russia before: it does not realize that arms and armaments are never neutral politically, they are always biased strategically and politically. The paranoid development of society, characteristic of the cold war period, now continues with NATO enlargement.

3) The West loses the historic opportunity to have a period of 'positive peace' (the latent conflicts being eliminated) instead of a 'negative peace' (the lack of direct violence). The enormous military potential, tied up in the cold war', is not freed and it is not going to be exploited in the interest of a fundamental social transformation. The spiral of distrust is not broken, global militarization continues.

4) The unilateral disarmament has taken place. In this historic moment, it would be logical and evident if mutual security was created at the low level. The discharging of enormous capacities would make it possible to finance the elimination of exterminism and isomorphism, that is, it would be an opportunity to create the intellectual and material foundation for a long-lasting peace covering several continents.

5) After the disappearance of the bipolar world order, the United States of America strives for autocracy and wishes to use NATO to control the entirety of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and the Far East. NATO does not serve the purposes of global and collective security but those of the international ambitions of the United States, the American statism.

6) The exterminism and isomorphism, embodied in NATO's existence, decide the dilemma of democracy or empire in Russia, create the chance of military integration between Russia and China, and will really set up the other hostile world pole. Thus, NATO, 'with no enemy', sows the seed of an even more extensive opposition. Eventually, a chance is created for a third world war because certainly "the direct cause for the third world war will be the preparations for it".<sup>21</sup>

7) As a result of NATO's enlargement into East Central Europe, the new members will be in a client relationship with those accepting them, the relationship 'large allies – small satellite states' is created, and last but not least: militarism is exported to the periphery. The possibility of the revival of an autonomous Europe-awareness is going to be lost. A staff of NATO officers, of trans-national 'interests' in theory, will come about at the expense of civilian values and the civil society, since, in reality, it will serve American, German, and perhaps British and French interests.

8) While the West played a substantial part in getting the region into this situation (Yalta), now, it does not provides it with a real 'compensation help' (second Marshall plan), and it feeds the region with a half-measure suitable for the conservation of conflicts (NATO enlargement). The tug-of-war concerning NATO expansion creates a misleading situation: it creates the illusion as if the countries of the region were major factors in international relations, while it is America and Western Europe whose interests are really dominant. The West dictates, while the propaganda manipulates: America and its allies wish to appear in the gracious role of savior and benefactor, and in the role of the protector of independent and democratic states.

9) The unconditional will of countries in our region to join NATO makes them similar to the countries of the third world. The point in the comparison is the view that makes the military the means of social changes and modernness and tries to answer, by pushing military interests in the foreground, all those difficulties that a country that has only recently gained independence, must face. Integration through NATO legitimizes the privileged status of weapons, the imperatives of defense may poison national economies, and the political elite, government bureaucracy and the military hierarchy get increasingly intertwined.

10) Pacifists are of the opinion that – for instance, in line with the Palme report – a general and total disarmament and the continuation of the disarmament spiral are necessary; the objective is to create security at the lowest possible level of military forces and to work out a joint security-disarmament program.<sup>22</sup> The common past and common future of the east central European region and the general impoverishment of the region and a lasting peace all require the creation of a zone of peace honored by external powers.<sup>23</sup>

Translated by *Sándor LACZKÓ*

*Mozgó Világ, 1995/11.*

<sup>1</sup> The figures are quoted from the material “Public opinion survey on NATO membership” (February 1995) commissioned by the Ministry of Defense. The public opinion survey was conducted by the Marketing Centrum National Market Research Institute with 1,000 randomly selected voters asked personally. (The margin of error of the data disclosed is 3-6 per cent.) Source: Ministry of Defense.

<sup>2</sup> In this piece, I have tried to map out the entirety of arguments and sets of arguments against NATO accession, and I have done my best in the interest of producing a professional and objective analysis. The types of counter-arguments do not make up a complete unity, the sets of arguments are not built on each other, the arguments raised against accession do not form a coherent unity, although they have similar characteristics. There is an unavoidable overlapping between the sets of arguments, and it may happen that not all arguments within a category can be synchronized with each other, or one argument may even oppose the other.

The study does not include counter-arguments that may be worded from NATO’s side, and does not always include counter-arguments that can be raised in the case of other countries in the region.

<sup>3</sup> However, there is a substantial difference of opinion within and outside the coalition concerning the issue of referendum, the legitimization of accession.

<sup>4</sup> See the pre-agenda speech in parliament by Iván Szabó, the head of the parliamentary group of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) on April 22, 1995: “However, Szabó stated: they were reluctant to hear opinions, including that of the Alba Kör (Circle), which are about the high costs of NATO membership. In his opinion, it is not good either if certain forces wish to make reversible the process that constitutes the common intention of government and opposition.” (The daily *Népszabadság*, April 23, 1995). See also the interview in *Népszabadság* with Géza Jeszenszky, the chairman of the Hungarian Atlantic Council: “The former foreign minister said that in his opinion, sentiments against NATO membership have become more intensive in our country, recently, at least that is the idea that he is getting when reading certain publications and statements. He believes the public should be properly informed”. (The daily *Népszabadság*, June 2, 1995).

So far, the following civic groups have indicated they are against Hungarian accession to NATO: Alba Kör – anti-violence peace movement (see the dailies *Népszabadság*, May 27, 1995, *Magyar Nemzet*, May 27, 1995, *Magyar Hírlap*, May 29, 1995); Left Wing Alternative Society, Bokor Roman Catholic base community movement (whose members initiated the collection of signatures against accession in May 1995); Fiksz Society, an anti-violence group, the founder of the station ‘Fiksz Rádió’; Hungarian Neutrality Movement (*Magyar Nemzet*, May 3, 1995); Marxist Youth Federation. Following a call by the Fiksz Society, the Left Wing Alternative Society and the Marxist Youth Movement took part in a joint anti-NATO-accession rally on Margaret Island in Budapest on May 28, 1995. The participants held a protest for an independent and neutral status for Hungary (see the daily *Népszava*, May 29, 1995).

The Green Alternative Party believes a referendum must be held on the issue of Hungary’s accession to NATO (*Hungarian Television News*, June 11, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> The Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP) and the Workers’ Party reject accession to NATO (The daily *Népszabadság*, May 26, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance: *NATO propaganda* by Gábor Lambert in the daily *Magyar Nemzet*, May 26, 1995. (“One can also see that certain political forces try to remain on stage by intensifying this issue that have so far enjoyed large-scale support”).

<sup>7</sup> *Quo vadis Hungaria?* by Tamás Szira in the journal *Gazdaság és Társadalom* [=Economy and Society], 1993/4, pages 5-69.

<sup>8</sup> Excerpts from the program endorsed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> congress of the Young Democrats: “It is possible, as a maximum objective, to leave the Warsaw Pact and proclaim the country’s neutrality, and, as a minimum objective, to transform the Warsaw Pact into an alliance of real defensive characteristics which ensures the equality and sovereignty of the member countries (...) The Young Democrats wish to take part in creating a weapons-free, united Europe”. The publication entitled ‘What do the Young Democrats want?’ includes – among other things – the following: “Independent and neutral Hungary that is free of foreign troops. Weapons-free, united Europe. Life free of fears”. Source: *The political yearbook of Hungary*, edited by Sándor Kurtán, Sándor Péter and László Vass. AULA-OMIKK, 1990, page 500.

The 16<sup>th</sup> point of the defense and security policy demands of the Independent Smallholder, Peasant and Civic Party is the following: “The Smallholders Party considers it necessary to develop a new, common European security system along with the simultaneous or gradual dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact”. The publication entitled ‘What does the Smallholders Party want?’ includes the following: “Independent, neutral and democratic Hungary!” The same source, pages 503-504.

Excerpts from the program of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF): “Our ultimate goal is a future Europe free of military blocs ... MDF considers it as a realistic future goal – depending on the state of international affairs – to win neutrality for the country which would result in the Soviet Union seeing Hungary as a politically balanced neighboring country that would not threaten its security interests”. The same source, pages 523, 532.

Excerpts from the program, entitled ‘What society do we want?’, of the Alliance of Free Democrats: “Our goal is the country’s independence. Our declaration of principle, we assume as a tradition the declaration of neutrality of 1956”. The same source, page 597.

<sup>9</sup> Stating this was the 42<sup>nd</sup> point of the document entitled ‘The position of the congress of the Hungarian Socialist Party on the Hungarian Socialist Party’. You can read the following in the 44<sup>th</sup> point of the same document: “Our party supports the idea of all foreign military forces leave the territory of European states ...” The same source, page 583.

<sup>10</sup> One must, of course, not forget that that at that time, Hungary was still a member of the Warsaw Pact, and – as a result – the term ‘neutrality’ created different notions in the people’s minds. At the time of the 1994 elections, the picture was completely different as – from 1991 – almost all parties were in favor of NATO membership. According to the party programs in 1994, the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (with a referendum on the issue) as well as the Alliance of Free Democrats, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Federation of Young Democrats and the Agrarian Federation were all in favor of NATO membership while the programs of the Christian Democratic People’s Party, the Independent Smallholders Party and the Hungarian Justice and Life Party did not touch upon this issue. The only party against NATO membership was the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, the main successor of the only party in the country for decades prior to the change of the political system in the late 1980s.

<sup>11</sup> The four requirements: democratic system, market economy, civilian control over the military and defense against terrorism.

<sup>12</sup> Concepts to attempt to achieve neutral and non-aligned status are mostly supported by this set of arguments.

<sup>13</sup> *The situation in the military is critical* by Zoltán Vereckei, the daily *Magyar Nemzet*, May 15, 1995; *Sad charts* by István Hársasi, the army paper *Magyar Honvéd*, May 19, 1995, page 7.; selection from the press on the basis of the news program of Hungarian Radio’s Channel Kossuth. the army paper *Magyar Honvéd*, May 19, 1995, page 9.

<sup>14</sup> *The budget of a premature welfare state* by Tamás Csapody, the journal *Élet és Irodalom*, April 7, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> *The myth of European unity* by Alen Sked, in the journal *Európai Szemle* 1991/2. pages 17-26.

<sup>16</sup> *Methodical issues in security policy forecasts* by Péter Deák, in the scientific journal *Magyar Tudomány*, 1994/9., pages 1,084-1,092.

<sup>17</sup> *NATO and the security of Western Europe* by László Valki, in the journal *Társadalmi Szemle* 1992/6. pages 14-33.

<sup>18</sup> *At the next elections, people cannot be deceived by empty promises* by Gábor Stier. Interview with the president of the Polish Republic, Lech Walesa in the Hungarian daily *Magyar Nemzet*, May 15, 1995. Quote from the interview: "The center of Europe cannot be no man's land".

<sup>19</sup> The Szonda Ipsos public opinion research company was jointly commissioned by the daily *Népszabadság* and the weekly television program 'A Hét' to conduct this survey on June 25, 1995. The size of the sample: 500 people. In the daily *Népszabadság*, June 12, 1995.

<sup>20</sup> "The rejection of unilateral advantages also includes that successful efforts aimed at the reduction of arms and the prevention of war must be based on the rejection of military predominance, or – in a more general term – threatening military situation". (Excerpt from the Palme Report) *Long Peace? (Fejlődéstanulmányok 10 – /Development studies/)* The Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Ed. by Ferenc Mészlivetz. Budapest, 1989, page 184.

<sup>21</sup> *The Causes of World War Three* by C. Wright Mills, London, 1958.

<sup>22</sup> Palme report. *Long Peace?* See above, page 184.

<sup>23</sup> The outcome of the referendum, held in neighboring Austria, is noteworthy. The Austrian population did not want their country to become a member of NATO. Although, the different positions of Austria and Hungary do not make it possible to make a comparison between them, it definitely shows that NATO membership is not a much wanted desire for every European country, and that there are counter-arguments to NATO membership in the West, as well.

## BUYING TICKET FOR NOAH'S ARK

Hungarian-American talks involving officials of the two countries' defence ministries were held in the past few days in Washington that also concerned the price of NATO enlargement. The Pentagon indicated that "the rate of the Hungarian defence spending ought to be increased to the average level of the NATO countries possibly already as of this year". And in the wake of talks between the state department and the foreign ministry, the state secretary in charge of integration said that "considering the possibilities, Hungary was ready to pay the price of membership of NATO and the EU. It is like buying the ticket for Noah's Ark".

Coming closer in time to Madrid and distancing from the intention to hold a referendum on Hungary's membership of NATO, these are very telling sentences. First of all they are a clear denial of the pro-NATO propaganda that NATO does not exert any pressure whatsoever on the would-be members and that the country's NATO membership would present only bearable burdens. Now, the strongest NATO member state has formulated exactly its financial requirements. It is giving up to be deliberately vague and makes it clear concretely that the precondition of NATO membership is not just the creation of a democratic system and free market conditions, the creation of good relations with the neighbouring countries and the civilian control of the army, but also spending much more on the army than until now. This was not in question among those who are watching developments with open eyes and mind, as under the disguise of phrases of NATO compatibility and inter-operability, Hungarian military developments have been implemented until now as well. So far, these have taken place under informal pressure by NATO.

The American demand which has now been made clear finally, eliminates two other illusions as well. One is the equal rights of the member states of NATO which undoubtedly exists formally. It is not NATO which sets its requirements but the largest military exporter and the most influential NATO member country, the United States. And the second illusion that has to be forgotten now is that the enlargement of NATO is the exclusive interest of the former socialist countries to which the West, or NATO unselfishly contributes ("invites us") "in the interest of extending the zone of security and democracy".

After all the West, or NATO does not do anything else than obtaining market and a market for arms and in the interest of military integration, it forces its own weapons onto us compelling the country to modernise its armed forces in a way which is compatible with NATO. As a result, it can finally take in continuously modernising military potential, while extending its economic and military borders at the same time.

The secret is out: the illusion of the unselfish saviour of the "weak but worthy democracies" is gone.

The official Hungarian reaction also contains new elements. Already before its invitation and the start of the accession talks, Hungary said yes to the increase in its military spending – the level of which is set for it by others. The statement that "the price is not a question" – although other government politicians failed to agree with the state secretary – is a true reflection of the attitude of some Hungarian officials and others fighting for membership by which anything would be done and everything would be sacrificed in order to achieve membership.

Of course, this attitude deteriorates the bargaining position of Hungary and the other countries of the region and it generates a bidding competition. No matter whether the outcome of the bidding competition is described as “the indispensable modernisation of the armed forces independently from NATO membership”, in actual fact, it amounts to an arms race – in its old and new terminology. But since there is no war situation at present, or an official enemy, the arms race is waged for getting into the North Atlantic integration.

But what does the American demand of increasing the Hungary military expenditure to the average level of the NATO countries’ spending mean? According to the 1995 data, the average military spending of the NATO countries was 2.5 per cent of the GDP. According to official data, in 1997, the Hungarian military spending – 23 per cent up on one year earlier – was 1.2 per cent of the GDP (the budgetary allocation for the Defence Ministry was 96.8 billion Ft). In other words, it is not difficult to calculate that to achieve the NATO average, the Hungarian military spending has to be more than doubled.

But the data intended for official and the population’s use are false, just like the data of the military expenditure in the previous years. They do not contain the 17 billion Ft. budget of the border guards, the almost 4 billion Ft. included in the budgets of the various ministries and state organisations set aside for NATO compatibility and defence spending and the most 1 billion Ft. of the reserve fund of the government for the Hungarian SFOR contingent and the 205 million Ft. of the same fund spent on the transformation of the army’s training system. In a similar manner, the most 30 billion Ft. assigned for air defence missiles, the 20 billion for air defence radio locators to be purchased this year and the 1997 share of the approximately 216 billion (!) budget for the purchase of fighter planes are not included in the official statistical figures. (The price of the missiles, locators and fighter planes will have to be paid in 8 to 12 years, which means that the proportionate part for 1997 is an addition expenditure somewhere between 33 and 22 billion Ft.). In other words, the official Hungarian defence spending data simply do not contain 44.2 to 55.2 billion Ft. It means that the total sum of the official and unofficial Hungarian defence expenditure in 1997 is about 141-152 billion Ft. which is not 1.2 but 1.7 to 1.9 per cent of the GDP.

Viewed from the aspect of the American proposal of reaching the NATO level, this could be good news. Good because we ought to increase the defence spending by 0.6 to 0.8 per cent to reach the 2.5 per cent of the GDP. That means that “already this year”, we could reach the NATO average with an additional 50 to 64 billion Ft. fund. But I have the fear that this “good news” is in fact bad news, as the basis of all Hungarian and NATO calculations is the 1.2 per cent of the GDP (96.8 billion Ft). So, Hungary will reach the NATO average starting from the base line of the official 1.2 per cent of the GDP and not the actual 1.8 to 1.9 per cent of the GDP. It means that we will be able to say what the price of the ticket for Noah’s Ark is if a simple addition is made. Namely, the sum of the official military spending (96.8 billion Ft) is increased to the NATO-(GDP) level (105 billion Ft) and the extra defence expenditure not registered among the official data (44.2 to 55.2 billion Ft) is added to this. In other words, the price of the ticket – on current prices – will be an annual 246.2 to 256.2 billion Ft. for Hungary, and counting with unchanged GDP, 3 to 3.2 per cent of the GDP will be used up.

Is it too much or too little? The integration state secretary claimed that “the expected expenditures will not cause an unbearable burden” for Hungary. On the basis of the above figures, they will, while we are also misleading ourselves. Anyway, Noah set the price of the ticket in an uncompromising manner because he is fully aware that for those who wish to get on, it is the ticket and not its price which matters.

Translated by *Vera SÁRKÁNY*

*Magyar Hírlap, May 21, 1997.*

## DOUBT OF A FEW

The civic organisations opposed to NATO membership are weak.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, there are causes behind it that can be traced back to macro-social processes and specific issues related to the circle of problems of NATO.

The social set-up before 1989, the nature of the change of system and the “history” of the years since then all determined the weakness of the civilian sphere. In the one-party state, the social movements were not wholeheartedly welcome, which meant that later there was hardly anything on which they could be built and the change of system did not take place amidst huge social mass movements and a significant part of the civilian initiatives which had already existed were “syphoned off” by the party system. The social structure has been lacking differentiation, the interests have not been clearly articulated and the official, institutionalised politics has assumed excessive dimensions. However, the long awaited possibility of social transformation became a reality but it meant that the establishment of the institutions of democracy and issues of power and economy completely “tied up” society.

Prior to the change of system, a negative role was attributed to the social movements, and to some extent this tradition is still with us. The conflict between politics and social movements (civilian society) can be sensed until this day and those opposed to NATO are not legitimate players of the democratic set up, they are considered to be the personification of political rival which is a necessary thing in a democracy, but they are considered to be enemies that play a negative role. The current political parties which began their existence as civilian initiatives or alternative movements, and the totality of the Parliamentary parties are of the opinion that “politics” belongs to the democratically elected Parliament in a democracy. The mistaken idea has emerged that since social conflicts can freely surface in Parliament too, what does not surface in Parliament is not a social conflict, and in a similar fashion, Parliament and the state are exclusively authorised to resolve social conflicts. Conflicts outside this circle cannot become institutionalised (as official politics consider them to be unsuitable for institutionalisation), and are also classified as illegitimate and anti-democratic, whereas exactly the opposite is true: this too, is a guarantee of the maintenance of democracy.

### ABOUT THE MOVEMENTS IN GENERAL

Hungary’s social map lacks movements in general. This holds true of the civil rights movement and the civic values and our political culture lacks affinity towards alternatives. There are no traditions on which one could build, there has been no integral development and there was not opportunity for “socialisation for movements” either. The generations most active from the point of view of movements, the young people do not use their activities in the sphere of the civilian, alternative movements. The initiatives of movement that emerge despite all this are either unable to be institutionalised or are fictitious movements with a few (2-3) people. The genuinely existing social movements lack the ability to aim at collective action or changing society consciously, and they have no strength or a high level of organisation to consciously shape society. In other words,

there are serious shortcomings in morphology, teleology and structural features that are the criteria of social movements.

The absence of the development of social movements against NATO membership is primarily due to the morphological "state" of the organisations (their level of organisation, build-up) and the lack of teleology. The organisations opposed to membership of NATO are preoccupied with their own affairs and struggles and due to their limited capacity, they are involved in the issue of NATO only as a fringe activity and they fail to completely identify with the issue (peripheral opposition to NATO). In many cases, because their own decision making mechanisms are not worked out properly, the membership who are against NATO are not legitimate and their opposition to NATO is not the result of conscious decision making in the group but rather it is a private opinion of leaders that can possibly be deduced from the views of the organisation. So, this is not a well argued opinion against NATO membership which is consciously supported by the members and backed up by the opinions of experts, but rather an almost spontaneous attitude (which reflects the lack of identifying the problem).

This is also the cause of the absence of the anti-NATO teleology. The overwhelming majority of the organisations rejecting the Euro-Atlantic integration do not have a specific anti-NATO-membership concept. Only a few of the organisations opposing NATO membership (the Alba Kör /Circle/, the Left Wing Alternative, the Humanist Movement, the Foundation for a Neutral Hungary) have teleological ideas of defining the aims. This low level of the ability of setting aims in itself can cause the lack of mobility of those who oppose Hungary's Euro-Atlantic integration, and the same phenomenon can obstruct the emergence of a network of the opponents of NATO, as it is not clearly known how and why the individual organisations reject NATO membership.

It is important to mention that the absence of teleological ideas is also to be found in the conditions of the political framework as the arguments supporting NATO membership have not been known either. The political elite which is in the vanguard of the supporters of NATO does not have teleological ideas which means that the opponents of NATO do not have a concrete programme at their disposal which would be the basis of any debate and against which arguments could have been articulated. The civilian sphere behaves in a similar manner as the political elite which "should have" a teleological function stemming its "official status" but which it does not have. In fact, the situation is just the opposite: the pro-NATO official policy is in a defensive position.

The condition of the development of a social movement is social crisis and the social teleologisation of the crisis. But the civilian sphere does not perceive NATO membership as a crisis, it fails to see the complexity of the issue and does not see that accession would involve any conflicts. It does not sense that NATO membership would be a new social problem. Although the citizens do feel the social crisis that is fundamentally needed for the development of social movements but this sense of crisis is different in nature.

The crisis is linked with the transformation and it is defined as a necessary components of the transformation. In other words, if the crisis is over, then it cannot be part of the image of the future. The power, economic, political and moral crisis is made to appear not just as transitional but also as something which originates from the not yet perfect operation of the system (capitalist, the original accumulation of capital, the post-Communist transition etc.). Everybody expects the elimination of the mistakes of the system from the official declaration of Europeanness and integration: the solution is provided by integration, modernisation and Euro-Atlantic integration.

In this environment, the interest representation organisation and the grass roots initiatives have not too great chances to develop because the management of the crisis seems possible in this paradigm. The "localisation" of the sense of crisis conceals other crises "produced" by the social system which cannot be resolved in this structure and this way, the paradigm is not questioned.

The present situation is more like a dysfunctional social state than a post-modern society which brings alternative movements into existence. As long as the circle of problems related to NATO is not part of the social crisis, or as long as the official way of getting out of the crisis is Euro-Atlantic membership, the issue of NATO membership cannot become a teleological question. No anti-NATO movement or a more definite emergence of those opposed to NATO membership cannot be expected as long as these two basic criteria (the relationship between social crisis and NATO membership and the teleologisation of the crisis) are not met. This is why, in their present state, those opposed to the membership of NATO are unable to propagate the consequences of the crisis effectively, to articulate the protests and to be actively present on the "market" of protests. For the same reason, the views of only half of the civic organisations opposed to NATO have become known and only their opinions have been given some kind of openness. (The views of the other 6 organisations have become apparent for the researchers only after a profound sociological study). It means that even if society wanted, it could not confront with the anti-NATO opinions, the anti-NATO attitudes have very little chance to intensify, there is little chance for social mobilisation and the broadening of anti-NATO activities and there is hardly any chance for a concrete anti-NATO transitory team to become institutionalised.

Six months before naming the countries that would be involved in the first round of NATO enlargement it is more or less seen clearly what the anti-NATO civic organisations have achieved and it is easy to guess what one can expect from them.

It can be stated that no anti-NATO, and not even a pre-movement has emerged. The Foundation for a Neutral Hungary is a transitory team which has not reached the stage when it would break out from the role of lonely fighter, let alone when it would act like a movement.

Since the identification of the problem is also on a low level in the organisations, although the anti-NATO groups could appear on the market of protests, the organisational identity of these groups is weak.

Due to the absence of teleological ideas, the poor mobilisation influence, it seems to attain the social-political goal of preventing the country's NATO membership is impossible. Partial goals (such as for example, partial membership of NATO, the establishment of nuclear-neutral zones, the exclusion of stationing foreign troops or to counter the NATO battle in the media) have not been declared either and there are no alternative proposals (e.g. Russia should also be a member of NATO, the need for a security architecture in a unified Europe, a pacifist defence model) which perhaps would be accepted.

The organisations may aim at processional results instead of achieving the substantial goals. They can hope to be involved in the process of policy-making concerning NATO. But they will hardly have a say in shaping the political processes. The policy-makers and the press do not handle them as "actors". With the exception of the Alba Kör and the Foundation for a Neutral Hungary, (personally Rezső Bányász), the opponents of NATO are not involved in the political process and their processional results have been weak.

But even the two exceptions are made to appear as negative examples, as small groups (or individuals) who make a “lot of trouble” on the basis of a certain ideology or world outlook. The civic organisations opposed to NATO membership – and the political parties opposing NATO which are washed together with the organisations – are doomed to play the role of frightener.

From the point of view of attaining a goal within the context of social movements, the innovation result and the impact on the political culture and political socialisation are also mentioned. In our case, these mean whether the anti-NATO movements succeed to achieve any change that would leave its mark on the institutional, methodological aspect or the totality of the political culture. The opponents of NATO membership have had a negative innovation function because by just showing up the possibility of rejecting NATO membership, the preparation for communications strategies aimed at persuading the people was speeded up and the information centre popularising – in a very one-sided manner – the Euro-Atlantic integration has been created. However, the impact of the opponents of NATO on political culture and political socialisation is different and more significant. In addition to the sporadic demos, petitions, protests and press conferences, two forms of protest are noteworthy which might influence the political socialisation. One of them is a referendum initiative of the Workers’ Party (that is a “protest” by a party which is not a civic organisation) which was supported by some of the anti-NATO organisations.<sup>2</sup> The successful collection of the necessary number of signatures needed for a referendum, then the media and legal-, Parliamentary debate concerning the holding of a referendum can be termed as an important action. The protest action which took a legal form and the collection of the necessary number of signatures were a clear success and their impact on the political culture is positive, and the negative impact of Parliament’s rejection of holding a referendum cannot be neglected wither even if the media tried to deny that influence.

The other noteworthy protest action was an active anti-violence action launched by the Alba Kör. Alba Kör activists chained themselves to the NATO propaganda train in protest against NATO membership and publicising membership from public money via pseudo-NGOs. (That action can be seen as the first attempt to legalise a new type of legal action in Hungary through violating non-violent forms of protest. All the other protest actions by the opponents of NATO membership took non-violent, legal forms which abstained from harming public order).

The “exemplary function” of the civic organisations rejected NATO may have a more important impact than the above mentioned actions on the political culture and political socialisation. By raising and managing a social problem (by trying to make the issue of membership of NATO a social problem) and by seeking alternative solutions that are different from the official position, by aiming at substantial result and political innovation, these organisations and their actions set examples. By compelling the pro-NATO forces to engage in public debates and achieving a clearer picture of the nature of NATO membership and achieving that the people could chose from real alternatives at the referendum, and in general, that a struggle can be launched against the money and machinery of power – all these can render an example-setting function to these organisations. All this can mean the broadening of the political space for the whole civilian sector, including the social movements and the political civic organisations. However, it has to be noted that for the time being only the Alba Kör and the Foundation for a Neutral Hungary (Rezső Bányász) have a modest exemplary function.<sup>3</sup>

## THE PEACE MOVEMENT

From among the alternative movements, the rejection of NATO would primarily be the “duty” of the peace movements. But the peace movements are weak even within the single-issue groups in Hungary. As the peace movements have never had a tradition in Hungary, their social following is small and for this reason, they are of a nature of sub-culture. Their position is not very hopeful because the Western peace movements are also at a nadir. Within the alternative movements, they “handed over” their dominant role to the environmental movements. (However, it is true that most of the green movements in the West are against NATO). The one-time East European partners of the Western peace movements have been included in power and in the absence of new peace groups and because of the existence of a communications vacuum, they are coquetting with the old ones that proclaim renewal. In a sociological sense, there is no peace movement in Hungary, only peace groups and other organisations exist where one of the many different activities is “peace work”. The peace groups are divided along the line of continuity and discontinuity: the independent and anti-NATO Alba Kör is based on a completely different foundation than the pro-NATO Hungarian Peace Association that represents the official peace movement. Peace groups and peace initiatives that existed in the early years of the change of system, such as for example the East-West Dialogue Network, the Vega Circle or the Gathering of the Helsinki Citizens have ceased to exist without any legal successors. At the same time, the Anti-Violence Forum, the Association of those whose Rights have been Violated, the League of those against Compulsory Military Service or the Wallenberg Association are civil rights, interest safeguarding organisations of a transitory team nature that are on a low level of organisation and their mobilising influence is also limited. The Bokor Roman Catholic basic community which following the non-violent teachings of Jesus and which had conscientious objectors among its members before the change of regime is not a significant force in this regard.

Groups representing discontinuity have turned to anti-militarism in vain and it is all the same that the features of the new peace movements can be applied to them. In other words, they represent certain themes and programmes, they protest against the dangers involved in the new type weapons and they are ready to work together with other like-minded organisations. But their scope of social movement is very limited.

Perhaps the largest number of pseudo-movements are engaged in security policy and defence subjects. These are groups which make themselves appear as independent, professional organisations and movements. Within the theme of NATO, pro-NATO counter-groups which are given heightened state support and pseudo-NGOs have been established.<sup>4</sup> The strength of these organisations is not in the abilities of the different groups, their organisation, their accessibility to information, their opportunities to be on the media, their relatively strong financial position or the capability to pay to their experts, but it is more their network-like activities on different levels which mutually reinforce one another. Under different names and relying on their image of being independent and professional, these organisations can reach various groups of society in a more credible manner than the political parties. And they can do that without saying a word about the common intention of the groups that established them, or the existence-making, solvent “NATO marketing”.

## SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The potential and natural allies of the peace movements could be the organisations that belong to the alternative movements, such as for example the environmental, feminist or autonomous groups. But the groups involved in new political themes (e.g. environmental protection, women's equality, healthy and collective life style, help for the third world, or self-help) are rather weak in Hungary. They might be common in the "eco-pax" thinking, the rejection of violence, democratic organisation, opposition to technology, but they have been unable to work together in a network. Even the strongest ecological movement does not represent a significant force. There is practically no anti-nuclear energy ecological movement in Hungary. The ecological groups have been unable to act effectively against the Paks nuclear train or the pro-nuclear- and nuclear bomb views represented by Edward Teller. They had several months at their disposal to do something about the law on nuclear energy. If the Hungarian greens are unable to act effectively in connection with the classic and traditional environmental subjects, then they cannot be expected to be effective in relation to the deployment of nuclear weapons, militarism and membership of NATO. Although from among all the alternatives movements, the greens are closest to articulate their views on the level of a political party (e.g. the Green Alternative), but the opposition to NATO membership has not been a decisive feature of any of the green party's programme. There are hardly any environmental civic movements or initiative proclaiming an alternative life-style in Hungary which means that no anti-NATO "replacement" can be expected from this area either. The women's movements and the feminists are also divided along the lines of continuity and discontinuity and they are faced with ideological, structural and other problems. They hardly make themselves visible and audible, just like the autonomous groups (the anarchists, the Alternative Network), and their mobilisation force is rather insignificant. As a result, these organisations can hardly rely on each other and there is no chance that they would work together in an integrated form against NATO.

## MODERNISATION

The general indifference towards NATO membership and the lack of understanding of the alternative movements stem from the lack of a theoretical clarity. First of all I have in mind their relationship to modernisation. Péter Márkus is certainly right when he says that the theory of modernisation, modernisation as an ideology and a paradigm appear as a theory of state socialism (ideology, model and paradigm) that deserves breaking down.<sup>5</sup>

The modernisation theory is an idea that can fill the ideological gap that developed in the wake of the change of system which seems to be suitable for linking together the critical and reform elements. Prior to the change of system, modernisation was a background ideology which inexplicitly prepared the ground for civic and capitalist ideology. The theory of modernisation was "the conscience of crisis and programme" of the transition from state socialism to state capitalism. The Hungarian – and certainly the East European – version of modernisation is the ideology of the withdrawal of the state, the political transition and the establishment of equal opportunities free from party privileges and the realisation of the system of democratic institutions. Modernisation and the Euro-Atlantic integration used as its synonym, has become the official ideology of the change of system, and it is explicitly included in the political concept of the government's

modernisation programme of 1995. In practice and in the everyday usage, it means modernisation through the customs of consumption and an action programme to solve our problems. Public thinking identifies modernisation with development and the Western type welfare.

Modernisation is made to appear as the ideal direction of social development desired by every democratic society and every normal person, as if this were the ideology of the universal development of mankind. However, the type of modernisation which has dead end, which disregards global problems and neglects the interests of the developing and periphery countries has remained hidden. And in a similar fashion, the failure of modernisation involved in the socialist paradigm is not public knowledge either.

For the people and the alternative movements of a country which is the continuous state of pre-modernisation, modernisation means development and the opportunity of the much desired progress to the “qualitative” level of the consumer society. The East and Central European countries abandoning the shortage economy and head towards capitalism do not aspire to post-material and post-modern values, and the signs of crisis of the paradigm are not sensed by them.

It also follows from the lack of realisation of the positive, or negative role attributed to NATO in modernisation that the alternative movements have failed to become active opponents of NATO membership. Only two of the civic organisations rejecting NATO membership (the Bokor basic community and the Alba Kör) have realised the relationship between modernisation and NATO membership and only one of them – Bb – rejects modernisation itself. The alternative movements become alternative exactly because they have alternative teleological ideas. The absence of this indicates the basic difference between the Western alternative movements and the Eastern “alternative” movements supporting modernisation and at the same time, it questions the genuine alternative nature of the Hungarian groups.

## NOTES

1 The list of the civic organisations which are opposed to membership of NATO is: Alba Kör (Alba Circle) – Anti-violence Peace Movement AK; Baloldali Alternatíva Egyesülés (Left Wing Alternative Association) -BAL; Budapesti Autonóm Társulás (Budapest Autonomous Federation) BAT; Bokor Öko Csoport Alapítvány (Bokor Ecological Group Foundation) BOCS; Bokor bázisközösség (Bokor basic community) Bb; Egyetemes Létezés Természetvédelmi Egyesület Klubja (Club of the Universal Existence Nature Protection Association), ETK /this is the legal successor of the Nature Protection Club of the Eötvös Loránd Science University/; Fiksz Egyesület (Fix Association) FE; Létminimum Alatt Élők Társasága (Society of those Living under Subsistence Level) LAÉT; Május Elseje Társaság (May, the first Society) MET, /this is the successor of the Münnich Ferenc Society/; Semleges Magyarországért Alapítvány (Foundation of a Neutral Hungary), SMA.

Another 2 satellite organisations are opposed to NATO membership: the youth organisation of the Workers' Party, the Marxist Youth Federation (MISZ) and the Humanist Movement (HM) which is close to the Humanist Party.

2 Apart from its own satellite organisation (MISZ), 3 civic organisations took part in the signature collecting campaign launched by the Workers' Party (LAÉT, MET, SMA), while BAL was not involved as an organisation but some of its members did.

3 It is necessary to mention László Vit public writer as well, who, however does not belong to any organization, struggles against the NATO membership as an individual fighter.

4 The Army and Society Friendship Circle, the Manfred Wörner Foundation, the new Atlantic Initiative and the Hungarian Atlantic Council.

5 Péter Márkus: Theories of modernisation in the domestic (Hungarian) social science in the 1980s. *Eszmélet*, No. 9-10, pp. 5-11.

Translated by Vera SÁRKÁNY

*Társadalmi Szemle (Social Review)*, 1997/11.

## **THE ALTERNATIVE ORGANISATIONS AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA**

“A disquietingly large number of the thinkers (the intellectuals) have become advisers of chiefs-of-staffs. They are making efforts to make appear as sensible what is deadly senseless. The intellectual specialists of the nuclear- and ideological war are receiving their money for misleading the others and that people would go to the slaughter house like sheep”. (György Konrád)

No social movement opposing membership of NATO has developed in Hungary, or in the other Central and East European countries. The protests against NATO membership can hardly articulate themselves and for this reason, the sporadic protests cannot reach the stage of intensification. The protest actions are unable to broaden or become institutional and the signs of a “transitional team”-type anti-NATO-membership could emerge are not there either. The possibility of NATO membership has not been a social challenge so far and it has not had a mobilising force concerning the existing movements. A new type movement cannot emerge and the peace and eco-type movements cannot strengthen along this line either. (Neither a new movement, nor a new quality in the existing movements has developed). NATO-membership which can be regarded as a new wave of modernisation has failed to inspire a new cycle of movements – at least so far.

Maybe the social conditions or structure has to change before an anti-NATO-membership network or a “single issue” movement can develop which – independently from political goals – would set the prevention of membership of NATO as its sole aim. During the start of the accession talks, or when the conditions become known, or at the time of setting the date of the referendum of NATO membership, the general conditions will certainly change. Probably, it will be decided then whether the anti-NATO-membership protests can institutionalise or not, and if they do, then what will its political framework be; it is yet to be seen whether the civic organisations will work together or each on its own, whether they will remain within the civilian sphere or will be attached to political parties, whether they will have a unity of action, or form a specific civic movement. It is a question whether the interest safeguarding organisations, the integrating and professional organisations will become active? Similarly, it is not known what role the non-Parliamentary parties which are opposed to NATO membership can play. And that the left wing which is outside Parliament is ready to join forces with others and if any of the green parties will strongly identify itself with the opposition to NATO?

### **ALTERNATIVES WITHOUT INTELLECTUALS**

What is happening, or more exactly what is not happening in connection with Hungary’s integration into NATO and the European Union can be interpreted as a sign of crisis of the intellectuals.

The critical type intellectuals are fewer and fewer in this region. The intelligentsia are waging its life and death, and political struggle, while being exposed to lobby interests in the hope of obtaining money and existence. The path to western scholarships and invitations to attend conferences does not lead through the neglecting of modernisation or integration. On the contrary, making a living and survival are made possible by the

elaboration of Hungarian and foreign modernisation, integration or Euro-Atlantic integration strategies and placing it on a scientific foundation.

However, without intellectuals no alternative movement, or alternative ideology can be born. In Hungarian, there is no post-materialist intelligentsia and there is hardly any intellectual-public grouping which would represent the post-materialist and anti-militarist values. Issues of peace "have got detached" from the demands of the civil rights movements and the programmes of the East European liberal opposition which would perhaps be the best entitled to assume that role.

The same thing has happened to the Czech Charter '77, the Polish Solidarity or the Hungarian democratic opposition: they have disintegrated in power and revised their earlier views. After they got into power, all alternative ideas and indeed anti-militarism too, were swept out from the programmes of the former opposition. To have the freedom rights and civic right accepted consumed all their energies. The ideas to eliminate the bi-polar world have been realised, since the world has become "one-polar". Global issues, solidarity, equal rights of the peoples etc. could not be dealt with on the level of everyday and pragmatic politics (since they did not concern us directly any more) and anti-militarism aimed at conscientious objection which was ultimately resolved by the introduction of civilian military service.

Since the anti-militarism and freedom of violence in the system of values of the left wing are not duly represented politically, anti-militarism has suffered "a historical defeat". The anti-militarist elite of the change of system are united today in their support of membership of NATO together with the former Communists who got into Parliament who had early been dogmatically against NATO. Personal political lives and changes symbolise this situation very well. One of the founders of Dialogue, the first independent Hungarian peace group after 1945 had been a top state supporter of Euro-Atlantic integration for three years, and today he is the No.1 man in the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament effectively lobbying for NATO membership. One of the prominent personalities of the East-West Dialogue Network Circle, an independent peace group fighting for disarmament both in the East and West, established before the change of system, is a leading foreign affairs politician of one of the governing parties committed to membership of NATO. A well defined group of the East-West Network who were close to the British European Nuclear Disarmament (END) today belong to the core of the Young Democrats-Civic Party and the Alliance of Free Democrats. One of them is the chairman of the pro-NATO European Integration Committee of Parliament, the other one is the vice president of the pseudo-civic organisation, Hungarian Atlantic Council working for Euro-Atlantic integration. Members of the one time democratic opposition, the one time editors of samizdat publications are ardent believers of NATO-membership today as politicians inside power, or outside of it, as writers, scientists, public personalities or columnists. One of the former representatives of the official peace movement of the one-party state, the Peace Council which proclaimed radically anti-NATO views that resounded the will of the state is now one of the highest ranking Hungarian NATO diplomats, while the successor of the organisation – in line with the desire of the present holders of power – is pro-NATO. A top staff member in charge of "foreign propaganda" of the Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda department was first the head of the Defence Ministry's NATO department, and as such the main guardian of civilian control, then he became the "propaganda minister" in charge of NATO membership, while at present he is the secretary of a pseudo NGO, comprising of

politicians lobbying NATO who speaks out in the media as an “independent” expert. It is also public knowledge that the present Minister of Defence who “demands” membership of NATO wrote a chapter of a textbook in 1988 against NATO as an organisation which obstructs world peace and even at the end of 1992, he openly criticised those supporting NATO membership.

But “it is doubtful how real is the nation or the military alliance. As long as the interest of the state is bigger than the life of the individual, world peace is in danger. Intellectual rule over force is needed, otherwise we will be killed. Everybody has a liberation case study as his lot. We provide the answer to the most important questions with our biography.” (György Konrád)

Translated by *Vera SÁRKÁNY*

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## OPPONENTS OF NATO MEMBERSHIP

On the basis of the results of public opinion surveys concerning NATO membership, one can say that the people of Hungary – just like the citizens of the Czech Republic – are rather divided. However, the party affiliation or membership in NGOs of either those who support or reject membership of NATO is not known. Having said that, it is clear that members of the Workers' Party, the Hungarian Justice and Truth Party (MIÉP), the Humanist Party and the Hungarian Well-being Federation and of the organisations attached to the Humanist Party belong to the opponents of NATO. A common feature of all these parties is that they are outside Parliament and only the Workers' Party and MIÉP received more than one per cent of the vote at the 1994 elections. Until now, these two parties – being on the two ends of the political spectrum – have had no common standpoint in any issues. They were not always on a common wavelength concerning NATO either, as until the end of 1996 MIÉP's attitude towards NATO was rather controversial. But the Workers' Party which is to the left from the Hungarian Socialist Party and the extreme right wing MIÉP led by István Csurka have failed to come close, let alone engaged in common action this time too. The Workers' Party mainly opened towards the left wing outside Parliament, the Communists, Marxists and the former reform-Communists and its election alliance with László Kapolyi's Hungarian Social Democratic Party (MSZDP) is based – to no small extent – on their common opposition to NATO. But the aim of the Workers' Party and MSZDP to create a left wing anti-NATO group out of the left wing civic organisations and mini-parties, the trade unions and interest safeguarding organisation has failed. This is so, even if this group is in existence under the name of Left Wing Co-operation Council and that members of the above organisations are represented at actions against NATO organised by the Workers' Party. Co-operation with those organisations has made it possible that an adequate number of signatures was collected by the Workers' Party at the end of 1995 to hold a referendum.

There are other fundamental differences between the Workers' Party's and MIÉP's opposition to NATO membership. The Workers' Party's ideas are rooted in the Marxist left wing values and the political and economic preferences of the past, while MIÉP's anti-NATO attitude is mixed with racist, anti-Semite and nationalist ideology. Because of the diametrically opposed ideologies, the two parties' opposition to NATO cannot be brought to a common platform. And this is the case even if they both quote pacifism, a desire of peace and absence of violence but these slogans can be evaluated in their case as part of their rhetoric only.

In addition to political parties, some civilian organisations are also opposed to NATO membership. The still weak civilian sphere has 13 anti-NATO organisations. Among them, there are satellite organisations (the organisations of the Workers' Party and the Humanist Party) and there are anarchist groups (Budapest Autonomous Association /BAT/), a feminist organisation (Green Women), a pacifist organisation (the Alba Kör), an interest safeguarding organisation (Society of those Living Under Subsistence Level /LAÉT/), a religious group /Bokor Roman Catholic basic community/) and there are left wing organisations (Left Wing Alternative Association, Fix Association, May, the 1st Society) and green organisations (the Bokor Ecological Group Foundation, the club of the Universal Existence Nature Protection Association). In the grey zone between the

parties and the civic organisations are the Foundation for a Neutral Hungary (SMA) organisation of former ambassador, Rezső Bányász and the Social Coalition for a Human-centred Politics (TK) headed by Ádám Éliás, a minister of the Reformed Church who is an entrepreneur at present. The left wing SMA is close to the Workers' Party, while TK is a group which is equally open to the anti-NATO parties and party members. Both of these groups which have entrepreneurs among their members, were formed with the aim of creating a movement and both are single-issue organisations. It also means that if their goal is achieved, then these organisations cease to exist. A difference between the two is that SMA has been against NATO for two and a half years, while TK began its activities only last summer. Furthermore, SMA has failed to become an initial movement, whereas TK – despite the fact that it started its work “late” – is very active and can be regarded as being in the early stage of a movement. While SMA is built mostly on the column-writing activities of one person arguing first of all for neutrality, the methods of protest of TK are manifold and this organisations has a relatively broad social following. Evidently, this is partly the result of the fact that TK has opened its doors wide and accepts everybody from the extreme left, extreme right, religious or non-religious sphere, let them be pacifist or militant, who are opposed to accession to NATO.

Apart from these two organisations, there is the Social Interest Co-ordination Council (TÉT) which sometime voices anti-NATO statements but has not done more than that so far and there is METÉSZ, an agricultural interest protecting organisations. (Rezső Bányász is the vice president of the first of these two, and Gyula Kósa is chairman of the second. Gyula Kósa's anti-NATO membership statements last August seem to be nothing more than his individual, personal utterances).

If one takes into account the members and followers of the above mentioned organisations, then it is a very significant number, as LAÉT's membership alone is about 1.2 million. However, the full picture is much more modest because only the Workers' Party, MIÉP, the Alba Kör, the Left Wing Alternative Association and the Social Coalition have well articulated anti-NATO membership ideas. All the other organisations, including Albert Szabó's openly militant, racist and anti-Semite Hungarian Well-being Federation are inactive in the issue of NATO. If one looks at the level of organisation and the ability to mobilise, then the strongest organisations are the Workers' Party, MIÉP, the Humanist Party (Humanist Movement) and the Social Coalition, but from the point of view of appearance in the media, the Workers' Party, MIÉP and the Alba Kör are the strongest.

An interesting feature of the anti-NATO protests is that although they take very different forms, (ranging from demonstration and petition to press protests and civilian disobedience), there has been a spontaneous division of the protest market recently. The Workers' Party has been concentrating on street demonstrations where environmental issues are also raised (Taszár, the environmental pollution caused by American soldiers), MIÉP focuses on signature collection (to achieve a decisive referendum) and other large scale events (political rally), the Humanist Movement is aiding the actions of other organisations (Workers' Party and TK) and the Alba Kör is giving priority to the media and a war of statements (the Complaint Committee of the National Radio and Television Board).

It is yet to be seen what the months leading up to the referendum on NATO membership will bring. It is not clear at this stage what the people's reaction will be to the Foreign and Defence Ministries' pro-NATO propaganda and to the tug-of-war

concerning the referendum, what influence they will exert on the hesitating people and whether they will mobilise the parties and civic organisations opposing NATO membership. In my opinion, there is no chance for any new anti-NATO organisation to emerge and the unity of the existing organisations and their effective action is not likely either. Since both the legislative and executive power and the powerful media are pro-NATO, those opposing membership of NATO will not have followers. Something similar will happen as the demo organised by the Alba Kör two years ago where the participants protested against a Central European arms show in Budapest.

For all these reasons, the social presence and role is very important for the anti-NATO organisations – disregarding the extremist organisations –, but they are far from being able to counter the influence of the other side. From the point of view of the referendum, their role has been upgraded because the issue of NATO membership has been chaotically mixed with the question of land ownership. This mixture of the two issues has become a terrain of political clashes between the governing and opposition parties. All in all, if the referendum were to be unsuccessful, or NATO membership would be rejected, then the Parliamentary parties and not the opponents of NATO would bear the responsibility for it.

Translated by *Vera SÁRKÁNY*

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## **ARGUMENTS OF SOME CIVIC ORGANISATIONS AGAINST NATO MEMBERSHIP**

In Hungary exactly one dozen civic organisations are opposed to the country's Euro-Atlantic integration. The overwhelming majority (10) of the organisations opposing NATO membership are genuinely civilian organisations but there are also (2) satellite organisations close to political parties.<sup>1</sup>

Only four of the civic and satellite organisations opposed to NATO membership (AK, BAL, HM, SMA) have written and elaborated system of arguments against membership. (The arguments of MISZ are equivalent with those of the Worker's Party, which means that MISZ does not have arguments of its own but its views are well known). Their documents can be identified organisationally and they can be differentiated from one another. Only one document has become available which was signed by more than one organisation – in fact, it was signed by six groups.<sup>2</sup> This however, does not mean that the reasons of the opposition to NATO membership of the organisations which do not have a system of arguments would be unknown. Their arguments can be figured out from their writings and conversations with their representatives, so, this way, the network of ideas of those opposing NATO membership can be drawn up.

### **ARGUMENTS AGAINST JOINING NATO**

I have grouped the most frequent arguments of the civic and satellite organisations (see: civic organisations) against NATO membership (their answers to the question of "Why do they oppose NATO membership?") in 21 groups. On the basis of frequency, these are the following: 1. pacifism, anti-militarism; 2-3. economic burden, loss of sovereignty; 4-6. ethnic-minority problems; the emergence of new conflicts and a new enemy image; geopolitical consequences; 7. increasing arms race; 8-11. ecological concerns, reference of the Warsaw Treaty (parallel with the WT); social considerations; lack of legitimacy; 12-16. the problems of the Third World; being defenceless; defence of big capital; the danger of deploying nuclear weapons; the issue of equality and lack of equality; 17-19. deteriorating sense of security; it is the interest of the West; it is the interest of the Hungarian power elite; 20. division in Europe and 21. other arguments.<sup>3</sup> The most frequently occurring (11 occurrence) arguments belong to the group of ideas of pacifism and anti-militarism (the loss of an army-free Hungary and world through belonging to a militarised economy and integration via military structures). This is followed by the economic argument (8 occurrences) (NATO costs a lot, involves an increase in taxes, NATO membership means an economic disadvantage, it would be harmful to the country, questioning the promised economic advantages).

When rejecting NATO membership, the organisations frequently mention the loss of sovereignty (in general: 5 occurrences; the loss of military sovereignty: 2 occurrences; loss of the political independence: 1 occurrence, in other words, altogether 8 occurrences). Next on the list – with the same number of points – is the argument concerning ethnic minorities (the problem of ethnic Hungarians who live beyond the borders, the strengthening of ethnic-based hostilities), the arguments of news conflicts and the emergence of a new enemy image and the geopolitical arguments (we will be a buffer zone and a military springboard, we shall get to the periphery). All these

arguments occurred 7 times each. The next argument against NATO is the rejection of an arms build-up (NATO membership involves an arms build-up, our weapons will be modernised, accession will set off an arms race, we shall be a market of the Western military industry – 6 occurrences). The arguments of the following categories were mentioned five times. These include the ecology (eco- and green philosophy) and the parallel line with the WT (after the WT comes NATO, from one military bloc we go to the other), social arguments (the money to be spent on NATO ought to be spent on the health care, the social safety net, education and culture) and the arguments concerning legitimacy. According to this last argument, the commitment to NATO represented by the political elite is anti-democratic and anti-Constitutional and the elite has not authorisation to do that. The problem of the Third World is mentioned four times (contrasts between the rich and poor countries, the issue of center-periphery, the North-South problem), the arguments which can be described as the feeling of defencelessness (satellite role, being subservient, one-side Hungarian sacrifice) and the argument that NATO is enlarged for the defence of “capital” and “big capital”. Equally frequently occurred the argument of a danger of the deployment of nuclear weapons and the reasoning that NATO enlargement and our NATO membership is not compatible with the idea of equality of countries and equal rights of peoples. A relatively rarely mentioned argument is that Hungary’s military security is threatened by no-one, so, there is no reason for the country to join a military integration organisation (3 occurrences).

The idea that NATO enlargement serves the interest of NATO itself and the West and that membership of NATO is in the interest of the new Hungarian power elite was mentioned the same number of occasions, while two of the organisations mention that NATO enlargement would involve a division in Europe. Other arguments include that the civilian relationships should be given preference to military relations (1 occurrence), and there was one reference to the Bible.

#### WHAT DO CIVIC ORGANISATIONS OPPOSE?

They oppose the existence of NATO (with the exception of LAÉT and MISZ, 10 organisations agree with this), the deployment of nuclear weapons (4), the stationing of foreign troops in Hungary (4), sending Hungarian soldiers abroad (2), the role Hungarian soldiers have played in Bosnia (2), the transit of foreign troops in Hungary (1), the presence of the Americans (Taszár etc.) (1), and the use of Hungarian shooting grounds by NATO-IFOR (1). Interestingly enough, the modernisation is opposed by only one organisation (Bb) and it is supported by just one organisation (AK). Half of the organisations definitely support Hungary’s neutrality. Four organisations concretely mention of the fact that they agree with the planned referendum on Hungary’s membership of NATO. The country’s membership of the EU is explicitly supported by two organisations (AK,SMA) and they stress that EU membership should not be linked with NATO membership. One organisation (Bb) underlined that Hungary is at cross-roads and claims that we have already missed the path, while another group (SMA) denies even the fact of the need to choose. The organisations come up with the demand of a new type of peace system and the creation of a Europe without military blocs, and the need for a “truly collective security” (mentioned 6 times).

It is not uninteresting to see what historical dates and exemplary countries the organisations quote when they reject NATO membership. Most frequently, they refer to

the 1956 revolution. (There are three references to the demand of the revolution of neutrality). Apart from this, there is reference to the 1848-49 revolution and war of independence (“foreign troops should be taken away from the country”), the world wars (reference to the idea that we have always lost of the side of the allies), April 3. 1941 when Pál Teleki committed suicide,<sup>4</sup> reference to March 17. 1969, the date of issuing the Budapest Appeal and August 1. 1975, the date of signing the Helsinki Closing Document,<sup>5</sup> and there is also mention of the earlier promise of the elite involved in the change of system to introduce neutrality. From among the foreign countries, Russia and Ukraine are mentioned most frequently (the basis of the reference is that we are not threatened by any danger, we would lose our friendship and as a result of our NATO membership, the economic contacts would weaken). These countries are followed by reference to Portugal and Turkey (the basis of reference is that their examples show that NATO membership does not result in economic growth; and that there is a conflict between Turkey and Greece, see Notes 2.). Only SMA refers to Austria, Switzerland, Finland and Sweden as neutral countries, while AK is the only organisations which refers to Slovakia, Serbia and Romania. (The basis of reference of this latter one is that no military attack by these countries can be expected). Austria is mentioned separately (see Notes 2.) as a neighbouring and neutral country.

## CONCLUSIONS

AK, BAL, HM and MISZ (Workers’ Party) have the most comprehensive systems of arguments and reference background, while SMA focuses on the explanation of neutrality. The arguments cover a broad spectrum giving a priority to freedom of violence and anti-militarism. The leading position of the arguments related to pacifism and anti-militarism surprising which lends itself to drawing several conclusions.

At first sight, this might mean that a general and basic value of the alternative movements appears here, as being free from violence is a basic category of alternative theories and alternative movements. This is the ideological “glue” linking the alternative movements to each other. However, freedom from violence is only loosely related to the broad interpretation of the idea as applied by the alternative movements. They consider this value to be valid to man’s all relations and they do not accept the exploitation of nature just like any form of violence between men ranging from revolution to wars defending the country (these are pacifists, peace movements, peace churches, anarchists, greens etc.). Only 5 organisations (AK, BAT, Bb, BOCS and perhaps ETK) identify themselves with this interpretation of the freedom from violence, the others do not.

This limiting attitude is even more striking if one examines it from the point of view of the country’s possible future defence. Because, one can draw the conclusion from the available information that the other organisations’ ideal would be a neutral Hungary with a strong army of regulars or conscripts (like Austria, Switzerland and Sweden), for which it would be worth spending money. In other words, opposition to NATO membership only partially and certainly not primarily comes from the idea of refusal of violence which is typical of the alternative movements.

The argument of anti-violence – anti-militarism certainly means something else in this case. These organisations approach the maintenance of peace in a way that they see in the enlargement of NATO the changing of the organisation in the negative direction. They do not seem to sense military threat but they do feel the controversy that may

develop following Hungary's NATO membership. In other words, according to these organisations, instead of security, NATO brings insecurity, it fails to bring military threat to an end but generates such threats.

The issue of how credible the organisations (e.g. BAT, MET, MISZ, HM) are which refer to anti-violence and anti-militarism cannot be neglected, although it is not tackled here. An important question is whether anti-violence and anti-militarism follow organically from their charters, ideology and most importantly, from their social and political activities that are not related to the NATO issue. It is difficult to consider an organisation credible which is not reserved from street beatings (BAT), which does not dissociate itself from its legal predecessor that threatened with violence (MET), which is a satellite organisation of another organisation that pursues a political practice which interprets violence in a different manner (MISZ) or which does not reject a world revolution even with violence (HM).

The economic arguments take a leading place in list of the anti-NATO arguments. The fact that many people question the idea that NATO membership would involve economic advantages certainly plays a role in that. However, the argumentation does not include calculations as to how much neutrality or the maintenance of the present status (being outside of blocs) would cost. For the groups opposed to NATO, membership does not mean the resolution of the ethnic minority issue, but on the contrary, it would generate new conflicts and they forecast the emergence of new enemies and an arms race. Those who share this view, do not believe in the possibility of accession as a partner of equal rights and due to the country's history and geo-strategic position, they are afraid of the preservation of a subordinate role of the country. The loss of some form of sovereignty and the idea of eco-philosophy appear strongly among the arguments; drawing a parallel with the Warsaw Treaty can also be sensed, just like the fear from stationing foreign troops in Hungary and the role Hungarian soldiers may play in Bosnia.

The "weight" of these last two statements can be compared with the result of a public opinion survey carried out by the Hungarian Gallup Institute.<sup>6</sup> According to the data of the Gallup survey, 40 per cent of the Hungarian people reject the stationing of NATO troops in Hungary and 11 per cent cannot take a stand on the matter. 30 per cent of the people oppose the involvement of a Hungarian technical contingents in the NATO peace-making in Bosnia and another 15 per cent are hesitant. It means, that the stationing of NATO troops in Hungary and sending Hungarian soldiers abroad are very unpopular among the people.

Another interesting issue is that the organisations are also opposed to the country's present commitment to NATO. While relatively few people support concretely in favour of a referendum on NATO membership, the organisations regard the present level of commitment to NATO, the full and complete Euro-Atlantic commitment as illegitimate.

It is worth mentioning that the organisations put forward proposals for global solution, even if not always in concrete forms, so apart from their opposition, they also offer solutions. (Of course, the reality and realistic, political possibility of implementing them is another issue). These other arguments indicate that they are thinking in a different (broader?) globally than those who support NATO membership. This is apparent in a different thinking concerning geography and geopolitics, that they do not concentrate on the North Atlantic region and its periphery, but other – perhaps more disadvantageous – regions of the world are equally important for them. At the same time,

they take into account the wider connections and problems of the world and their relationship to NATO membership and NATO as such is within this context.

#### HOW DO THEY SEE NATO?

Only AK and BAL define “what NATO is” for them. The notion of NATO of BAT, Bb, HM and SMA can be determined on the basis of the available documents, but the idea of NATO in the perception of BOCS, LAET and MET cannot be seen. According to a 24 point statement of the pacifist Alba Kör “NATO is a military structure which – through its mere existence – maintains militarised economic growth” and “with huge costs, it operates a world-wide military structure”. NATO “is a generator of global tensions” and contributes to a state of affairs in which the wealth produced by the states and mankind is wasted on military purposes, and “it protects the welfare and consuming Euro-Atlantic region from poverty and immigrants, people of other religions and culture”. In the eyes of the Left Wing Alternative Association NATO “is the military interest-safeguarding organisation of the highly advanced West” “whose goal is to preserve the historical advantages accumulated by these countries and their defence militarily”. NATO is “kept in motion by the position struggle of the elites, their endeavours to expand and the logic of force and not by the desire of peace”. NATO is the institution of maintaining international relations of subordination and superiority. Among other things, this is why BAL says that NATO is unsuitable for solving the security problems of the region. The statement issued by the six organisations jointly lays down that “NATO is a military organisation generating new conflicts in this region which is contrary to the image of a peaceful Europe based on collective security and equality that violates the equality of the peoples”. For this reason, they consider NATO an organisation which is unsuitable for the creation of a new type of a system of peace. The anarchist BAT is of the opinion that NATO is an army brought about on the basis of an international agreement which “is the means of the advanced Western countries’ policy neo-colonialism”. It is a form of appearance of the capitalist system, economic dependence and power, and suppression.

The Roman Catholic Bokor (Bush) community thinks that NATO is a military organisation and as such, it ensures privileges for the Western world through military violence. It makes lavish consumerism possible and guarantees an efficient representation of white man and the priority of historical Christianity. For the Humanist Movement, NATO is a military organisation which is kept in motion by its economic and political interests backed by capitalist banking groups. And finally, the Foundation for a Neutral Hungary speaks about an “outdated military political machinery left by the cold war” which poses as the ruler of the world and which represents only 20 per cent of the world’s population. In their eyes, NATO obstructs the “truly historical” “neutral Hungarian road”, the implementation of neutrality which would guarantee the security of the Hungarian people, free, democratic and independent development.

The image of NATO in the eyes of these organisations is rather homogeneous, while the arguments they quote against NATO is very varied. For them, NATO is clearly a military integration organisation which defends with arms partial interests (Euro-Atlantic interests, the interests of the West, the white man instead of representing global interests outside Central and Eastern Europe and generally outside Europe), and group interests (interests of the political elites, the capitalists and the Christians).

NATO is the symbol of division, exploitation and lack of equality, it is a military integration which represents those who get rich at the expense of exploiting other, those who live well but are in a minority. This rather mechanic interpretation certainly stems from the past: here one finds official, anti-NATO arguments that were spread widely during the existence of the WT. (These judgements in themselves do not classify their contents of truth). A reason behind the permanent nature of the NATO image is that NATO'S definition of its own self is confused and that the definition of its goals and tasks after the elimination of the bi-polar world is not without problems either.

## FAULT LINES

The official approach supporting NATO membership often interprets membership as a means of modernisation and as a modernisation strategy, direction and model of modernisation. But the alternative movements in the west deny the model of the modern industrial society and are seeking a way out of the crisis of the traditional modernisation. It would be logical if in Hungary the rejection of modernisation were to have an outstanding place among the arguments against NATO membership. But in contrast to this, only the Bokor basic community rejects the modernisation represented by NATO membership. It is equally interesting that the Alba Kör which has all the criteria of an alternative movement, is a supporter of modernisation. The alternative movements operating in two different types of society approach modernisation differently exactly because their societies' position concerning modernisation is different. While the alternative movements in the west are thinking in terms of an alternative modernisation, the eastern "alternative movements" support the traditional, western type modernisation. On the whole, the differences between the eastern and western alternative movements can be seen well and it is clear that only a minority of the opponents of NATO membership belong to the category of the alternative movements, or the new social movements.

In other words, the fault line between the supporters and opponents of NATO membership is not between modernisation and the alternative ideology. The genuine fault line is between the assessment of NATO as an organisation, a political-military structure and the ideas attached to NATO membership. That is the statements are based on value priorities and an approach which focuses on efficiency. Since NATO itself has problems concerning its own self-definition, and the accession will be made into an organisation which is not fully known yet, and the real consequences will be known only after joining the organisation, or refusal to join in, emphasis on efficiency includes emotional, speculative elements. The charges brought up against the opponents of NATO membership that they "want to hold back development", they "are against the democratic, law-guided state", that they "are opposed to development" and "integration" are not true. The collective judgement that they would be committed to Russia is certainly not true in the case of at least eight organisations. It is probably not true of any of them that they would be interested in the restoration of the pre-1989 regime and that they would urge to treat NATO membership as an issue of legitimacy. Research results have failed to back the idea that the differences of judgement would be the result of the different position of the political parties and civic organisations, or that their positions are different.

Translated by *Vera SÁRKÁNY*

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## THE TEN DEADLY SINS OF ARMS BUILD-UP

During yesterday's demonstration against arms build-up I met the deputy editor-in-chief of the one of the most widely read dailies. He is a well known journalist and a good acquaintance of mine. Way back, in the uncertain situation of the early stage of the change of system he ensured space in the paper for new about the conscientious objectors. It caused then problems for him, as comrades of the military court called him to responsibility. So, now, I turned to him with confidence but he almost immediately interrupted me asking: "What's the problem with building up arms?".

There are many problems with the arms build-up. The first problem is that it is taking place after the bi-polar world, the cold war and the compulsory armament set for the members of the Warsaw Pact have ceased to exist. With its Russian arms import valued 1.2 billion USD, the purchase of fighter bombers at a value of 1 billion USD and with the plan of buying a locator and missile system for almost 500 million USD, Hungary is putting an end to the halt in armament in Central Europe. Hungary is not content with the present technical level of the army, and our country does not want to make use of the historic opportunity of ending the arms build-up. By purchasing weapons when there is not official enemy, Hungary increases the danger of an armed conflict, generates an arms build-up in this region and lays the foundations of an arms race in Central Europe.

The problem with armament is that it costs a lot of money. The costs are many times more than those of building the National Theatre, the financing of the National Scientific Research Fund or the building of a new incinerator to get rid of wastes; and it costs about the same amount as would be required for backward regions, like the area beyond the Tisza river to catch up, or as the maintenance of the social safety net. Decisions of the Hungarian government and Parliament prove that old truth that a country cannot be poor and indebted enough for being unable to spend on armaments in abundance.

It is also a problem related to arms build-up that there is never a public debate about it. For many months, there was a sharp debate in Parliament and society about the 2 billion Ft. related to high school tuition fees and the compulsory salary increase of 20 to 35 per cent in various sectors. But there is no Parliamentary or social discussion about the arms purchases valued at about 400 billion Ft. due between 1990 and 2005. It is a welcome development that there is debate about every cent provided for the civilian sphere but it is an open question why are the billions of dollars to be spent on the military taken as unquestionable, foregone truth.

It is a great problem that Parliament adopted the defence program budget last July which contains the financing of military target programmes apart from the annual budget for the Defence Ministry. By doing so, a dual budget has been created, one is the "civilian" and the other one is a military budget to be allocated under different entitlements (border guards, civilian guards, military research, the army, military programmes and military target programmes).

Another problem involved in the arms build-up is that it is not one case, but a process. It is impossible to say that with the announced arms purchases, we will have been over the technical modernisation of the army by 2005. The modernisation of air defence is just the tip of the iceberg, as 40 to 60 per cent of the technology of the army is impossible to operate, 60 per cent of the means of military technology is outdated, 40 per cent of the

vehicles cannot be used and the Defence Ministry wants to change about half of the whole technology. The programme of replacing the fleet of armoured vehicles is ready and the reconstruction programme concerning army vehicles and the chemical defence gear is being prepared. But it cannot be said that no matter what the costs are, the facilities purchased during the Warsaw Pact are going to be changed and then, for 20 or 30 years, they will not cause any problems. This is not the case because 8 to 12 years after integrating the new arms into the system, there will be need to modernise them as they will be in use in peace-time, and the development of military technology – and the modernisation of the neighbours' military technology makes replacement "necessary".

In other words, the arms build-up is a continuous state which is said to be temporary, it is a constant circle which cannot be stopped within the armament paradigm.

It is also a problem that once again Hungary will be the arms market for a military bloc, a major power and the Western multinational (arms producing) companies. In addition to the compulsion of repaying the country's foreign debts, Hungary seems to be ready to meet its arms purchase obligation as well. Hungary is pleased to buy supermodern arms that had originally been developed and deployed against us but which have been "freed" from COCOM. And Hungary will integrate these weapons into its military technology in order to turn our former allies into a Western weapons market.

The next problem with the arms build-up is that as a result of the proclaimed armament programme, the Hungarian military industrial lobby will strengthen. This lobby is dreaming about military industrial orders, state subsidies and development, a separate bank, that is about the return of the past.

The way the large and small Hungarian churches handle the arms build-up is a major problem. The throne and the altar, the church of power and the state power are thinking about the army, national defence and armaments the very same way. The voice of the churches of peace does not reach the politicians, while the historical churches are involved in discussions with representatives of power only to get back their nationalised assets and to establish the church service in the army barracks. The Christian Democratic People's Party which is selected as a "spokesman" and said to be Christian is the greatest supporter of the arms build-up.

A grave problem of the arms build-up is that it is the hotbed of corruption. The case of the secretary general of NATO indicates that large arms orders may go together with enormous cases of corruption. During one or another arms purchase politicians and parties may receive as much bribe money that would easy life for the rest of their lives, or that could decide the outcome of Parliamentary elections. In this regard, the incumbent government concluding the arms deal is at an advantage, it is exposed to attempts of corruption which at the same time, it a strong attraction to keep power. In this context, the arms build-up may become decisively important in Hungary, as the country may lose billions of dollars as well as losing the possibility of altering the political parties on the top of power.

It is no small problem either that the arms build-up appears in an "orwellian outlook". On the surface, there is the reduction of personnel, the elimination of the morning exercises of GIs and the possibility of wearing civilian clothes and the poverty of officers, similarly to other Hungarian employees – all being exposed in the media. But the other faces of the reform of the armed forces – the technical modernisation, the armament programme and its costs – remain hidden to the general public. Since the elimination of fighter planes – such as the MIG-21 type aircraft – is nothing else than a "noteworthy

manoeuvre” because what is being eliminated as part of contracts concerning the decrease of arms, it amounts to giving up outdated technology, that is a necessary phase prior to the purchase of new arms. In other words, a necessary element in the exchange of weapons.

The biggest problem of the arms build-up legalised by law is to be found in the way how this is viewed. In this respect, Hungary is preparing for changing one military bloc to another but not for a change of views, whereas the conversion of souls would be necessary. A significant part of the politicians, decision-makers, churches and the intellectuals, that is those who shape the opinion of the general public believe that the survival of the nation and the security of the region depend on the strength of the weapons. They depend on the operability of the Hungarian army and not the birth rate, the health care, the quality of life, the average life expectancy or the level of education. So, dear deputy editor-in-chief, the problem with the arms build-up is only the fact that while the civic society is thinking about “finding out” what Hungary ought to be like, the politicians and people of the military have discovered the arms building Hungary. And this has never involved anything good.

Translated by *Vera SÁRKÁNY*

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## INFORMATION OR PROPAGANDA?

### THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY OF HUNGARY'S NATO MEMBERSHIP

The presentation of NATO, the publication of information about NATO enlargement and Hungary's NATO membership (NATO communications) are financed from funds coming from different sources via different channels and realised in different forms. The funds for NATO communications may come from the state (a separate heading in the budget, government support, ministry funds, party funds, budgetary support ensured for civic organisations), or they may come from Hungarian and foreign (West European and American) sponsors and foundations, or directly from member countries of NATO and from companies directly involved in arms tenders and from membership fees of organisations.

### MONEY FROM THE STATE BUDGET

The organisation which provides information on Euro-Atlantic integration for Members of Parliament, the Parliamentary standing committees, members of the Parliamentary party groups and their experts is the North Atlantic Information Centre (NAIC) operating in the Office Building of MPs. The goal of NAIC that can also be read on the Internet is "to contribute to the domestic acceptance of our endeavours concerning Euro-Atlantic integration, the exact information of the general public" and "it wants to participate in the preparation of those shaping public opinion, the media specialists and journalists, it wants to participate in seminars, workshops, debates and TV programmes organised jointly with NGOs and the invitation of famous guests and experts". To meet these duties, the NAIC receives six million Fts of budgetary support this year, as opposed to the five million last year.

In January, 1997 the Foreign Ministry's NATO-WEU department compiled a document called "Communications Strategy Preparing Accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation". "The government's communications strategy should be financed basically from budgetary sources. In addition, NATO's financial support will also be necessary" – writes the document on the sources of financing. "The implementation of all those laid down in the communications strategy requires a total amount of about 450 to 500 million Fts", and out of that total "120 million Fts are available from the budget of the Foreign Ministry to meet the 1997 duties". Finally, the Foreign Ministry had to be content with ensuring 112 million for that purpose this year which however, is not laid down in the relevant, ministerial chapter of the Official Gazette, but it is evidently a fund which had been approved Parliament. (I do not know the financial support of NATO that can be used for this purpose).

But the Foreign Ministry also has the "government's Communications Strategy preparing Hungary's accession to the European Union" which is supported by the government with a total of 210 million Fts. The printed and electronic media often carry information about the relations between the EU and NATO, or explicitly about NATO, or Hungary's NATO membership which is financed from this EU strategy. In the interest of the implementation of this strategy, in October, 1996 the Foreign Ministry concluded a framework agreement of the same contents – what is called co-operation agreement –

with Hungarian Television and Hungarian Radio. In Hungarian Television this money is used for making EU programmes (an EU bloc within the Farmers' TV programme, Youth programme of information about the EU, programme of disseminating knowledge on the EU among old age pensioners and those who are at home during the day, an EU competition of the Agrarian University, EU magazine, EU newsreel, Political culture in the EU) for which 60 per cent of the whole support is paid by the Foreign Ministry in one lump via the Euroinfo Service. Broadcasts in the Radio are prepared on the basis of a contract of similar contents but already prior to the conclusion of the contract, the Foreign Ministry had supported the EU programmes of the Radio (e.g. 1.5 million Fts of the total costs of about 2.1 million Fts of an EU Day in Békéscsaba in October, 1996 were covered by the Foreign Ministry). The six largest, national circulation dailies were given a total of 4.5 million Fts distributed evenly for their EU supplements. (This year, the daily papers probably received more than this sum). Since the news carried by the printed and electronic media supported from the Foreign Ministry's EU communications strategy fund included ample news on NATO, or the two integrations were consciously handled together and because the Foreign Ministry's NATO communications strategy evidently relies on the EU coverage, a significant proportion (maybe as much as 30 per cent) of the money allocated for EU communications can be "settled" as NATO communications. (I do not think the same would be true the other way round, in other words, the costs of EU communications do not constitute a part of NATO communications).

The Defence Ministry of the Hungarian Republic also has a communications strategy inside and outside the army for the promotion of the joining of NATO. In 1997, 35 million forints are available for this purpose. According to certain opinions, this money can exclusively be spent on the national defence aspect of the government strategy helping accession to NATO, while other opinions hold, this fund can be used to improve the media image of the Ministry of Defence and the army as a whole. This latter option is more likely in my opinion because the two have been inseparable for several years: news about the reform and modernisation of the armed forces, arms purchases and the endeavours of the army etc. have always appeared within the context of the desire of becoming a member of NATO. Using a part of this fund for communications, the Ministry of Defence had a press competition entitled "National defence and NATO" where a total of 540 thousand Fts were distributed. But the same fund was used for covering the costs of 2 million 400 thousand Fts of a competition on "The new, uniform image of the Hungarian Army" following the country's invitation to join in Madrid. (The open competition announced together with the Star PR agency also includes a new system of symbols and slogan which is compatible with NATO and applicants may enter the competition on the basis of a memorandum of the army which contains the image of the Hungarian armed forces for the future and the communications philosophy). As part of the communications strategy, the Defence Ministry has been making the Hungarian Gallup Institute carry out opinion surveys every other month since 1994 and less frequently, similar surveys have been done by the Szonda Ipsos public opinion research company. Millions of forints are spent on this every year.

Apart from all this, there is a government fund of unknown size from which tens of millions of forints are spent on concrete events popularising the enlargement of NATO as well as courses and training programmes are held with NATO in the focus.

## THE MONEY OF THE ARM PRODUCERS

Ever since the Hungarian government decided to buy about 30 fighter planes for about a total of 220 billion Fts, four fighter bomber producers- weapons exporters have been competing for the Hungarian market. The arms producers interested in the 30 billion Ft. defence missile tender that has already been assessed, the 20 billion Ft radio location tender and the planned tender of a communications system valued at about 40 billion Fts are advertising themselves and their weapons systems "as standard ones in the world's strongest defence alliance" and as such through which NATO membership can be achieved. Part of the competition is their financial involvement in the NATO supplement or special edition of one or another daily or weekly newspaper, and they provide primary or secondary help for events which popularise NATO membership (e.g. IFABO, the C + D weapons exhibition, the international aviation day at Kecskemét), and in the interest of the establishment of co-operation, seminars and conferences are organised on defence planning and the costs of travels by representatives of Hungarian industry and journalists to the given weapons producer are covered, The PR expenditures of the arms producers belong to the top military secrets. It says little and at the same time a lot about this issue that the PR companies working in the three countries invited to join NATO that are involved in the selling of fighter bombers count with 5 to 20 thousand USD (about 1 to 19 million Fts) unspent sums every month.

## SLICES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The funds of the communications strategy are first of all channelled to the media and in the second and third place to various organisations, book and periodical publishers and the organisers of different events. The biggest "users" are the electronic media. The series of programmes called Atlantic Express produced by the foreign policy department of Hungarian Television has received 9 million Fts, NAP TV got 3.5 million Fts to organise a NATO competition, while Hungarian Radio received 2.5 million Fts from the Foreign Ministry to produce NATO programmes. Within this last item, the soap opera Szabó Family received 400 thousand Fts between April and July, while the editorial board producing foreign political programmes got 380 thousand Fts. The Defence Ministry has contributed to the 13 episodes on NATO of the Family Ltd. with 8 million Fts, and to the monthly military political magazine called Manoeuvre which regularly discusses NATO themes with 12 million Fts. (This last programme received 1 million Fts about 80 per cent of one slot in each broadcast through the Horizont Military Film Studio).

The programmes of Szerencsekerék (Lottery Wheel) of Hungarian Television and the commercial radio stations Juventus and Danubius also dealt with the subject of NATO by using money from the Foreign Ministry. It is also known that Duna TV is given money to prepare a six part series on NATO, and increased bonus is ensured by the Foreign Ministry for all those in the electronic media who prepare any programme on NATO (about joining, membership etc.) and Hungarian Television's soap opera "Szomszédok" – Neighbours undertook to popularise NATO voluntarily, without sponsor money.

The written press also has a significant slice of the money of the communications strategy. Népszabadság, Magyar Nemzet, Népszava and Világgazdaság are tied to the Foreign Ministry with a contract valid for a whole year. The monthly, or three-weekly

NATO supplements of 2 to 4 pages, or separate NATO pages cost about six million forints a year per paper. Magyar Hírlap carried its first NATO supplement only in mid-July but it will be followed by monthly supplements for which a total support of about three million Forints is given. Világgazdaság (World Economy) carries analysis and news about the subject and not supplements. Local, country-side newspapers are not left out from the support either; they are fed with materials on NATO via MTI Press which receives 10 to 20 million forints from the Foreign Ministry and other press agencies providing articles for the county and regional press. Élet és Tudomány (Life and Science), the weekly of the Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge and the Official Gazette Publishing company decided to carry a four part series on NATO – on three pages each – starting in May 1997 using the almost one million Forint support received from the Foreign Ministry’s communications strategy fund. (As from the middle of 1997, some large American dailies carry Hungarian “NATO supplements” with support from the Foreign Ministry).

The arms producers do not spare money either to obtain the market for their products necessary for NATO compatibility. In a NATO supplement in mid-July, the Budapest Business Journal published in Budapest every week advertised fighter aircraft and carried other related ads (by British Aerospace, Aero Vodochody, Lockheed Martin) at a total value of 1.8 million Forints which were based on Hungary’s would be membership in NATO. (This NATO supplement was carried simultaneously by the Business Journal published in Prague and Warsaw).

#### NGOs WORKING FOR ACCESSION TO NATO

In the communications strategy of the Foreign Ministry, a separate target group are the non-governmental organisations. Under the heading of “addresses of non-governmental organisations working for the Hungarian accession to NATO” on the Foreign Ministry’s Internet home page, one can read the names of the NGOs supported from the communications strategy, with the Hungarian Atlantic Council (HAC) being on the first place. Set up by the former foreign minister in 1992, the HAC has several opposition and government MPs as vice presidents and its members include well known representatives of the political, scientific and economic life and of the armed and police forces. HAC receives money from the central budget (communications strategy and other state money, and from funds that are distributed among social organisations), from abroad (NATO embassies, project money from abroad), from the banking sphere, from the support of entrepreneurs and membership fees. From the Foreign Ministry’s communications strategy, HAC obtained four million Forints for teaching NATO information in schools (teaching aids and other school instruments as part of an educational package) and two million Forints to set up a network of clubs primarily in the country-side to popularise the Euro-Atlantic idea.

Scientific publications related to the Euro-Atlantic thought (5 or 6 issues annually) and shorter background analysis (about 25 issues a year) are published with the support of the Hungarian Development Bank and the American Express Hungary Ltd. HAC received 100 thousand Forints of budgetary support from the fund distributed annually by Parliament. It also has a rather significant amount of money from the membership fees and its work is also promoted by entrepreneurs through their contacts which either bring money, or result in saving money. HAC gives receptions and dinners completed with pro-

NATO lectures for about 70 people for its members and invited politicians, journalists and representatives of business life in the elegant Grand Hotel Ramada on Margaret Island. (The monthly parties cost about 300 to 350 thousand Forints each). Apart from the professional help, the NATO countries provide aid for HAC in the range of about 10 thousand USD (1.8 million Fts) per project which can be given to countries involved in the Partnership for Peace programme.

The next NGO on the Foreign Ministry's home page listing the organisations "working for joining Nato" is the Manfred Wörner Foundation (MWF) established at the end of 1995. Set up by the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and Industry and several members of Parliament's Defence Committee and many MPs and top politicians of one of the government parties and an opposition party, the MWF has on its board the chairman of the Hungarian Credit Bank, one of the deputy state secretaries of the Defence Ministry and the commander-in-chief of the Hungarian Army is also among the members. The Foundation is well positioned financially (it is a recipient of money from the communications strategy, state money from the Defence Ministry and other state support, financial help from state companies, arms exporters and NATO funds).

The MWF has been holding free defence policy course and seminars on NATO for teachers of history, other teachers, journalists and soldiers for which it receives one million Forints of government support.

MWF were the organisers of what is called NATO-express last year and this year. The three day international aviation show in Kecskemét in May, 1997 was an outstanding event of popularising NATO not only for Hungary but all the countries that want to join the Alliance and according to the assessment of the Defence Ministry, it contributed to a significant increase in the sympathy of NATO in July. The total costs of the event are not known, as the organisers regard it as a military secret. What is known however, is the fact that the MWF received 9 million Fts of state support to organise it and that the arms producing companies paid 15 thousand USD each (2.7 million Fts) to be present; that one of the producers of fighter bombers present, Gripen spent 200 thousand USD (about 36 million Fts) on posters and advertisements. Some of this money was used by Gripen to treat an about 500 strong group of the invited guests with food and drink and presenting all of them with a toy – maquette of an aircraft.

Népszabadság published a 30 page colour NATO supplement for the air show in 270 thousand copies which was sponsored by the Manfred Wörner Foundation. The publication of the supplement was made possible by the financial help or advertisement of the arms producing companies (McDonnell Douglas, Gripen, Dassault Aviation, Lockheed Martin, Pratt (Whitney) and various other companies (Mazda, MOL, Pannon GSM, the Europa-GAN Insurance company).

This event was advertised by the MWF in advance on several occasions in all the local papers from the fund of the Defence Ministry's communications strategy. The Hungarian Army also identified itself with that event because – according to the official evaluation – prior to Madrid, it was to demonstrate "in front of the Hungarian society and the word that the Hungarian Armed Forces are ready and suitable for joining NATO". Without calculating the costs of investments built for the occasion and to be used in the long term (for example a new huge airshed cost 5 million Fts), the armed forces spent in the range of about 10 million Fts on the event. Taking everything into account, this pro-Atlantic event cost about 100 million Fts, about 60 per cent of that amount was covered by the weapons producers and 40 per cent – coming from various sources – by the Hungarian state.

The Foreign Ministry's list of supported organisations also includes the European House Association and the Military and Security Policy Association of the Federation for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge. The European House Association which is in symbiosis with the Hungarian Peace Association has been organising social forums where security policy experts committed to NATO take part. The European House Association together with the Engineers for Peace Foundation and the Military and Security Policy Association of the Federation for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge won 1 to 2 million Fts of support from the Foreign Ministry's communications strategy fund to organise jointly social forums. (In 1997, the European House Association and the Hungarian Peace Association received 350 thousand Fts of budgetary support each, while the Jászi Oszkár Foreign Political Society got 100 thousand Fts. from the same source).

The Foreign Ministry's list does not contain the Army and Society Friendship Circle which was established in 1994 at the initiative of Josef von Ferenczy involving artists, intellectuals, church personalities, journalists and soldiers and politicians. The Circle has been actively involved in the popularisation of joining NATO. The Friendship Circle operates under the presidency of the chairman of Parliament's Defence Committee and has its headquarters in the Defence Ministry, and apart from the financial support of its initiator, it also enjoys the professional, moral and financial support of the Defence and Foreign Ministries. The Circle which makes use of a lot of voluntary work, is supported from the communications strategy when it organises about 50 debate forums. At the forums called "Our country's security and European security" well known pro-NATO politicians and specialists deliver lectures for citizens and soldiers and schools in the countryside. (With one "go", debate forums are held for all those three different audiences). The local press has been mobilised for the about dozen such forums held so far.

#### OTHER FINANCIAL SOURCES

The Foreign Ministry also finances the publication of scientific works. The book "Neutrality, illusions and the reality" published by Centre for Security and Defence Studies Foundation in 1997 has been fully financed – as the publications explicitly says so – from the government's communications strategy. The amount devoted to this purpose is in the range of about 500 thousand Fts. The same source made it possible to publish the No.1 issue of the Hungarian Foreign Political Institute in 1997 for which about 400 thousand Fts. were ensured. "The organisation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation", a study of about 400 pages published in July this year by the Strategic and Defence Research Institute which operates under the auspices of the Defence Ministry was sponsored from a separate budgetary allocation of the Ministry.

The fans of computer games have been able to use a CD-ROM called NATO-POLY ("Shape a picture of NATO") since early July which primarily shows NATO and the advantages of Hungary's membership of NATO. The total costs of the game issued by the European Studio Communications company (which is different from the European House Association) were covered by the United States and the main telecommunications supplier of the NATO forces, Lucent Technologies which also supplied the communications network of the Taszár and Kaposvár basis of IFOR-SFOR and by McDonnell Douglas, one of the fighter aircraft producers that is interested in the

Hungarian fighter bomber tender. This game is provided for secondary schools, higher education institutions and military institutions free of charge. (The estimated costs of building the communications systems in the three new NATO member states is 2 billion USD – about 400 billion Ft – in a period of 10 years. At least, six multinational companies are competing for the orders). As it is indicated on the CD-ROM, professional help was provided by the Foreign Ministry, the Manfred Wörner Foundation and its No.1 man and the Euro INFO Service company.

All in all, in 1997 the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence can spend 147 million Ft for NATO communications to which about 30 per cent of the Foreign Ministry's EU communications strategy (about 63 million Ft) can be added and about 40 per cent of the Defence Ministry's support (for the Kecskemét international air show). The six million Ft. budget of the North Atlantic Information Centre and the tens of millions of forints of government expenditure burden the central budget, just like the approximately 50 per cent of the about 1 million Ft. given to NGOs, as social organisations for NATO communications. (It totals 280 million Ft). The producers interested in the weapons tenders spend more than 100 million Ft for direct and indirect NATO communications as part of their PR and marketing activities and the funds coming from banks and as the organisations' membership fees can be in the range of 10 million Ft. All this means that in 1997 Hungary spends at least 500 million Ft on NATO communications and this sum does not include the money to be spent on a campaign on NATO membership to be launched in the autumn.

#### FURTHER CRITERIA

The sums of money spent promoting NATO communications in themselves do not say a lot. These can only be assessed together with two other criteria: the principles and practice of the distribution of money and the quality and objectivity of the "products" produced from that money.

#### THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND THE LAW

The distribution of the NATO communications money of the Foreign and Defence Ministries lacked openness: the contents and accessibility did not become publicly known and the system of competition was not worked out.

This is especially apparent in the case of the electronic media. As it reached the Complaint Committee of the National Radio and Television Board which then stated in the case of the Atlantic Express, Manoeuvre and the Szabó Family, these programmes were selected and supported concretely. Under the law on public acquisition, any service or commission valued at six million Ft or more ought to be announced in an open tender. In these cases (Atlantic Express, Manoeuvre, Familia Ltd)., the regulations of the public acquisition law were not applied, as there was no procedure of open tender, invitation or negotiation. The Foreign and Defence Ministries decided to support TV and Radio programmes that seemed to be the most suitable on the basis of viewing and availability to target audiences. They simply contacted the editors of the given programmes. The editors of the chosen programmes prepared their own programme plans for which the given ministry provided the money from the offered fund.

There is however, another problem with the ministerial support of the electronic media. The law of the electronic media does not allow the support of either EU or NATO programmes. This has already been the ruling of the National Radio and Television Board in connection with some broadcasts. The Complaint Committee stated twice and the Board stated once in connection with the Atlantic Express that "since Hungarian Television accepted financial support for making a programme from a state organisation, it has grossly violated both the spirit and word of the media law", and that "independence and freedom from the state and government is a requirement of public service broadcasting, the spirit of the law was violated by the fact that the series of programmes in question (Atlantic Express) was produced from state, that is budgetary money". A statement by the Complaint Committee of the National Radio and Television Board concerning Szabó Family produced with Foreign Ministry help was of similar contents. None of the programmes which made use of the money from NATO communications published the sponsor's name which is ethically incorrect towards the sponsor but first of all towards the viewers or listeners.

However, irrespective of the gross and continuous violation of the media law by the Foreign and Defence Ministries, the actual programmes could have come up to the requirement of being balanced. In other words, if these programmes ensure space to the opinions that are different from the official standpoint, if they reflect the existing different opinions, then the principle of objective information is not violated. But the Complaint Committee of the National Radio and Television Board unanimously stated that the Atlantic Express, The Szabó Family and another radio programme called Interurban "failed to meet the requirement of the objective, balanced and mansided information but instead, served the popularisation of the official standpoint of the Foreign Ministry", and strengthened the accession to NATO. "The programme providers violated the law by exclusively presenting such points of view in the mentioned programme (Atlantic Express) which reflects the position of the power elite in the issue of joining NATO, including its positive and unconditional necessity". (This naturally does not mean that all "Nato-programmes" on TV and Radio violated the requirement of balanced information).

#### FURTHER RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

No comprehensive study or legal condemnation of the printed press has taken place so far. The NATO supplements and pages, analysis and news of the national circulation dailies published from communications funds and the MTI Press materials carried by the local press have been definitely and clearly pro-NATO in their contents, size ad approach. In these supplements, Népszabadság gives space to the smallest extent to views different from the official standpoint (0 per cent) and Magyar Nemzet is the most ready to do so (10 per cent).

The authors of books and periodicals issued as part of the NATO communications (altogether 32 authors) have not included one single author who would not have shared the official standpoint concerning NATO membership.

The North Atlantic Information Centre attached to Parliament carries only the news which is positive from the point of view of NATO enlargement and from abroad and home it does not carry any material which differs from the official opinion and would question NATO membership. Events organised or planned by the European House

Foundation (Hungarian Peace Association) and the Army and Society Friendship Circle are attended by pro-NATO participants only, while one or another non-NATO believers have been invited to events organised by the Manfred Wörner Foundation and the Hungarian Atlantic Council.

The Hungarian Atlantic Council, the Manfred Wörner Foundation and the Army and Society Friendship Circle are not civic organisations or NGOs. These are pseudo-NGOs which formally meet the legal requirements of the non governmental organisations, but in essence these are pseudo-civic organisations of the government, the political parties and ministries. To a large extent, their founders, leaders and members are Members of Parliament, Parliamentary party leaders, representatives of Parliament's foreign affairs, defence and integration committees, leading officials of the Foreign and Defence Ministries, diplomats and leaders or officers of the Hungarian Armed Forces. In issues of NATO communications they do not only want to represent opinions that are contrary to the views concerning NATO in their own government, party or ministry, but they have been set up to communicate pro-NATO ideas. Their task is to try to represent the issue of joining NATO especially in the countryside and in the eyes of local people in a more credible manner than their own political parties. Because of the personal relationships and due to having informal access to the NATO-communications funds, either via formal tender or without it these organisations distribute the communications money for and among themselves. They appear both in Hungary and abroad as independent civilian organisations and as such they can access foundation, bank and enterprise funding more easily at home (money given from foundation is deductible from tax), furthermore they also receive money from the (not too big) funds distributed by Parliament among social organisations every year. On the basis of recommendation by their own members who are in high positions, they can obtain NATO, government and NGO funds abroad. The costs of the foreign representation of the pseudo-NGOs and the expenses of travel abroad to obtain money are often covered by the representative's own political party. The arms producing companies are also less prone to attacks if – on paper – they ensure funding for independent foundations and associations. Both the European House Association and the Military and Security Policy Association of the Federation for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge are suitable to act as umbrella organisations bringing together security policy experts who are partially or fully committed to NATO as well as representatives of the intelligentsia, the economic and political life and the media. (Two examples: Gábor Izbéki, the editor of the Atlantic Express condemned more than once by the National Radio and Television Board is a member of the Hungarian Atlantic Council /at the time of making that programme, he was the head of the foreign political editorial department/, and Zoltán Antalóczi, the vice president of the Army and Society Friendship Circle is a member of the editorial board of the weekly Life and Science).

## SUMMARY

On the basis of all this, one has to say that the about 500 million forints spent on NATO communications in Hungary in 1997 is not a very significant sum of money. It is not significant, as four times higher sum will be spent on the Hungarian SFOR contingent in Bosnia, or the costs of the referendum on Hungary's NATO membership will be four times higher, or the Agricultural Ministry alone spends that much on the preparation of Euro-Atlantic integration. The costs of NATO communications is a fraction of one or

another recent, or planned Hungarian arms purchase deal, or it can hardly be compared to the money the companies interested in the arms trade spend on advertisement. In other words, the absolute sum and proportion of the money spent on NATO communications is insignificant. But the problem is not the sum of money but the way it is distributed, the accessibility and the nature of "product". The funds are distributed in a way which is uncontrollable by the general public, on the basis of commission or formal competition and frequently by violating the law on public acquisition. Supporters of NATO disregard the most basic rules of compatibility and distribute the money amongst themselves and pseudo-NGOs set up to promote the cause of joining NATO, and by corrupting the media which always lack sufficient funding, programmes to their own liking are prepared. Each and every programme produced with the support of the Foreign and Defence Ministries violates the provision of the media law concerning balanced information. Some of the programmes which received extra sponsor money present the aim of the sponsor on a low level and some other programmes carry the information on NATO in an environment which is not unsuitable for conveying objective information, plus it is done without announcing the sponsor's name.

The ethics of press is violated by supporting the written press and handling the subject mostly in a one-sided way, but true, that without the exception of Világgazdaság, Élet és Tudomány and MTI Press Agency, all the papers print the name of the sponsor. Without exception, the scientific writing and publications are by NATO-believer authors. The funds of NATO communications – irrespective of where they come from – are used for clear and unequivocal supporters of the cause of NATO who are guided by the same principles and expectations of supporting and popularising that issue.

By using a part of their PR and marketing money in Hungary and by mobilising other resources, the companies interested in selling arms here, significantly contribute to the popularisation of Hungary's membership of NATO.

All in all, the problem is not so much in the sum of money devoted to NATO communications and the sources of that money but rather the fact that 99 per cent of those funds is used for goals supporting NATO membership. In other words, NATO communications in Hungary is nothing else than one-sided communications for NATO, joining NATO and Hungary's NATO membership and instead of informing the people, it tries to convince the population. In fact, NATO communications is equivalent with NATO propaganda.

Translated by *Vera SÁRKÁNY*

*Eszmélet (Conscience) No.35, 1997.*

# HUNGARY AND THE NATO ENLARGEMENT

## I. SUMMARY IN GENERAL

1. This was the second time in NATO history that the issue of the membership of a country had been decided by referendum. We believe that it is essential and desirable to ask the opinion of the public in such an important question, through the institution of the referendum. That is why we regard it as important in respect of the democratic development of Hungary that – contrary to Poland and the Czech Republic – a referendum was held on our country joining NATO; furthermore – contrary to the Slovakian Republic – the referendum itself was held within the constitutional framework. In spite of all our criticisms, if we compare this situation to those in societies which consistently reject the idea of a referendum, are unwilling to accept the risk of a referendum, or are unable to succeed in holding one successfully, then the process was one that points to the future.

2. The Hungarian referendum was carried through in accordance with constitutional processes. We consider it an event governed by law. Consequently, we accept the result and respect it.

3. On the other hand, we condemn the manner in which the referendum was preceded by innumerable violations of law; the riding rough-shod over written and unwritten law, especially in the non-disclosure of freely expressed opinions; the buying of the media; the exploitation of a network of personal contacts; the bringing back of the methods of the one-party regime; the complete lack of the role of opposition in Parliament; the distributing mechanism based on servile clientele relations; the anti-democratic way of thinking which is a characteristic of both former reform-communists and former democratic opposition, both the conservatives and the liberals, both government and opposition parties, both the populists and the urbanists. We regard all this as a sorrowful return of the past, one that will continue for a long time.

4. It was regrettable to witness how state and party leaders who grew up in the one-party system, reached their positions with the change of the regime, and alternate as representatives of government and opposition, were unable to subordinate the issue of NATO membership to that of the law. It was also a sorry sight to see how former Warsaw Pact propagandists, no doubt with thoughts of a secure livelihood in mind, converted themselves into advocates of NATO, “travelling NATO-ambassadors”, NATO-lobbyists of quasi-NGOs without any change of means or methods.

5. In Hungary there was no genuine discussion of NATO membership. It could not take place because neither the parties nor the researchers and intellectuals had a worked out case to present on the NATO issue. The political, economical and media elite were definitely for NATO. But the most serious problem was that – with few exceptions – the elite behaved in an intolerant, anti-democratic, aggressive and discriminative manner towards those thinking differently. The elite induced a social atmosphere in which those who dared to speak against NATO were labelled as extremists, members of marginal groups, anti-democratic minded or despised adherents of the former regime.

6. The events preceding the NATO referendum show that Hungary proceeds along the path of constitutional democracy only formally, and in some instances not even that far. It is also obvious that the various groups of the elite are unfamiliar with the concept of respect for the rules of democracy, and are unable to accept that the law must take precedence.

7. The laws that would be essential to a constitutional state do not exist, are not applied or are inapplicable. There is no system of sanctions, and observance of law depends on current political considerations. Without European standard laws on conflict-of-interest, advertising and the media; without independent intellectuals, research institutions and media, it is impossible to join Europe and the family of constitutional democracies, even if the country is a member of NATO.

8. The Hungarian people was misled by the governmental NATO propaganda and voted on joining NATO lacking essential information and knowledge of alternatives.

9. The voting citizens were not aware of what responsibilities Hungary has to accept as a NATO member. The public voted “Yes” to membership without criteria and conditions. In this manner the Hungarian government and Parliament acquired an unconditional mandate, sealed and “legitimised” by a referendum, and it will lead the country into NATO under any conditions NATO dictates and the political elite wants.

10. The NATO referendum also proved that civil society is even weaker in Hungary than had been supposed. There are no alternative movements, not even the seeds. The NATO question was insufficient to generate a NO NATO movement, to call for social solidarity. Those opposing NATO were not able to establish a common stand. Just like before the change of the regime, things are still over-politicised, and the NATO question was governed by political interests and party politics.

11. Free world, constitutional democracies are NATO members as well. So these countries, their media, and their parties were not interested in disclosing the violations of law occurring in Hungary. Parties opposing NATO enlargement (I have in mind primarily the Greens) and the media, forgot us or concentrated on the ratification process in their own countries: a somewhat limited approach.

12. The one-dimensional information given to the public meant that people were unable to consider in an informed manner, not only the issues concerning NATO but also those linked with entering the European Union, and this could easily have serious consequences in the future. All that happened in Hungary in order to access to NATO might divert the country from democratic development. It has certainly slowed it down.

## II. ALBA KÖR Standpoints

1. The Alba Kör – knowing the public conditions and the activities of the pro-NATO camp – understands the result of the referendum, but disappointedly accepts it. We respect the rules of constitutional democracy, and ask for the same respect from the those in power. Therefore we respect the will of the voters, as declared in the referendum and accept the decision of the majority.

2. This does not mean that our NATO opposition standpoint has changed. The referendum clearly showed that at least 600. 000 citizens are against NATO enlargement – from these there must have been a number of voters that opposed joining NATO based on the same or similar reasons as Alba Kör. The referendum results confirmed us in our view that our opinion on NATO membership, even if it is a minority opinion, has a justified place in our country.

3. Furthermore, none of our arguments against NATO was refuted, and the will of the majority is not the same as deciding which party to a debate has truth on its side.

4. Naturally we do not say that we agree with all “NO” voting citizens. We declare the opposite: we do not identify the Alba Kör with any of those “no” voters that had extreme left- or right wing reasons for opposing NATO enlargement.

5. We do not think – even in the light of the result of the referendum – that we should have co-operated in the interest of possible success with any parties, organisations that have extremist members, or organisations that are opposed to NATO enlargement on militaristic grounds. We think now, as we declared in the very first NO NATO documents of the Alba Kör (May 1995), that it was a good policy decision to declare Alba Kör’s individual approach to the NATO issue. The unambiguous and definite separation from the groups that, in the interest of possible success, were ready to integrate even with extreme elements was the appropriate step, and helped the common cause of the NATO opposition.

6. The Alba Kör fulfilled all the demands set by the NATO issue – except one. The Alba Kör, far beyond it’s very limited structural and financial resources was present, representing the NATO opposition, continuously and without dissonant voices. As an authentic, trustworthy, non-violent peace group, we succeeded in establishing a public presence, elaborated and presented alternatives, came up with real and rational opposing arguments. We could give an example of responsible, considered, non-extreme and civil politics; the spreading of real civic courage. By insisting on observance of law and regulations we could add to the development of constitutional democracy. We never had illusions about the final result of this David and Goliath encounter, but still, in several cases, we made the power withdraw or backdown.

7. On the other hand, we never managed to be a seed that would germinate within civil society a movement capable of involving other civil organisations. The efforts to unite groups in a single-issue, civil, alternative NO-NATO movement failed. From the point of view of Hungarian social development – beside the result of the referendum – we failed to take advantage of this major opportunity.

8. This failure has several social reasons, but we also have a role in this, therefore we have to be self-critical of our own work and efforts.

9. Whatever success we had in presenting an opinion does not lead us to forget that the political and media elite considered the NATO opposition to be a conflict between the parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties, which was not true at all. On the other hand there was never any parliamentary opposition on the NATO question, and our small peace group, with very limited resources, was neither able to compete with nor to represent a real danger to the power. Alba Kör could be treated as an acceptable, correct, but small and weak, marginal group. In some cases Alba Kör was preferred from all the NATO opposition groups. Unpleasant though it would prove to be, we had to utilise the fact that in seeking to demonstrate that democracy exists, the power selected us as a minority group which had a right to be present,.

10. Alba Kör – due to the unfortunately quite underdeveloped social structures, the (untrue) definition of the NATO problem, and the possibilities offered by the governing elite – used all the available opportunities, and sometimes even “misused” the “guest-role”. We were accorded “loyal opposition” status, and used our space with careful consideration, but we were very critical and uncompromising in our attitude to the power. Therefore, in some cases we were more effective than other NATO opposing groups, or evoked much more heated and emotional reactions from the power.

11. We repeatedly stated our opinion that considering its size and capacity, the Alba Kör was considerably over represented in the Hungarian and international press and media. (We gave more than a hundred interviews and Alba Kör's name was present a few hundred times in the media). This does not mean, however, that the views of Alba Kör or of the opposition to NATO membership in general, was over-represented. Quite the reverse: proportionally the opposition was always grossly under-represented. Those who opposed NATO membership (24-35 %) and those who had reservations (12-26 %) never received media space and coverage commensurate with their numbers.

12. The Alba Kör – the results notwithstanding – will not change its civil status; the capital amassed in knowledge, experience, and contacts will be used only within civil society, with the very same ideas and for the same purposes.

13. Our critical analysis is not confined to the distasteful and law breaking behaviour of the governing power; unfortunately we have critical remarks to address to western civil organisations, foundations and alternative groups. We believe that following the Madrid invitation, and in the kind of situation that arose in Hungary, the western organisations should have helped the opposition in all three 'invited' countries – even without being asked to do so. We regularly asked for moral, media and financial support but – with the exception of a few organisations – the response was minimal. We had a feeling that most western and American groups opposed to NATO simply abandoned us and the Central and East European alternatives. It is for these reasons that we feel they also bear some of the responsibility for the success of the NATO-friendly power, and the results it achieved in an undemocratic, unlawful way.

14. The Alba Kör received support from the organisation of the American Quakers, the American Friends Service Committee. The financial support of the AFSC enabled us to convene an international NO NATO conference in Budapest, at the end of October (12,000 USD), and the publication of a book: Running Amok into NATO, by Tamas Csapody and Laszlo Vit (2,800 USD). In addition, 500 USD from the Quakers plus 1,000 USD from a Hungarian entrepreneur living in the US was spent on printing and distributing 100, 000 leaflets. Beside these, the Alba Kör activities opposing NATO enlargement (telephone, fax, copying, post, transparencies between 1995 May – 1997 Nov) cost about 300.000 HUF, coming from the other basic resources of Alba Kör (grants, incomes) .This does not take into account the voluntary, unpaid work invested in the NO NATO activities.

15. After the referendum many tasks await the Alba Kör. The majority are not NATO-related (e.g. providing information to those on civilian service and conscientious objectors, spreading the idea of non-violent solutions and thinking, etc). However, a number do concern NATO- related cases begun in the period preceding the referendum (National Radio and Television Board cases, the suit brought against Minister of Foreign Affairs Laszlo Kovacs, and petitions before the Constitutional Court). It is very important to document the events of the past months; the Defence and Foreign Ministry calls for competitive tenders for "studies" of the recent past, show that the power has already laid the foundation of untrue history-writing. Several challenges are set by the practical process of NATO enlargement, before and after it actually happens: radar-base construction in nature conservation areas; the complete weapon-change of the armed forces; the secret increase of military expenditure for NATO compatibility, which has already started, and the continuous misleading of the public. It can be anticipated, from the privatisation scandals now reverberating throughout the Central European region, that

within a few years the issues of military spending and associated corruption will be high on the agenda. (The Alba Kör does not have an opinion about European Union integration, and we are not planning any action in this field).

### III . DETAILED SUMMARY

In Hungary there was a referendum on the country joining NATO on 16th of November 1997. It might be useful to set out the road to the referendum in separate periods:

The first period started with the parliamentary election in 1994 and lasted till December 1995 when a proposal for a referendum submitted by the Munkaspart (Workers Party) was rejected. The second period started with the previously mentioned rejection and lasted till the beginning of the campaign before the referendum. The third period covers the ten days of the official NATO referendum campaign. The fourth period is the two days of campaign silence and the referendum itself. The fifth period started when the referendum was over and continues.

In the following we sum up the general experiences and those of Alba Kör referring to Hungary and NATO enlargement.

#### 1. THE FIRST PERIOD

(Spring 1994 – 22. December 1995.)

1. At the time of the parliamentary election in 1994, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) declared in its program that it intended to hold a referendum on joining NATO. The HSP won the election and formed a coalition with Free Democrats Alliance (SZDSZ). Their government program also indicated the intention of holding a referendum, although the SZDSZ had made serious efforts to persuade the MSZP that this should not be included in the program.

2. In the autumn of 1995, the Workers Party, which had been unable to win parliamentary representation, began collecting signatures to a petition for the NATO referendum. The Workers Party was able to obtain the number of signatures prescribed by the law but, in clear violation of the Referendum Law, Parliament did not hold the referendum. Its decision was based on its own political interests, and the fact that at the time there was insufficient support for NATO membership (public opinion polls in December 1995 showed only 46% of the Hungarian population ready to say 'Yes' to joining NATO). Parliament then decided that it would hold a referendum "as soon as the conditions of access were known". At the same time, however, it proceeded to exert every effort in favour of eventual accession to NATO (political decisions, contracts, legal harmonisation, accepting standards etc).

3. The Workers Party turned to the Constitutional Court (CC) seeking legal remedy following Parliament's unlawful decision, but after considering the issue for two months the Court professed a "lack of competence". By so doing the Court practically, if not formally, gave what amounted to an endorsement of the unlawful decision of the Parliament.

4. According to the intention of the political elite, the media presented the decision of the Parliament as lawful and progressive. The "no competence" ruling of the Constitutional Court was presented as positive approval of the parliamentary decision. The intellectuals tolerated this in complete silence.

5. The parliamentary parties were unanimous in support of joining NATO. (In the course of the first free election in 1990 all parties set the aim of a free, independent Hungary). Despite heated parliamentary debate on army reform and the participation of Hungary in IFOR, none of the doubts on these issues would lead to any questioning of the value of North Atlantic integration.

6. In May 1995, Hungary hosted – the first in Central and Eastern Europe – the North Atlantic General Assembly. On this occasion Alba Kör took its first action against NATO: a 24 point declaration against NATO and NATO enlargement. It was largely ignored by the media; published only by one interest group magazine, *Érted vagyok* (I Am For You).

7. At the end of 1995 ministers, members of parliament, state officials, military leaders, members of the governmental and opposition parties, formed the Manfred Worner Foundation (MWA) dedicated to support for joining NATO. This was the third quasi-NGO (the other two were the Army and Society Friends Circle /1994/, Magyar Atlantic Council /1992/). Although these are recognised legally as independent NGOs, their membership, leaderships, and financing show that they are not genuinely non-governmental or independent. These quasi-NGOs popularised NATO using public fund to an extent that was never disclosed.

## 2. SECOND PERIOD

(22nd of December 1995. – 5th of November 1997.)

### *2/a. EVENTS, ACTIONS*

1. The governmental parties and the opposition were agreed that the referendum should not be held between December 1995 and Summer 1997. Because of the common position, no communication strategy (P.R.) on the NATO question was prepared until January 1996. Furthermore, parliament decided that 120 million HUF for the Foreign Ministry, and 35 million for the Defence Ministry would be enough for communication (information) purposes. (If the referendum date had been decided at that time, much larger funding would have been provided for the NATO campaign). Due to the relatively small amount originally allocated in the budget, when in Spring 1997 the HSP finally decided on the referendum, the many tens of millions spent on pro-NATO propaganda had to come from the government reserves (for TV's NATO Express, support of quasi-NGOs).

2. At the same time when the referendum was declared in June 1997, the government proposed an amendment to constitutional law on referendums. The proposal, adopted by Parliament, suggested a reduction of the validity threshold of voter participation. So instead of 50 %, 25% participation would be sufficient to validate a referendum. But the approved text of the law did not express this will unambiguously, so it was possible to interpret it in several ways. (That is why some groups could move to have the result of the referendum annulled/, for details see V. 2 ) Parliament amended the law in order to guarantee the validity of the NATO referendum in advance. If the manner of doing so was legitimate, it was also a procedure unusual in constitutional democracies, and a serious violation of the unwritten rules of democracy.

3. Nevertheless, the governing coalition still did not dare to take the risk of a “decision-making” referendum whose result would be of binding consequence. So it decided to hold an “opinion declaring” referendum, instead. This kind of referendum is of

little significance. The result does not have a mandatory effect, and the Parliament can make a decision without taking the result of the “opinion declaring” referendum into consideration. The government had the “opinion declaring” form accepted by the Young Democrats-Hungarian Civic Party (Fidesz-MPP), which had previously opposed any kind of referendum; The Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP); the Hungarian Democratic Peoples Party (MDNP) and other opposition parties which had not supported the referendum idea. This proposal expressed the intention of the parliamentary parties: to keep the promise on the referendum, but without any obligation to attach importance to the result: they would observe the democratic ‘rules of the game’ but leave themselves free to vote for an outcome that showed democracy to be illusory.

4. In August, the government changed its mind and decided to hold a “decision making” referendum after a suggestion to this effect was made by the Fidesz-MPP, which served its own political interests and had in mind next year’s parliamentary elections. At this time the NATO referendum was linked to the holding of one on land ownership rights. The reasons for this desire to link the two were: 1.) The influence of the biased NATO propaganda had begun to appear in the opinion polls (by that time 61% favoured NATO membership), so the risk attached to a decision making referendum was now at an acceptable level. 2.) it was still doubtful whether a sufficient number of electors would take part ( the NATO and land issues were connected in order to guarantee the percentage of voter turnout necessary to validate the result). 3.) They wanted to undermine the opposition proposal for a referendum on land ownership. There was a heated debate in Parliament on the land issue but none at all on the NATO question.

5. The land ownership issue created a situation which endangered the result of the NATO referendum, and threatened a political and constitutional crisis. The situation was resolved by the Constitutional Court (CC): it ruled that the proposed referendum on the land issue was unconstitutional. On this occasion, the CC neither needed two months of deliberation before reaching a decision nor a declaration that it lacked competence, as had been the case when it dealt with the Workers Party complaint two years earlier. These events showed that CC decisions are not always free from the influence of daily political events or the interests of prominent political personalities.

6. NATO and the countries which were invited to join NATO in Madrid exerted great pressure on Hungary to hold the referendum by 16 November, 1997 otherwise, it was claimed, NATO accession by Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland might be delayed or become impossible. So the date of the referendum was not defined independently by Hungary, and it can be stated that that this was intervention.

7. Nothing but superficial press declarations and communiqués were published on discussions going on between Hungary and NATO from September 1997. Alba Kör addressed an Open Letter to State Secretary for Integration Affairs at the Foreign Ministry (Ferenc Somogyi) pointing out that in the negotiations it was possible to differentiate between joining the political or the military wings of NATO. Alba Kör also wrote to the Deputy State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence (István Gyarmati), suggesting that he should start out from the realistic figure, 1.9 % of GDP, when discussing Hungary’s military expenditure. Alba Kör did not receive answers to these letters.

8. NATO and Hungary agreed that reports on the accession discussions, and the details of the agreements, would not be made public. (They still are unknown, and are unlikely to be published).

9. All of this meant that Parliament had gone back on its decision of December 1995. The referendum was called without prior information on the conditions of accession to NATO, or at least without publishing them.

10. Parliament did not formulate the question for the referendum impartially but so as to influence people to give the answer “Yes”. (Do you agree that the Hungarian Republic provides for the defence of the country by joining NATO?)

11. In August 1996, the encyclical letter of the Hungarian Catholic Board of Bishops “For a more true and brotherly world!” became widely known and discussed. In this message, the Roman Catholic Church opted for the necessity of North Atlantic Integration.

12. None of the historical Churches made official declarations for NATO, but all of them supported it unambiguously. “Private pro-NATO opinions” given in public in November 1997 by some leaders of these historical churches, were especially offensive.

13. Two members of the Board of Bishops of the Hungarian Catholic Church (MKPK) made propaganda for NATO. Bishop of Vac, Ferenc Keszthelyi (Spring 1997), and Bishop of Pecs, Mihály Mayer (Autumn 1997) agitated for NATO in public. Alba Kör wrote an Open Letter to the MKPK related to the statement of Mihály Mayer which had been published in both the clerical and secular press, asking it to draw a line between its own opinion and that of the Bishop, and calling on it to adopt an impartial position at the time of a referendum. (MKPK did not fulfil these requests and did not even answer).

14. All the other churches and religions remained silent on the question of NATO membership. The one exception was the Basic Community led by the Roman Catholic priest György Bulányi. It categorically rejected joining NATO.

15. In Spring 1997, an integrative NGO, the Social Coalition appeared, opposing NATO. This brought the number of active NGOs opposing NATO to three. (Alba Kör, Social Coalition, Foundation for Neutral Hungary).

16. Alba Kör made an attempt to form a public movement against NATO on the occasions of the demonstration against the armament of Hungary (November 1995) and commemorations of Hiroshima in 1995 and 1996 when it co-operated with 40-50 NGOs. This effort did not lead to success.

17. It became obvious by Summer 1997 that neither the parties against NATO (Workers Party, Hungarian Truth and Life Party, Peoples’ Welfare Alliance, Green Alternative), nor the NGOs were able to co-operate with each other, and that it was not possible to form a movement against NATO. While they concurred in the end result of their arguments, their basic and ideological approaches were often completely different.

18. In May 1996, Alba Kör carried out the first Hungarian civil disobedience (active non-violent) action by chaining themselves to the NATO Express (media and propaganda) Train so as to prevent its departure.

19. Alba Kör published the “Charter of National Defence” for the Madrid Summit (July 7-8. 1997.). The Charter summed up the circumstances which threatened the security of the country, and suggested an alternative to joining NATO. As in the case of our 24 Points Declaration, no daily paper published the Charter, although we approached each one personally. (Only the quarterly: “Érted vagyok” published the whole text. The Új Magyarország opposition daily published extracts).

20. Some arms factories which have interests in NATO enlargement and arms trade in Central Europe were intensively present in Hungary (Gripen, Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, Dassault Aviation, Lockheed Martin, Pratt and Whitney, Lucent Technologies

etc.). They gave financial support to pro-NATO programs (e.g. NATO Express, Hungarian Atlantic Committee conference series), funded adverts for NATO joining (e.g. in the Budapest Business Journal, Magyar Honvéd – Hungarian Soldier, HVG-Weekly Economy). Several hundred million forints were spent advocating Hungarian membership of NATO by arms factories in 1997.

## *2/b. NATO COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES*

1. In 1997 147.000.000 HUF was spent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence to have the idea of joining NATO accepted. The money was used by the two ministries practically to buy the support of the largest proportion of electronic and written media. All the programs in the electronic media supported by them violated the media law, since in Hungary it is forbidden to give financial support to political programs. The law on media was violated in another way, too: the NATO programs were not impartial, balanced and objective. That media law had been violated, was declared by an independent official body, the National Radio and TV Board (NRTB) several times, based on complains lodged by Alba Kör and others. Those who gave illegal financial support to the programs were never named, expect once.

2. In July 1997, the Ministry of Defence rejected an Alba Kör proposal on distribution of money for the NATO communication between NGOs with views pro and contra NATO. We based this proposal on the fact that in Scandinavian countries, when the issue of EU accession was on the agenda, the available funds were equally distributed among organisation supporting and opposing membership. On another Alba Kör proposal, that the amounts involved and the names of the programs given support should be made public, the Ministry of Defence, after two months pondering the question, decided against the publication of any data or the naming of supported projects. Because of the withholding of data of public interest, Alba Kör turned to the Commissioner for Data Defence. In a letter to the Ombudsman, the representative of the Ministry of Defence, (Mátyás Eörsi) denied any knowledge of the Alba Kör proposal, although it had been presented officially during negotiations in the presence of four persons, and reported by The Hungarian News Agency (MTI) and the major circulation daily Népszabadság on the very next day. Obviously, the Ministry of Defence was playing for time so that the data would be published and condemned only after the referendum.

3. The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs distributed the NATO communication moneys without calling for tenders, building on their relations and omitting the public. The two ministries violated the law on acquisition in those cases where more than 6 millions were given. Only after an Alba Kör proposal, at the end of September, when 80% of the money had been distributed, was the Ministry of Defence inclined to publish the call for tenders in the official gazette of the Republic of Hungary, in Magyar Közlöny.

4. E.g. 9 TV programs, 14 radio programs and editorials, 2 video-films and video-film programs, 13 events, 4 educational programs, 2 research programs, 3 conferences, 2 publications, 7 article-series, 5 daily papers were supported by the NATO communication strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with 110.000.000 HUF (to date). All of these were designed to emphasise unilaterally the advantages of joining NATO.

5. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spent 8.000.000 HUF on lobbying in large American and Western European papers for Hungary's invitation to join NATO. Besides, it assisted and used the lobbying activities of Hungarian organisations in the U.S.

6. The pro-NATO programs on public television's MTV1 (12 parts of Atlantic Express) and on radio (Szabó Family) were justifiably condemned by the NRTB, ruling on a complaint submitted by Alba Kör. (The National Radio and Television Board endorsed the findings of the NRTB Complains' Committee in five cases) According to the findings, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had popularised NATO by supporting the NATO Express with 9.000.000 HUF and the Szabó Family with 400.000 HUF. This is a violation of the media law paragraphs on sponsorship and balanced information.

7. Even the popular children's program on TV "Three Wishes" (Három kívánság) was used as an instrument of NATO propaganda. The program format is based on finding the child with the most unusual requests and then granting them. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave 580.000 HUF to MTV for arranging that a child spontaneously wished: for a trip to Brussels, a visit to the NATO centre, and a meeting with Javier Solana. (The boy who travelled to Brussels was a class-mate of the son of Hungary's NATO Ambassador in Brussels, András Simonyi) The NATO column of the daily Népszava carried an article with a photo: Three Wishes With Javier Solana (Három kívánság Javier Solánával), and the TV program itself gave a live broadcast on this media event.

8. The Europa Studio Communication Ltd. issued a NATO popularising NATOPOLY CD ROM in 5,000 copies, supported professionally by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MWA, and financially by those U.S. arm factories which have interests in Hungary: (Lucent Technologie, Mcdonell Douglas) (Europe Ltd, is the same firm which got 4.800.000 HUF from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a film series popularising NATO. For more details see V. 9.). The CD ROM prepared in Summer 1997 was distributed free. The CD ROM mentions Alba Kör as the only organisation opposing NATO although, when the film was made, we were not informed that it would be pro- NATO propaganda, that it was supported by arms manufacturers, and would advertise weapons.

9. The Ministry of Culture and Education sent the NATOPOLY CD ROM to 2,268 secondary schools, universities and educational institutions. We think that in doing so the ministry 1.) assisted in spreading the cult of violence, 2.) abused its authority over the institutions 3.) popularised arms manufacturers who are interested in Hungarian arms tenders (unilaterally) 4.) distributed products of a private company without recompense 5.) directly contributed to NATO propaganda.

10. In an Open Letter to the Ministry, Alba Kör asked that the CD ROM should be sent back to Europa Ltd., at the firm's expense. The Ministry described this proposal as an act of provocation and did not answer on its merits. Alba Kör then raised with the Ombudsman, the Ministry's secrecy concerning the cost to public funds; its concealment of data which ought to be available to the public. Finally, it was revealed that the Ministry spent 235,870 HUF solely on postage related expenses. (The Ministry did accept responsibility and did not fulfil our requests).

11. The Ministry of Defence supported pro- NATO events (BNV-Autumn Fair NATO pavilion, C+D military engineering exhibition), press publications (Social Review periodical, NATO supplement in Free Land weekly paper) and programs by the NATO communication strategy. NRTB accepted as justified two complaints lodged by Alba Kör against Familia Ltd. TV program. Alba Kör complained that the program had violated

the media law by accepting financial support of 7.000.000 HUF, and by giving biased information on NATO.

12. NRTB decided that the Szabó Family and Família Ltd. programs were of an entertainment character, and therefore unsuitable vehicles for the provision of impartial information on NATO. As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had given financial support to other entertainment programs (Three Wishes) and provided 500.000 HUF to a Hungarian Radio show, Cabaret Theatre which was to be recorded in Brussels, we were correct in claiming that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs never had any intention of giving correct, objective and impartial information on the issue of joining NATO.

13. A quasi-NGO, the Army and the Society Circle of Friends, led by the chairman the Parliamentary Defence Committee (Imre Mécs) obtained aid in kind and financial support from the Ministry of Defence and 1.4000.000 HUF from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the purpose of utilising forums in the provinces in order to convince the local population that joining NATO would be advantageous for Hungary. (Opponents of NATO were not invited to take part in any of the 100 public discussions). The above mentioned organisation, which was formed in 1994, is permanently supported by the press magnate Josef von Ferenczy.

14. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence did not alter their unlawful attitude even when the violation of law had been declared by NRTB. The two Ministries did not regard the decisions as legally binding ,and continued to give support to pro- NATO programs in the electronic media.

15. The Hungarian Television Co. (MTV) obstructed the activity of the NRTB Complaint's Committee; the Hungarian Radio (MR) assisted the Committee in enforcing the media law. The unlawful behaviour of producer of the Família Ltd. program (György Gát) merits mention. When the Complaint's Committee ordered the tapes to be submitted in order to judge the verity of the complaints, the producer refused to do so for two months, and finally handed them over practically on the eve of the referendum. The Committee especially condemned MTV for this default.

16. The Hungarian News Agency (MTI) and the national press published the decisions of NRTB correctly and regularly. We cannot say the same of MTV and MR as, they have a tacit understanding not to interfere in each others' internal affairs.

17. In spite of the fact that the decisions of NRTB and the media law were made public all over the country, neither parliamentary parties, governmental or opposition MPs, nor parliamentary committees protested against recurrent violations of law.

18. In July 1997, the Parliamentary Committee of Foreign Affairs (COFA), based on a unanimous decision wrote to NRTB calling on it to reverse the Complaints Committee's ruling condemning the pro-NATO programmes. The NRTB was also told to interpret media law in a "more flexible manner". This was an unlawful intervention in the work of the NRTB. In Open Letters to both the Foreign and Cultural Affairs Committees, Alba Kör asked them to review the situation that had arisen, and to declare whether there had been any violation of the constitutional state. The Foreign Affairs Committee replied that because of its crowded agenda it could not begin to consider the question before the Spring of 1998; the other committee did not respond in any way.

19. Instead of making the COFA letter public and protesting against it, the NRTB set aside the decisions of the Complaints Committee to which COFA objected, citing doubtful and formal reasons. In dealing with Alba Kör complaints, NRTB consistently violated the media law provision that complaints must be dealt with within 8 days of

filing; in the case of Alba Kör complaints there were delays of 90 to 150 days. It watered down Complaints Committee findings that the program deliverer was in breach of law, and never condemned the financial malpractice. Effectively, in its evaluation of decisions and in its activities concerning media law, NRTB fulfilled the expectations of COFA.

20. Not even the legally binding decisions of NRTB, were carried out by the program deliverer, not even the obligation to publicly acknowledge the ruling that they had been in violation of the media law. They were able to do so with impunity because the rest of the media were in solidarity, and remained silent in response to the interests of their influential sponsors.

21. No money from the NATO communication fund was given to any organisation opposing NATO membership. Aware of the illegal manner in which money was being distributed, Alba Kör did not apply for funding. As far as we know, the Social Coalition (Társadalmi Koalíció), the Munkáspárt (Workers Party) and the Green Alternative (Zöld Alternatíva) did apply. The Green Alternative application was rejected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

22. As we know from the press, the Workers Party wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to ensure that NATO communication moneys be distributed between organisations both opposing and supporting NATO membership. The Prime Minister did not deign to reply. The Workers' Party asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 2.000.000 HUF for its weekly paper. And was allocated half a million. Nevertheless, the Workers Party did not take the money because, it was dependent on a Ministry contract that it would be used exclusively for pro-NATO purposes.

23. The NRTB also found violation of the media law in all those cases when a deliverer did not decide the content of the supported program by itself. The case of the Workers Party demonstrated that the moneys allocated from the NATO communication strategy were assigned to pro-NATO propaganda, and that there was no truth in the repeatedly made Ministry claim that "the supported programs were supposed to deal with NATO, no matter what they said".

24. Using money from the NATO Communication Strategy funds, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs bought NATO pages, NATO columns in all national dailies and some interest group magazines for 3-4.8 million HUF per page. In order to provide NATO material for the local papers, the Ministry s assigned 2.277.500 HUF to MTI-Press. The principled, detailed case against joining NATO was never published, despite the many requests made by Alba Kör. The supplements of the above mentioned publications were 95% devoted to the pro-joining arguments.

25. Despite specific, repeated requests, the daily newspapers which produced NATO supplements: Népszabadság, Magyar Hírlap and Kurír refused to publish any opinion that differed from the official NATO image. The NATO supplement of Magyar Nemzet was relatively tolerant: 10% of the space carried opinions questioning the advantages of joining NATO.

26. In different opinion columns of the daily and weekly papers it was possible to publish some writings which queried joining NATO. These were Népszabadság, Magyar Hírlap and HVG (Weekly economy). The weekly 168 Hours refused to publish anything about us or our opinions.

27. The papers generally regarded as part of the alternative press, also refused to publish articles querying NATO membership, in much the same way as the regular media.

Apart from its news columns, the weekly Magyar Narancs (Hungarian Orange) carried anti-NATO items only reluctantly. The periodical “Liget” published not one article querying the value of joining NATO.

28. NATO propaganda moneys from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was paid to periodicals. The Rubicon Historical Magazine (Rubicon Történelmi Folyóirat) got 574.000 HUF, the Life and Science (Élet és Tudomány) 407.000 HUF, the Youth Magazine (Ifjúsági Magazin) 450.000 HUF and the Social Review (Társadalmi Szemle) 2x300.000 HUF from the NATO propaganda moneys of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Universal Existence Nature Preservative Association (Egyetemes Létezés Természetvédelmi Egyesület (ETK)), represented by György Lajos, called upon the nature and scientific (!) magazine Life and Science to counter-balance its pro NATO series with some aspects of the case against joining. Without result.

29. In the sociologic periodicals (Mozgó Világ – Moving World, Világosság – Light, Valóság – Reality, Századvég – End of Century, Európai Szemle – European Review, Külpolitika – Foreign Policy) it was impossible to publish any studies which differed from the governmental image of NATO. During all periods listed in the introduction, the Social Review, and Consciousness (Társadalmi Szemle, és az Ezzmélet) proved to be the most open-minded of Hungarian periodicals.

30. The only NATO programmes allowed in prime time by the electronic media were those favouring membership. The executives of the electronic media prohibited discussion shows on NATO. When a few programs of this kind were transmitted, the managers took good care to ensure that NATO opponent participants were outnumbered.

31. Because they were beneficiaries of positive discrimination in the distribution of frequencies, most of the regional-local radios are under political obligation to one of the governmental parties. Programs for NATO transmitted by these radios-studios were supported with 778.000 HUF by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Consequently, they did not organise even discussions on the issue of joining NATO.

32. Political obligation also applies to the majority working in local television and press. In complete disregard of the requirements of an independent media, with few exceptions, they were ready to communicate solely the homogeneous opinion of the parliament parties.

33. Not only the public media, but the commercial media adopted a uniformly negative attitude towards NATO opponents. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave 9.453.000 HUF to the NAP TV Ltd. for several programs (NATO Block, “Seeking Reporters” – NATO Related Questions, NATO Quiz), and 3.78.000 HUF to Danubius Commercial Radio for popularising NATO in “NATO Top Five”.

34. The information remained unilateral even after the appearance of the new TV channels. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs assigned one of the highest amounts (4.000.000 HUF) to a new TV channel (TV-2).

35. News items on the opposition to NATO in the electronic media and the national press did approximate to reasonable coverage. Alba Kör’s opposition was carried continuously and regularly in the news casts and columns. We regard information of this type as very important and valuable, but the news format never allowed for the full case against joining NATO to be presented.

36. Népszava was the one national paper which informed continuously on the activities of NATO opponents, including Alba Kör. Magyar Hírlap and Kurír, throughout the months before the referendum did not carry even news items on those against NATO.

We found that Népszabadság was the only paper which gave correct information on the anti-NATO position of Alba Kör. We were especially satisfied with the professional and impartial work of the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) throughout the period mentioned in the introduction.

37. The weekly papers appearing in foreign languages in Budapest (Budapest Business Journal, Budapest Week, Der Neue Pester Lloyd) published NATO news different from the governmental version from July 1997. Among the most important were their reports on the violations of law committed by the NATO Communication Strategy.

38. Before the Madrid decision and the referendum, the west European, the American, and the Japanese press showed interest in Alba Kör activity opposing NATO. The press in Central and Eastern Europe was much less interested: a few Czech, Slovakian press organs and the Russian press showed average interest. We consider valuable our repeated appearance in the Washington Post and Financial Times as well as in news issued by Reuters. It is also important that our activity appeared in Newsweek, Boston Globe, L'Humanité and to a considerable extent in Finnish and Swedish media.

39. On the first weekend in November 1997, Alba Kör organised an international No NATO Conference in Budapest, with the title "The World Without NATO" supported financially by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). The conference was addressed by experts and representatives of several movements: Alistair Millar /BASIC-USA/, Bridget Moix /FCLN-USA/, Michael Simmons /AFSC-USA/, Prof. Jiri Matousek /Czech Republic/, Prof. Alexander Sergounin /Russia/, Xanthe Hall /IPPNW-Germany/, Jorgen Johansen /WRI-Norway/, Csapody Tamás /Alba Kör/, Vit László /journalist-Hungary/, Matthias Reichl /KKAE-Austria/, Prof. Thomas Wallgren /Finland/, Tobias Damjanov /INES-Germany/. The event could not fulfil all our expectations though the press covered the event. (Népszabadság gave the most thorough coverage).

40. Alba Kör appealed officially to the two largest journalist associations (MUOSZ, MUK), and to the important and independent, media monitoring organisation, the Publicity Club, requesting them to take measures against the unilateral NATO propaganda and to ensure observance of freedom of press and opinion. All the necessary documents were forwarded to these organisations. The two journalist associations refused to declare an opinion. The Publicity Club agreed to monitor the media, with the reservation that it would not publish its expert opinion until after the referendum. So the two journalist associations declared their affiliation: they supported the NATO propaganda of the written media and deliberately refused to take a stand for freedom of the press and opinion. The Publicity Club is also responsible for this situation because it was ready to report on possible violations of freedom of speech only after the referendum.

41. The Hungarian Atlantic Council (Magyar Atlanti Tanács – MAT) formed by key representatives of politics, science, economy and the media to work for North-Atlantic integration was given a large sums of money (altogether 10. 557.000 HUF), by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Hungarian organisations in the US; arms firms interested in the Hungarian market; the NATO centre in Brussels, and a number of foreign foundations and Hungarian banks.

42. The quasi-NGO Hungarian Atlantic Council has among its members the heads of the ministries which have disposal of the NATO Communication Strategy moneys (László Kovács, György Keleti), the former political state secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (István Szent-Iványi) and presently (Mátyás Eörsi), as well as the political state secretary of the Ministry of Defence (István Fodor). Directors of some

scientific workshops contributing to the NATO question as “independent” research institutes (Hungarian Foreign Institute, Central-Europe Institute, Centre of Security and Defence Research, Strategic and Defence Research Institute) are also involved in the quasi-NGO, MAT. These institutions received altogether some 10.000.000 HUF through NATO Communication Strategy funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

43. The support given to the above mentioned institutions was used for financing research and publications. These were not available to those persons who did not strengthen the governmental NATO image. The State Secretary For Integration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ferenc Somogyi) who decided on the support, and the Deputy State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence (István Gyarmati) published their views either as authors or respondents in several publications to which they had allocated support.

44. Among the members of MAT are a number of experts who argued the case for joining NATO, appearing in the media as “uncommitted” scientific experts. Journalists who were condemned by NRTB, after the event, for making NATO propaganda films (Mihály Hardy, Gábor Izbéki, who had been the director of the Foreign Policy Studio of MTV till Autumn 1997), are also members of MAT. So is the managing editor of three periodicals (Gábor Papp).

45. A number of facts concerning the activities of both MWA and MAT are self-evident: 1./ there is a serious incompatibility between the position of those who distributed the moneys and their membership and advisory board membership, 2./ the chances of success for any proposal or application were not equal (their own organisations were preferred), 3./ NATO propaganda moneys were distributed through uncontrollable and personal contacts, 4./ the opinions of members of the organisation appeared as their own independent personal views, though this was not the case.

### 3. THE CAMPAIGN

(1997. November 5 – 14.)

1. At the time of the campaign the Ministry of the Interior (BM) invested 8.000.000 HUF in convincing the citizens about the necessity of voting, and voting “Yes”. The National Elections Committee (OVB) used part of this amount for official posters, public service and commercial television advertisements with the slogan “Europe Is Watching Us!”. By using this slogan the OVB, which is charged with responsibility for ensuring the holding of influence-free and legal referenda, propagated an official political message which implied that to oppose NATO enlargement was to be against Europe and the West, to wish to bring back the old system, or to be friends of Russia. The BM and the OVB did not confine themselves to transmitting to the citizen value-neutral information and technical knowledge about the coming referendum. The role of OVB was particularly grave; with this approach it lost its independence and neutrality.

2. The only political commercials carried by the TV channels were those supporting NATO enlargement. Some of these were commissioned by the MFA, others by the Manfred Worner Foundation (MWA).

3. The MWA placed large pro-NATO posters on billboards in the capital and throughout the country, and published half-page and smaller announcements in the dailies in the two weeks prior to the referendum. The slogan of the announcements was “Decide Our Fate On November 16th”. Neither the posters nor the press announcements gave

any indication of the name of the organisation commissioning them. (The television commercials did include the name of MWA) The Alba Kör called a number of editorial offices, but they refused to reveal who had commissioned the announcements. After the intervention of Alba Kör, Magyar Hírlap indicated on a header to the announcements, that they were “political advertisements”, Népszabadság and Új Magyarország followed this example, the others did not.

4. The “Decide Our Fate On November 16th” slogan, the advertisements and the announcements, anonymous or otherwise, conveyed three main ideas: 1./ if the country joined NATO conscription would come to an end 2./ with NATO membership Hungary would be on the “winning”, the “good” side 3./ NATO would bring lasting peace to families and the country 4./ NATO would give greater security at less cost. These messages clearly reflect: 1./ the low level approach to the question 2./ the inferior programming ability of the political elite 3./ the word by word repetition of the “communication strategy” of the government, and harmonisation with the official propaganda of the parliamentary parties, 4./ and express claims all of which, in Alba Kör’s opinion, are untrue.

5. The MWA, which is in fact the “civil initiative” of the Foreign and Defence Ministries, received funds from the ministries, from the government’s reserve fund, and also from unknown business sources (weapons industry?, banks? enterprises?). About 50.000.000 HUF was spent on the pro-NATO campaign. The MWA seriously broke the rules of advertising ethics with the anonymous announcements. What is more, with the total exclusion of any public disclosure, the members of parliament and leading politicians distributed the money among their own NATO friendly organisations.

6. In the week of the referendum the National Technical Development Committee (OMFB) took quarter- page announcements in all dailies “Tenders are invited for participation in NATO’s Science for Peace Programme”. The publication date of this “call for tenders” unambiguously demonstrated the official standpoint that the NATO is not a military organisation, but an organisation of “science, peace, environment and citizen security”. They also pushed the idea that NATO enlargement would serve the strengthening of the scientific infrastructure of the partner states. The OMFB – while it did not infringe advertising ethics – did take part in disseminating the misleading government propaganda.

7. The daily newspapers published announcements ( eighth of a page) – without the name of the commissioning organisation – containing, word for word, the text of the political declaration of Parliament in favour of joining NATO.

8. From among the parliamentary parties, the Hungarian Socialist Party, the Free Democrats Party and the Hungarian Democratic People’s Party campaigned. Their posters, leaflets and political advertisements were according to the rules of advertisement ethics. There was only one anonymous pro-NATO handout with the slogan “Protected Area”. Probably it was printed by a state organisation or one of the quasi-NGOs, but the publisher definitely violated the rules of advertising ethics.

9. In seeking a “Yes” vote from the citizens – before and during the campaign period – the parliamentarian elite played the “nationalist card”. This nationalism, stimulated from the top down, dramatised the southern-Slav war situation, suggesting that a new conflict could break out at any moment in the Balkans. The ‘ever-present Slav threat’ was employed as an ace ideological card. The political elite bears a heavy responsibility for this, too, as they contributed to a reopening of gradually healing historical wounds.

10. Three days before the referendum the representatives of the four historical churches visited the Prime Minister. The subject of discussion was a new law about the churches, but also they touched on the coming NATO referendum. As the leaders of the churches promised the prime minister, the priests and pastors called on religious people to participate in the referendum. They did not call for a “Yes” vote, but the timing of the meeting with the head of the government right before the referendum, in itself had a serious political message. Furthermore, the fact that the discussions on state financing of churches were conducted at the same time as the issue of the NATO referendum, suggests a certain give and take on both sides (not necessarily bribery, but definitely influence). In any case, media articles on the meeting were easy to misunderstand. They gave the impression that the churches supported the government point of view on the referendum.

11. If not before, during the last week before the referendum several organisations found it necessary to issue declarations on the importance of a “Yes” vote. The National Gypsy Minority Self-Government spent several millions on advertisements in daily newspapers. There were several new pro NATO voices: Antall József Memorial Committee, Batthyányi Foundation, Piarist Students Alliance, Hungarian Social Democrat Party, National Alliance of Hungarian Trade Unions, National Alliance of Enterprises. There were a few new opposing voices – Interest Defending Alliance of Agricultural Producers and the Citizens Interest Alliance.

12. Three days before the referendum, on 13 November, the Alba Kör filed suit at the Pest District Central Court (PKKB) against the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The suit claimed that in using moneys from the Communications Strategy budget to sponsor propaganda, the Minister, and his portfolio had continuously violated media law. The Alba Kör decided to take legal action because, in all public forums the Foreign Ministry always denied responsibility. Despite the negative decisions of the National Radio and Television Board which proved that violation of law had occurred, they had not been followed by political and economical consequences. After the filing of suit, Minister of Foreign Affairs László Kovács publicly described Alba Kör spokesman Tamás Csapody as a “traitor to the country” (1997, Nov. 16, 20.45. Hall of Duna Television). A similar civil action will be filed in December against Minister of Defence György Keleti for sponsoring (Familia Ltd.) and other programmes.

13. On the last working day before the referendum the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Trade Union agreed that in 1998 officers’ salaries would reach 80 percent of the amount specified for 1999, as laid down in the Service Law due to come into force on January 1, 1999. The figure agreed for deputy officers was 90 percent of the 1990 salary. In view of the close proximity of the NATO referendum the Ministry of Defence 1) accepted the Union’s demand 2) avoided a threatened demonstration by soldiers 3) won votes in the armed forces. This affair showed that 1) in the case of NATO membership the military would be in a privileged position – as was the case with the Warsaw Pact 2) the government was ready to make any sacrifice in the interest of NATO membership.

14. The week before the referendum daily newspapers provided some space for the arguments of the opposers, but limited in size, and never enough to make good the deliberate exclusion of the previous months. Népszabadság’s NATO supplements never gave any space for opposition views.

15. In the last issue before the campaign silence (on the days before and the day of the vote all campaigning is prohibited) almost all daily newspapers unambiguously reiterated the view that it was necessary to join NATO. An editorial in Népszabadság and the entire issue of Népszava were especially offensive.

16. Several media organs violated another aspect of campaigning prohibitions in the week before the referendum. The National Election Committee officially declared that the Magyar Hírlap, Népszabadság and Új Magyarország had violated the campaign silence by publishing public opinion poll results.

17. The National Election Committee – beyond examining and declaring the violation of campaign silence- was not able to proceed further: there is no legal framework within which it could take action. As a result, the violations of law we have described are not followed by political, financial or personal consequences. Alba Kör printed 100.000 NO NATO leaflets entitled “If You Want Peace, Prepare For Peace” The week before the referendum, 64.000 were distributed in Székesfehérvár and Dunaújváros, 5.000 in Pécs, Miskolc, Lábatlan, Tura, Győr, Komárom, Szeged, Dusnok, Bánya, Nótincs, Zirc and Solymár, and 16.000 in Budapest. (About 15 thousand remained undistributed because of lack of time). In Sopron 25 thousand people were able to see the same text in the form of paid political advertising, published in a commercial magazine.

18. As the unilateral and unlawful nature of the NATO campaign became known internationally, partly as a result of Alba Kör activities, Peter Eriksson, a Green Party M.P. of the Swedish parliament visited Budapest to see on the situation on the spot. At a press conference on 13 November Peter Eriksson stated: “The manner in which the campaign concerning NATO has been conducted in Hungary, could prove to be a serious obstacle in the process of entering the European Union”. The Swedish politician said he would present a report about his experiences to the Swedish and the European Parliaments. In Hungary only Magyar Hírlap reported the press conference, and on 17 November, the day after the referendum.

#### 4. THE CAMPAIGN SILENCE AND THE REFERENDUM

(November 14. midnight – November 16. 19 o'clock)

1. The Alba Kör was not allowed to participate in the supervision of the referendum. None of the parliamentary parties supported the proposal that non-parliamentary parties and civil organisations should be among the observers at the polling stations. Only one NATO opposing organisation was allowed to check the referendum, the Hungarian Truth and Life Party (MIÉP), a right-wing party with one single representative in Parliament. They were present in about 50-60 percent of the polling stations.

2. A few days before the referendum, two of the parliamentary opposition parties, The Young Democrats-Civic Party (Fidesz-MPP) and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) expressed doubts about whether the government could be trusted to organise elections without cheating. While the two parties had next year's parliamentary elections in mind, as the doubts were raised by the parliamentary opposition, they cannot be excluded in relation to the NATO question, although it has the full support of all parties.

3. The appalling case of the Observer from the British Helsinki Human Rights Group, Daniel McAdams was reported by the media. Although an officially delegated supervisor of the NATO referendum, he was excluded from seven of the nine polling stations visited, and in the two stations he could enter, was not allowed to check the numbers. He

stated that the parliamentary parties did not use the right of supervision. There were no independent supervisors only government delegated committee members in the polling stations. It also became public that the National Election Committee prepared in advance a list of those polling stations the observers were allowed to visit.

4. The National Election Committee condemned the treatment accorded Daniel McAdams. The board apologised, but it also declared that it had been a unique, exceptional case, and there was no reason to generalise as to the transparency or legality of the referendum.

5. The unilateral, law-violating NATO campaign was condemned in statement by the Oxford British Helsinki Human Rights Group. The Alba Kör fully agrees with this statement which was reported and published only by the opposition daily newspaper Új Magyarország.

6. We believe the case of Daniel McAdams to be extremely important. It shows 1) the extent to which Hungarian officials are unable to accept that they can also be supervised 2) the general hysteria generated in order to secure the “Yes” votes at whatever cost, and by any means, 3) the state of the Hungarian press and media.

7. It is important to stress again that the Swedish member of parliament and the observer of the British Helsinki Human Rights Group had the same opinion and experiences. They shared the opinion expressed in the British group’s report that the propaganda campaign generated a feeling as if Hungary had returned to its own past, “when only one candidate could be elected”.

8. The opposition daily, Új Magyarország reported the Daniel McAdams case on its front page, as an attack on the government, while the rest of the daily newspapers did not report the case at all. These reactions demonstrate both the violation of the independence of media and the lack of ethical journalism.

9. An Alba Kör group in the town of Sopron – from negligence – violated the campaign silence. The local group was requested by the Alba Kör to put a political NO NATO advertisement into a local commercial weekly “Soproni Hír Sztár”. While it was published on 14 November, the day before the campaign silence, some copies of the magazine were delivered only the day after, on Saturday, which was within the campaign silence period. On 17 November the Alba Kör announced that the Sopron group violated the law, and accepted full responsibility. The full text of the press release was published by the Hungarian News Agency, and carried on the front page of the Sopron County newspaper “Kisalföld”. The Alba Kör also sent the release to the county notary.

10. The Hungarian Catholic Board of Bishop’s semi-official weekly magazine, Uj Ember, which is available from Wednesday, but always dated for the following Sunday, also violated the campaign silence by carrying an article on NATO. The article was negative about joining, although the magazine had always rejected any news or articles questioning the necessity of NATO enlargement.

11. In our opinion the Channel One of Hungarian Television (public service TV) also violated the campaign silence with the 16 November program “Referendum” (9.30-10,00 and 17.05-17.40). The tone of the program, the narrated texts and pictures broke the campaign silence, because directly or indirectly they called for “Yes” votes. It was especially displeasing to see families leaving the church, the grandparents worrying for the future of their grandchildren, the words of a Lutheran pastor, the examples of the Spanish referendum and the detailed story of the “converted” Javier Solana’s life. The Alba Kör lodged a complaint with the National Radio and Television Board.

12. From press reports we know that the Workers Party and the Social Coalition also lodged complaints with the National Election Committee because of the unilateral campaign and violation of campaign silence.

13. The day after the referendum, opposition Member of Parliament Ibolya David (Hungarian Democratic Forum), in a speech before the day's agenda, upbraided the government for unlawful sponsoring of propaganda programs in order to achieve NATO membership. The Új Magyarország daily newspaper also found it important to publish a large, detailed article about the violations of law – the week after the referendum. These were valuable revelations of the true facts, but do not alter the situation that government and opposition, share responsibility for the silence about the scandalous actions before and during the referendum.

## 5. WHAT HAPPENED SINCE ?

(1997. November 16 – December 8.)

1. The 8.059.039 citizens had the right to vote, but only 3.968.668 persons (49,24%) participated in the referendum. There were 3.919.114 valid votes, 3.444.131 “Yes” (85%), and 574.983 “No” (15%) votes.

2. On 19 November, Alba Kör turned to the National Election Committee, asking it to declare the referendum invalid. In our interpretation of the law the referendum was invalid, because more than 50 % of the citizens did not vote (See point II/2.) and the law on referenda still defines more than 50 percent as the participation for a valid vote. Independently from the Alba Kör. (The Hungarian Truth and Life Party (MIÉP) and the Social Coalition came to the same conclusion).

3. The National Election Committee declared the referendum legal and valid. The committee acted according to law, when it considered the Alba Kör complaint. At the same time, in a real democracy it is inconceivable that a decision making body should be the one that sits in judgement of complaints made against it.

4. After the NEC rejection the Alba Kör turned to the Constitutional Court in mid-December asking the annulment of the result of the NATO referendum. The MIÉP had gone to the CC on the same grounds earlier.

5. The President of the Republic of Hungary thanked both the “Yes” and the “No” voters for their participation.

6. The Prime Minister and the parliamentary parties were overjoyed at the result of the referendum, and hailed it as a great victory. Evidently, this is quite an exaggeration, as more than half of the citizens did not take the trouble to express an opinion.

7. The Prime Minister, in his first post-referendum speech, thanked the parliamentary parties, civil organisations and churches for the success; the no votes he attributed to extremist forces. We agree with his first point – those he praised were used or contributed to all the means, legal or illegal, which helped bring about the “Yes” result. His second point we most definitely reject.

8. At the first post-referendum session the parliamentary group leaders were also ecstatic at the result of the referendum. Only Ivan Szabo, leader of the opposition Hungarian Democratic People's Party treated the no-voters appropriately.

9. The Workers Party and Hungarian Truth and Life Party (MSZMP and MIÉP) evaluated the 15 % “No” as their own successes. These claims, which evaluate the

results from a purely party-political standpoint, are as untrue and ridiculous as those made in the speech by the Prime Minister.

10. The Alba Kör believes that all NATO opposing organisations contributed to the number of “No” votes. It is impossible and unnecessary to question how many of the half a million “No” votes were brought in by which opposition force.

11. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided 4.800.000 HUF to the Europa Studio Communication Ltd. for a six part “educational film series” on NATO, which was sent to 50 (!) cable television stations free of charge. The Complaints Committee of the National Radio and Television Board – after the submission of the Alba Kör – condemned the firm for unilateral, unbalanced propaganda. (The same firm that produced the NATOPOLY CD ROM). The NRTB committee was especially critical of the fact that the presenter of the series (Miklos O. Molnar) was one of the firm’s owners, and that other television and radio employees were also co-owners.

12. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided 2.300.000 HUF for Duna Television (satellite channel) in order to “satisfy the special communication needs of expatriate Hungarians”. The final episode in Duna’s “NATO Mosaic” screened two weeks before the referendum, featured Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs, the main sponsor of the program. NRTB’s Complaints Committee condemned the program for unlawful sponsorship and violating the legal obligation to provide the balanced information required by media law.

13. Duna TV had asked the Alba Kör to appear in “NATO Mosaic”. By that time the fact of unlawful sponsorship was already obvious, and Alba Kör rejected the possibility of an appearance. Program editor, László Cselényi, knew that Alba Kör would complain to the NRTB, and it was in the hope of avoiding a negative decision that he sought to persuade Alba Kör to participate. After we rejected appearance, he attempted blackmail, saying he would use previously filmed materials to show Alba Kör in a negative light. Alba Kör reiterated its rejection, and in a written response prohibited the use of any previously filmed materials. Nevertheless, Duna television used the previously filmed materials. They also broadcast an untrue statement: that Alba Kör had refused to appear in the show for “tactical reasons”. With this the program violated the Law on publication of visual and audio recordings (Civil Code).

14. At the beginning of the “NATO Mosaic” program, Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs stated that he did not regard the decisions of the National Radio and Television Board as soundly based and justified. He also claimed that the already condemned “Atlantic Express” fulfilled the obligation to disseminate balanced information. This means the Foreign Minister confessed in front of the broad public, that he, and his ministry do not feel obliged to abide by the provisions of media law. At the same time he falsely stated that the Alba Kör had asked for 50 million forints (about 40 percent of the whole budget), the truth is that Alba Kör never asked for any support from the ministry.

15. Evidently, Duna Television seriously violated Alba Kör’s right to respect for its “good name and reputation”. This will be part of the Civil Law case Alba Kör is presenting to the Court, asking for a ruling that 1) the Foreign Minister declared untrue, invented theories about the Alba Kör 2) the Duna Television unlawfully made use of previously recorded film materials.

16. NATO Supplements still are being published by the daily newspapers; they were contracted for the whole year. They are now exclusively devoted to articles in support of NATO.

17. Parliament on the last working day of the year discussed reports on the referendum from the Chair of the National Elections Committee and Minister of Interior Gábor Kuncze. By an overwhelming majority, Parliament accepted the reports, and the two motions based on them, although the Constitutional Court has still to rule on the referendum.

Translated by *Charles Taylor COUTTS*

# **HUNGARY AND THE NATO ENLARGEMENT**

## **CONTENTS**

ARGUMENTS AGAINST HUNGARIAN ACCESSION TO NATO	3
BUYING TICKET FOR NOAH'S ARK	21
DOUBT OF A FEW	24
THE ALTERNATIVE ORGANISATIONS AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA	32
OPPONENTS OF NATO MEMBERSHIP	35
ARGUMENTS OF SOME CIVIC ORGANISATIONS AGAINST NATO MEMBERSHIP	38
THE TEN DEADLY SINS OF ARMS BUILD-UP	44
INFORMATION OR PROPAGANDA?	47
HUNGARY AND THE NATO ENLARGEMENT	57

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