

AXEL BRAUN

**DRUŽBA PIPELINE – NAGYMAROS DAM – PAKS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT I / II**  
Narratives of energy politics in Hungary (1951-2014)

VISEGRAD SCHOLARSHIP: FINAL REPORT (3 January – 3 March 2014)



Film still (excerpt) of *A műtargy* (The Object), a documentary of *Fekete Doboz / Black Box* on the protests of *Duna Kör* in 1988  
Film Library of Open Society Archives, Budapest. Copyright by Fekete Doboz, 1988

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## **DRUŽBA PIPELINE – NAGYMAROS DAM – PAKS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT I / II**

Narratives of energy politics in Hungary (1951 – 2014)

### INTRODUCTION

The narratives connected to large infrastructure projects are indicators for the development of a civil society. Each of the above mentioned Hungarian enterprises for energy supply is characterised by the influences of the particular time and its political framework. Selected phenomena from Stalinist industrialisation, Soviet economical and geo-political strategies to the first ecological movement that coincided with the fall of socialism will be considered for this research as well as the current re-establishment of energy political alliances between Hungary and Russia.

A large number of quotations, pictures and case studies will be collected to contribute to my on-going long-term artistic research project on man-altered landscapes. I plan to juxtapose my own documentary photographs and video material of these industrial landscapes with the historical footage that I found during my archive research. The material from very different backgrounds will be contextualised in presentations, artist books and installation-like exhibitions to offer uncommon approaches to complex discourses for both experts and an interested wider audience.

In the following chapters I will give a synopsis of my findings during my Visegrad scholarship at the Open Society Archives (3 January 2014 – 3 March 2014). It is structured according to the particular fields of research. As the work on these topics is intended to continue over a longer period of time these descriptions can be understood as preliminary reports about my activities in the time frame of the Visegrad scholarship.

## DRUŽBA PIPELINE

### INTRODUCTION

*Družba*, *Barátság* or *Freundschaft* (Friendship) is the name of a crude oil pipeline system translated to the particular languages of its transit countries. The construction was decided in 1958 to connect Soviet oilfields with Poland, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Later it was further connected to the pipeline systems of West Europe. In 1962 the first Hungarian branch *Barátság I* was completed (entering Hungary from Czechoslovakia) and in 1972 the second branch *Barátság II* was connected to the refinery in Százhalombatta (entering Hungary from Ukraine).

### RESEARCH AT OSA

I could find newspaper clippings and situation reports on the construction and maintenance of the pipeline system in the Hungarian Unit's Subject Files of the Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Research Institute (HU OSA 300-40-1, Box 282 and 283).

Next to Hungarian and East German newspaper articles that advertise the completion of the two branches with photos, illustrations and schematic maps, I could find press clippings from Western sources (e.g. Daily Telegraph and Süddeutsche Zeitung) that commented on the establishment of the new infrastructure. Furthermore I could find B-Wire notes of Radio Free Europe that describe conflicts over oil price politics between Arabian countries and the Soviet Union in 1961. In the late 1980s and early 1990s reports on accidents, leaks and environmental damage dominate the news about the pipeline system.

### RESEARCH IN OTHER ARCHIVES

Thanks to the support of István Rév I could furthermore extend this part of my research to the archive of *Magyar Olaj- és Gázipari Múzeum* in Zalaegerszeg and the *Magyar Országos Levéltár* (Hungarian National Archives) in Budapest. In Zalaegerszeg I could find plans and documents from the construction period, including lists of steel pipes that were imported to Hungary by Western companies.

At my next visit I will sift photo documentations of the construction process. In the National Archives I try to find key documents on the Soviet-Hungarian collaboration such as international contracts and agreements.

### FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

I will collect further material on the topic in Hungary but also in other countries along the pipeline system. Furthermore I will attend national and corporate archives in Germany to find more material about the economic collaboration between East and West before and after 1989.





## GABCIKOVO-NAGYMAROS HYDRO POWER SCHEME

### INTRODUCTION

The plans for the *Gabcikovo-Nagymaros dams* on the river Danube date back to the early 1950s when centralised plans for industrialisation were developed across the Socialist countries. The hydro power scheme was planned as a Czechoslovakian-Hungarian joint-venture to provide energy for the industrialisation process and to increase bonds between “brother states”.

Nevertheless it took until 1977 that a contract between the two countries was signed. While the Czechoslovakian side started to work on the *Gabcikovo dam* and a redirection of the Danube to Czechoslovakian territory in the early 1980s, Hungary hesitated to enter the construction phase for financial reasons. In 1986 Hungarian and Austrian representatives signed a contract which included a loan for the construction costs, an export insurance and the assignment of big parts of the actual construction works to the Austrian *Donauwerke AG*. In return Hungary agreed to deliver peak time electricity to Austria for a time span of twenty years (1996 to 2016).

In 1984 the first Eastern European environmentalist initiative *Duna Kör* (Danube Circle) was formed, based on a group of intellectuals represented by the Hungarian biologist Janos Vargha. While the protests of *Duna Kör* could still be oppressed by Hungarian authorities in 1986, just two years later the political situation had changed in favour of the demonstrators. In 1988 a petition to stop the works on the *Nagymaros dam* (signed by more than 120.000 people) was handed to the parliament. This event was followed by public protests, both in Budapest and at the construction site, that increased the pressure on the government which itself was reported not to be unanimous in favour of the dam.

Still in 1989 the construction works on the Hungarian side were timed and the following democratic government abandoned the project completely, which was reason for disputes among the contractual partners.

In 1992 Hungary and Czechoslovakia decided to take the case to the *International Court of Justice* in The Hague. Hungary made Czechoslovakia responsible for environmental damage on Hungarian territory, while the Slovak side, who was committed to terminate the project, sued Hungary for violation of their treaty from 1977.

### RESEARCH AT OSA

I could find newspaper clippings and situation reports about the planning and construction of the scheme and on the activities of *Duna Kör* in the Hungarian Unit's Subject Files of the Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Research Institute (HU OSA 300-40-1, Box 276, 278 and 279).

Next to Hungarian and Czechoslovakian newspaper articles that advertise the planning and construction of the dams with photos, illustrations and schematic maps (e.g. *Népszabadság*, *Magyar Hírlap*, *Rudé Pravó* a.o.), I could find press clippings from Western sources (e.g. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Zeit*, *Die Tageszeitung*, *Die Presse*, *Falter*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time Magazine* a.o.) that commented on the plans and consequences of the new infrastructure. Many of these sources put special focus on the activities of *Duna Kör*. Among these press clippings I could find an advertisement that the environmentalist group published in the Austrian newspaper *Die Presse* to protest against the Austrian involvement in the dam project. Additional to the press clippings, A- and B-WIRE reports – that were compiled by the editorial team of Radio Free Europe – I could also find a number of original periodicals in the Open Society Archive's collection that were quoted

## GABCIKOVO-NAGYMAROS HYDRO POWER SCHEME

in these *RFE* reports. Robert Parnica and Örs Tari provided great help to get access to these materials. As a next step I will produce photographic reproductions of selected articles.

Supported by Zsuzsa Zadori, István Rév and Robert Parnica I could find another very interesting body of material about the protest movement in the archive of the documentary film group *Fekete Doboz/Black Box*. Next to complete documentaries *Dunasaurus* (Ádám Csillag) and *A műtargy* (Ádám Csillag, et al.), the raw materials for these films and further footage are kept at OSA as well. This material forms a highly interesting body of audio-visual documents of the activities of *Duna Kör* and the time of the regime change.

In a next step I plan to sift these materials – if possible together with the particular authors – and to do interviews with participants of the protest movement, the members of *Fekete Doboz* and other parties and observers that were involved in the controversy of the *Gabcikovo–Nagymaros* project.

### RESEARCH IN OTHER ARCHIVES

Thanks to the support of István Rév I could furthermore attend the *Magyar Országos Levéltár* (Hungarian National Archives) in Budapest for this topic. I will try to find key documents on the Soviet-Hungarian collaboration such as international contracts and agreements.

### FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

I plan to contextualise my archive findings with my own landscape photography of the relevant sites of the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros project (Danube valley, Nagymaros, Gabcikovo). Furthermore I plan to produce video interviews that I would like to contextualise with the video material of *Fekete Doboz* in form of a multichannel video installation.



E/W - GABCIKOVO-NAGYMAROS *Vizierómu* F- 562

Munich, April 16 - (CND/EC) - following advertisement appeared in the Vienna daily DIE PRESSE of April 16, 1986; titled:

# AUFRUF

Werte Leserinnen und Leser,

Wir wenden uns auf diese Weise an Sie, weil Sie demnächst eine entscheidende Rolle bei Finanzierung und Realisierung eines überflüssigen und schädlichen tschechoslowakisch-ungarischen Donau-Wasserkraftwerksprojekts spielen könnten.

Sie sollten wissen, daß das Projekt des Staufensystems Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros in Ungarn auf friedlichen, jedoch entschiedenen und deutlichen Widerstand stößt. Seit Jahrzehnten ist dies die bedeutendste staatsbürgerliche Willensäußerung im Lande. Zehntausend Gegner des Projekts haben in Petitionen eine offene Diskussion und eine Volksabstimmung gefordert; doch die Regierung läßt keinerlei Medienkritik an dem Vorhaben zu und gestattet auch keiner Organisation oder Versammlung, Gegenmeinungen – und sei es bloß durch einen „Schweigespaziergang“ – kundzutun.

Auch diese Anzeige könnte in Ungarn nicht erscheinen. Es liegt uns eben daran, daß Sie die Argumente der Protestierenden aus erster Hand erfahren. Wir verheimlichen nicht, daß wir tief enttäuscht wären, würde man die freundschaftlich gesinnte öffentliche Meinung des Nachbarlandes Österreich nicht in die Waagschale legen.

## Das Projekt

- Die Donau soll auf einer Strecke von 200 Kilometern völlig umgestaltet werden.
- In der Ebene unterhalb von Preßburg (Bratislava) soll ein Staubecken mit 60 Quadratkilometern Fläche angelegt werden.
- Die Donau als Grenzfluß soll in einen 30 Kilometer langen und bis zu 16 Meter hohen ausbetonierten Kanalkanal auf tschechoslowakisches Gebiet ausgeleitet werden.
- Das Stauwasser soll durch das Spitzenkraftwerk Gabčíkovo zweimal täglich abgelassen werden.
- Um die vier Meter hohe Flutwelle zu bändigen, will man dem Fluß mit einem zweiten Kraftwerk zwischen Visegrád und Nagymaros – im romantisch-schönen Donauknie oberhalb von Budapest – an den Leib rücken.

Es geht um ein jahrzehntealtes Konzept, das, der damals herrschenden Anschauung entsprechend, vor allem auf maximale Energiegewinnung abzielt. Dennoch würde das Staufensystem die ungarische Energieproduktion nur um drei bis vier Prozent steigern, jedoch um den Preis einer gigantischen Investition, die bei der gegenwärtigen Wirtschaftslage aus eigener Kraft gar nicht aufzubringen wäre.

## Die Diskussion

Bis zur Nachricht über eine allfällige Beteiligung Österreichs ging es in der Auseinandersetzung in Ungarn bloß um ökologische Belange. Dabei haben auch die mit dem Umweltschutz betrauten offiziellen Körperschaften Kritik geäußert: so ein Sonderausschuß der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, das Landesamt für Umwelt- und Naturschutz, das Institut für Städteplanung und der Verband Ungarischer Baukünstler.

Der Bericht der Akademie wies darauf hin, daß im gewaltigen Projekt die Erfordernisse der Umwelt, also auch die damit verbundenen Kosten, überhaupt nicht berücksichtigt worden seien. Die Bauten würden, falls planmäßig realisiert, irreparable Schäden an Fluß- und Grundwasser, Trinkwasserversorgung, Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Tier- und Pflanzenwelt wie auch an der einzigartigen Donaulandschaft verursachen.

Nur ein Beispiel aus der Verlustliste: Die Umleitung in das betonerte Kanalbett würde durch Absenken des Grundwasserspiegels das Trinkwasser für drei Millionen Anrainer gefährden.

Die von Fachleuten und Betroffenen gleichermaßen geäußerten Einwände haben nur bewirkt, daß die Regierung eine nachträgliche Studie über die Umweltauswirkungen in Auftrag gab. Diese nahm

(PTO)

## PAKS I / II

### INTRODUCTION

Paks is the name of a Hungarian municipal at the Danube where the first – and so far only – Hungarian nuclear power plant was built.

The construction was decided in 1966 in form of a collaboration of the Soviet Union and Hungary.

As Hungary possessed its own resources of uranium ore the agreement included that the Soviet Union would provide the reactor technology and would be responsible for the processing of the fuels. The first plans scheduled the power plant to be finished in 1976.

The construction phase was characterised by strong delays that were caused, among other reasons, by a general lack of work power.

The first of four reactors was starting operation in 1982 and it took another five years to fully complete the power plant.

In January 2014 Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán signed a contract with Russian President Vladimir Putin about the financing and construction of another nuclear power plant at Paks by the Russian energy company *RosAtom*.

### RESEARCH AT OSA

I could find newspaper clippings and situation reports on the commissioning of the first part of the *Paks* power plant in the Hungarian Unit's Subject Files of the Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Research Institute (HU OSA 300-40-1, Box 272).

Next to Hungarian newspaper and magazine articles that advertise the completion of the particular reactors (including photos and illustrations), I could find *Situation Reports* of *Radio Free Europe* that comment on the power plant and its construction process. Among these I found a commentary titled "A Monument to Inefficiency" by Steven Kopany from 1986.

### RESEARCH IN OTHER ARCHIVES / SOURCES

Thanks to the support of István Rév I could furthermore attend the *Magyar Országos Levéltár* (Hungarian National Archives) in Budapest for this topic. I will try to find key documents on the Soviet-Hungarian collaboration such as international contracts and agreements.

To follow the recent developments I will collect both Hungarian and international media footage on the power plant and the further development of Russian-Hungarian relations.

### FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

I will collect further material on the topic in Hungary and abroad. At a later point I will try to connect these findings with observations from other researches (mentioned above). I am particularly interested to learn how energy-, geo- and power-political interests are implemented in these very particular but nevertheless comparable infrastructure projects – how they are expressed (or disguised) in the official narratives and how they are discussed by the public.





**Á**llok a Duna-parton. A vizet nézem, a szürkés-kék hömpölygést. Vajon mit hoz az Alpokból és mit visz innét tovább? Ágak, tuskók, mindenféle hordalék tarkítja. A hullámtörők mellett a víz kristályos, inni is lehetne belőle. Lenyúlok, hagyom sodortatni a kezem. A hűsítő habok kellemesek, felüdülök. A szemközti partról áthallik a gyerekzsivaj, a fürdőzők öneledt játéka. Motorosoknak zúg el melletttem. A strand felé veszi az irányt. Közel merészkedik a békés fürdőzőkhöz, azok megriadnak.

A paksi oldalon megtelt a komp. Személygépkocsik, motorosok, kerékpárosok, bikinis lányok készülnek a túlpartra.

Tőlem pár száz méterre 1887. június 18-án 216-an fulladtak a Dunába. Most is kavargó a víz, ide fordult valamikor a zarándókat szállító komp. Csak a pap, meg a komphúzó ló maradt életben.

Tíz éve még kőszent őrizte a halottak emlékét. Ezt írták rá: „Emléül a Szív 216 zarándósnak, kik 1887. évi június 18-án e révpart közelében a Dunába haltak. Állította Paks kath. közönsége 1909-ben. Add uram, hogy akik sz. Szíved dicsőségét keresték a földön, annak látásában gyönyörködjenek az Égben. Az örök világosság fényeskedjék nekik.”

Meg kellene keresni azt a kőszentet, vajon megőrizték-e a tájat formáló gépek? Kikerülték-e, meghagyták-e emlékek?

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