

Ladies and Gentleman, dear colleagues,

Please allow me to briefly introduce the institutions organized around the Foundation of Political History. The Foundation is aiming and organizing the multifold scientific research of the recent past and the present age. Besides political history it is widening its focus on other sciences as well, such as social history or economic history. It helps the birth of new scientific results with tenders, scholarships, support of individual and team researches. The Foundation maintains the Institute of Political History, which is a company outside the governmental institute-system, and enables the public usage of the documents of national value kept in the archive and library of the Institute. To publish the results of the researches the Foundation operates a detached publishing house, Napvilág Kiadó.

Besides the historical and societal research works, the Institute hosts scientific conferences and cultural events as well. The Foundation publishes the historical quarterly journal *Múltunk* (Our Past) and the social critical monthly journal *Egyenlítő* (Equalizer).

Our Institute has 4 departments:

1. The Scientific Department of the Institute of Political History
2. The Archives of Political History and Trade Unions
3. The Library of the Institute of Political History
4. Napvilág Publishing House

The predecessor of the Archives of Political History and Trade Unions was established in 1948. It served as a department of the Institute of Labour Movement of the Hungarian Workers' Party until 1956, of the Institute of Party History of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party until 1989, of the Institute of Political History of the Hungarian Socialist Party between 1989 and 1998, and as a part of the non-profit organization of the Institute of Political History from 1998. Its maintainer is the Foundation of Political History.

Before the change of regime the operation of our archive was determined by political considerations, research was limited and only for the privileged ones, the researchers were selected by political reason. Our archive had a privileged position, it stood outside the Hungarian archival system, it was directly controlled by the Hungarian Workers' Party and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

The operation of the archive has been utterly changed in the last 20 years. The privileged position of the archive has come to an end. It became an open proprietary archive and fitted in the Hungarian archival system when the new act regulating the archives was born in 1995.

Our most important endeavour was to cease the preceding restrictions in the researches and the political selection among the researchers, to make our inventories public.

As an open proprietary archive we are handling the documents in our care in accordance with the rules set forth for public archives. According to our own rules, the archive is open for research, while the staff is ready to provide the necessary information and supplies data as well.

There were huge changes in the amount of the documents the archive kept. It was reduced to its third in 1991 by the nationalization of the documents related to the Hungarian Workers' Party and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, and moving them to the National Archives of Hungary and to the Budapest City Archives.

There was significant accession in the amount of the documents: since 1998 we have been storing the documents of the Hungarian trade union movement that were produced during the period of 1945 to 1989 and which had previously been stored in the Central Archives of Trade Unions.

The other important accession in the amount of the documents was when the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) gave its documents and papers to the archives as a deposit.

These two huge group of documents is continuously expanding, because the Hungarian Socialist Party and some of the trade unions regularly sent their documents to us.

In the care of the Archives there are 4300 running-metres of documents, more than 1200 cassettes and tapes, almost 300 rolls of research film and about 25000 photographs. The majority of the fonds are co-ordinated and included in the inventory. The researchers could access the third of the inventory through internet, but we're continuously extending this.

We distinguish 13 main groups of fond:

I. Parties - *among them there are the documents of the Hungarian Communist Party, the Hungarian Social Democratic Party and the Hungarian Socialist Party*

II. Trade unions, labour and left-wing organizations, movements - *it contains the early documents of the Hungarian labour organizations and movement until 1945*

III. Social organizations - *such as the documents of the Association of Hungarian Partisans and Antifascists or the National Council of Hungarian Women, originated after 1945*

IV. Youth organizations - *such as the documents of the Hungarian Democratic Youth Association, the Young Workers' Association and the Communist Youth Association, originated after 1945*

V. Press - *documents related to the press of the political Left*

VI. Personal collections, recollections - *for example the documents of Béla Kun (who was the leader of the Hungarian Soviet Republic), Mihály Károlyi (the president of the Hungarian People's Republic), János Kádár (who was the leader of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and prime minister of Hungary), Károly Grósz (who also was a communist leader and prime minister)*

VII. Collection of pamphlets – *originated from 1870 up to 1958*

VIII. Facsimiles of documents relating to Hungary originating from foreign archives - *from the states of the former Soviet Union, the USA, Great Britain*

IX. Documents of miscellaneous origin - *among them there's the collection of the 1956 revolution*

X. The Archives of the Budapest Committee of MSZMP

XI. The Archives of the Pest County Committee of MSZMP

XII. The Central Archives of Trade Unions - *documents from 1945 up to now*

XIII. Vocal documents and photographs

We've made every effort to make our documents acquaint and utilize not only for archivists and historians, but for the ordinary people. Our intention has a result: while in 1992 the archives received 79 researchers in 504 occasions, in 2009 we received 144 researchers in 920 occasions - so, it's almost been doubled in the last two decades.

Our archive has very strict administration, and upon that we have detailed information on our researchers, the topics of researches and the documents our researchers inspected.

Before 1989 our archive had been collecting primarily the documents of the pre-1945 legal and illegal movements of the Hungarian labour movement, of the parties of the popular democratic period following the First World War, of the left-wing youth organizations, and of the people connected to these movements and organizations.

Nowadays we are focusing not merely on the political Left, but also on the entire Hungarian history of the modern age. We are endeavouring to trace, collect and preserve the private documents that are enduring sources of contemporary history, with a special emphasis on the history of the change of regime. We are open to all parties, organizations,

associations and private individuals who wish to deposit their documents in the Archives of Political History and Trade Unions.

Beside the strictly professional work we have some cultural functions. We've taken part in the programs of the Cultural Heritage Day for years. On that occasion one of our colleagues gives a presentation on the holdings and documents of the archive, the everyday work of an archivist. We frequently give lectures for university students specializing on archives. Some of these students spend their professional practice at our archive.

We also could give out certifications and copies of documents related to compensation, pension and court cases.

Even if it's fitted in the archival system, our archive is still unique. If I'm correct, every Central European party archives was ceased after the change of regime, their holdings were nationalized and moved to state archives. In Hungary, our archive and institute survived the change of regime and stayed alive. I think that the remaining of the institute was a by-product of the peaceful Hungarian transition. In our case only a part of the holdings and documents was nationalized, and a considerable part of the documents which was created in the years of state socialism remained in the care of our archive, for example the documents of *the Communist Youth Association, of the trade unions etc.*

In Hungary there's no obligation for the political parties to store their documents in archives or even to preserve them for the future. This is an unsolved task for the Hungarian historians, archivists and archives. As I know the only extant parliamentary party which gives its documents to archives is the Hungarian Socialist Party – and our archive is a pioneer because we accept and consciously collect party papers and documents.

Although we collect the documents of the Hungarian Socialist Party, but our archive is not a classical party archive: we not only collect party documents, but the documents of labour and social movements, trade unions, private documents of contemporary history. Furthermore the

Institute is not maintained by the Socialist Party or a foundation of the party.

The institute was maintained by the sources of the government and the contribution of civils. But the operation of our institute is considerably influenced by political changes: the current government doesn't give any money to the institute, even though the archive keeps documents of national value and always works objectively and in a legitimate way, it's opened for any citizen - although the institute has an open confessed left-wing tendency. If the withdrawal of the state resources continues, the Institute could operate in its ordinary way only to 2014, because the civil society is too weak to maintain or support an institute like ours. Because of the withdrawal the management of the institute has to reduce the expense, so the number of the archivists will cut back to its half: there are six people working in the archive, but from January only three of us could stay.

Despite the difficulties and the lack of money the institute and the archive continues working as we always did. The archive is working currently on a database of those Hungarian people who were captured as war prisoners in Russia during WWI, and of the ones who moved by any way to the Soviet Union during the interwar period. The other main task is ordering those documents which could command interest of lots of researchers, historians and journalists. That's why we're working on the ordering of the documents of trade unions and Socialist Party. To come up to the researchers' expectations we're continuously extending the amount the inventories which could be reached through internet. The Institute's homepage is also available in English where you can find detailed information on the archive. The archive's published several archival guides and finding aids in print so far and we are determined to continue publishing them despite the difficulties.

The publishing house of our institute celebrated the 20th anniversary of change of regime with a book series called *20 Years After*. 15 books were published in the series. The authors of that series, historians, economists,

sociologists, social psychologists, jurists try to interpret the recent past and the present in a critical approach, but avoid adjudicating. All of them use the methodological tools of their professions, and try to process their questions of study and show how the Hungarian society, economy, politics and culture have formed in these two decades.

The Archives had widespread international relationship before the change of regime. We had good relations with other Central European party archives, but also with the Swedish, Austrian and West German social democratic archives. After the change of regime the relations of the archive mostly broke up, partly backslided. It's because the ceasing of the partner archives and the unfavourable changes in the staff of our archive. We are ready to revive the international relations, to acquaint the foreign historians and archivists with our archive, documents and results. We are ready to cooperate with other archives and institutes, so that's why I'm eager to hear something about the HOPE project which could be a chance for us to cooperate.

Dear colleagues, thank you for your attention.