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**The Romance of Revolution? The Discourse of Revolutionism
among Hungarian Youth 1957–1970**

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Abstract

After the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Kádár-regime revised the political and ideological tasks and aims in the field of youth politics. In this study, I am going to examine the discourse of revolutionism and its manifestation in youth political movements. By defining the political-historical and ideological background, I focus on “socialist patriotism” and ‘internationalism’ in the early period of the era. With the case study of the “Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok” (Revolutionary Youth Days) the revival of revolutionism will be examined allowing for the ideological construction of revolutionism to be observed in practice. The domestic and global events of 1968 challenged the ideological construction of revolutionism when the “revolutionary romanticism” faced “revolution of the everyday” and it slowly eroded the construction of the “Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok”.

Keywords: revolutionism, communism, youth, ideology, Communist Youth League, political movement

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to examine the discourse of revolutionism in the Hungarian People’s Republic in the field of youth politics. Primarily it is a piece of theoretical research based on the idea of revolutionism; moreover it covers several aspects of the political history of Kádár-era, especially the youth politics. It examines contemporaneous political events and publications in which the idea of revolutionism took form and was transformed. The ideologist of the era has to face, as well as to answer the question posed by the title: Is there any romance in the revolution under the so-called process of “peaceful construction” in Kádár’s Hungary?

The 1956 revolution played an important role for the youth, not only in the clashes on the streets but also in the organizing of the demonstration on the 23rd of October. After the 4th of November, when the revolution was defeated by the Soviet troops, János Kádár became the new leader and the reorganizer of the Communist Party: the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party. In that period, the youth remained problematic for the regime, in the winter those still defiant, primarily young people, released a slogan (“We will start again in March”, the original Hungarian abbreviation is the MUK) which signaled their intention to restart the revolution on the 15th of March. The new government took this slogan seriously with a counter-campaign, and with the paramilitary organization the Workers’ Militia the authorities prevented new demonstrations on 15th of March. Moreover, on the 1st of May,

a huge march attended by thousands reinforced the legitimation of the new government. “The Kádár government was clearly apprehensive of the generational power, which the 1956 uprising had so clearly demonstrated, of which this youthful cohort was capable. For this reason, the regime was bent on creating the ‘scientific foundations of youth policy’”¹

Learning from the problems of the 1950s and the autumn of 1956, a new youth organization – the Communist Youth League (KISZ) – was established on 21st March 1957 (the anniversary of the Declaration of the Hungarian Soviet Republic) an attempt to reinvigorate the process of socializing those aged from 14 to 30 into the norms of a developed socialist society. Their first aim was to expand membership, which was successful in terms of the numbers: within five years of the league’s founding, its membership had reached 708,000 (more than seven hundred thousand). However, the reception of ideological knowledge by these members was problematic for the leadership throughout the entire period.

The “youth problem”

The so-called “youth problem” became a significant issue from the late 1960s both worldwide and in the Hungarian context. Both interpretations appeared during the Kádár era in Hungary. Frequently it emerged as a problem in the western “bourgeois” countries, yet the same notion referred to the Hungarian situation in some respects. It was important for youth politics to separate the “western” and “Hungarian” nature of the “youth problem”, as discussed in the official youth weekly journal “*Hungarian Youth*” (*Magyar Ifjúság*) in 1970: “Think about the movements of the youth in leader capitalist, imperialist states. However, it is a mistake if we exchange their youth problems with our socialist youth movement’s contradictions, because youth problems in an antagonist society are based on a totally different basis. There are growing symptoms of crisis, in our country, the dynamic rearrangement of society throws up waves of contradictions.”² This article was a part of a debate series called “Youth, KISZ, society”, in which a teacher from Csepel (a working-class borough of Budapest) is quoted above. It was a tool of the party leadership to publish these ordinary people’s opinions, thus making it clearer and bringing official ideological positions to newspaper readers, especially to the youth. It was more important after 1968 when several events agitated the “youth problem”, which will be presented later in this paper.

¹László Kürti, *Youth and the State in Hungary: Capitalism, Communism and Class* (Pluto Press, 2002), 113.

²*Magyar Ifjúság* 14, no. 6 (1970): 14.

In this study, I interpret the “youth problem” within the aspect of political leadership and I position the idea of revolutionism within the framework of the “youth problem”. Firstly, the ideological framework of the youth and revolution will be interpreted with examples from speeches and articles from political leaders and ideologists. It is important to reveal the contradictions between the communist ideology and the political situation of the Kádár-era. Thereafter, I will examine the post-1956 period, when the idea of revolutionism was largely concealed behind two other ideological terms: internationalism and socialist patriotism. The rehabilitation of revolutionism is mentioned in the next chapter, in which a case study of the “Revolutionary Youth Days” reveals the new aspects of the youth and revolution. Here I will present the concept of that political movement, and the global challenges to the idea of revolutionism in the late 1960s. After that, I will examine the effect of that period on Hungarian youth politics especially how the idea of “romanticism of everyday” was constructed and its effects on “Revolutionary Youth Days”.

Youth and revolutionism

According to the ideological basis of Marxism-Leninism, revolutionism has only a positive meaning and is a significant element of the ideology. From this perspective, revolutions nourish social development. In addition, the youth has a key role in the concept, they are connected with revolution because they symbolize the future in the present. Yet, the authorities’ negative experiences of teenagers participating in counter-revolution makes the concept ambiguous.

After the formation period of the KISZ, the discourse of revolutionism remained important, a fact revealed in the publications of the newly founded youth newspapers, for example, the *Hungarian Youth* (*Magyar Ifjúság*) and the *Young Communist* (*Ifjú Kommunista*) and later the *Youth Magazine* (*Ifjúsági Magazin*). The youth press was controlled by the central organizations of the party and the KISZ and was intended to play an important role in ideological education. The necessity of romanticism had appeared connected with the criticism of the 1950’s era before the KISZ was founded: “*In the past few years, the social organizations, institutions were not able to realize, these young people want to live in a youthful way, they have youthful desires, plans, they have the necessity for romanticism.*”³ It is clear in this article, that in a short period after the revolution it was recognized that the political leadership can not ignore young people’s necessity for romanticism, because it could easily be turned against the one-party state.

³Mária Sárdi, “Néhány szó a kétféle adósságról,” *Ifjú Kommunista* 1, no. 1 (1957): 28.

In early 1957, the political leadership had already recognized the necessity of revolutionary romanticism for the youth, although the concept of revolution was bonded to the events of 1956 and remained threatening for the regime, thus it was important to create new forms of youth politics. The young people's need for "revolutionary romanticism" proved problematic, thus the KISZ had to provide the possibility of experiencing revolutionary romanticism while maintaining control, to ensure the party's objectives were met. Lajos Méhes, the First Secretary of the KISZ reflected on the "revolutionary romanticism" in his speech in 1969: "It is a little bit platitudinous, that our youth see only the fights in the past as a revolution, and just in that see romanticism, and they think, our ancestors and fathers had the opportunity to do revolutionary actions."⁴ This speech is important in two aspects: firstly, it is a criticism about the past focused behavior of the youth and secondly, it acknowledges the need for "revolutionary actions."

It was necessary for the Communist Party and its youth organization to police the youth's "revolutionary energies." The party leaders were aware of the youth's specific time experience, one such example was occurring in the 1965 meeting of the Central Committee, where István Szirmai, the head of the Agitprop Workshop of the CC made the following comment highlighting the dangers of Maoism: "The youth have a critical eye with regard to the present. Having no experience of capitalism, they are ready for action. Also, they are saturated with tension and energy. They think that it was much easier for their fathers since the latter were given the chance to make a revolution."⁵ Szirmai's speech reinforced the concept of Méhes mentioned above, underscoring the energy and the receptivity of the youth.

In the attenuated political atmosphere of the early 1960s, the idea of revolutionism was concealed behind other ideological terms, such as socialist patriotism and internationalism. Thus it was possible to highlight the "traditions of revolutions" and simultaneously separate revolutionism in time (socialist patriotism) and space (internationalism). In that period the specific movements became more important in youth politics, one being the "Youth for Socialism" ("Ifjúság a szocializmusért"). They were also intended to channel the "romantic revolutionism" of young people into various controlled actions (cultural activities, sports). One of the most influential ideologists of the era - György Aczél – declared the importance of emotions in ideological education in a 1958 speech at the Central Committee meeting,

⁴Lajos Méhes, *The First secretary of KISZ the Hungarian Young Communist League*, 7th may 1969. (Ifjúsági Lapkiadó Vállalat, 1969): 4.

⁵HU-MOL 288 f. 4/73-74. 84 (see also: Ádám Takács, *The Maoist Incident: Effects of Political and Ideological Consolidation on Youth Mentality in the Kádár Regime in the 1960s* Resocea Report, 2012 (https://www.academia.edu/15233364/The_Maoist_Incident_Effects_of_Political_and_Ideological_Consolidation_on_Youth_Mentality_in_the_K%C3%A1d%C3%A1r_Regime_in_Hungary_in_the_1960s))

“He thought, that emotional persuasive effect displayed with film, novel, or pictures, should still not be left out of the toolbox of ideological persuasion.”⁶

Internationalism

Internationalism was important for the communist party’s ideology, Kádárism attempted to implement it for the political socialization of the youth. “Many party leaders, ideologues, and intellectuals hoped that revolutions in distant lands would provide inspiring images of the future of socialism that domestic exemplars were unable to match and that these might profoundly move the ideological inclinations of a younger cohort toward a deeper cultural identification with socialism as a modern, growing, and now truly global ideology.”⁷

In that case, revolutionism presupposed the support of countries where revolutions or freedom fights had occurred in recent years, like Cuba, Vietnam. From these freedom fights, the Hungarian youth should learn, and support them, but only ideologically, and with charity. The regime claimed in Hungary that their fight for freedom had ended after the communist takeover.

After the revolution of 1956, internationalism was an opportunity to create a connection with teenagers and allowed them to showcase revolutionism without reference to recent events. “In the first period of 1960’s league-sponsored magazines such as *Világ Ifjúsága* (World youth) and *Ifjú Kommunista* (Young Communist) frequently communicated new anti-imperialist struggles to the young. In their accounts, a new generation was turning to socialist construction across the world.”⁸

The connection between internationalism and revolutionism is noticeable in the case of Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara’s visit. When Ernesti “Che” Guevara – one of the major figures of the Cuban Revolution – visited Hungary in December 1960, it was the annual conference of the Communist Youth in Budapest, that publicly showcased him to the Hungarian population. The fact that the visit was organized by the youth league and not the Communist Party indicates that the Hungarian ideologist wanted to introduce Che Guevara to the youth. On the other hand, he was not introduced as an “official revolutionary” but as the head of the National Bank of Cuba, despite this his image retained traces of revolutionary

⁶Melinda Kalmár, *Ennivaló és hozomány, A kora kádárizmus ideológiája* (Budapest: Magvető, 1998), 157.

⁷James Mark and Péter Apor, “Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956–1989” *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no 4. (December 2015): 852–891. 861.

⁸Mark-Apor, “Socialism Goes Global,” 857.

romanticism. A report published in *Hungarian Youth* emphasized that image, reporting the look of Guevara as a “giant, tall young man, dressed in the revolution’s uniform.”⁹

When Che Guevara was captured and killed in the Bolivian rainforest, “he had publicly popularized his disappointment in the Soviet Union and he became a follower of Mao Zedong, thus it was necessary that the Hungarian communist party leaders set itself apart from his methods and his extremist idea of the global revolution.”¹⁰ As a result of this, the Hungarian impression of Che Guevara changed, and his previous role in youth politics disappeared, moreover his image became problematic for the party leaders. “They also wanted to keep the Hungarian youth away from Che Guevara, who had become a symbol of the revolution, because following them would have meant joining the Western student movements of the 1960s however, linking youth and the revolution - a decade after the Revolution of 1956 - was a nightmare for party leadership”¹¹ In practice, this meant that the news of Che Guevara’s death was only very briefly reported in the press, and the regime did not use it for political propaganda. In the 1970s and 1980s, his character remained visible to youth politics, primarily focused on the visual aspects, besides the controversy of his biography.

Another vivid example of “concealing” revolutionism was the state-sponsored policy of anti-imperialist solidarity. “In early 1965, the largest solidarity movement of the entire communist period was established following the intensification of the US bombing of Vietnam.”¹² The favorable global political atmosphere created the opportunity for the political leadership to utilize teenagers’ political activism and to ensure it reflected with the party’s interest.

The “Vietnam Solidarity Committee” was established by university students György Pór and Sándor Bencze under the umbrella of the KISZ. They organized protests at the U.S. embassy in Budapest and the “Vietnamese Sundays” solidarity action. The “Vietnam Solidarity Committee’s” success was, despite appearances, not spontaneous in character: students from different universities in Budapest discovered that although this initiative was approved and officially led by the Communist Youth League, its organization remained largely a volunteer-based activity. “Being an important vehicle for collective social and political activity for university students, the solidarity campaign for Vietnam also allowed for radical commitment and creativity, something that was usually lacking from official communist youth events and initiatives.”¹³

⁹ *Magyar Ifjúság* 4. no. 52 (1960): 9.

¹⁰ András Murai and Eszter Zsófia Tóth, *1968 Magyarországon. Miért hagytuk, hogy így legyen?* (Budapest: Scolar, 2018), 108.

¹¹ Murai and Tóth, *1968 Magyarországon*, 116.

¹² Mark and Apor, “Socialism Goes Global,” 870.

¹³ Takács, *The Maoist Incident*, 52.

The thirst for revolutionary romanticism manifested itself as leftist criticism of the regime among certain youth groups, criticism levelled against the economic and social reforms of the late 60s. From 1968 onward, the party leadership, as well as police authorities, moved aggressively against those who challenged official interpretations of anti-imperialism, and semi-autonomous and ideologically heterodox movements were shut down.¹⁴

The best-known instance was the so-called Maoist trial that took place in the summer of 1968. A group of university students including György Pór and Sándor Bence were accused of organizing a Maoist-inspired conspiracy and an illegal party to overthrow the regime, and despite the absurdity of such charges, the leaders were jailed. Word spread that those convicted were Maoist intellectuals, making it clear that domesticating Chinese or other excessive forms of revolutionary behavior would not be tolerated anymore.

Also, the fact that dissatisfaction with Kádárist reforms in Hungary in the 1960s could be generated in some individuals, and in particular among the youth, sympathy toward the Maoist position exposes the very narrowness of the political imagination of those who, while not accepting the political orientation of the regime, actually cared about the future of a socialist society.¹⁵

Revolutionary Youth Days (Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok, FIN)

Another aspect of revolutionism was based on Hungarian history. This concept was socialist patriotism, which was an expressly anti-nationalist idea, tightly connected with internationalism, however, it exploited the national history.¹⁶ The concept of socialist patriotism had been used by Lenin, yet its real content and interpretation, the difference between the nationalist “flag-waving” patriotism and the internationalist fortified socialist patriotism was unclear. Furthermore, it was possible to create a definition for the populace, as “the working class’s patriotism is the socialist patriotism.”¹⁷ Nonetheless, the interpretation remained problematic, in so far as it failed to define how it differed from the “old-fashioned” nationalism and connected with internationalism at the same time. In the 1960’s the concept of socialist patriotism—followed by historical debates—was inserted into the Kádárist ideology. This was based on Hungarian freedom

¹⁴ Mark and Apor, “Socialism Goes Global,” 878.

¹⁵ Takács, *The Maoist Incident*, 5.

¹⁶ About the conceptual history of social patriotism in Hungary: Milán Pap, “„A nép és a szülőföld igaz szeretete” – A szocialista hazafiság fogalma a Kádár-rendszerben,” *Politikatudományi Szemle* 22, no.1 (2013): 66–86.

¹⁷ Vince Lukács, “Szocialista hazafiság és proletár internacionalizmus,” in *Ifjúsági előadásorozat 27. 1969/70*, ed. Vince Lukács (Ifjúsági Lapkiadó Vállalat), 7.

fighters and revolutions in the past, hence the peasant uprisings, the uprisings against the Habsburgs, and the building of socialism were all part of the same framework.

Ten years after 1956, a new youth political movement emerged based on revolutionism. It was called the Revolutionary Youth Days ('Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok', abbreviated: FIN), a new political movement for the youth celebrating socialist patriotism free from internationalist connections¹⁸. Taking place every spring from 1967 to 1988, it was based on three historical public holidays: the 15th March 1848, celebrating the Hungarian Revolution, the 21st March 1919 which saw the Declaration of the Hungarian Soviet Republic and the 4th April 1945, when Hungary was liberated after World War II by the Soviet Red Army. The essence of this concept was that these three different historical events were connected with the idea of revolution. Thus, March 15th symbolizes the origins, the "lighting of the fire of the revolution", and the 4th April is the fulfillment of all former freedom fights, hence the latter was the most significant of the three holidays. The calendrical order also helped to maintain the increasing importance of the events, thus reducing the importance of the non-communist holiday of March 15th. Only the 1848 revolution had real legitimation and historical tradition in the society, thus with the movement, the regime attempted to exploit the social memory of that event.

"These celebrations presented earlier instances of domestic leftist radical activism in 1919 and 1945 as precursors of the student and New Left movements that were emerging in the West—not in order to create solidarity with those movements, but to demonstrate that Hungarians had no need for radical fights in the 1960s since their forefathers had already fought those battles some twenty to fifty years previously."¹⁹

The FIN was not the first example of an ideological connection being created between 1848, 1919, and 1945; it is rooted in the communist concept of history, in which the social development occurs through civic and socialist revolutions. Hence the ideologists interpreted Hungarian history as a chain of uprisings. The predecessor of the "Three Spring" ("Három tavasz") was that under the regime of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the Communists considered the revolution of 1848 as an antecedent, primarily characterized by Sándor Petőfi's character of the revolutionaries.²⁰

The Revolutionary Youth Days was a political movement, which included celebrations, marches, cultural and sports events, and competitions, coordinated by the KISZ organizations such as at schools, workplaces and in the army. It became a tradition to organize an opening and closing ceremony of the KISZ at the capital or one of the more significant cities such

¹⁸ Mark and Apor, "Socialism Goes Global," 878.

¹⁹ Mark and Apor, "Socialism Goes Global," 878.

²⁰ Boldizsár Vörös, „*A múltat végképp eltörölni?*” (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2004), 100.

as Pécs or Debrecen. The participation of the youth was of utmost importance to the regime, a popularity survey published for the VIIIth Congress of the KISZ in 1971, at which a vast crowd appeared: “the Revolutionary Youth Days were attended by more than two million people a year.”²¹ A booklet published by the KISZ mentioned significantly less, but still a high number, “hundred thousands of young people” in 1974.²²

The movement of FIN included television quiz shows, scientific and art competitions nationwide. As an example, it was the 1967’s conference called “Három forradalmi korszak és az ifjúság” (“Three revolutionary era and the youth”) and the television broadcasted quiz show called “Hősök nyomában” (“In the Wake of Heroes”).²³ The connection between these events was based on the ideological framework of the “three springs”, thus they could focus more on ideology than the actual historical events. An article in *Magyar Ifjúság* reported the 1970’s FIN students’ conference, where the main topic was the relationship between youth and Marxism, with over “two hundred papers on Marxism.”²⁴

Most of the events were held by the “basic organizations” (alapszervezet), thus the schools, factories, and even the People’s Army facilities became locations for the FIN. In practice, the organization of these events was left to the local level – with suggestions from the higher authorities – a feature that saw a lot of differences in the attendance at and efficiency of the programs in different basic organizations. The KISZ influence a majority of the younger generation through sports programs, festive membership meetings, debates, and cultural events although the implementation of the ideology depended on the local organizers the KISZ secretaries and propagandists.

The closing ceremonies of the Revolutionary Youth Days were linked to the celebration of 4th April. It was common for this day to include the oath ceremony when the new KISZ members were inaugurated. Here, the symbolism of fulfillment can be observed, moreover in the case of the closing ceremony of FIN in 1967, when the event was held at the top of the Kékes mountain, the highest peak in Hungary, a fire ceremony closed the FIN commemorating the liberation of Hungary in 1945.²⁵

After the celebrations, evaluating the event was important for the KISZ and the party’s leading organizations. In a report of the Agitprop Department, they compared the first series of the FIN to the previous, presumably popular “We accuse the Imperialism” (“Vádoljuk

²¹ Csillik András (ed. et al.), *A KISZ VIII. kongresszusának jegyzőkönyve 1971* (Budapest: Ifjúsági Lapkiadó Vállalat, 1972), 101.

²² *Nyári KISZ vezető képzés '74* (Ifjúsági Lapkiadó Vállalat, 1974), 12.

²³ PIL 289/4 250, Péter Apor, *Az elképzelt köztársaság, A Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság utóélete 1945-1989* (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2014), 194.

²⁴ *Magyar Ifjúság* 1970/10. (március 13.) 7.

²⁵ PIL 289/4 250. Javaslata Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok megrendezésére. 1966. aug. 17

az imperializmust”) political movement with a positive result.²⁶ For the legitimization of the newly emerged movement without any significant social roots, participation was very important. Therefore the reports frequently highlighted the high attendance at these events.

1968: the year of revolt

In the second period of the 1960s, revolution was the main cultural phenomenon worldwide.²⁷ Numerous events in several countries reinvigorated the discourse of revolutionism, such as the “cultural revolution” of Maoist China, the Vietnam war, the student revolt in the USA and Western European cities. In Hungary, there were no revolutions or demonstrations against the regime in 1968, but the discourse of revolution was revitalized worldwide, as well as in Hungary, and in the field of youth politics the ideologically based construction was challenged. The historian Éva Sandeisky writes about this period in her memoir: “It was an exciting, eventful, hopeful time when I was a university student. In those years, when the international and the national circumstances made it possible to be part of the processes for the students, at least we thought so. The predecessor and the successor generations of the Kádár-era did not have that opportunity.”²⁸ These events ensured at least the feeling of the political participation for the youth, they could easily feel, that they had a major social impact under the state socialist regime also.

The year 1968 had direct consequences for Hungary, which affected both politics and ideology. One was the invasion of Czechoslovakia: On the night of 20th–21st August 1968, Eastern Bloc armies from four Warsaw Pact countries – the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary—invaded the ČSSR. This event revealed the limits of the Hungarian reform movement and revived memories of 1956.

The main ideologist of Kádárism noted these phenomena, recognized a deficiency in the party’s ideological education. According to György Aczél: “We have to explain the evolutionary type of our time. There are debates about that question within our borders and the international labor movement.[...] because of the differences of the concrete historical condition and duty the revolutionism means different for each country and political party.”²⁹ With that method Aczél tried to separate the revolution’s “militant” aspect from

²⁶ PHL 289. f. 3/240. ö. e. Tájékoztató a Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok néhány tapasztalatáról KISZ KB Agit. Prop. Osztálya, 1968. június 3.)

²⁷ Apor, *Az elképzelt köztársaság*, 194.

²⁸ Éva Sandeisky, “Az én hatvannyolcam,” in *Kádárizmus: átereszek. Évkönyv XVII*, ed. Gyula Kozák (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2010), 263–274. 274.

²⁹ György Aczél, *Eszmény erejével* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1971), 244.

the state-socialist countries like Hungary, where genuine uprisings are unnecessary. In that same speech, he declared the growing conquest of “revolutionary romanticism”: “In the consciousness of some youngster, the glory of revolution is tied only to the heroes of barricades and guerrilla wars; mostly they mention Che Guevara”.³⁰

Revolutionary Romanticism vs. Revolution of the everyday

In the first period of the 1970s, an ambiguity defined youth politics. On the one hand, the ideologists considered revolutionary romanticism necessary for increasing the participation of the younger generation in the socialist movement. On the other hand, the idea of revolutionism still remained threatening, it required an embedding in the non-heroic everyday.

The question is, how could the youth be revolutionary under the circumstances of state socialism? To answer that question the idea of ‘revolution of everyday’ was born. According to that theory, everyday work, learning and maintaining the existing system are reinterpreted as revolutionary action. One of the first examples of this idea was published by Péter Rényi in *‘Valóság’* journal in 1970³¹, and in more detail in literary historian and ideologist István Király’s essay in *Kortárs* and his book entitled *‘Hazafiság és forradalmiság’* (Patriotism and revolutionism).³²

The main principles of ‘revolutionism of everyday’ influenced the context of Revolutionary Youth Days from 1968. In the 1968 May issue of *Ifjúsági Magazin*, Ferenc Baranyi, the managing editor of the magazine, published an article titled “Nem érkezettek ide késve” (“You didn’t come here late”). This article specifically targeted young people, who “think of the revolutionary youth of heroic ages with secret envy” and Baranyi offers them the concept of “revolution of everyday”³³ The connection between the Revolutionary Youth Days and Baranyi’s article is clear – besides the publishing date of April – when we examine the three illustrations accompanying the article. Three documents from the historical events being celebrated were published with the article. Probably, it is not a coincidence, that in this same issue, an illustrated report of the situation in Vietnam was published.³⁴ Thus Baranyi’s article was an attempt to balance the militant with the more acceptable side of revolutionism for the younger generation.

³⁰ Aczél, *Eszménk erejével*, 244.

³¹ Péter Rényi, “A forradalom, mely nem falja fel gyermekeit,” *Valóság* 13, no. 9 (1970): 13–22.

³² István Király, “A mindennapok forradalmisága,” *Kortárs* 17, no. 11. (1973): 1791–1808; István Király: *Hazafiság és forradalmiság* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1974).

³³ Ferenc Baranyi, “Nem érkezettek ide késve,” *Ifjúsági Magazin* 4, no. 4 (1968): 22.

³⁴ György Pille, “Levélosztás... csak este,” *Ifjúsági Magazin* 4, no. 4. (1968): 23–25.

The idea of the “revolutionism of everyday” became clearer in the *Magyar Ifjúság* 1969 May 14th issue, in an article titled “Mai feladataink teljesítésével” (“By fulfilling our recent objectives”). This article was an introduction for the forthcoming Revolutionary Youth Days, and its main purpose was to link the revolutionary past with present objectives, to prove that the idea of an exciting past was relevant to the present: “There is no gap between the fights in the past and the present objectives of the youth. It has always been about that, people own their homeland, their life is based on work and enjoying its benefits.”³⁵

It can be fruitful to examine the reasons for the strong connection between revolutionism and the Revolutionary Youth Days. In 1967 when the political movement was established, it was beneficial to connect the three celebrations, thus stressing the continuous line of freedom fights and revolutions. However, after 1968 the new, costly emerged Revolutionary Youth Days existed in that boiling political climate, thus the revolutionism may had dangerous connotations. The ceremonies are intended to be the exit of the everyday, they are opportunities to relive romantic revolutionism, thus they could be the basis of a leftist radical movement. The Communist Party and the Youth League tried to avoid that threat by publishing articles saturated with the idea of the “revolution of everyday” and they forced the celebration to focus primarily on the present. According to this interpretation, the Revolutionary Youth Days is the framework, where revolutionism can be experienced by the youth in a controlled and diminished way.

The integration of the “revolution of everyday” into FIN’s concept is more visible in the press representation than the structure of the events and celebrations. As a result of this phenomenon, there is no evidence of cancelled celebrations, the festive nature of the events remained. In the nationwide youth press, the tension between everydayness and festivity was commonly repeated throughout the 1970s. The 1974 February issue of the ‘*Young Communist*’ (*Ifjú Kommunista*) a publication entitled “Everyday and holidays” analyzed that ambiguity, the author of the article declared the importance of both states, and highlighted that ‘the ideological education should not be reduced only on holidays.’³⁶

The discourse of revolutionism remained powerful but global political events years after the student revolts saw the discourse of revolutionism became less important globally as well as in Hungary. In the field of Hungarian youth politics, the forms devised between 1967–1970 remained almost the same, moreover, they became even triter. During the 1970s, the discourse faded so much, that in an article (titled “Youth, Revolutionism”) published in one of the daily newspaper “*Magyar Nemzet*” it was stated that being revolutionary for

³⁵ *Magyar Ifjúság* 13, no. 11 (1969. március 14.): 2–3.

³⁶ G.F., “Hétköznapok, ünnepek,” *Ifjú Kommunista* 18, no. 2 (1974): 32.

the youth means to support the party's politics only.³⁷ In that period the lack of political activity was a serious issue for the youth organization, thus revolutionism became a synonym for denying the indifference and the political inactivity as illustrated by Karikó: "Have we understood enough with our young generation, why the mandatory work is needed, the learning, besides leisure time reading the maybe grueling books of Marx and other socio-political, philosophical books-journals, watching television about public life."³⁸

Conclusion

In conclusion, revolutionism was a point of collision in the aspect of youth politics. The events of 1956 revealed the immense differences between the youth's concept of revolution and that of the prevailing communist ideology. In the early period, even mentioning the "revolution" could have been dangerous for the political leadership, thus the idea of revolutionism had been replaced with terms like internationalism and socialist patriotism. Thereafter the Kádár-regime aimed to utilize the "revolutionary energies" of the youth for the party's interest. Political movements such as the "Revolutionary Youth Days" were established to achieve that interest, although the real ideological socialization impact of the youth was less effective than the political leadership expected.

The effects of 1968 reinvigorated the discourse of revolutionism in Hungary, positioning the youth to this new phenomenon was challenging for the ideologists. Initially, it seemed to be achieved by the communist party, ten years after 1956 they established a new annual political action based on revolutionism, and they involved a large number of the younger generation. However, facing the "Maoist" challenge, the idea of revolutionary romanticism was repressed again by the Communist Party and the Youth League. The Hungarian Communist Party and youth organization tried to balance "revolutionary romanticism" with the "revolution of everyday" through the programs of the Revolutionary Youth Days. They wanted to include both of these aspects which were difficult to comprehend for the younger generation. In the early '70s, this discourse gradually faded, and in the late '80s before the end of state socialism in Hungary, revolutionism and particularly the 1956 revolution became keystones of protest against the regime.

³⁷ Sándor Karikó, "Ifjúság, forradalmiság. A nyolcvanas évek küszöbén." *Magyar Nemzet* 1980. febr. 21. 3.

³⁸ Karikó, "Ifjúság, forradalmiság," 3.

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