

**Movements into Parties: The Historical Transformation
of the Hungarian Opposition**

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The post-communist system in Eastern Europe will be distinguished by the quality of its civil society. The market will cast civil society's construction in one mold, but a democratic civil society will depend on the constitution of critical intellectuals, or the making of individuals with the inclination and capacity to understand their personal situation to reflect a public condition, and to understand the public condition as constituted through potentially transformed power relations. In order to illuminate this general process, this paper rethinks the distinction of intellectuals and considers two important cases of the making of critical intellectuals in pre-transition Poland. Physicians in 1980-81 and peace activists in 1985-88 illustrate how instabilities create opportunities for new groups of people to become critical intellectuals and how critical intellectual work can create new possibilities for social transformation. By illuminating these processes, this paper hopes to contribute to the expansion of critical intellectuality in and about Eastern Europe.

Abstract

The two most successful parties in the 1990 parliamentary elections in Hungary developed out of political movement organizations that sought reforms of the communist political system. From origins in informal, interpersonal and professional networks, these groups became increasingly formalized as movement organizations from 1987 onward. These organizational developments came in response to a changing political environment in which the crisis of the Hungarian economy deepened and reformers within the ruling party gained increasing control. The emergence of new organizations led, in turn, to quick growth of other movement and interest organizations and increased pressures on the regime. These developments provided the context for the negotiations and referendum which established the framework for the elections. Utilizing a political movements perspective, this paper traces the dynamic interplay between ideology, organization, and political environment in the origin, development, and transformation of these movement organizations.

In the March-April 1990 National Assembly elections held in Hungary, six parties gained sufficient electoral support to give them representation in the new legislature.¹ Three of these parties, including the two leading vote-getters, were new political parties that had not existed prior to the late 1980s. Two of the parties were "historical" parties which had participated in the elections in the immediate post-World War II period of democracy. The final party was a reconstituted version of the ruling party.

The Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), one of the new parties, emerged from the spring 1990 elections as the leading party in the National Assembly and formed a coalition government with two historic parties, the Independent Small-Holders Party (FKGP) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP). As an outcome of the elections, another new party, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), was the second largest party and formed an opposition to the government in cooperation with the other new party, the Federation of Young Democrats, FIDESZ. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), legal successor to the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSZMP), is also an opposition party in the current parliament.

This paper focuses upon the historical emergence of the new political parties, particularly MDF and SZDSZ. During the last half of 1980s, these two parties witnessed broadly similar patterns of development. Both emerged out of informal personal and professional networks to become formal political movement organizations. As the political environment underwent dramatic changes in 1988-1989, these organizations transformed into competitive political parties. While the paper is predominantly historical, the account presented is based upon an analytical framework derived from research on social and political movements. Before presenting the historical account, it would be useful to outline the basic themes of the political movements literature that shape the presentation.

A Political Movements Framework

Social movements are collective actions which involve purposive action to change individuals or social institutions and which typically involve recourse to noninstitutional forms of political participation.² When political institutions themselves are the focus of change, we may speak of

political movements. The historical account presented below shows that the new political parties which emerged in Hungary during the transition from a communist political system to a democratic parliamentary system had their origins in political movement organizations, which themselves emerged out of intellectual circles during the course of the transition. Therefore, the analytical framework of social and political movements literature is helpful in understanding the origin and transformation of these organizations. It is useful to identify three important analytical dimensions: ideology, organization, and environment.

Ideology refers to the conceptual framework which provides meaning to collective action. Participants in a political movement collectively and dynamically construct ideology, which includes identifying responsibility for the grievances or dissatisfactions the movement seeks to change, goals necessary to alter dissatisfactions and the means to achieve them, and possibilities of achieving changes.³ Ideology plays a role in forming the identity of the movement (its participants and organizations), guiding action, and attracting recruits and resources.⁴

Organization refers to the manner in which collective action is coordinated. Such coordination can range from a basis in the patterns of everyday life, typically found in defensive (re)actions,⁵ to highly formalized organizations with concrete leadership structures, routine means of decision-making, and a division of labor. An important argument suggests that sustained movement activity requires the development of formal organizations, particularly to mobilize the resources necessary for action.⁶ Members and supporters provide resources that movement organizations need. Both the origins of movement organizations and subsequent recruitment of members and resources is aided by a pre-existing frameworks of interpersonal, professional, and organizational ties. It is also important to note that within a movement it is likely that several formal organizations may develop, exhibiting both cooperative and competitive relations.⁷

The environment of political movement activity includes other significant actors participating in political action. Clearly the state, a set of organizations specializing in security, administration, justice, and resource accumulation, is central to the political environment; but political parties and interest groups also play important roles in this environment, as do a variety of other actors—interna-

tional, national, and local; collective and individual. Environmental actors are important because they provide an orientation for movement activities and they also have the ability to influence the costs associated with various movement actions.⁸ Alliances and coalitions with actors in the environment (in addition to repressive actions by them) are particularly important in shaping action. Another important aspect of the environment is events and broad processes which undermine the stability of political institutions.⁹

In a dynamic analysis of movements, these three dimensions are highly interrelated. Goals, means, and assessments of the possibility of success change as the political environment changes. These elements of ideology also change as organizations develop. The emergence of organizations and the actions which they undertake in turn effect key actors in the environment. In the account presented below, the origins and development of the opposition political movements in Hungary are explored on the basis of these dimensions.

Hungarian Intellectual Circles in the 1970s and 1980s

Hungarian intellectual circles have often played an important role in Hungarian politics. During the 1848 Independence Rebellion against the Hapsburg dynasty, intellectual circles were central to the effort. They not only provided an ideology for the insurgents but under the example of the poet Sándor Petőfi, they were active in the rebellion. This tradition continued again during the 1956 Revolution when intellectuals played an important role. Various circles developed criticisms that set the stage for the revolt and intellectuals were active in the events themselves.

In the late 1970s and the 1980s, Hungarian intellectual circles slowly became more active in politics. It is possible to identify three important groups of intellectuals: (1) dissident intellectuals who had little or no access to official positions and publications and later came to call themselves the democratic opposition; (2) populist writers, poets, and artists who had limited access to official cultural outlets, usually regional journals and limited publicity activities; and (3) reformist intellectuals, those in official positions with access to scholarly and other official outlets. These

circles tended to overlap, but they had distinct ideologies and organizations reflecting their relations with authorities.

At the beginning of this period, the dissident intellectuals primarily engaged in intellectual and cultural activities. Given the nature of their position in society, these activities also had a political meaning: reproducing samizdat literature, creating flat seminars (a free university), sending protests letters and petitions, and, from the early 1980s, creating a number of journals and independent publications.

The samizdat publications were strongly influenced by the dissolution of the Budapest school of philosophy, former students of philosopher György Lukács, including Agnès Heller, György and Mária Markus, and Ferenc Féher. In the early 1970s this group was disciplined by the authorities for their criticisms of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the contradictions of communism. Most of the older members of the circle emigrated to the West. Under the pseudonym Marc Rakovski, two younger members of this circle, György Bence and János Kis, began writing analyses of Soviet-type societies as new social formations. First published as an article in *Le Temps Modernes* in 1974, this analysis later developed into a book, *Towards an East European Marxism*, published in the West and as samizdat in Hungary.¹⁰

These two themes, the meaning of Marxism and the nature of Soviet-type societies, dominated the samizdat literature of the time. Informal discussions of these themes also developed among small groups meeting informally in private flats. These flat discussions developed into regular seminars, a free university with organized lectures beginning in the fall of 1978 and continuing through the fall of 1983. Courses in the free university included history of the Soviet Union (by Miklós Szabó), Hungarian literary history and policy after 1945 (György Dalos), Hungarian history from 1848 to 1945 (Péter Hanák), the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania (Gáspár Miklós Tamás), and other historical topics. In 1981, the 25th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution was commemorated with an address by György Krassó, who read the banned poem of Gyula Illyés, "A Sentence on Tyranny," a speech by Miklós Szabó on the significance of 1956 for today, and a poem by György Petri dedicated to the Revolution.¹¹

The crowd attending the flat seminars provided an important nucleus for minor political protests, like open letters and petitions. Already in 1977, a letter of support for Charter 77 attracted some 34 signatures. Two years later, a letter of protest over the trials of Charter 77 activists was sent to János Kádár, First Secretary of the ruling MSZMP, and the members of the state Presidential Council. This letter garnered more than 150 signatures.¹²

In the early 1980s, a number of independent publishing projects were begun by members of this circle. Two of the more successful of these were the journal *Beszélő* and *AB: Independent Publishers*. The former began publishing in December 1981, with a 120 page issue reproduced in 1000 copies. The organizers included Miklós Haraszti, János Kis, Ferenc Kószeg, Bálint Nagy, and György Petri. The publishing house was founded by Gábor Demszky and Jenő Nagy and published works by such authors as György Konrád, Marc Rakovski, and Miklós Haraszti. Later, it also published an Information Bulletin and its own journal, *Hírmondó*.¹³ These attempts at independent publishing and the samizdat culture were aided by the resources, like photocopying and offset printing, of the black market and the developing second economy, where the equipment of official establishments could be used during non-working hours.¹⁴

The influence of the Polish experience was important in the development of the Hungarian democratic opposition. The ideas of KOR, particularly Adam Michnik's "New Evolutionism," influenced the thinking of Bence and Kis. Members of this circle developed contacts with Polish Solidarity during its period of legality. While attempts by some dissidents to travel to Poland during the Gdansk strike were prohibited, others were successful later. Demszky and Krassó were able to establish contacts with the Mazsowsze region Solidarity organization and Demszky and László Rajk, son of the former Interior Minister, learned printing techniques in Poland. In the aftermath of Polish martial law, several actions in support of Solidarity were organized. Demszky, Haraszti, Bálint Nagy, and Rajk were detained by authorities, though later released, after organizing an August 1982 demonstration in support of Solidarity. About 100 persons attended the demonstration.¹⁵

Another activity by members of this circle was the establishment of the organization called SZETA (Foundation to Assist the Poor). Organized by Ottilia Solt, András Nagy, Bálint Nagy, and

Demszky, SZETA engaged in a number of activities designed to collect and distribute goods for the poor, as well as to raise money through benefit poetry readings and concerts.¹⁶

The second major intellectual circle was that of populist writers and poets. While a few of these writers attempted to portray in literary terms the impact of changes undergone by recent Hungarian society, a traditional role of Hungarian literature as political criticism, most generally limited their demands to the elementary aspect of freedom of speech.¹⁷ One of the more radical writers was István Csurka, who in 1977 insisted on the strongly political role of the writer. By the 1980s, this circle had gained some organizational power in the Hungarian Writers' Association (*Magyar Irok Szövetsége*, MISZ). At the MISZ Congress in December 1981, secret balloting was held to elect a new board. Sándor Csoóri and Csurka, both associated with the populist group, were elected to the board and two other populist writers were elected to MISZ leadership positions: Gyula Fekete became deputy chair and Gáspár Nagy a Secretary of the organization.¹⁸

A popular theme during these years, particularly for the populist writers, was the experience of 1956. Sándor Lezsák, a populist poet, organized an observance of the 1956 Revolution in 1985 at the cultural center in Lakitelek, a small town southeast of Budapest. At the observance Lezsák criticized the repression of freedom in Hungary and Romania, including restrictions on literature. The banned poem of Gyula Illyés, "A sentence on tyranny," was performed. Other participants included graphic artists, Csoóri, and the poet Gáspár Nagy, who had been removed as secretary of MISZ in 1985 after publication of his poem about Imre Nagy (Prime Minister during the 1956 Revolution, who was later executed). In the summer of 1986, the regional literary journal *Tiszatáj* was suspended after publication of its June issue, which contained a poem by Gáspár Nagy with an allegory to 1956.¹⁹

The activity of the populist writers, and a few writers closer to the democratic opposition, in the MISZ was an important organizational resource. At the MISZ Congress in November 1986, a struggle developed between the radical writers and the cultural authorities of the regime, particularly János Berecz, MSZMP Central Committee Secretary for ideology and cultural policy, and Béla Köpeczi, Minister of Culture. At the Congress, Berecz spoke harshly to the writers, telling them that the organization would be dissolved if they did not observe party ideology and discipline. Köpeczi accused

the MISZ members of taking a political attitude opposed to party policies by questioning the legitimacy of the party, favoring bourgeois democracy, publishing writings in illegal publications, and maintaining contacts with hostile foreign news media. He also denounced the writers' demand for a re-evaluation of the 1956 events and their demand for a public debate on the plight of ethnic Hungarian minorities. Csoóri and Csurka reacted strongly, rejecting accusations and talking of their own experiences with censorship. Konrád spoke about independent publishing and István Eörsi, blacklisted for comments about Poland in 1982, noted the need for freedom of thought.

In secret ballot elections, party members were removed from the 71-member executive board, a result not to the liking of culture authorities. A ten-member board headed by Miklós Meszöly, a signer of the joint appeal on the 30th anniversary of 1956, was appointed to reach an agreement on the leadership question. Several weeks later, new leadership was announced but authorities remained unhappy. Several prominent Communist writers, including editors of the leading cultural journals, announced their resignation from the MISZ. It was not until March 1987 that a compromise was reached between the MISZ presidium and authorities. One of the elected MISZ secretaries, József Annus, an editor of *Tiszatáj*, was removed and three party members were admitted into the MISZ leadership.²⁰

The third group of intellectuals were those who were sympathetic to the causes of reform but were not openly critical of regime policies. The exception to this absence of criticism was among a number of intellectuals sympathetic to reform who held positions in research institutes of the Hungary Academy of Sciences, as well as in other research institutes, universities, and the media. Among the most prominent were the "reform economists," including János Kornai and Tamás Bauer, who criticized the structure of the state socialist planned economy in Hungary. Reform economists limited their criticism to scholarly journals and publications and did not take part in openly political activities in this period. This broader group of intellectuals were familiar with the arguments of the other circles and became a source of support in the later 1980s.

These various circles were not isolated from one another but had cooperated in protest letters, as well as at a meeting organized in the summer of 1985 by Ferenc Donáth at Monor. Around fifty

intellectuals attended this meeting, in which four authors presented written papers in advance and four additional intellectuals provided written critiques. The written contributions were later published in samizdat form.

From the populist circle, both Csurka and Csoóri provided written presentations. Csurka attacked the regime for the deterioration of the cultural and moral health of Hungary, a product of the dispossession of peasant-centered character of society. He called for a new program of national salvation based upon self-development, discovery of identity, and a program of love. Csoóri pointed to the troubled fate of ethnic Hungarians living abroad, particularly in Romania. He noted the terrible feelings caused by Trianon and the 1940s and criticized the regime's refusal to raise the issue of Hungarian minorities. Democratic oppositionists, Miklós Szabó and János Kenedi provided the critiques of Csurka and Csoóri, respectively.²¹

János Kis also presented a written paper that noted the worsening economic conditions of the country and the lack of reform. Noting that the Soviet Union could not achieve a consolidation in Poland, he suggested that it was time to rethink the possibility of a new course in Hungary. Arguing that not only economic growth but also intellectual and political growth had reached a limit in the absence of legal rights, he called for a new compromise based on the separation between the spheres of civil law and public law. Limits on state interference in civil law would be legally fixed, with an independent judiciary given a larger role. Moreover, a clarification of the sphere of public law was also necessary, defining the content of the party's "leading role" and specifying the relation between the party and the state. His paper was critiqued by Miklós Vásárhelyi, a former protege of Imre Nagy and sympathizer with the democratic opposition.

The reform economists were also represented at Monor with a written presentation by Tamás Bauer, who criticized the hesitancy of reform and its obstruction by centralized lobbies and the Soviet-dominated Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), and a critique of his paper by Mihály Laki, who was even more pessimistic on the prospects for reform.²²

The 30th anniversary of 1956 provided an opportunity for the Hungarian dissident community to mark the ideals of the Revolution. A joint declaration was published along with activists from

Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Poland. The majority of the signatories were members of the democratic opposition, including Demszky, Haraszti, Kenedi, Kis, Konrád, Kószeg, András Nagy, Jenő Nagy, Solt, Gáspár Miklós Tamás, Vajda, and Miklós Vásárhelyi. A few members of the populist writers—Csoóri, Csurka, and Lezsák—also signed the declaration. The appeal was quite short and emphasized the joint determination to struggle for democracy, national independence, pluralism based upon self-government, peaceful reunification and democratic integration of divided Europe, and rights of all minorities. It closed with acknowledgement of the tradition and experience of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution as a common heritage and inspiration.²³

Hungarian Methods of Repression

Hungarian authorities undertook a variety of methods of repression. The most widespread was harassment on the job. For those who remained too active, professional positions and opportunities could disappear. Occupational measures blended with censorship for writers and scholars who published views deemed appropriate by authorities. Articles might be prohibited (usually in editorial decisions), entire issues might be withheld, or, in severe cases, an author would be prohibited from publishing.

The response of authorities to Gáspár Nagy in 1985 and to the editors of *Tiszatűj* in 1986 reflects the type of censorship measures in which authorities engaged. Csurka also suffered from the repression of authorities, who criticized him with damaging the interests of the state by presenting a distorted picture of history of the past thirty years. He had also allowed Radio Free Europe to broadcast one of his lectures. In 1986, the Politburo imposed a year of silence on him, forbidding publishers and editorial offices from publishing his work and film studios and theaters managers from producing his work. At the same time, it was reported that democratic opposition activist László Rajk had been removed from his position as architect in a state-owned firm after his return from a four-month scholarship in the United States.²⁴

In addition to such censure and occupational harassment, authorities frequently raided private homes to search for and seize political writings, as well as stopped and searched known activists as

they were travelling about. The independent publishers of *AB* and editors of *Beszélő* were particularly suspect to such harassment. When samizdat material, which were illegal to possess, were found, the possessors were typically assigned stiff fines. After one 1983 incident in which Demszky was beaten and hospitalized, authorities brought charges of assault against him. Despite protests by more than 100 at his trial, he was found guilty and received a six-month suspended sentence.²⁵

Authorities also took repressive measures against public actions. During the spring of 1986 police broke up two demonstrations. In February, a demonstration of about 100 Gabcikovo-Nagymaros dam protesters was broken up by truncheon wielding police. There was also difficulty with police on March 15, 1986, when a spontaneous protest march on the anniversary of 1848 Revolt led to a confrontation between several hundred demonstrators and police, who again moved in with truncheons and broke up the crowd. During the same evening, a second demonstration was broken up with police sealing both ends of the Chain Bridge, confiscating identity cards, and making numerous arrests.²⁶

Hungarian authorities engaged in such repressive activities throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Compared to other Warsaw Pact states, the Hungarian regime was relatively mild in its repression. It arrested people and occasionally made them face trial, but very rarely did it sentence anyone to prison. One possible reason for the lack of major repressive campaigns was the importance of Western trade to the Hungarian economy and the high level of national indebtedness to Western creditors. In a 1986 Politburo directive leaked and published in samizdat the following spring, it was admitted that some tolerance was being shown toward illegal publishing because of the perceived potential for Western economic reaction.²⁷

A Changing Political Environment

By the time of the struggles within the MISZ in the winter of 1986-87, events both within Hungary and within the Soviet bloc were beginning to change the fundamental assumptions of the political establishment and introduce uncertainties into the political environment. A long-term trend, the declining performance of the Hungarian economy, had a strong impact on both Hungarian authorities and the intellectual circles. A second essential aspect of the political environment was the

changing nature of Soviet policy. The ascent of Mikhail Gorbachev to the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party and his steadily increasing emphasis on reform also began to undermine the traditional status quo in the Hungarian polity.

Within Hungary, the most important change that was occurring was the continuing crisis of the economy. As early as April 1986, government economic authorities had expressed reservations about ability to meet the goals of the Seventh Five-Year Economic Plan adopted at the 13th Party Congress the previous year. Economic difficulties included declining industrial output, stagnating productivity, a trade deficit, and unexpectedly high government expenditures leading to a large deficit. During 1986, Hungary's trade deficit worsened; in particular, its convertible currency account deteriorated as a result of a dramatic rise in imports. Reflecting a decline in investment which had begun as early as 1979 and 1980, imports of machinery, transportation equipment and other investment items showed particularly large increases.²⁸

The economic difficulties forced the party to consider undertaking reforms. As a result of the worsening trends, Hungary had witnessed the depletion of its financial reserves, increased its foreign borrowing, and, in the process, built up huge debt commitments. Government belt-tightening resulted, with a further stagnation in growth and decline in living standards for many. However, in the eyes of the authorities, there was not a systemic difficult with the economy; rather, as János Berecz argued in a 1986 article on the leading role of the party, most of Hungary's economic problems resulted from the military buildup of the West and the world economic crisis of the 1970s. Perhaps positioning stockhimself to be successor to the aging János Kádár, Berecz stressed the need for the party to develop clear policies and forge a national consensus.²⁹

This was also the period during which Mikhail Gorbachev was moving to consolidate his power in the Soviet Communist Party. Gorbachev began by promoting attempts to reverse declining growth rates in the Soviet bloc through greater efficiency in the national economies and closer economic integration. While he was championing economic improvement, in early 1986 he still was quite cautious on the nature of reform. Gorbachev sought to limit cooperation with the West, discourage over-reliance on private enterprise, restrict dissent, and keep in check the interference of national interests

with internationalism. During a June 1986 visit to Budapest, Gorbachev noted that the Soviet Union could learn from its neighbors, but at the same time reiterated that the CMEA remained the firm foundation for development of its member states.³⁰

By autumn 1986, Gorbachev had won internal party battles to press ahead with reform. East European leaders were informed at their November 1986 summit, while the CPSU Central Committee Plenum in January 1987 proclaimed the implementation of market socialism, democratization, and *glasnost*'. The new ideology decreased reliance on the party in decision-making, ended the intrinsically bad association of private property, backed off the dominance of class struggle in East-West relations and world progress, and eased party limits on the independence of other groups. Vladimir Kusin argued that these changes had the effect of increasing the uncertainty of among national leaders, while they gave dissent a certain strength by officially acknowledging the need for change.³¹

The growing economic crisis and the uncertainties surrounding Soviet expectations had their effects on the Hungarian ruling party. In November 1985, the MSZMP held a conference on the "state and development of party democracy" for several hundred higher party functionaries. Top party leaders, including Deputy General Secretary Karoly Németh, expressed concern about growing apathy among members towards participation, as well as toward support of and help in carrying out decisions. Despite arguing for the need to involve members in discussions preceding decisions, Németh maintained the Leninist position that the party had to remain unified in carrying out its policies. Unity was seen to lie in the involvement of activists in party policy, in the confrontation of views in debates. He urged observance of the practice of "equality of members" in expression, rather than the existing reliance on experts and leading bodies. Németh also noted that the party's theoretical stance was that it accepted a multiplicity of social interests, though they could not take institutional forms nor found independent pressure groups.³²

The growing dislocations could also be observed in the intermediate organizations controlled by the party. In preparations for the 25th Congress of the National Trade Unions Council (*Szakszervezetek Országos Tanácsa, SZOT*) in February 1986, open debates and discusses took place. Wages policies and other issues of government policy brought complaints and the desire to maintain

full employment received much attention. Members also expressed desires to have a greater say in their own affairs. At the Congress itself, Gáspár Nagy, SZOT Chair and MSZMP Politburo member, criticized the views of impatient members and those who felt the unions should make their own demands and be more assertive in fighting for them. Still many of the speakers who addressed the Congress were frank in their criticisms, including that the value of work was not adequately recognized in wage incentives and that unions should be made more open and democratic. A SZOT resolution stressed the importance of improving living conditions through wage increases and called for more assertion of unions' independence and rights.³³

Similar voices of dissatisfaction were expressed at the 11th Congress of the Communist Youth League (*Kommunista Ifjúság Szövetsége*, KISZ) in May 1986. KISZ leaders reported on the deteriorating situation of youth, three-quarters of whom were required to engage in extra work and many of whom could not find housing. While membership had grown overall during the early 1980s, this growth was largely among working youth and partially among secondary school students. Among college and university youth there was a dramatic decline during the same period.³⁴

During 1986, reformers within party began to maneuver for support of their policy interests. It was during this year that Imre Pozsgay, General Secretary of the Patriotic Peoples' Front (*Hazafias Népfront*, HNF) tried to encourage the prospects of economic reform. In May, Pozsgay met with a group of reform economists and subsequently the HNF Social Policy Council undertook a study of the crisis of the Hungarian economy and the prospects for reform.³⁵ More than 60 experts from the Research Institute of the Ministry of Finance, the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences, and other institutes participated in this study of reform. The report was drafted during the summer and fall of 1986 under the title *Fordulat és Reform* (Turn About and Reform).

The draft report described the current state of the economy and assessed its problems. Assessment of the current situation was critical of the structure and performance of the CMEA, of enterprise dependence on state subsidies, and of the absence of profit motive. The report argued for market-based, decentralized reforms, including foreign stock ownership. It also concluded that a comprehensive political as well as economic reform was needed. Recommended reforms included

increased openness, popular participation, and representation of interest groups as means by which society could exercise greater control over government programs. Internal party reforms were recommended, as well as legal protection of individuals rights. A background section on media reform emphasized that the success of reform depended upon public support, which itself required full openness in the media. This section called for various groups in society to be given access to the media to express their positions, criticized the existing management of information (i.e., censorship), and called for various decentralizing reforms.³⁶

At the end of October, several of the senior authors reported to the MSZMP Central Committee Secretary for economic policy the view that the cause of the crisis was governmental economic policy and that party and state leaders should undertake radical social and economic reform. In November the study materials were sent to the HNF Social Policy Council. That month the party Central Committee reprimanded the HNF Council, saying that it was the Central Committee not the Council that set programs.

A public statement of the reform proposals did not appear until the following summer, when a revised version appeared in the June issue of *Közgazdasági Szemle* (Economic Review). The new version was substantially edited, the length reduced by 90 percent and the tone made milder. Original strong criticisms of the CMEA were eliminated and the main political recommendations concentrated on strengthening the role of the National Assembly. Among media proposals, it was suggested that newspapers operate on a self-financing basis, with full control exercised by publishing organizations, and elimination of external censorship.³⁷

During this period a slight indication of a change in regime position occurred with respect to the "traditional" unofficial March 15 demonstration in 1987. In that year, police kept a low profile. As typical of the annual march, demonstrators made the circuit of symbolic monuments for past heroes of Hungary. Members of the democratic opposition were prominent in the demonstration and two, György Gadó and Tibor Pákh, made spontaneous speeches. Several days before the demonstration, dissident intellectuals had sent an appeal to authorities asking that they refrain from suppression. Whether a reason or not, Central Committee Secretary Matyas Szűrös was in the United States for official talks at

the time. The US government had been critical of suppression used during the March 15 demonstration in 1986.³⁸

It was clear that something was changing in the political opportunity structure even if the nature and direction of that change were not clear. The economic crisis was steadily worsening, creating a sense among the various intellectual circles that the need for radical reform had never been greater. The authorities themselves realized that the economic situation demanded dramatic measures. As Gorbachev increasingly moved toward a reform agenda in the Soviet Union it seemed that conditions favored dramatic reform in Hungary, but the existing structure of bargaining over policy, the weakness of reformists at top levels of authority, and the uncertainties over future leadership all worked to delay regime-led change.

The Emergence of Political Movements

New signals about the possibilities of change were not lost on the Hungarian intellectuals. Already in December 1986, after his election to the MISZ board, György Konrád noted in an interview with the Italian paper, *La Repubblica*, that the new leadership in Moscow contributed to a more favorable climate than that which had existed during the previous MISZ Congress in 1981. He also suggested that such new Hungarian phenomena as the growth of private property, elements of toleration by the regime, and the public development of new sensitivities in such areas as ecology and religion contributed to the changed climate.³⁹

In the period between the 1981 and 1986 writers' conferences, peace and environmental movements had emerged in Hungary. The peace movement evolved as part of the general European-wide movement for disarmament in 1980 and 1981. The movement developed in a spontaneous manner among youth, with events in December 1981 and May 1982 that eventually were taken over by KISZ. In the fall of 1982 a group called *Dialógus* (Dialogue) was formed by youth who wished an organization that was neither official nor oppositional. This group held public meetings and gained modest support and international contacts. At the Dialogue national conference in April 1983, there emerged a split between moderates, including its better-known leaders, who favored cooperation with the official

National Peace Council and radicals who sought more autonomy and independent activity. Despite this split some 400 people participated under the group's banner in a May 1983 march organized by the National Peace Council. The regime took an aggressive position toward Dialogue, beginning police harassment and house searches. Official support for an international peace camp in July 1983 was initially granted but later withdrawn. In the face of official harassment the group voted to disband. The moderates moved closer to the National Peace Council and the more radical activists continued to organize other actions.⁴⁰

An environmental movement also developed around opposition to the joint Czechoslovakian-Hungarian hydro project, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam. In 1984 an environmental organization *Duna Kör* (Danube Circle) was founded. *Duna Kör* undertook a petition to the National Assembly against the project which garnered more than 7,000 signatures.⁴¹ The environmental movement also developed international contacts. In January 1986, 22 Austrian and Hungarian activists met in Budapest and issued a joint statement indicating that they would engage in further action. This meeting was the likely basis for the aborted demonstration in February 1986 which was broken up by police. As the Austrian government considered financial involvement in the dam project in the spring of 1986, 30 Hungarian intellectuals signed an April 16 appeal published in the Austrian daily *Die Presse*, which asked that Austria not exploit the lack of democracy in another country for its own advantage. The appeal did not stop Austrian involvement, which became official in May. Subsequently 19 members of *Duna Kör* sent a protest petition to the Austrian parliament. Another international activity also took place in November 1987, when Hungarian environmental activists organized an international seminar attended by 150.⁴²

Both the peace and the environmental movements were important in creating a tradition of activism among Hungarian youth. The peace movement played a role in sensitizing Hungarian youth to activities outside of official organizations, but it never gained a large following. With the exception of a few activists in the democratic opposition, like Haraszti and Rajk, the intellectual circles under examination did not really become involved in its activities. It was also an issue that was shaped by the international political scene, over which Hungarians had little control. The environmental

movement, on the other hand, became an issue about the lack of reform in Hungary and increasingly gained strength during the mid-1980s. In fact, its cause came to be taken up by the emerging political movements and the decision was eventually reversed in the National Assembly.

In 1987 a subtle but important change took place within the democratic opposition circle. The June issue of *Beszélő* contained a program for political reform, "Társadalmi szerződés" (Social Contract), written by János Kis, Ferenc Kószeg, and Ottilia Solt. The program suggested that in order to achieve economic reforms the authorities would have to form a bargain with society, a social contract with all interested parties. Noting that leadership behaved differently in crisis, i.e., insecure and divided among itself, the authors urged society to demand rights. They called for giving voice in any open forum, bombarding authorities with written declarations, demanding publication of all details of draft proposals, organizing of reform clubs, recall of leaders, and creation of an ever wider publicity for all spontaneous initiatives. Most dramatically it made the call, "Kádár must go!"

The economic demands of "Social Contract" echoed some of the themes of "Turn About and Reform," including development of markets, equal rights for all forms of property, breaking with CMEA, and cutbacks on doubtful investments (like the dam project). More radical were the political proposals "Social Contract" contained. Stating that the "fundamental demands of October 1956 were not obsolete," it noted that those demands—representative democracy, self-management and self-government, national sovereignty and neutrality—could not be realized in the present political situation. The authors recognized that one-party rule was a given at that time and the party would retain certain prerogatives, but "Social Contract" presented a compromise (and the authors openly stated it was much less than they desired) that called for constitutional limitations on party power, a sovereign legislature, statutory freedom of press, right of assembly, safeguarding of workers' interests, social security and equitable social policy, and fundamental citizens' rights.

By far the most radical demands were for a new law on the party. Acknowledging that acceptance of the "leading role" of the party was a limitation on the sovereignty of the people, it was nevertheless put forward as a guarantee to the Soviet Union. More importantly, it was suggested that this concession did not limit movement toward a constitutionally guaranteed pluralism. It was argued

that no more power be accorded to the party than necessary in satisfying this guarantee. Specifically, the Central Committee could be constitutionally enshrined with exclusive competence over external obligations, a right to veto constitutional changes, and right to nominate key state posts—President of the National Assembly, Chair of the Presidential Council, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Defense Minister. In return, the decisions of the Central Committee would be required to be made in public, with decrees published in the press. Limits would be imposed on powers of subordinate party bodies, powers of the party in workplaces would be restricted, nomenklatura would exist only for the Central Committee, and procedures would be clearly mandated for party contravention of the law. In addition, the independence of social organizations would be constitutionally recognized, with their leadership elected without party involvement.⁴³

While the program of "Social Contract" shared some of the same themes as "Turn About and Reform," it went further in its calls for limitation on party powers. In a way, these calls for political reforms were a natural outgrowth of the arguments that Kis had made in his Monor presentation. In the meantime the economic crisis had become more severe and the more concrete economic proposals of the reform economists were incorporated into the program statement. What was original in the program was its open call for political action. Though this call still did not argue for the formation of an opposition organization, it did urge definite actions throughout society. As Miklós Haraszti commented later, it urged the voicing of demands, the pressuring of authorities.⁴⁴ In this way it was far more radical than "Turn About and Reform" and it signaled an important advance in the development of opposition political movements.

Opinion on the program of the *Beszélő* editors among the democratic opposition was not unanimous in its support. In the more radical publication, *Demokrata*, a letter criticized "Social Contract" for renouncing what it considered the primary condition of any possible compromise: that the power of the party was based upon the military presence of the Soviet army. The letter argued that this "pillar" of the system was not simply the party's business but "our" (i.e., society's) business as well. Therefore the precondition for any social contract must be the protection of property of Hungarians in their homeland, defending their sovereignty, and seeking withdrawal of the occupying

troops.⁴⁵ Gáspár Miklós Tamás criticized the program for believing that the party could give legal safeguards for limitations of its power. In his view, such actions would be against the very nature of the communist power; it must either be absolute power or it will lose power. From his perspective the law on the party called for by "Social Contract" was only a dream. Tamás suggested that if it were dreams that were to be demanded, then why not the real dream—"that we want Hungary to be a free country, an independent country, a Parliamentary democracy, to be part again of the Western community of nations."⁴⁶

The more moderate reformers did not give up their program with the drastic revision of "Turn About and Change." In September 1987 a group of about 100 intellectuals—writers, economists, sociologists, artists, historians and others—who represented the populist (Csurka, Gyula Fekete), reformist (Bihari, László Antal), and democratic opposition (Konrád) circles, sent an open letter to representative of the National Assembly. The letter noted how the economic situation in the country had continued to worsen, causing social dislocations as well. Echoing many of the themes of "Turn About and Change," the letter argued that the crisis was not simply the result of the world economy but was a crisis of the economic system characterized by centralization, nationalization, and planning. Previous failures to commit fully to economic reform were criticized as resulting in foreign indebtedness. Policy announcements of the MSZMP Central Committee in July 1987 were criticized as not going far enough in the creation of markets, recognition of all property forms, and movement away from traditional methods.

The letter argued that economic improvement required dialogue with society, bringing debates into the open and allowing different interest groups to express their points of view. In addition to economic reforms, political reforms were called for. These included guaranteeing basic freedoms of association, free speech, press, and rights of citizens against the state, ending the bureaucratic management of culture, diminishing the hierarchical power of trade unions in favor of local groups, and strengthening the power of the National Assembly and making it accountable to electors. Implicitly noting the continuing impact of Gorbachev's reforms on the bloc countries, the letter ended by noting that external circumstances had never been more favorable to reform.⁴⁷

Perhaps strengthened by the support of the signatories, two reformist party members among the National Assembly deputies were outspoken during the two-day fall session. Zoltán Király, a former television newscaster from Szeged, spoke of the need for economic and political reform and called for strengthen of the National Assembly, greater openness, and freedom of the press. Rezsó Nyers, architect of the 1968 New Economic Mechanism and a deputy from Bacs-Kiskun county, noted the need for social dialogue, as well as giving the National Assembly a greater role. To a correspondent from *The Economist*, Nyers spoke about the need for parliamentary control of one-party government and a multi-party system in the distant future. In the immediate future the goal was achieving the greatest degree of pluralism.

Prime Minister Károly Grósz, who was appointed in June 1987, responded by speaking of the need for economic and political changes, noting that several committees were working on changes in political institutions. Asked about the open letter at a news conference, Grósz said that it contained many ideas worthy of consideration but that it was not the government's job to re-examine the internal structure of political institutions. He suggested that the role of the party could move toward fundamental theoretical and political questions, while the government and research institutes could work out economic policy and make technical decisions. Grósz also said that any group which functioned according to law and the constitution would be supported by the government. He went on to note that the government would not talk with those who did not respect the laws of the People's Republic. Those who wanted to change the content and nature of the system were legally prohibited from taking organized actions in support of their positions.⁴⁸

It was within this climate of growing demands for change that the first move toward the creation of an opposition organization came from a coalition of populist writers and reformers from within the party. On September 27, 1987, about 180 persons gathered under a tent in the backyard of Sándor Lezsák in Lakitelek. The group was almost exclusively intellectuals, with main figures of the populist writers present. Gyula Fekete presided over the meeting, and Csurka was among other populists making statements. Also present were a number of historians who had previously written about

national themes, including Lajos Für, Rudolf Joó, and György Szabad. György Konrád was the lone representative from the democratic opposition circle.

More significant was the presence of Imre Pozsgay at the meeting. Pozsgay called on those present to formulate their own alternative program for reform, over which the government was ready to enter into dialogue. He called for a broadening of economic reform to other areas, proposing that the party's activities be opened and that parliament become an open political forum. Pozsgay urged that dissident voices be heard and that all forces in society join in a coalition based upon constitutional principles. Also present were other key figures of reform within the party, including parliamentary representative Zoltán Király and Zoltán Bíró, a literary historian and close associate of Pozsgay. Political scientist Mihály Bihari argued for total reform under new leadership. Reform economist László Lengyel reiterated that political reform was necessary.⁴⁹

The closing communique from the meeting began by noting the various ills which faced the Hungarian nation. The statement suggested that participants were filled with a feeling of responsibility for the fate of the country and the Hungarian nation and wanted to establish a framework that would permit members of society to participate as true partners in the creation of national consensus. Because the current system of political and social organization did not provide guarantees for expression of autonomous and independent views, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*, MDF) was proposed as an arena for sustained public discussion. This forum was seen as an open forum for discussion, analysis, and preparation of alternative proposals. With both a democratic and national spirit, people with different ideologies and party leanings would be able to cooperate in its work. The statement also argued that it was necessary to create independent press organs to publicize its discussions and analyses. The statement ended by arguing that it was possible to get out of the crisis through large-scale collaboration.⁵⁰

The themes of the Lakitelek were the importance of the Hungarian nation and cooperation among various interests to overcome the crisis of the country and the nation. The stress on the Hungarian nation reflected a theme which was central to the populist tradition. The emphasis on cooperation reflected the fact that the populists were gathering with reformers from within the party.

Cooperation was important to both groups. For the reformers within the party, the populists provided an ally in their struggles with forces opposed to reform. For the populist writers, alliance with the reformers, particularly Pozsgay, gave them some safety from harassment and hope for organizational legitimacy. The possibilities for alliance were aided by the relations established when Pozsgay was Minister of Education and Culture, 1980-1982.⁵¹

The meeting itself received no publicity, but Pozsgay was able to draw attention through his press interviews. In late October he told the weekly *Heti Világgazdaság* that the meeting was a citizens' initiative with a responsible exchange of views based on dialogue with authorities. Several weeks later he gave an interview to the daily paper of the HNF, *Magyar Nemzet*, in which he supported such initiatives and associations, arguing that consensus had to be achieved within society. He called for a new law on associations which would clarify the status of such groups and provide them legal protection. He denied that the Lakitelek meeting had been an oppositional gathering and again noted that those participating had sought a dialogue with the government on the basis of consensus and the constitutional order. Along with publication of this interview, the paper printed the text of the closing communique from Lakitelek. Pozsgay appeared to be using the resources of the HNF to support the nascent organization.⁵²

The MDF held its first large public meeting on January 30, 1988, at Jurta Theater in Budapest. The more than 500 persons attending the meeting discussed such topics of political reform as parliamentary democracy, the changing role of the National Assembly, and constitutional revision. As in the previous meeting, populist writers who had been active in leadership in the Writers' Association (MISZ) were key organizers and speakers. They included Gyula Fekete, Sándor Csoóri, and Csurka. Bíró was also active in organizing the meeting. The historians Für and Szabad took part and two law professors, Gábor Halmai and László Solyom, also made presentations. Unlike the September meeting, activists from the democratic opposition were invited and spoke at the meeting. Among them were Haraszti, Gáspár Miklós Tamás, János Kis, and Ferenc Kószeg. Konrád also made a speech before the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, literary historian Gy. Csaba Kiss read a proposed statement which said that the serious political crisis in Hungary made radical reform of the communist system inevitable. It argued that democratic institutions and guarantees of rights were necessary. Specific steps toward democratic reform included the drafting of a new, democratic electoral law which would serve as the basis for election of a new parliament that would draft a new constitution. The new constitution should clarify the relationship between party and state; list and guarantee citizens' personal and political rights; and establish a constitutional court. It was urged that the National Assembly function on a continuous basis; that powers of representatives be expanded, including financial and staff support; that openness in parliamentary debate be guaranteed and minutes be made public; and that formation of parliamentary fractions be allowed. The statement concluded by noting that if the official media failed to publish the statement within a week, it would be released to other media, including foreign press and samizdat publications.⁵³

Six days later the official government daily, *Magyar Hírlap*, acknowledged its receipt of the statement in an unsigned editorial. The paper said that publication was not justified because it contained no new elements. Some of the demands in the statement were listed. Referring to calls for electoral reform and a new constitution, the paper noted that a committee had been working on electoral reform for more than a year and other committees were examining the operation of the National Assembly. The editorial also criticized the MDF for putting itself in the position of reviewing the National Assembly and for demanding publication of the statement.⁵⁴ These criticisms, plus the fact that party members were not given permission to attend the meeting, suggested that the regime still had major reservations about the MDF.

On several occasions after the September meeting, government authorities had expressed ambiguity in their response toward MDF. In November, Grósz had attacked what he called "extremist elements" and threatening letters that tried to discredit leadership and its efforts. A few weeks later he said that the comments had been taken out of context and noted that he was ready to exchange ideas with people from different political currents. He went on to note that the government aimed at dialogue with all seeking solutions in the interest of "socialist resurgence."⁵⁵

While the demands of "Social Contract," the open letter to the National Assembly deputies, and the January 1988 MDF meeting were on economic and political reforms, there was another major issue which became the focus of organized activities in 1988. The issue was the status of the Hungarian minority in Romania and the more general issue of the repressive nature of the Ceausescu regime. It was an issue which was able to bring both the populist and democratic opposition circles together in cooperation.

As a result of the November and December 1987 protests in Romanian cities, increased attention was focused on the Romanian regime. On January 19, 1988, a news conference was held in the home of Lajos Für, where a statement signed by some 350 persons was made public. Miklós Vásárhelyi read the statement, which began by noting the changes in the region—Gorbachev's gestures toward the Soviet opposition, the rejection of the referendum on the economy in Poland, marching on Human Rights Day in Prague—and the demonstration of the political will of Romanians in the streets in previous months. It protested against persecution and suffering initiated by Ceausescu and expressed the hope that Romanians and other nationalities in Romania would join forces to achieve political changes creating democratic conditions. It emphasized the need to build upon values of coexistence and expressed solidarity with their struggle. Organizers of the petition included individuals from both the populist circle (Csoóri, Csurka, Für) and from the democratic opposition (Konrád, Haraszti, Miklós Meszöly, Miklós Szabó). At the press conference, boycotted by official Hungarian media, the organizers noted that they were attempting to pressure the Hungarian regime to take further action on the Romanian situation.⁵⁶

On an international basis, Charter 77 called for a day of Solidarity with Romanians on February 1. Some 60 Czechoslovak activists held a 24-hour hunger strike in support of the Romanians. A demonstration in Warsaw attracted well-known activists. In Budapest between 400 and 500 persons held a vigil outside of the Romanian embassy. Gáspár Miklós Tamás made a brief speech and after more than 30 minutes the crowd dispersed at the request of police. Other than removing some banners, police did not interfere with the protest. The following day the demonstration was even reported on Hungarian radio.⁵⁷

On March 6, 1988, the MDF again met in Jurta Theater. On this occasion more than 700 people attended a discussion on Hungarian minorities. As in the January meeting, both populist and democratic opposition activists took active part in the meeting. The by-now familiar names of participants included Csoóri, Csurka, Gyula Fekete, Szabad, Für, Haraszi, and Gáspár Miklós Tamás. The regime lifted its restrictions on party members and Király, Bihari, and Bíró attended this meeting. Also present at the meeting were Hungarian minority activists from Slovakia and Romania. The discussion at the meeting criticized the Ceausescu regime for its human rights violations and the Hungarian regime for the lameness of its inaction. A second meeting a few weeks later continued the discussion since not everyone was able to speak.

A provisional statement was accepted at the early March meeting. It criticized attempts by the Romanian regime to assimilate the Hungarian minority and its disregard of Magyar language, culture, and traditions. The situation of the Magyar minority in Romania was claimed to have become one of the causes of the current crisis in Hungary. Preparations of a new plan for dealing with issue by authorities met with approval. Four proposals were put forward. They stated that the constitution should include the principle that the Hungarian state assumes responsibility for all ethnic Hungarians; that there should be a widening of private and cultural contacts with Hungarians outside of Hungary; that a government body headed by the Prime Minister should be formed to take care of Hungarian minority affairs at the state level; and that in the course of media reform and increasingly available information, the approach to minority issues be changed. The statement concluded that democratic renewal and national questions were equally important.

A couple of key organizational issues were also noted at the meeting. It was announced that two provincial branches of MDF had been established. Gyula Fekete expressed hope that authorities would allow the MDF to establish its own periodical, *Hitel* (Credit), and asked those present to subscribe in advance. At the meeting it was also noted that site of the MDF meetings, Jurta Theater, was under pressure from authorities. The Hungarian National Bank had canceled a preliminary loan agreement with the theater.⁵⁸

It was clear by the spring of 1988 that an organization was being created in which a variety of political issues which had previously been restricted were now able to be publicly discussed. The political impact of the creation of MDF was still confused but its calls for reform were clearly directed toward creating a legal framework for pluralism and limitation of excessive party power. MDF shared these goals with the reform intellectuals that had authored "Turn About and Reform," as well as with the democratic opposition. Where it differed from these two groups was in its strong emphasis on the Hungarian nation. Almost all Hungarian intellectuals condemned the repressiveness of the Ceausescu regime but not all expressed the issue in terms of the Hungarian nation. The fact that these issues could be expressed in public was a dramatic change in the political environment. The ongoing development of the organization supporting this discussion also gave other groups encouragement to make public their own organizations.

A Mushrooming of Independent Initiatives

The spring and summer of 1988 became the period of movement inception as a number of new, independent initiatives were formed. Among these initiatives was a new trade union for scientific and academic workers. This movement began with dissatisfaction over budget cuts in the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences in December 1987. With support from researchers in the Academy's Institute of Sociology, a February 1988 meeting of about 200 persons was held to discuss the possibilities of establishing an independent union. A coordinating committee was established to draft statutes. On May 14, the founding meeting of the Democratic Union of Scientific and Academic Workers (*Tudományos Dolgozók Demokratikus Szakszervezete, TDDSZ*) was held. Attended by more than 500 persons, the meeting elected a steering committee that included many distinguished figures of intellectual life, like sociologists Zsuzsa Ferge and Elemér Hankiss, philosopher Éva Ancsel, and historian Péter Hanák. Party members also participated in coordination of the organization. Elected chair of the organization was Pál Forgách, who had once been Hungarian representative to the World Federation of Trade Unions.

TDDSZ did not take a directly political reformist stand. Rather it expressed goals in line with interest representation for its members—increasing the real value of funds for scholarship, improving workings conditions, and protecting professional rights and job security. It did represent a challenge to the official trade union organization, SZOT, which initially opposed the effort but later said that it would not interfere. Importantly, as an independent trade union TDDSZ demonstrated that it was possible to organize and take action on behalf of a group's interests. Hankiss expressed the hope that it could serve as a model for other social interests.⁵⁹

Another attempt at forming an independent group which combined interest representation and change goals was encountering less success at the same time. Led by employees from key publications, television, and radio, several hundred journalists tried to establish an independent forum, the Openness Club (*Nyitvánosság Klub*), to promote freedom in the media. This Club had its roots in the media supplement to "Turn About and Change" which had called for restrictions on party interference in media and a reorganization of the information business. At a meeting of the official National Federation of Hungarian Journalists (*Magyar Ujságírók Országos Szövetsége*, MUOSZ) in January 1988, prominent journalist and academics presented an appeal signed by more than 200 persons, the large majority from key official media, calling for the establishment of the Openness Club. Under the auspices of the HNF, an official application for establishment of the club was forward to the Council of Ministers in March. Authorities responded by harassing supporters and prohibiting a further meeting to discuss the club. Media editors threatened staff with sanctions for involvement. While authorities had shown some liberalism toward the new initiatives of the time, it was clear that they were not ready to abandon supervision of the media and control of information.⁶⁰

Another initiative which had limited success at this time was a discussion group of reform intellectuals, many from within the party, who tried to constitute themselves as the New March Front (*Uj Márciusi Front*), named after the March Front movement launched in 1937. The New March Front was founded in December 1987 and drafted a release in March 1988 that was signed by 19 persons. Under pressure from authorities, the group did not make public their statement until the following September. Participants in the group included Rezső Nyers, who played a key role in establishing the group;

reform economists László Antal, Tamás Bauer, László Lengyel, and Martón Tardos; Zoltán Király and Mihály Bihari; sociologist Iván Vitányi; Miklós Vásárhelyi; and another former associate of Imre Nagy, Szilárd Ujhelyi. The founding appeal of the Front echoed the basic reform themes of the time: the severity of the crisis facing Hungary, the need for involvement of society in the reform process, greater openness, democratization of political institutions, and market oriented economic reforms. The group sought to convince the MSZMP of the usefulness of various platforms within the party but felt compelled to observe party discipline.⁶¹

Another interesting initiative that became public during the spring of 1988 was the founding of the Federation of Young Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*, FIDESZ). On March 30, 1988, FIDESZ was officially founded by 37 students, mostly affiliated with the István Bibó College of the Faculty of Law of Budapest's Eötvös Loránd University. The Federation was designed as an independent, self-supporting youth organization seeking to operate within the guidelines of the constitution. FIDESZ's initial statement said that it sought a new Hungary in which interests could be represented in freely established organizations, an institutional system be brought about which promoted balance of economic efficiency and equality of chances, people could regain a healthy self-identity, and a demilitarized Europe be realized. The functions of FIDESZ were to be to express an opinion on all questions which touched upon interests of its members (limited to those between 16 and 35), participate in policy making as representative of the interests of its members, strive for intellectual and political influence among youth, and offer its members a voice in political affairs.⁶²

Authorities tried to use intimidation to disband the group. Five leaders were called into police headquarters and given warnings for having an illegal association. Media covered the event, giving the group publicity. Despite warnings, some 200 people attended an April 17 FIDESZ meeting. After the meeting leaders were again summoned to the state prosecutor's office. The leaders informed the authorities that since they were not an organized association the law regulating associations did not apply to them. They based their activities on rights to assemble guaranteed in the Constitution. The leaders also argued that the law on youth did not say that the official KISZ had to be the sole representative of youth. Prime Minister Grósz said that the government would tolerate FIDESZ, as other

independent political groups being formed, but would refuse to deal with these directly until the National Assembly had acted on a new law on associations. Other authorities and the official press criticized the illegality of an independent political organization for young people.⁶³

It was in the context of these various initiatives that the Network of Free Initiatives (*Szabad Kezdeményezések Hálózata*) was formed at a meeting on May 1, 1988. Conceived as an umbrella organization of initiatives and organizations, the Network aimed to help exchange of information and coordination among the various independent groups. János Kis, one of the organizers, expressed the hope that the founding was the first step toward building a genuine political opposition. Already on March 17 a petition was drawn up by more than 45 dissidents and signed by more than 700 before the end of April. The petition called on the government to enter into good faith negotiations with society to overcome the current crisis and for formation of a multiparty democracy that would constitutionally guarantee individual rights. It also proposed a free enterprise system. While calling for good relations with the Soviet Union, the appeal stated that Hungary should be sovereign and an equal member of the family of European nations.⁶⁴

At a press conference after the formation, individuals from several organizational backgrounds were present. They included Miklós Haraszti; Miklós Vászárhelyi; Judit Vászárhelyi, a librarian who had been present at Lakitelek; Tamás Deutsch, an organizer of FIDESZ; Imre Mécs, an engineer and veteran of the 1956 Revolution; István Vass, a worker; János Vargha, a biologist and founder of *Duna Kör*; Levente Ruttkay, a pastor; and Ferenc Mészlivetz, a sociologist. They made public a statement by the Interim Council of the Network, which began by noting increasingly vocal demands for democracy: constitutional state, parliamentary rule, multi-party system, explicit protection of rights and interests, national sovereignty, and a mixed, market-oriented economy. Noting that the loss of confidence of those in power was not sufficient to allow pressure from below to succeed, the statement said that the way out of crisis involved political changes.

The demands of the democratic movement were presented as a new constitution guaranteeing civil and political rights; renewal of parliament based on an impartial electoral law; rights of association and assembly; legislation guaranteeing autonomy of churches; termination of administrative con-

trol of mass media and freedom of press; right to establish trade unions and to strike; and legislation to govern the activities of the party. With a few minor exceptions these demands and other recommendations for solving the economic crisis were those made in "Social Contract." Two themes received emphasis in the statement beyond that in "Social Contract": national sovereignty, specifically equality among Warsaw Pact nations and working toward the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary; and protection of Hungarian minorities outside of Hungary, in particular demanding that the state clarify its obligations and demands concerning these minorities and seeking their collective rights. In addition to asking everyone in agreement to sign the appeal, the call to action in the appeal also echoed that of "Social Contract." It argued that supporters should question members of parliament and union representatives on further democracy, support party members in their efforts to democratize the party, establish groups and an independent press, and defend each other through mutual solidarity.⁶⁵

The analysis of the economic and political crisis, as well as the identification of goals and means to achieve them presented in the statement of the Network leadership strongly reflected the influence of the *Beszélő* group in the formation of this organization. In an environment in which many new initiatives were being formed, the creation of a coordinating organization among those sharing similar goals was appealing and sensible. Many of the activists from the initiatives were drawn to the Network for this reason. For the core activists from the democratic opposition, the creation of the Network provided the first opportunity to bring organization to the various activities which it had encouraged in its program of June 1987. It was also the first attempt to respond to the new opportunities to form organizations and emerge from the darkness of illegality. The influence of criticism of "Social Contract" for its the acceptance of Soviet relations and party hegemony was reflected in the added emphasis on national sovereignty. The beginnings of competition with the MDF were also reflected in the addition of a statement on the Hungarian minority living outside of Hungary and in the very attempt to create a new organization coordinating various initiatives.

Deepening Crisis and Regime Changes

The dramatic increase in independent initiatives in Hungary during the early months of 1988 put strong pressure on the MSZMP to push ahead on economic and political reforms. At the same time, continuing developments in the economy also dramatized the case for reform. While there were a few bright spots in the economic performance in 1987, real growth in the 2.5 percent range and an increase in hard currency exports, bad news more than made up for the good news. There were two devaluations of the forint during 1987. Inflation for the year was 8.6 percent. Balance of payments and (convertible) foreign trade deficits remained large (\$847 million and \$361 million, respectively). Foreign debt grew from \$16.2 billion to \$17.7 billion and debt service for the year was \$2.4 billion. It marked the third consecutive year that both gross and net hard currency debt increased.⁶⁶

The debt difficulties forced the Hungarian government to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for aid. In April 1988, a program was completed providing an initial stand-by credit of \$350 million for the first year and another credit of \$350 million for the succeeding two years. The IMF program sought a substantial reduction of the state budget deficit from Ft35 billion to Ft20 billion, mostly by eliminating subsidies to enterprises and consumer goods. Tax reforms, bank reorganization, reduction in the growth of internal borrowing, further devaluation of the forint, and relaxation of price controls were other elements of the program.⁶⁷

Economic strains had already had an effect on regime and state personnel. In December 1986, the head of the Central Committee economic policy department, the chair of the National Planning Office, and the Minister of Finance had been replaced. In June 1987 there was a further leadership shuffle, though it was probably more due to maneuvering within the party than economic performance. Karoly Grósz, head of the Budapest party organization, became Prime Minister. He replaced György Lázár, a Kádár loyalist who moved to Deputy Secretary General, a position controlling personnel. Two new members were added to the Politburo, including János Berecz, the Central Committee Secretary for ideology and culture. At the time, Grósz and Berecz were considered to be principal candidates to succeed Kádár as MSZMP General Secretary.⁶⁸

Economic difficulties, the burgeoning growth of independent organizations, and the continued uncertainty over leadership succession to the aging Kádár added to the stress within the MSZMP. In March 1988, the Central Committee heard a report on discussions of party ideology that had been conducted within the party in January. A wide variety of topics on party processes, the role of party in society, and reform were addressed. The results of discussions suggested that within the party there was great uncertainty, which weakened the party's political unity and unity of action. In the context of these questions, the party organized an extraordinary National Conference for May 1988.⁶⁹

A draft policy statement to be debated at the May conference was approved by the Central Committee and forwarded to basic party organizations for comment. The draft came under criticism from activists, particularly for not dealing with the question of responsibility for past mistakes. The KISZ reviewed the document and criticized its lack of specificity and its proposal to delay reorganization until the 14th Party Congress in 1990. The HNF also reviewed the document. Its comments reflected its role as an organization in promoting reform: the need to include comments on restoration of confidence which required legal guarantees over the exercise of power; importance of separating party and state; legislation to institute referenda; drafting a new constitution; new laws on elections and associations; and new administrative and constitutional courts.⁷⁰

During the spring months Kádár attempted to maintain his leadership position. In an apparent effort to preserve his authority, the party cracked down on leading reformers within its ranks. Pozsgay was criticized for his outspokenness and Nyers was sanctioned for his efforts to create the New March Front. In April, the MSZMP Central Control Commission expelled four reformers—Mihály Bihari, Zoltán Bíró, Zoltán Király, and László Lengyel—from the party. The commission said that party members could not be allowed to express views that differed from the party line at public forums where anti-party and anti-regime opinions were expressed. All four had been present at Lakitelek and had involvement with MDF in its early meetings.⁷¹

While Kádár was trying to hold on to the leadership post, Grósz ran a virtual campaign to succeed him. In the final weeks before the conference, Kádár accepted leadership change and a compromise was apparently worked out. This compromise broke down at the conference when Kádár's open-

ing address presented a hard line against reform. Restless delegates and a coalition put together by Grósz, with Berecz on the hard-line side and Pozsgay and Nyers on the reform side, turned almost completely against the old leadership. Grósz replaced Kádár as General Secretary. Eight Politburo members appointed in 1980 and before were removed and six new members were elected. Nyers and Pozsgay were among new the members, as was Miklós Németh, Central Committee Secretary for the economy and a protege of Grósz. More than one-third of the Central Committee was replaced at the conference.⁷²

The conference also modified the previously debated draft statement. Included was a criticism of past Central Committee and government evaluation of and reaction to the world economy and its impact on Hungary. Revisions also noted that implementation of economic reform was hindered by the fact that reform was not introduced in rest of society and that reform must begin within the party itself. The statement called for greater democracy within the party itself, participation of all members in the shaping of policy, as well as consideration of the views expressed by public organizations, interest groups, and public forums. It called for limitations on party officials to two five-year terms in office. Called for political changes included constitutional review, exclusive jurisdiction of the National Assembly over legislation, rights of citizens regulated in law, improved electoral system, and a call for allowing referenda.⁷³

The Kádár era had drawn to a close with a dramatic performance, an important growth in power of the reformers, and symbolic commitment by the party to increased reform. Grósz appeared as an agent of reform in this drama, but his past marked him as a pragmatist more committed to hard-line positions. While he then held both the top party and government posts, his power was not secure. There were still hardliners flanking him on one side and reformers on the other. The new strength of moderates and reformers in the party was reflected by personnel and policy decisions that emerged during the summer and fall.

The summer session of the National Assembly, June 29-July 1, 1988, reflected the changes in the party. The parliament elected a Constitutional Preparatory Committee to be headed by the chair of the HNF, Gyula Kallai, and elected Bruno F. Straub, a biochemist and non-party member, as President

of the Presidential Council (head of state). The MSZMP Central Committee had recommended these and other personnel changes at its June 23 meeting. Changes in the government included the appointment of Imre Pozsgay to a newly created position as Minister of State, the second highest position in the government with control of all government information and media, as well as all matters connected with national minorities. Kalman Kulcsar, a sociologist of law but not a party member, was appointed as the new Minister of Justice.⁷⁴

At a Central Committee meeting in July 1988, the approach of the new leadership toward reforms became clearer. In an unprecedented move, the Central Committee published drafts of its resolutions *prior* to the meeting and allowed broadcast media to be present at the meeting. On the economic front, the body endorsed proposals that were strongly influenced by the IMF austerity measures: further market-oriented reforms, restructuring of the industrial sector, cutbacks in domestic consumption, and further liberalization of the private sector and foreign trade. Miklós Németh, new Politburo member in charge of economic policy, proposed expanding the role of private enterprise and establishing real markets in commodities, money, capital, and labor; allowing enterprises to independently use their resources; stricter monetary, financial and budget policies; and limitations on state intervention in enterprise affairs. His proposals echoed the recommendations originally presented in "Turn About and Reform," almost two years prior.⁷⁵

On the political front, the Central Committee decided that the National Assembly should act on new laws of association and assembly. Legality of associations would be based on registration, which could be denied only when prohibited by another law. Authorities would be permitted to take prohibitory measures only when regulations were violated and challenge of such restrictions by citizens would be allowed in court. The law on assembly would have required 5-day prior notification to police or local councils before demonstrations. The body called for publication of the proposed legislation, followed by a period of "public discussion" of the proposals.⁷⁶

Following the August publication of the draft laws, public discussions were held under the auspices of the HNF. Though these were poorly attended, negative opinions of the proposals were expressed. Legal scholars, who had become increasingly vocal over the past year, criticized the pro-

posals for allowing the state to prohibit assembly in advance based upon broad and subjective criteria. Bihari presented a criticism that argued that the proposed laws were predicated on the assumption of an "omnipotent and omniscient" state, incompatible with a democratic state based upon the rule of law. The Network of Free Initiatives and FIDESZ issued a statement rejecting the right of the state to prohibit assembly in advance and called for a shortening of the period of notification. The joint statement also criticized the omission of the MSZMP from the law on associations, as well as the requirement that associations must have a minimum of 1000 members. In response to criticisms, the Ministry of Justice was forced to revise the proposed statutes.⁷⁷

The law on assembly and association was finally introduced in the National Assembly in December 1988, though final action on the law was delayed until January 1989. The law on assembly retained the prior notification clause but tightened the conditions under which police could deny permission and gave organizers the right to appeal to the court. The law on associations outlined conditions for the formation of independent associations and trade unions, and gave the right to form political parties. Details of the conditions regulating political parties were to be specified in a separate law to be passed later.⁷⁸

The economic crisis and question of Kádár's successor had finally caught up with the MSZMP. In response to growing pressure from rapidly multiplying independent organizations and its own internal pressures, the party responded by changing leadership and embarking on a cautious reform path. This change in the political establishment and increased strength of the allies of reform movements did not lead to a lessening of demands. If anything, it emboldened the dissident movements and increased their confidence. The impact of these new signals about political opportunities could be seen in movement activities and organization.

Increasing Political Movement Activity

The activities of the political opposition movements were not limited to holding discussion and organizational meetings. In 1988 there was also an increase of demonstrations, which though they were not legal were not always treated as illegal and subject to repression. These demonstrations tended to be

organized by individuals from a number of groups rather than by any single group or organization. The joint demonstration in January supporting the Romanian people was such a collaborative effort of individuals.

The traditional unofficial March 15 demonstration took on the same character in 1988. The Network of Independent Initiatives had not yet been established but many of its organizers were instrumental in organizing speeches for the demonstration and encouraging supporters to turn out for the event. As had been typical for several years, demonstrators marched throughout central Budapest visiting monuments to the heroes of the 1848 Revolt—Petőfi, Kossuth, Bem, Batthány. Along the route, they chanted slogans calling for real reforms, freedoms of assembly and press, and free elections. In 1988, the crowd numbered around 10,000, by far largest ever for the unofficial demonstration and reportedly larger than the official event organized by the regime at the National Museum. Also for the first time, Radio Budapest gave an account of the unofficial demonstration, though it did not note that it was organized by dissidents.

Well-known democratic opposition figures János Kis and Gáspár Miklós Tamás delivered speeches, as did long-time activist Tibor Pákh. Róza Hodosán, wife of Gábor Demszky, delivered his speech, since he had been taken into preventive detention before the demonstration. Demszky's speech demanded curbing excessive government power, introduction of genuine parliamentarism, new elections, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly. Tamás argued that it was a peaceful transition that they desired, possible only through elections. Hungarian democracy must be created from a new constitution and free elections. He called on leaders who had lost the confidence of the people to resign and on people to dare and demand.⁷⁹

Authorities took strong and definite preventive action against the organizers. On March 8 and 9, homes of Demszky, György Gadó, Jenő Nagy, Otilia Solt, and two others were searched. Police seized publications, typewriters, photocopiers, and video equipment. On the morning of March 15, this same group, plus Haraszti, artist Tamás Molnár, and others, were taken into detention. They were released later in the evening.⁸⁰

During 1988 the environmental movement and the political opposition movement grew closer together as the Danube power project became increasingly politicized. On May 27, a demonstration against the project drew 2,000 persons to Budapest. Again, Radio Budapest provided reports on the demonstration. Later, on September 12, more than two dozen organizations, including the Network of Free Initiatives and MDF, took part in organizing an anti-dam demonstration. Planned to coincide with a parliamentary vote on the dam issue, more than 30,000 people participated in the demonstration, in which open display of organizational banners was prominent. The debate in the National Assembly was televised. Zoltán Király and 30 other representatives demanded a roll call vote but the move failed. The National Assembly also voted to continue the hydroelectric project. Partly as a result of this vote, independent organizations demanded inclusion of political parties in the new law on associations.⁸¹

In the aftermath of the May 1988 MSZMP conference, Grósz appeared to make a clear statement to the Network of Free Initiatives that he wasn't interested in treating it tolerantly. The Network organized a series of actions for June 16, the 30th anniversary of the execution of Imre Nagy and associates. Activities began at the cemetery where Nagy and the others were buried in unmarked graves. Participants in the Revolution, like Sándor Rácz, Imre Mécs, and Jenő Fónay attended the ceremony. Fónay called for full rehabilitation of Nagy and other victims, including a proper burial. At Heroes' Square, Rácz was stopped from laying a wreath at the monument to the unknown soldier.

Police had blocked access to the next stop, a central Budapest monument to Batthány, Prime Minister in 1848 who was later executed in October 1849. At the monument, Gáspár Miklós Tamás was detained when he tried to address the crowd of about 500. The crowd moved several blocks to the headquarters of Hungarian Television, where János Kis attempted to make an address. As police moved in to make arrests, the crowd chanted "AVO," name of the secret police of the 1950s. Western news sources said that as many as 100 persons, included women and children, were beaten. It was reported that Gábor Demszky and Róza Hodosán were handcuffed behind their backs, kicked, and beaten. Around 20 persons were detained, with the government paper, *Magyar Hírlap* reporting that 15 were arrested. Official

government press accounts accused the demonstrators of "trying to move certain masses against the present political regime."⁸²

The 1956 Revolution remained a sensitive issue to the regime. However, some signs of change were evident. Radio Budapest aired a program on the role of Nagy on June 17 and two days later Pozsgay told the party daily, *Népszabadság*, that he would head a committee to be established to study Hungarian history since 1945. It was clear that the combination of 1956 and the Network was not to the liking of authorities. Grósz told a meeting of the trade union council, SZOT, that the state would not stop people from paying tribute to the dead but rejected mobilization against the system and representatives of power.⁸³

Only two weeks later the regime displayed a fundamentally different attitude of implicit support toward a joint demonstration condemning Romanian government policies toward Hungarian (and German) minorities living in Transylvania. On June 27, somewhere in the vicinity of 100,000 people took part in protest at Heroes' Square. The demonstration was organized by a committee of prominent individuals with links to a variety of organizations, including MDF and the Network. Particularly active in organizing the protest was István Csurka. Veterans of 1956, with links to the Network, who participated include Imre Mécs and Jenő Fónay. Following an initial ceremony at the Basilica, the demonstration consisted of the crowd singing hymns and a few short speeches, of which Csurka's was the keynote. A note of support for human rights of Transylvania Hungarians from Lech Walesa was read. Organizers had composed a memorandum to the Romanian authorities, which was read, and demonstrators held a candle-light march to the Romanian embassy.⁸⁴

Formalization of Organization Structures

Through the summer of 1988, both MDF and the Network of Free Initiatives were loose organizations. MDF acted as its name and typically was a forum for discussion. The Network also resembled its name and was more of an attempt to coordinate actions among a number of diverse groups than it was a well-bounded organization. From the fall of 1988 onward, this situation began to change. First, MDF and, later, the Network moved toward formalization of their organizations.

On September 3, 1988, MDF met again in Lakitelek. The more than 350 persons present took no formal vote but did accept a founding charter and internal statutes for the organization. Reflecting the dramatic changes that one year had brought, and the new control of Pozsgay over broadcast media, Radio Budapest reported on the meeting the same day. In his opening address, Zoltán Bíró maintained that the MDF wanted to transform from a loose intellectual group into an organized, independent intellectual and political movement that would be open to all Magyars and would promote democracy in Hungary. According to him, among the activities that MDF would engage in would be drafting alternative proposals and publicizing them; organizing social forces and engaging them in political activity; maintaining a dialogue and cooperation with authorities and other organizations and independent movements; and nominating candidates for National Assembly and local elections.⁸⁵

Mátyás at the meeting. Its members included writers István Csurka and Gyula Fekete; poets Dénes Csengey, Sándor Csoóri, and Sándor Lezsák; literary historians Gy. Csaba Kiss and Bíró; and historian Lajos Für. The presidium was a temporary body that would report on its activities and then dissolve at the first congress of MDF, which would be held when membership reached 10,000 or in one year at the latest. At the meeting, Bíró announced that permission had finally been granted to publish a biweekly periodical, *Hitel* (Credit), which would begin appearing in November. Csoóri would chair the editorial board and Bíró would be editor-in-chief. The writers, poets, and historians who constituted the presidium had been seeking their own independent journal for many years.

During the meeting, it was noted that the Forum considered establishment of a multiparty system an essential element of democratization, but it did not intend to become a party under the current circumstances. MDF emphasized its desire to work within constitutional limits and in complete openness. At a press conference, it was emphasized that it was premature to think of the Forum as a party. MDF did not wish to compete for power but to conduct a dialogue with authorities on the basis of independence and equality. In later statements to the press, Bíró, Csoóri, and historian Rudolf Joó all stressed that MDF was not a political party despite its professed intent to run candidates for 1990 national elections. At the press conference, it was also noted that before it could hold a congress, the

question of legality of its organization and activities had to be resolved (in the law on associations and assembly).

Among stated aims of MDF were protection of the rights of Magyar national minorities living abroad and promoting the right of people to elect their own leaders and representatives. Its vision of the Hungarian parliamentary system was based on local self-government and autonomous organizations, with the National Assembly as the truly highest body of popular representation and state power. The group expressed the view that the nationalized economy should be replaced with a "socialized" economy. Gy. Csaba Kiss told the government daily, *Magyar Hírlap*, that while the MDF did not differ greatly in character from the writers' association, MISZ, it was not a movement of populist writers but wished to express views of a much wider spectrum, including bourgeois radicalism, Christian humanism, classical Hungarian liberalism, and democratic socialism. By early October, Gyula Fekete told a meeting in Szeged that MDF had several thousand members and around 300 local groups.⁸⁶

Some two months after the MDF meeting, FIDESZ held its first national congress, November 19-20. Over 600 delegates and supporters were told that the organization had around 2,000 members in 53 chapters. The Federation passed a political platform that emphasized the restoration of Hungary's European identity by dissolving military blocs. Under threat from authorities that they would withhold legalization of the group, the platform refrained from directly calling for withdrawal of Soviet troops. It noted that the highest goal of guaranteeing the peaceful, free, and independent life of citizens could only be attained through parliamentary democracy. Parliamentary democracy in turn required a market economy based on equality of forms of property. FIDESZ pledged to use all existing legal and constitutional means to pursue its goals. The group also announced that it would run candidates in the next parliamentary elections. Elected to a 10-member steering committee were Tamás Deutsch, Gábor Fodor, and Viktor Orbán. It was also decided to apply for permission to publish *FIDESZ News*.⁸⁷

At this same time, between October and December 1988, a number of new organizations were formed representing the "historical" parties from Hungary's immediate post-War period. The Inde-

pendent Smallholders' Party (FKGP) first organized as a political society in October and within a month was re-organized as the FKGP. The Social Democratic Movement formed an interim executive committee during the last week of November. In the first week of December an organization held a founding meeting to revive the Christian Democratic movement.⁸⁸ All these moves were made despite the lack of legality of such actions. The new law on association had not yet been approved, and its enabling legislation on political parties was many months off. Still, the formalization of the various political movements into organizations was itself changing the nature of the political environment.

In this changing political field, pressure built within the Network of Free Initiatives to become a more formal organization as well. The attempt to build a broad coalition of independent initiatives had not been successful and competing organizations were moving ahead with organizational identities and structures to match. In this context, the Network of Free Initiatives met to discuss transformation of the organization. While a number of activists favored maintaining the Network as an umbrella, the core of democratic opposition activists pushed for the creation of a new, formal organization. This latter group triumphed and on November 13, 1988, they created the Alliance of Free Democrats (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége, SZDSZ*). Among the best-known members of that time were Gábor Demszky, István Eörsi, Miklós Haraszti, János Kis, György Konrád, Ferenc Kószeg, Imre Mécs, László Rajk, Ottilia Solt, and Miklós Vásárhelyi. Over the ensuing months, SZDSZ established a number of working committees which produced a program for the transformation of Hungarian society, economy, and politics.

By the time its first congress was held on March 19, 1989, SZDSZ claimed 1,800 members in 35 chapters (20 in Budapest). At this congress, the draft of its program proposals was presented and discussed. One of the general purposes of the SZDSZ was defined to be furthering integration of Hungarian culture and institutions into the European system. It explicitly rejected the possibility of any "third road" of development between socialism and capitalism. Central to the draft was a call for a new constitution that would end the party's monopoly of power, limit the powers of the state, and guarantee the sovereignty of people. The draft also called for denationalization of the economy, expansion of private ownership (both domestic and foreign), cutting military and wasteful expenditures, and seeking

changes in the role of Hungary within the CMEA. Poverty and social issues were also addressed. The draft called for a social security system that would take care of people's basic needs and noted that poor people could become a political problem if their needs were not met.

On foreign policy the draft program maintained that the main task was to bring Hungary closer to the developed nations of Europe. SZDSZ professed the 1956 declaration of neutrality as its heritage. While it argued that Hungary should not unilaterally leave the Warsaw Pact Alliance, it did call for an elimination of that association's influence on internal politics within member countries. The draft explicitly called for withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and urged the Warsaw Pact to repudiate the Brezhnev doctrine by condemning the 1968 military invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Questions of political tactics were also discussed in the program draft. Joint negotiations between independent groups and with authorities to bring about a smooth transition to a multiparty system were called for. The Independent Forum of Lawyers had proposed that independent initiatives form an alliance and negotiate jointly with the MSZMP. The congress approved this proposal. The draft also suggested that independent groups and the authorities should agree to act with restraint toward one another to reduce "mutual distrust." It called on the MSZMP to accept independent groups as negotiating partners and make agreements binding on both sides. The goals of negotiations were defined to be the formulation of rules of the political game for the transition period to a multiparty system. Such rules would involve new electoral law, a modified law on freedom of association and assembly, a new penal code, and a new press law. SZDSZ sought a field of freely competing forces that would be reflected in the composition of parliament after the elections. The prevailing sentiment at the congress was that any coalition government with the MSZMP was ruled out.

A second half to the congress convened on April 16, after local branches had the opportunity to discuss the draft program. At this meeting, a declaration was issued calling on the government to resign and be replaced by an interim government headed by Pozsgay and Nyers until elections. The new government would be technocratic and not composed of members of any party, except in the posts of foreign affairs and defense. Another proposal recommended seizure of the property of the party and its affiliated organizations, followed by placement of the property under public control.⁸⁹

The first congress of the SZDSZ had come in the wake of the first congress of MDF, which was held on March 11-12, 1989, with foreign ambassadors and Mátyás Szűrös, recently elected Chair of the National Assembly, among those present. MDF reported 13,200 members in more than 200 branches in 159 localities. From the beginning of the congress, Zoltán Bíró proclaimed that the congress did not have authority to decide whether the Forum would turn itself into a regular political party. He noted that though still an intellectual and political movement, it could not be ruled out that MDF would become a genuine political party in the near future. In the framework of a multiparty system though, MDF would be a genuine political factor. Bíró said that the present parliament should dissolve itself and be replaced by a constitution-drafting assembly. He argued that the current National Assembly had lost all legitimacy when it voted to continue the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project and institute a new tax system. Bíró also maintained that MDF would not take responsibility for the mistakes made by others during the past 40 years and would not rush into a coalition government. He said that MDF was still preparing its program.

Sándor Csoóri argued that the 1988 MSZMP conference had not brought any real change and that such change would only occur with a *de jure* multiparty system. Sándor Lezsák noted that it was only a question of time before MDF turned into a regular political party and joined ranks with the already existing parties, Social Democrats, Smallholders, People's Party. MDF responded to Szűrös's statement to the March session of the National Assembly that foreign affairs were no longer exclusive domain of the party by calling on the government to involve the Warsaw Pact in trying to aid the plight of Magyar minorities in Romania.⁹⁰

Beginning with the FIDESZ congress in fall 1988 and continuing through the re-formation of historical parties to these two congresses, the formalization of political movements which had emerged out of the intellectual circles of Hungary began to take a new turn. The organizations had become increasingly formal, with charters, dues-paying memberships, official leadership positions, and other indications of specialization. This formalization was partly a product of increasing size: membership now numbered in the thousands. It was also a result of increasing competition among the organizations. Different organizational identities played an important part in the competition. MDF

continued to emphasize the importance of the Hungarian nation, as well as its willingness to enter into dialogue with authorities. SZDSZ stressed connection with European values and institutions, as well as market-based economic reforms. FIDESZ drew upon many of the same themes as SZDSZ and used its demographic uniqueness as a key to its identity. All these organizations continued to demand multi-party democracy as goal.

As organizational structures and identities developed during this period so did an important goal. The independent organizations began to speak of running candidates in the 1990 parliamentary elections; they began to act like political parties. During 1989, there occurred a process of transformation of these political movement organizations into political parties. This change did not occur automatically. As it became clearer during the latter half of 1988 that the possibilities of a multi-party system were real, the political movements increasingly demanded the legal guarantees of political parties. When the January law on association enshrined the possibility, the political opportunity structure had clearly shifted. No longer were these organizations competing for supporters only for increased organizational strength, they were now also beginning to compete for potential voters.

Determining the Rules of the Game

Despite the increasing competition among the political movement organizations, they were able to cooperate in two important events during the spring. The first took place on March 15, when 24 independent organizations joined together to create an alternative celebration of the 1848 Anniversary in Budapest. An estimated crowd of 100,000 demonstrators chanted slogans and carried banners as it followed the traditional circuit of monuments to the 1848 heroes—Petófi, Kossuth, Batthyányi, and Bem. The independent groups organizing the rally issued a 12-point statement, following the 12 points issued by Petófi in 1848. At the top of this list was the demand for a multi-party system, with free and honest elections. Other demands included a constitutional state, human rights, freedoms of speech and press, right to strike, just distribution of economic and social costs and obligations, curtailing bureaucracy, dismantling the para-military Workers' Guard, withdrawal of Soviet troops, defense of Hungarian

minorities, and honors due to the martyrs of the 1956 Revolution, with October 23 made a national holiday.⁹¹

Imre Mécs, member of the Committed for Historical Justice and SZDSZ, encouraged the silent majority in Hungary to not be afraid to step forward and help block a return to old methods. At the Hungarian Television building, actor György Cserhalmi read out the 12 points. Dénes Csengey of MDF told the crowd that Hungarian television belonged to the people, not the regime; separate programs for independent groups were demanded. János Kis called for Hungary to rejoin Europe in freedom and independence. At Kossuth Square, in front of the National Assembly, a half minute of silence honored those killed there in October 1956.

A much smaller crowd, estimated at 30,000, attended the official celebration at the National Museum. There National Assembly Chair Szűrös spoke of the validity of the 1848 message for today. Rezső Nyers criticized past Soviet suppression of East European reforms and Stalinism and Brezhnevism for their repressive destruction of the spirit of reform. Besides the MSZMP, the HNF, and the KISZ, the official demonstration was joined by the recreated Smallholders' and Social Democratic parties.⁹²

The second event was the formation of an Opposition Roundtable (*Ellenzéki Kerekasztal*, EKA) among nine independent organization, including MDF, SZDSZ, and FIDESZ.⁹³ The EKA was initiated at the urging of the Independent Lawyers Forum after the MSZMP had attempted to divide the opposition by holding bilateral talks.⁹⁴ On March 23, representatives of the nine organizations met and agreed of the necessity of harmonizing their goals and presenting a unified standpoint to the MSZMP. The Lawyers Forum undertook to play a mediating and organizing role.

The emergence of the EKA eliminated the possibility of divisive actions on the part of the regime and led to the formation of a unified opposition facing the regime in negotiations. One of the EKA demands was that discussion with the MSZMP must be two-sided rather than roundtable, so that clear distinction could be discerned. Preparatory discussions between the EKA and MSZMP took place over the next two months, with a final agreement on the framework for talks made on June 10, 1989. The agreement stated two goals for the negotiations: determining the principle and rules governing a

democratic political transition, and discussing strategic tasks involved in overcoming the social and economic crisis.

An obstacle during the preparatory talks had been the question of who would be represented at the discussions. The EKA had insisted on two-sided negotiations between the MSZMP and itself, while the party sought the inclusion of other organizations, like the SZOT, the Federation of Democratic Hungarian Youth (a new umbrella organization), HNF, and others. In a compromise, the EKA agreed to the participation of these groups as a third side in the negotiations. In turn, the party agreed to seek passage in the National Assembly of any legislative proposals emerging from the negotiations. It also agreed to avoid creation of legislation before negotiations were concluded. A party spokesman did hedge a bit and indicate that such cooperation was conditional on constructive progress.⁹⁵

The first plenary session of the negotiations took place on June 13, with foreign and domestic journalists present and the session broadcast live on Hungarian Television and Radio. Introductory statements were presented by the three sides. The MSZMP delegation was led by General Secretary Károly Grósz, with Pozsgay, Nyers, and Berecz also in the delegation. In advance of the meeting, the party representatives spoke of limiting talks on political issues and expanding those on economic issues. For the MSZMP, it appeared that the negotiations provided an opportunity to mobilize social support for necessary economic reforms.

In contrast, the EKA repeatedly maintained that the crisis of the economy had its roots in the political system. The interest of the EKA was in focusing negotiations on the fundamental laws of constitutional change, electoral law, political party regulation, criminal code, and property rights. The basic interest unifying the EKA participants was ensuring that forthcoming parliamentary elections were free and fair. One of the key disagreements to be settled at the beginning of talks was the disagreement between the party and the EKA on the relative weight of economic and political issues in the negotiations.⁹⁶

At the beginning of the second round of negotiations on June 21, Grósz was absent and Pozsgay had assumed the head of the party delegation. Berecz and another hard-liner had been replaced by more moderate representatives. At this meeting the EKA conceded that economic and political issues

could be discussed in equal proportions. EKA spokesperson Iván Petó admitted that the EKA had agreed to this party demand because of the threat that the MSZMP would push through bills in the National Assembly before agreements were reached in negotiations. He also admitted that the EKA wanted to avoid the public appearance that it was obstructing economic reform measures.⁹⁷ In return, the MSZMP agreed not to submit any new bills to the session of parliament set to convene on June 27. Two committees were to begin work immediately, one dealing with the fundamental political questions and the other addressing strategic economic questions.

In the midst of these negotiations the bargaining power of the EKA was also strengthened by the enormous outpouring of emotion associated with the reburial of Imre Nagy and his associates on June 16. The Committee for Historical Justice had been pressing for more than a year for justice to the victims of the post-Revolution repression and had sought a dignified burial for Nagy and his comrades who had been dumped in an unmarked, mass grave after their execution. In the wake of an official reassessment of the meaning of the 1956 Revolution resulting from the Central Committee commission analyzing Hungarian history headed by Pozsgay, the position of the regime changed dramatically during 1989. Officials agreed to honor Nagy and in fact took an active part in the ceremony. The honor guard accompanying Nagy's casket included top government officials in addition to Nagy's comrades.

The solemn ceremony allowed thousands of persons to file past the coffins of Nagy and four of his associates. An empty sixth coffin represented the known and unknown victims of the repression. The coffins were placed upon a secular altar designed by László Rajk, an architect. A number of Hungarian and foreign dignitaries laid wreaths before the coffins. Among those giving speeches to a crowd estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000 were Sándor Rácz, leader of the Budapest Workers' Councils in the aftermath of the Revolution, who said that it was not the victims who needed rehabilitation but the communists. Viktor Orbán of FIDESZ said that young people bowed to Nagy and his companions because they broke with blind obedience to the Russian empire and with the single party dictatorship. Orbán condemned communist leaders who then rushed to the Nagy memory and he proclaimed that Hungarians had to be brave and force the party to submit to free elections.⁹⁸

In the immediate aftermath of these events the explanation of Grósz's absence at the second negotiating session became apparent. His position within the MSZMP had slipped even further. At a Central Committee meeting on June 23-24, it was announced that Rezső Nyers had been named to position of party president and that a new four-member presidency had been created to be a directing body for the party. In addition to Nyers and Grósz, the General Secretary, the other members included Pozsgay and Miklós Németh, Prime Minister from November 1988. The Central Committee also called for a Congress of the MSZMP on October 7, 1989.

These developments within the MSZMP were partly an outgrowth of increasing discontent within the party itself. On May 21-22, there had occurred a national conference of reform circles within the MSZMP. These circles had begun to be established in late 1988. The first circle was created as a discussion group in Szeged in November. It published an appeal in the local daily paper inviting sympathetic individuals to join it. Within a week, Grósz had arrived in town and condemned the circles as factionalism. The editor in chief and deputy editor of the paper were dismissed. Despite attempts to limit their growth, by the time of their conference there numbered around 100 circles.

More than 400 representatives attended the Szeged conference, including a number of prominent intellectuals. On the second day, 3,000 spectators, along with Pozsgay and Nyers, attended an open-air meeting. The goal of the meeting was to force the party into more reform. The final statement of the conference called for an early party congress to be held in the fall. The statement criticized the system itself for the country's current crisis and urged reforms which called for expansion of the private sector and market economy, more party democracy, peaceful change into a legal, constitutional state, and immediate talks with the EKA. The conference also went on record as asking for forgiveness from the families of Nagy and other victims of 1956.⁹⁹

It was in the context of this widespread public demonstration for Nagy, with its implied criticism of the history of the party, and the growing crisis within the party that the three-side negotiations took place in the summer of 1989. In addition to this organized pressure and the internal splits in the party, the international environment also had its impact on the negotiations. As the opposition and the party moved toward the negotiation of a multiparty framework, the Soviet Union made

no explicit statements challenging this development. The electoral success of Solidarity in Poland in early June had forced the Soviets to come to terms with a weakening of communist power in that country. In a July 6 speech to the European parliament in Strasbourg, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev made it explicit that the change in the social and political order of European countries was "exclusively a matter for the people themselves and of their choice."¹⁰⁰ He went on to say any interference in the internal affairs or limits on the sovereignty of states was inadmissible. The communique of the Warsaw Pact meeting two days later stressed the right of member countries to create policies "without outside interference." Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn said that the Hungarians had stated that "the period of enforcing the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine is over once and for all."¹⁰¹

During July, the three-sided negotiations broke down when conservative Central Committee Secretary György Fejtő replaced Pozsgay as chief negotiator for the party. Fejtő reinterpreted and withdrew from several agreements and the MSZMP threatened that its draft on a multiparty system would be rushed through the National Assembly. The party withdrew support of legislation barring party organizations in work places, as well as for withdrawing party functionaries from government agencies, courts, and local governments. An emergent disagreement was over the timing of presidential elections. The MSZMP had nominated Pozsgay as its candidate for the office and sought to have the elections held during the existing parliament. The party threatened to break off negotiations if the EKA did not agree to this demand. For its part, the EKA opposed this timetable fearing that the party could carry over its hegemony into the position even if it would be defeated in parliamentary elections. The opposition had seen the results of the Polish roundtable bargaining and wanted to avoid the possibility of creating an office where the party could continue to control the state.

Other electoral issues were also in contention between the party and the EKA. The EKA favored an election scheme in which 150 of the approximately 350 deputies would be elected in individual electoral districts and the remainder would be drawn from party lists on a proportionate basis. The MSZMP sought to limit the number of seats drawn from party lists to 50. There was also disagreement over the number of signatures required to place a candidate on the ballot, with the party seeking a greater number than the EKA. The opposition groups sought to end the privileged access of the MSZMP

to state funds and seek redistribution of party assets. The party had changed its position and said that the issue was not negotiable.¹⁰²

In late August after Pozsgay once again assumed the leadership of the MSZMP delegation, progress in the negotiations resumed. By September 6, the three-sided negotiations had produced a draft electoral law. The draft was based on the basic contours of the EKA position on electing a large number of deputies from party lists rather than individual electoral districts. The draft agreement placed restrictions on the abilities of groups to nominate candidates. Depoliticization of the professional ranks of the military was also agreed upon. Some issues did not find consensus among the three sides. Agreement was not reached on the presence of MSZMP organizations in workplaces. Nor was the issue of the timing of the presidential election solved, though agreement on duties of the office was reached.¹⁰³

In mid-September the unity of the EKA broke down as six of the nine groups signed an agreement with the MSZMP and the mass organizations over the draft laws. The agreement defined the common goal of the signatory parties to be the establishment of the conditions for peaceful transition to a multi-party system. The six draft laws included establishment of a constitutional court, legal guarantees for operation of political parties, electoral law, and amendments to the penal code. The agreement stipulated that presidential elections would be held prior to parliamentary elections. The MSZMP also agreed to hand over assets to the government, which would then give them as state aid to the political parties. Unsettled were a new law on media, the question of the Workers' Guards, and other questions.

SZDSZ, FIDESZ, and the League of Democratic Trade Unions refused to sign the agreement mainly because of their opposition to the timing of the presidential election. These groups also criticized the lack of a full and complete accounting of MSZMP assets, the failure to reduce the party's domination of the media, and the failure to settle the question of party organizations in work places. They did refrain from using their veto power within the EKA to scuttle the agreement. The Social Democratic Party also criticized the timetable, attaching its reservations to the agreement, which it signed. Later the Smallholders' also expressed opposition to the timing of the presidential elections. A

result of the split was increased strain within the EKA, but spokespersons for MDF, SZDSZ, and FIDESZ all reaffirmed their commitments to the EKA.¹⁰⁴

At a session on September 26-27, the National Assembly adopted a new law on foreign travel, amended the penal code (including revoking the criminal status of the advocacy of political change), and passed a statement condemning the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Many deputies in parliament showed resistance to approving the agreements of the three-sided negotiations. Prime Minister Németh appealed to the deputies to take into consideration that it had been necessary to create a national consensus in view of the historical task of reforms. Action on constitutional amendments and legislation regulating the multiparty system was postponed until after the upcoming MSZMP congress.¹⁰⁵

The party congress took place on October 6-7 in Budapest. The reform circles, which had been organizing within the party during the year, came to the congress as the "Reform Alliance," the largest of the more than half-dozen "platforms" which had formed in preparation for the meeting. The Alliance demanded a clear break with the past, including a repudiation of the mistakes and crimes of the MSZMP. As one of the reform leaders, political scientist Attila Agh argued that the party's potential in upcoming multiparty elections depended upon a thorough turnaround in policies, organization, and personnel. With the support of Pozsgay and Prime Minister Németh, the Reform Alliance successfully passed its program calling for the setting up of a new party, the Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt, MSZP*). The founding statement of the MSZP argued that the era of the MSZMP had ended in Hungary and it renounced the bureaucratic party state. At the same time it argued that it was heir to the values of reform within the old party and was committed to humanism, freedom, democracy, and respect for work. It argued that the MSZP would be a party of the people, seeking to achieve a social market economy based upon mixed forms of property and a multiparty democracy.¹⁰⁶

Following the party congress, the National Assembly took up the remaining legislation in its October 17-20 session. It approved constitutional amendments which included eliminating the party's leading role and changing the form of state from a "People's Republic" to a "Republic." This latter

change took effect on October 23, 1989, which the parliament also declared a national holiday. During this session the National Assembly approved a new law regulating political parties. Going beyond the three-sided agreement, the new law banned political parties from operating in work places and prepared the way for a redistribution of the assets of the MSZP. Political parties were no longer allowed to receive financial support from state budgetary organizations, state-run enterprises, nor foreign governments. In the future, state funds would be distributed to parties on the basis of their strength in parliament and their electoral results. The parliament also passed a new electoral law shaping the parliamentary elections required before the end of June 1990. The new law again reflected some independence by the deputies from the negotiated agreement. The law increased the number of individual electoral districts to 176, set the number of seats to be filled from regional (county) party lists at 152, and allowed an additional 58 seats to be filled from national party lists.¹⁰⁷

With the passage of this legislation the legal transformation of the Hungarian party-state had been completed. Most of the political demands made by the opposition political movements during the previous two years had been realized. But the structure of the new democracy was not yet settled. The four groups which had protested the negotiated settlement's proposal on the timing of the presidential election had not remained still during this period. In September, FIDESZ and SZDSZ began a movement to place the question of the timing of elections before voters in a national referendum. In the spring the parliament had approved new legislation requiring it to consider a referendum if 50,000 voters requested one and to implement a referendum if 100,000 voters requested one. The petition campaign was successful, ultimately gathering 200,000 signatures. The organizers requested that four questions be put before the voters: delaying the election of the president until after free parliamentary elections, removing party organizations from work places, disbanding Workers' Guards, and requiring a complete accounting of party assets. While the petition drive was under way, the National Assembly passed legislation banning party organizations from work places and dissolving the Workers' Guards. The new law on parties also required an accounting of party assets.

Due to the success of the petition drive, the National Assembly was forced to implement the referendum. It established the date for the vote for November 26, the date that it had originally set

for the presidential election itself. In enacting legislation for the referendum, parliament added to the wording on the question of the presidency a qualification saying that a vote to delay the election would be support for election of the president by the National Assembly rather than directly by the population. Despite these maneuvers and questions about the accuracy of the voter registration process, the vote went ahead on November 26.¹⁰⁸

The weeks preceding the vote took on the character of a true electoral campaign. The four parties organizing the call for the referendum—SZDSZ, FIDESZ, the Smallholders, and the Social Democrats—campaigning for passage of the proposals. The parties spent heavily on publicity, with posters and leaflets flooding Budapest and the countryside. The publicity had the professional quality of Western political campaigns and set standards for the upcoming elections. The wording of the referendum gave these groups an easy campaign slogan—"Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes." In contrast the MSZP took the opposite position, urging no votes on the questions. The MDF, which had signed the three-sided agreement supporting early presidential elections, took the position that the vote was unnecessary and it urged a boycott. The law governing elections stipulated that the results were not valid if less than 50 percent of voters cast legal ballots. Thus, the MDF position had the consequence of arguing for the same result as the MSZP but without openly allying with the party.

Two days after the referendum, the National Election Committee announced that 58 percent of eligible voters had taken part in the election. The turnout exceeded expectations of many analysts who had predicted that a lack of interest in the vote combined with the call to boycott might lead to less than 50 percent turnout. By the narrowest of margins on the question of the timing of the presidential election, the "yes" side was victorious. They had managed to gain 50.1 percent of the vote (a margin of slightly more than 6,000 votes). On the other three questions, the yes vote was around 95 percent. This vote settled the final structure of the rules of transition in Hungary. There would be no immediate possibility of Pozsgay gaining the presidency and having a position to maintain party power.¹⁰⁹

With these results, the movements for political reform had realized their goals of the reform of political institutions in Hungary. The only goal remaining was the holding of multiparty parliamentary elections. In December the National Assembly voted to dissolve itself by March and the acting

Head of State Mátyás Szűrös set March 25 for the first round of voting. The transformation of the political movement organizations into political parties was now virtually complete. Of course, these organizations had been engaging in actions with the character of political parties for over a year. For the four parties supporting the referendum, the campaigns for signatures and later for the vote itself had increasingly brought them into activities of political parties.

Thus the year 1989 was the transition year for the political movements. They began the year with organizations built during the movement period but already evolving toward electoral goals. This ambiguity was reflected in the goals of the organizations during the year. The chief goals were the creation of the legality of a constitutional democracy and multiparty parliamentary elections. Toward these goals the organizations were able to cooperate for most of the year, in demonstrations and in negotiations. Yet the organizations also clearly articulated goals of becoming electoral parties. As the framework of change became increasingly clear, the competition among the parties increased and their actions began to take on an electoral character. By autumn, the institutional and organizational goals had become fused and the movement period was largely finished. The parliamentary campaign of the early months of 1990 cemented the transformation of the movement organizations into political parties.

Conclusion

In the presentation of the political movement perspective at the beginning of the paper, three analytical dimensions were presented. These dimensions—ideology, organization, and environment—provided the underlying framework for the historical analysis of the emergence of new political parties in Hungary. The account traced the development of ideology and organization in dynamic interaction with the changing political environment. It is useful to summarize the main points of this development.

The two main opposition movements analyzed, SZDSZ and MDF, formed out of pre-existing interpersonal and professional networks. These networks left each movement with a distinct ideological legacy and with potential allies and competitors. The ideological framework and the potential for allies in turn shaped the nature of the organization created. The opportunities for action of these

organizations were in turn influenced by the actions of the communist regime and the perceptions of opportunities by the activists themselves.

The political environment which set the stage for the development of these movements was one of monopoly of social and political institutions by the party, the MSZMP. Behind the party was Soviet hegemony which placed limits on the actions which the party could undertake. Not only was this hegemony a legacy of the post-War period in Hungary, but it had been reinforced by the Red Army in 1956. In the re-consolidation of communism in the 1960s, attention to the standard of living of the country became particularly important and economic reform was experimented with. In the cultural realm, some tolerance was permitted if openly political messages were avoided. Discussion of the role of the Soviets and the events of 1956 were clearly controlled. As with other communist governments, attempts to organize independent associations were not tolerated. The Hungarian regime used repression when necessary to disrupt cultural activities with undesired political content or more openly political activities. Still, by the standards of neighboring countries the Hungarians were somewhat mild in their use of repression. This was the political environment for cultural circles in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The SZDSZ emerged during a process of development of interpersonal and professional networks. Central to these networks were intellectuals—philosophers, historians, and social scientists—who had gone through a process of critical evaluation of Marxism and the nature of "actually existing socialism." These ideological themes were inherently political and subjected these circles to official harassment. As a result of this harassment and more general philosophical positions, these circles emphasized human rights and democratic freedoms and took some political actions in support of these positions. These actions were mostly petition and letter writing campaigns, as well as cultural activities like flat seminars and samizdat publications. These actions were all illegal or politically sensitive and brought the circles continual harassment from authorities.

A change in the international environment was important in expanding the activities of the democratic opposition. The growth of Solidarity provided an important stimulus to the democratic opposition to engage in more forceful advocacy of its human and cultural rights. The main goal was the creation of a legal sphere in which these intellectual and cultural activities could be undertaken.

While there were some small demonstrations in favor of these goals and in support of Solidarity, the main activity was the creation of a sphere of independent publication. The group of editors and contributors to the samizdat journals *Beszélő* and *Hírmondó* came to provide the organizational locus for these circles. Since both publications were illegal, these informal organizations were subject to harassment and limited in their ability to mobilize resources.

During 1987, the *Beszélő* group published a radical reform program which called upon the party and state to implement dramatic reforms and create a "Social Contract" with society. Its call for economic reforms included market creation and private property rights, showing the influence of the ideas of the reform economists. Demands for political reforms argued for limits on party and state power and the creation of a legal order in which the rights of citizens were protected and the rights of the party limited. The program called on society to make demands and engage in spontaneous actions demanding rights. Most of these themes could be traced back to earlier themes of the democratic opposition circles.

The interpersonal networks from which MDF emerged centered on the populist writers and poets who published in official, though not mainstream, journals and were active in the MISZ. These populist cultural circles had ideologies which emphasized the importance of national culture and identity. They held communists responsible for promoting a system which did not give sufficient place to the historical traditions of the Hungarian nation, thereby causing crises in culture and identity. The populists emphasized the importance of the Hungarian minorities outside of the country's borders, particularly the minority in Transylvania. They often criticized the role of the communists in the 1956 Revolution and sought to pay tribute to the events and heroes of 1956. Consistent with these themes, the populists had three main political goals: an increase in freedom of speech, public debate on the fate of Hungarian minorities, and a re-evaluation of 1956.

The organizational framework for the populists was largely based on informal interpersonal networks. The populist writers and poets had been involved in common cultural activities and events for many years. They also participated together in the writers' association, MISZ. During 1986, the struggles between the leadership of MISZ and the cultural authorities over the control of the organization

helped to create an identity and experience that shaped the future political actions of the populists. This organizational framework developed during the autumn of 1987 and early months of 1988 as the populists made alliances with other groups and crystallized as the MDF organization.

Based upon the existing organizational network provided by MISZ, and connections previously established during the term of Imre Pozsgay as Minister of Culture and Education, the populist circle was able to form an alliance with the emerging reformers within the party leadership. This alliance benefitted both groups. It gave Pozsgay and his reform colleagues popular support in the internal MSZMP struggle, while it provided the populists with protection from repression and access to the organizational resources of the HNF headed by Pozsgay. The moderate stance of the populists was also further reinforced by the alliance. With access to official resources (publications, the MISZ), they were critical of the regime but limited direct attacks on the system. Historians who worked on subjects closely related to questions of national culture also joined in the alliance.

The ideology which emerged from the early MDF was one of participation with authorities as partners. The organization which developed was an open forum for discussion of issues not before allowed to be publicly discussed and a place where alternative reform programs could be presented. Reflecting the interests of the populists, the forum emphasized responsibility for the Hungarian nation and sought an independent press. The early activities of MDF reflected this ideology and organization: discussion meetings at which the topics of political reform and the Hungarian minority were the focus. Some members of the MDF also cooperated with members from the democratic opposition circle in a protest letter about the Romanian regime.

Both the the alliance between populists and reform Communists which led to formation of MDF and the more radical demands of the democratic opposition circle were responses to the changing political environment. In the years leading up to and including 1986-87, the long-term crisis of the Hungarian economy became acute. As a result, the subject of reform became central both within the MSZMP and among intellectual circles. The repeated failure of the party to sustain economic reform led to eroding legitimacy within the party and further crisis. The exigency of change was heightened by the reform campaigns of Mikhail Gorbachev. Social pressures also increased during this period as peace and

environmental movements formed and engaged in demonstrations and intellectuals pressured the party and the state to undertake radical reforms.

The formation of MDF had an impact on the political environment in turn. Its open discussion meetings in early 1988 involved hundreds of people in the movement and its ability to create an informal organization provided a signal to other groups that such organizations could be formed. The response was an explosion of organizational growth in the months that followed. Interest representation organizations and more general reform organizations were formed (TDDSZ, FIDESZ, Openness Club, New March Front). The authorities responded in ambiguous fashion to these new organizations, sometimes harassing and attempting to disrupt their meetings and activities and other times speaking of dialogue and cooperation.

The response of the democratic opposition was to found a somewhat more formal organization—the Network of Free Initiatives. The Network was an attempt to bring a broad alliance to many of the new independent organizations. While one of its goals was coordination as such, many of its other goals were the political and economic demands that had been articulated in "Social Contract." Moreover, the network of activists who were active in *Beszélő* and *Hírmondó* were central to the organization of the Network. In a sense, the network was their first attempt to establish an organization that could compete with the MDF. During these months, the Network took more radical actions, including organizing the unofficial March 15 demonstration and a demonstration commemorating Imre Nagy and the 1956 martyrs, which was repressed by police. It also participated with a number of organizations, notably the MDF, in organizing a large protest of Romanian regime policy.

The broad development of independent groups combined with the ongoing economic crisis to create internal and external pressures on the party to change leadership and undertake radical reforms. In May 1988, János Kádár was replaced as party leader and reformers gained significant power in leadership. The party began to talk about constitutional revisions that would legalize organizations and other basic rights. Pozsgay gained supervision of media after these changes and publicity for the growing movement activities began to increase.

In response, the existing informal organizations all became increasingly formal. First, FIDESZ and MDF developed formal charters and statements. They also began to acknowledge that they would run candidates in the 1990 parliamentary elections. In the last months of 1988, a number of the historical political parties announced their re-creation. In this increasingly competitive organizational environment, the Network became a more formal organization, SZDSZ, with its leadership drawn from the activists of *Beszélő* and *Hírmondó*.

As formal organizations, MDF and SZDSZ continued to promote goals which they had promoted as informal organizations. MDF spoke of the Hungarian minority and the importance of nation, while SZDSZ emphasized political and civil rights. They also adopted new themes: SZDSZ talked of the Hungarian minorities, MDF of constitutional and legal reform. As opposition to the Danube project grew, all organizations adopted the environmental issue. With parliamentary elections on the horizon, the organizations also spoke about the need to establish a multiparty system.

In the spring of 1989 the competing organizations agreed to form an alliance to prepare for negotiations with the MSZMP. The resulting Opposition Roundtable (EKA) proved decisive in altering the political environment. The unified strength of the EKA put increased pressure on the party. Within the party, the growth of reform circles among activists increased the pressure on the party to reform itself and national political institutions. The power of reform forces was symbolized by the huge demonstration to honor Imre Nagy and his associates in June. In this political context, the regime could try to hold on to its power by being difficult in negotiations, but the tide of reform had triumphed. During the late summer of 1989, the rules of democratic transition were settled between the EKA and the party. On almost all points, the goals of the opposition political movements were realized. The opposition organizations did ultimately split over the one issue on which the party and the EKA held sharp disagreements, the timing of the presidential election. The MDF and its conservative allies took the side of the party, while SZDSZ and FIDESZ led a group of organizations which opposed the party. In the midst of the anti-Communist fever which swept Eastern Europe in autumn 1989, the party was defeated on this last issue, and the stage was set for free parliamentary elections in 1990. This final change in

the political environment helped seal the ideological and organizational transformation of political movement organizations.

While the analytic framework of the paper focuses upon the broad dimensions of ideology, organization, and environment, there are several detailed issues raised in the the movements literature which have implications for analyzing the Hungarian developments. These issues include the importance of pre-existing groups and networks, the nature of recruitment, the role of grievances in movements, the dependence of movement organizations on outsiders, and the forces determining change in goals and organizational structure.

One of the central themes in contemporary movements literature is the importance of pre-existing group structure in the mobilization process. Following Oberschall, both Tilly and McAdam stress the role of pre-existing groups. Snow and his colleagues emphasize the importance of pre-existing interpersonal networks.¹¹⁰ The interpersonal links of such groups play a role in creating and maintaining ideology by providing common interests and identity. They further aid in recruitment by facilitating communication and solidary sentiments which bind participants to each other. A common culture of participation is also an encouragement to action.

Pre-existing group structures were central in the process of movement formation in the Hungarian political opposition. The democratic opposition emerged from a loosely structured group producing and distributing illegal publications and organizing flat seminars in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Reflecting members' origins in philosophical, historical, and social scientific disciplines, the preoccupations of the group focused on questions like the meaning of Marxism and nature of actually existing socialism. The inherent political nature of these questions in a communist state brought the group into political conflict with the regime from an early date. Activists from this group continued to be involved in other actions, like demonstrations and protest letters, during the early and middle years of the 1980s. It was many of these same activists who in 1988 played founding roles in the Network of Free Initiatives and later were central in the formation of SZDSZ.

This long-standing group structure created a milieu in which shared goals of human and democratic rights and political change developed. The repression faced by this group also worked to increase

the strength of personal ties and common identity, even in the face of ideological disagreements. The historical origins of SZDSZ clearly demonstrate the importance of pre-existing group structures in shaping movement mobilization by providing common identity, solidary sentiments, and a basis for recruitment.

The experience of MDF also shows the importance of pre-existing group structures. In addition to common participation in cultural events, there were long-standing interpersonal networks among the populist writers, poets, and artists. These networks shared a common ideological focus which emphasized the importance of national culture and identity. This ideology was critical of communism, particularly its urban and international dimensions which were viewed as opposed to peasant cultural traditions of Hungary.

An important shared experience for these writers and poets was their participation in the writers' association, MISZ. This participation provided them with access to resources and a forum in which they could engage in criticism of regime policies. Many of the radical activists in MISZ were pivotal in the formation of the MDF in the fall and winter of 1987-1988. A core group of populist writers and poets remained active in top leadership positions as MDF grew and established itself. The participation of the populists in official cultural organizations helped promote the development of relations with reformers within the regime. Particularly important were the relations developed with Imre Pozsgay, when he was Minister of Culture and Education in the early 1980s. The relation between Pozsgay and the populists helped provide protection for MDF in its early period of organization. The culture of official relations and alliances also was reflected in MDF ideology, which emphasized cooperation and collaboration with authorities.

Other movement organizations which emerged during the transition also reveal the importance of pre-existing networks and organizational bases. The most obvious example is FIDESZ, which was formed a strong network of student activists in the István Bibó College of the Budapest Law Faculty. This group shared many common experiences in the early 1980s, including a common living situation in the college. The solidary ties and common identity helped FIDESZ activists stand firm in the face of harassment by authorities in the early days of their organization.

In the communist political system where attempts at independent association were subject to harassment and repression, the role of pre-existing interpersonal networks was particularly important. Not only did they provide common identities and interests, but the solidary incentives arising from interpersonal relations were very strong in promoting trust and action. In the early days of the Hungarian opposition political movement, recruitment was strongly influenced by pre-existing ties. In the absence of publicity and openness about movement activities, recruitment occurred through these pre-existing networks. Person-to-person communication played the central role in mobilizing support.

As movement organizations gained strength and repression loosened, more open forms of recruitment could be used, though access to the official media continued to be restricted. In this changed environment, ideological appeals came to play a large role in recruitment. Snow emphasizes that the dynamic adjustment of a movement's "frame" or ideology toward potential supporters, a process which he and his colleagues call frame alignment, is an important part of the mobilization process.¹¹¹ While such processes of adjustment took place throughout the history of the opposition movement, they became most important during the period of formalization of movement organizations, when creation of local chapters and expansion of membership were major goals of movement organizations. These attempts to align organization frames with those of potential supporters can be seen in the widening of proclaimed organizational goals and new emphases in organizational ideology. The adoption of the environmental issue, i.e., opposition to the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros water project, by all organizations reflected such framing. Each organization also began to broaden its appeals: SZDSZ spoke more often of problems of the Hungarian minority, MDF of common links with Europe.

Another important issue is the role which grievances play in the mobilization process. Some resource mobilization theorists suggest that grievances do not play a central role in the origins of social movements. In particular, McCarthy and Zald take such a view and note that grievances and discontent may even be shaped by issue entrepreneurs and organizations.¹¹² Other analysts hold that grievances play an important role in changing the perception of movement participants. Turner argues that movements have arisen or gained strength directly in response to grievance-producing events.¹¹³ It has also been noted that a central element of movements is the subjective perception of objective social

conditions. In fact, McAdam maintains that the decisive event in the political process of insurgency is "cognitive liberation," the experience of changing political conditions which communicates prospects for success of collective action.¹¹⁴

The Hungarian events tend to support the positions of Turner and McAdam, though not unequivocally. The grievances—censorship and repression, party monopoly of culture and social life, failure by the Hungarian regime to aggressively support the cause of Hungarian minorities—which the democratic opposition and the populist circles expressed were long-standing and did not dramatically change prior to their mobilization. However, the deepening economic crisis increasingly came to be linked with these prior grievances. Economic crisis increased intellectual discontent with the regime and, more importantly, increased uncertainty and divisions within the regime. In this sense, grievances did play an important role in the mobilization process, though most of the impact was probably indirect rather than direct.

It also seems that there was an increasing process of cognitive liberation in Hungary as the opposition circles took note of the growing intellectual discontent and divisions within the regime. While this liberation continued throughout the dynamics of the transformation process, its decisive growth occurred in the aftermath of the 1987 Lakitelek meeting. The symbolic importance of a leading party reformer, Pozsgay, meeting with activists who had been critical of regime policy (some even subjected to restrictions) seems to have played an important part in signaling the possibilities for movement activities. In the six months following Lakitelek, the main movement organizations came out into the public and the crisis within the party over succession of Kádár became deeper.

Another issue of importance in the movement literature is the dependence of mobilization on outsiders. There are two varieties of the dependence argument: one focuses on resources, the other on alliances. The resource variety emphasizes that movements depend upon external support for the provision of crucial resources. Jenkins and Perrow note the importance of an injection of outside resources to mobilization, helping to launch mobilizations and providing leadership.¹¹⁵ McCarthy and Zald develop this argument by suggesting that social movement organizations must devote much time and

energy to converting nonadherents into adherents, those who believe in the goals of the organization, and adherents into constituents, those who provide resources to the organization.¹¹⁶

The second variety of external dependence places emphasis on the alliances into which movement organizations enter. Tilly's focus on contention for membership in a polity, i.e., routine rights of access to government, is most appropriate in this regard.¹¹⁷ He suggests that successful entrance for nonmembers often depends upon coalition with members. In these coalitions, members who cannot find coalition partners within the polity benefit from resources mobilized by nonmembers. For the challengers seeking entry, the coalition is likely to reduce violence directed at it. Jenkins and Perrow also emphasize the importance of coalition partners who are able to apply leverage on government.¹¹⁸

Reliance on external resources does seem to have played a part in the launching of the MDF organization. The resources provided by Pozsgay through the People's Patriotic Front (HNF)—organizational support and access to media—did play a role in helping MDF. However, this support should not be overemphasized. The resources provided MDF were not substantial and external support was not necessary for development of its leadership. The significant component in this support seems to have been an alliance between the populists and the reformers within the party—the former seeking polity membership and the latter being members looking for partners. It is important to note that SZDSZ received no outside support in this manner.¹¹⁹

The formation of a coalition therefore seems to be the most salient issue of outside dependence. The history of populist opposition activities prior to the origins of MDF suggests that this group might not have undertaken formation of an organization without the decisive protection provided by the coalition with the party reformers. At the same time, the reformers increased their power within the party in the aftermath of the coalition. The coalition was not the only factor leading to this increased power but it was an important element. Moreover, the coalition was decisive in altering the perception of organizing opportunities within Hungarian politics. Once the alliance began to be formed other groups began to openly organize themselves.

A final analytical issue of importance is the transformation of the goals and structure of movement organizations. Zald and Ash emphasize the importance of a changing environment to changes in

organizational goals and internal arrangements.¹²⁰ One dimension of the environment which they argue is important to goal change is changing public sentiments toward the organization. Organizational goals and structures may change in attempts to maintain membership in the face of social change. They also argue that from the standpoint of the social movement organization another dimension of the environment is competing organizations. Competition for support can require changes in goals and tactics. Similarly, coalition and merger may also lead to changes in goals and other organizational transformations. Finally, success or failure at achieving goals may itself lead to transformation. In particular, they argue that successful achievement of goals requires that an organization either adopt new goals or go out of existence.

These forces were at work on the Hungarian political movement organizations. As MDF and SZDSZ moved from small, informal groups to expanding, formal organizations, they began to open their ideologies to broader goals. While these changes might have been a result of the impact of previous recruitment, the more likely explanation is that the organizations sought to expand their public appeal by incorporating other popular goals emerging in the movement (again the environmental issue being the most obvious). These changes took place within a competitive process in which each organization sought to improve its strength vis-a-vis each other as well as the regime.

The transformation of the political movement organizations into political parties must also be seen in this context. The original aims of populist and democratic opposition groups expanded between 1985 and 1989 as earlier goals were realized and new opportunities emerged. Though there may have been hopes and desires for the opportunity to become political parties in 1985, there was little realistic opportunity. Thus, there were no such goals. By 1986 and 1987 the issue of free, multiparty elections was being raised but no group was seeking the formation of a political party. As the goals of freedoms of speech, assembly, and association, creation of a legal order, and a multiparty system were progressively realized during 1988 and 1989, the realistic possibility of forming political parties emerged. For MDF, SZDSZ, and FIDESZ, there was no crisis of goal transformation with the realization of earlier goals. Instead, they adopted electoral goals and began the transformation of political movement organizations into political parties.

The events in Hungary show that political movements develop out of preexisting networks which provide the incipient movements with ideology and informal organization. However, the growth and development of such movements depends on environment factors which promote and sustain organization. In Hungary, the long-run crisis of the economy was particularly important in creating pressure on the regime. From international trade and finance partners there were pressures to avoid harsh repression. Within the regime itself there was increasing pressure for reform. These internal party pressures both created allies for opposition movements, particularly the moderate opposition, and provided signals that reform had some possibility.

Once alliance between reformers and part of the opposition had been created, the regime began to lose control over the political environment. The result was an increase in independent organizations and protest activity which further undermined regime power, both against its opponents and against the reformers within its own ranks. The lesson of the Hungarian transformation appears to be that while opposition political movements may not be strong enough to transform an authoritarian regime, in the context of economic and political crisis they are strong enough to create the conditions under which reformers will come to power. The reform regime then finds it difficult to maintain power in the face of organized movements and the possibilities of further transformation are enhanced.

This paper has shown the dynamic interplay through which the origin and transformation of opposition political movements can influence regime change and bring about realization of the goals of these movements.

¹ The six parties and the number of their elected representatives: Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*, MDF), 164; Alliance of Free Democrats (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége*, SZDSZ), 92; Independent Smallholder's Party (*Független Kisgazda, Földmunkás és Polgári Párt*, FKGP), 44; Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt*, MSZP), 33; Federation of Free Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*, FIDESZ), 21; and Christian Democratic People's Party (*Kereszténydemokrata Nép Párt*, KDNP), 21. Eleven were elected as independents or other common nominees. See György Szoboszlai, "Választási Rendszer és Politikai Tagoltság" (Electoral System and Political Structure), pp. 12-26 in Szoboszlai, ed., *Parlamenti Választások 1990* (Parliamentary Elections 1990), Budapest: MTA Társadalomtudományi Intézet, 1990.

The Hungarian electoral law was complicated. There were three forms of election of parliamentary representatives: 176 elected from individual constituencies; 152 elected from county (and Budapest city) party lists; and 58 elected from national party lists. Nomination for an individual constituency required collecting 750 signatures in the electoral district. Elections for individual constituencies were held in two rounds. Election in the first round required more than fifty percent. If no one received such a majority, candidates receiving more than twenty five percent of the vote advanced to a second round in which a plurality was sufficient for election. Only registered parties could create a county list and only if they ran candidates in one-quarter of the constituencies in the county. Parties could create national lists if they were able to stand 7 county lists. In the first round, voters cast ballots for both an individual candidate and a county party list. Final distribution of national and county lists depended on other factors, but parties not receiving a minimum of four percent did not gain parliamentary representation. For details, see György Szoboszlai, "Political Transition and Constitutional Changes," pp. 195-212 in Szoboszlai, ed., *Democracy and Political Transformation*, Budapest: Hungarian Political Science Association, 1991.

² This definition is synthesized from my reading of several sources. In particular, see Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change," *Social Forces* 44(1966):327-341; Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982; J. Craig Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements," pp. 81-153 in Samuel L. Long, ed., *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, New York: Plenum: 1981.

This definition is also close to the discussion presented by Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, John Keane and Paul Mier, eds., London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989.

³ Though the elements differ slightly, Oberschall presents a similar definition of ideology. Snow and his colleagues also discuss similar elements but they do not refer this constellation as ideology, rather as a "frame." See Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973; David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review*, 51(1986):464-481.

On the dynamic nature of ideology, as constructed by participants during and after movement activities, see David A. Snow, Louis A. Zurcher, and Sheldon Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment," *American Sociological Review* 45(1980):787-801.

⁴ See Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*; Jean Cohen, "Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements," *Social Research* 52(1985):663-716.

⁵ See Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, chapter 5.

⁶ There is little agreement on what constitutes resources. For McCarthy and Zald the concept includes legitimacy, money, facilities, and labor. Tilly argues that it is best to think of factors of production: land, capital, labor, and (perhaps) technical expertise. McAdam identifies members, solidary incentives, communication, and leaders. Property, money, and labor (members) seem to be the essential resources. While symbolic resources are clearly important, they seem to be best considered an element of ideology. See John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Par-

tial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82(1977):1212-1241; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*.

⁷ John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory;" Zald and McCarthy, "Social Movement Industries: Competition and Cooperation Among Movement Organizations," *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 3(1980):1-20.

⁸ Oberschall did not explicitly define the environment as a key concept, but he did note many of its important effects on collective behavior: social control, focal points, shifting alliances and coalitions, the role of armed forces, and the international context (particularly intervention). Tilly emphasizes the importance of repression (and its opposite, facilitation) in influencing the costs of action, noting the special role of the state in the process. He also stresses the importance of alliances for collective action. McAdam explicitly identifies the environment as one of the main determinants of action. To him it provides opportunities and constraints for action. See Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*.

⁹ McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*.

¹⁰ On this history, see Bill Lomax, "From Intellectual Theory to Samizdat Practice," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, 3(No. 2, 1979):14-16; Lomax, "The Rise of the Democratic Opposition," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, 5(No. 3-4, 1982):2-7.

¹¹ Bill Lomax, "A Chronology of Political and Intellectual Opposition Under the Kádár Regime: 1956-1978," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, 3(No. 3, 1979):15-18; Lomax, "The Rise of the Democratic Opposition."

¹² On the 1977 letter, see Lomax, "The Rise of the Democratic Opposition." In 1979 there was actually some confusion and two letters circulated with some overlapping support. For the text of the 1979 letters and the initial signatories, see "Nyílt Levél a Charta 77 Aláíróihoz" ("Open Letter to the Charter 77 Signatories"), *Magyar Füzetek* (Hungarian Notebooks) No. 5(1979):137-144.

¹³ Lomax, "The Rise of the Democratic Opposition." A selection of articles from *Hírmondó and AB: Tájékoztató* (Information Bulletin) is collected in, *Szamizdat '81-89*, Budapest: AB-Beszélő, 1990.

¹⁴ See "Publishing Independently in Hungary: An Interview with Gábor Demszky," *Uncaptive Minds* 1(No. 2, 1988):40-42.

¹⁵ On the influence of Michnik, see Lomax, "A Chronology of Political and Intellectual Opposition Under the Kádár Regime." On contact between Solidarity and the Hungarian democratic opposition and the influence of the former on the latter, see Anna Pomian, "KOR's Contacts with Other Bloc Countries: b. Contact with the Hungarian Opposition," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Polish Independent Press Review/11, 17 September 1986. For Demszky's own views, see "The Opposition in Hungary," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Polish Independent Press Review/5, 1986. On the August 1982 demonstration in Budapest in support of Solidarity, see "Solidarity demonstration in Budapest," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, 5(no. 5-6 1982):38.

¹⁶ Lomax, "The Rise of the Democratic Opposition."

¹⁷ For details, see George Schöpflin, "Opposition and Para-Opposition: Critical Currents in Hungary, 1968-78," pp. 142-187 in Rudolf Tóké, ed., *Opposition in Eastern Europe*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

¹⁸ Judith Pataki, "Writers and Regime Clash at Congress," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/12, item 8, 23 December 1986.

¹⁹ This was not the first political difficulty for the periodical. Its editor and deputy were removed in the 1970s and new editors survived calls for resignation in 1982. In both cases, publication of politically sensitive articles were the source of difficulty. See Judith Pataki, "Censorship Tightens as 30th Anniversary of the 1956 Revolution Approaches," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/9, item 1, 29 August 1986.

²⁰ For more details on these events, see, Judith Pataki, "Writers and Regime Clash at Congress," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/12, item 8, 23 December 1986; Kevin Devlin, "Hungarian Writers Seeking Rights, Not Challenging Regime, Says Konrad," *Radio Free Europe*

Research, Hungarian Situation Report/12, item 9, 23 December 1986; Judith Pataki and Alfred Reisch, "Party Attempts to Split Writers' Union," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/2, item 2, 25 February 1987; Slobodan Stankovic, "Yugoslav Daily Discusses Literary Conflicts in Hungary," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/2, item 3, 25 February 1987; Pataki and Reisch, "Writers' Union Remains Under Fire," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/2, item 4, 25 February 1987; and Pataki, "The HSWP and the Writers' Union Reach a Compromise," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/4, item 7, 18 May 1987.

²¹ Steven Koppany, "Hungarian Opposition Groups Hold Meeting to Discuss Nation's Future," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/24, 13 February 1986; György Krassó, "The Monor Discussion," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* 8(No. 2, 1986):30-31.

²² Koppany, "Hungarian Opposition Groups Hold Meeting to Discuss Nation's Future;" Krassó, "The Monor Discussion." Kis's essay at Monor is reprinted as "On Our Limitations and Possibilities," in János Kis, *Politics in Hungary: For a Democratic Alternative*, Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs, 1989.

²³ Vladimir V. Kusin, "East European Dissidents' Appeal on Hungarian Revolution Anniversary," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/151, 28 October 1986.

²⁴ Pataki, "Censorship Tightens as 30th Anniversary of the 1956 Revolution Approaches."

²⁵ Bill Lomax, "Samizdat Under Siege," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* 6(No. 1-2, 1983):29-31; Lomax, "Police Harassment of Samizdat Activists," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* 5(No. 5-6, 1982):37-38; Lomax, "Samizdat Publisher Sentenced," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* 7(No. 1, 1984):26; Lomax, "Harassment of Opposition Intensifies," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* 7(No. 1, 1984):27-28.

²⁶ Steven Koppany, "The Police Flex Their Muscles," *Radio Free Europe Report*, Hungarian Situation Report/5, item 3, 28 April 1986.

²⁷ J.R., "Secret Politburo Report on Opposition Published," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/7, item 6, 22 July 1987.

²⁸ Stephen Koppany, "Hungary Already Concerned About Prospects for Its 1986-1990 Plan," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/60, 24 April 1986; Karoly Okolicsanyi, "Attempt to Freeze Wages in Response to Worsening Economic Indicators," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/13, 23 December 1986; Okolicsanyi, "Poor Foreign Trade Performance in 1986," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/13, 23 December 1986.

²⁹ Stephen Koppany, "HSWP Concerned About Signs of Eroding Support," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/4, item 1, 25 March 1986.

³⁰ Alfred Reisch, "Gorbachev in Hungary: a. The Kadar-Gorbachev Talks," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/7, item 1, 11 July 1986; Elizabeth Teague, "Gorbachev in Hungary: b. Gorbachev Addresses the Hungarian Workers," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/7, item 2, 11 July 1986; Vladimir V. Kusin, "Gorbachev in Hungary: c. Gorbachev, Hungary, and the Warsaw Pact Meeting," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/7, item 3, 11 July 1986.

³¹ Kusin does note that dissident groups exceeded the reformist framework in that they pressed for faster and more profound transformations, as well as demanded an evolution toward a noncommunist ideology, whether nationalism, liberalism, democratic socialism, or religion. See, Vladimir V. Kusin, "Gorbachev's Impact on Eastern Europe After Three Years," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/47, 17 March 1988.

³² Edith Markos, "The HSWP Riddle: How to Create 'Party Democracy'," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/1, item 1, 3 January 1988.

³³ Alfred Reisch, "Trade Unions Brace Themselves for Lively 25th Congress," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/3, item 1, 25 February 1986; Reisch, "25th Trade Union Congress: Restlessness Below, Platitudes from the Top," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/37, 12 March 1986.

³⁴ Edith Markos, "Youth Congress Offers No Real Remedies to Youth Problems," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/7, 11 July 1986.

- ³⁵ Pozsgay met with László Antal, director of the Research Institute of the Finance Ministry; Mihály Bihari, a political scientist at Eötvös University in Budapest; Martón Tardos, an economist at the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Science; and two economists in the Finance Research Institute, László Lengyel and György Matolcsy. For the details of the history of *Fordulat és Reform*, see László Lengyel, "Adalékok a Fordulat és Reform Történetéhez" (Contributions to the History of Turn About and Reform), *Medvetánc*, 1987(Number 2):131-163.
- ³⁶ See "Fordulat és Reform" (Turn About and Reform), *Medvetánc*, No.2(1987):5-45; "Háttér tanulmányok" (Background Studies), *Medvetánc*, No.2(1987):47-129; Karoly Okolicsanyi, "Unpublished Economic Report Proposes New Reform," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/4, item 3, 18 May 1987; Judith Pataki, "Unpublished Hungarian Report Proposes Media Reform," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/115, 10 July 1987. The background report on media appeared separately as "Javaslat a nyilvánosság reformjára" (Proposal for the Reform of Publicity), *Hírmondó*, No. 24(March-June 1987); an English version is "Proposal for the Reform of the Public Sphere," *East European Reporter*, 3(No. 1, 1987):58-61.
- ³⁷ Karoly Okolicsanyi, "Major Economic Report Published in a Revised Form," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/138, 10 August 1987.
- ³⁸ Alfred Reisch, "The March 15 Demonstrations: The First Signs of Spring?" *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/3, item 1, 3 April 1987.
- ³⁹ Kevin Devlin, "Hungarian Writers Seeking Rights, Not Challenging Regime, Says Konrad."
- ⁴⁰ Bill Lomax, "The Hungarian Peace Movement," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, 5(No. 5-6, 1982):35-36; Lomax, "The Dialogue Breaks Down," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, 7(No. 1, 1984):23-25.
- ⁴¹ Reported in Vladimir Sobell, "The Ecological Crisis in Eastern Europe," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/5, 20 January 1988. Another report said that 10,000 persons signed; see Huberus Knabe, "Unusual Methods'—Hungary's Growing Environmental Problems," *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, 9(No. 2, 1987):45-47.
- ⁴² Herbert Reed, "Hungarian 'Greens' Petition Austrian Parliament," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/96, 11 July 1986; Sobell, "The Ecological Crisis in Eastern Europe."
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- ⁴⁴ "It is Not Hopeless If You Demand: An Interview with Miklós Haraszti," *Uncaptive Minds* 1(No. 1, 1988):15-19.
- ⁴⁵ "Remarks on Beszélő's 'Social Contract'," *Uncaptive Minds* 1(No. 1, 1988):9.
- ⁴⁶ "There's More to Politics Than Human Rights: An Interview with Gáspár Miklós Tamás," *Uncaptive Minds* 1(No. 1, 1988):10-14.
- ⁴⁷ The text is presented in "The Future of Hungary—A Call for Action," *East European Reporter* 3(No. 2, 1987)49-51; see also, Alfred Reisch, "Open Letter to Parliament Calls for Far-Reaching Political Reform," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/11, item 4, 3 October 1987.
- ⁴⁸ Reisch, "Open Letter to Parliament Calls for Far-Reaching Political Reforms."
- ⁴⁹ *Lakitelek 1987: A Magyarország Esélyei* (Prospects of the Hungarian People), Budapest: Antológia-Püski Kiadó, 1991; Judith Pataki, "Democratic Forum Proposed by Populist Writers and Other Intellectuals," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/13, item 2, 28 November 1987.
- ⁵⁰ *Lakitelek 1987*; Alfred Reisch, "PPF Daily Publishes Statement of Hungarian Democratic Forum," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/13, item 3, 28 November 1987.
- ⁵¹ As Minister, Pozsgay had supervision of cultural organizations, including the MISZ. It was during this period that free elections were introduced into that organization.
- ⁵² Pataki, "Democratic Forum Proposed by Populist Writers and Other Intellectuals;" Reisch, "PPF Daily Publishes Statement of Hungarian Democratic Forum."
- ⁵³ Alfred Reisch, "Hungarian Media Fails to Publish Appeal for Political Reform," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/16, 10 February 1988.

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- 57 Socor, "Independent Groups in Eastern Europe Urge Support for People of Romania;" Reisch, "Intellectuals Express Solidarity with Romanian People."
- 58 Alfred Reisch, "The Democratic Forum Issues Statement on Magyar Minorities," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/3, item 5, 21 March 1988.
- 59 Edith Markos, "First Independent Hungarian Labor Union Established," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/6, item 4, 19 May 1988; Markos, "Scientific Researchers Press for an Independent Trade Union," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/4, item 7, 30 March 1988; see also, Gábor Demszky, "Initiatives for Hungary," *East European Reporter*, 3(No. 3, 1988):49-51.
- 60 Edith Markos, "Attempt to Set Up Club To Promote Freedom of Publishing," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/13, item 5, 18 August 1988.
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- 63 Judith Pataki, "Independent Political Groups Mushroom," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/6, item 3, 19 May 1988.
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- 77 Alfred Reisch, "Draft Laws on Assembly and Association Severely Criticized," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/17, item 1, 7 November 1988.
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- 79 "Speeches from the March 15 Demonstration," *Uncaptive Minds* 1(No. 2, 1988):43; Edith Markos, "March 15 Demonstrations in Budapest for Democratic Reforms," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/3, item 1, 21 March 1988. Also, see Chris Corrin, "Hungarian Glasnost?" *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* 10(No. 1, 1988):33.
- 80 Markos, "March 15 Demonstrations in Budapest for Democratic Reforms."
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- 83 *Ibid.* Pozsgay himself would distinguish between the June 16 demonstration and one on June 27, described below. He said the former had taken place without prior agreement between demonstrators and security forces, while the latter "did not violate any constitutional rights," so there was no reason to prevent it. See Alfred Reisch, "HWP Guidelines To Regulate Freedom of Assembly and Association," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/11, item 2, 5 August 1988.
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- 85 Alfred Reisch, "Hungarian Democratic Forum Formally Set Up With Official Acquiescence," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/16, item 4, 28 October 1988.
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- 88 Judith Pataki, "The Rebirth of Political Parties," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/1, item 1, 12 January 1989.
- 89 Edith Markos-Oltay, "Hungary's Free Democrats Launch a Political Program," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/6, item 4, 9 May 1989.
- 90 Alfred Reisch, "Democratic Forum Holds First National Congress," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/5, item 4, 31 March 1989.
- 91 "What Does the Hungarian Nation Demand?" *Uncaptive Minds* 2(No. 3, 1989):20; Edith Markos, "March 15 Demonstrations Symbolize Turning Point in Hungary," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/5, item 3, 31 March 1989.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 Other participants included the Smallholders' (FKGP), the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, the Hungarian Peoples' Party, the Democratic League of Free Trade Unions, and Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Friendship Society.

- 94 Two public exchanges had taken place between MSZMP and MDF representatives, one on January 20 and the other on March 5. See Reisch, "Democratic Forum Holds First National Congress."
- 95 Jeremy King, "Party and Opposition To Begin Talks," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/10, item 1, 23 June 1989; King, "The Negotiations Between the Party and the Opposition: Strategies and Pitfalls," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/10, item 3, 23 June 1989.
- 96 Jeremy King, "The Negotiations Between the Party and the Opposition: The Differing Goals," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/10, item 2, 23 June 1989.
- 97 Jeremy King, "The Second Session of the Talks Between the Party and the Opposition," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/10, item 4, 23 June 1989.
- 98 "Viktor Orbán's Speech at the Reburial of Imre Nagy," *Uncaptive Minds* 2(No. 3, 1989):26; Irena Lasota, "Budapest, June 16," *Uncaptive Minds* 2(No. 3, 1989):24-25.
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- 100 Quoted in Vladimir V. Kusin, "Mikhail Gorbachev's Evolving Attitude To Eastern Europe," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/128, 20 July 1989.
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- 107 Judith Pataki and Alfred Reisch, "National Assembly Adopts Electoral Law and Law on Political Parties," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Hungarian Situation Report/17, item 2, 30 November 1989.
- 108 Edith Oltay, "Preparations for Hungary's First National Referendum Marked by Controversy," *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/226, 22 December 1989.
- 109 Alfred Reisch, "Cliffhanger Referendum Changes Political Timetable," *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 1(12 January 1990):9-13.
- 110 See Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*; Snow, et al., "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment."
- 111 Snow, et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation."
- 112 See the "weak assumption" about the centrality of deprivation and grievances in McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory."
- 113 This is the argument made by Ralph H. Turner, "Collective Behavior and Resource Mobilization as Approaches to Social Movements: Issues and Continuities," *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change* 4(1981):1-24.
- 114 McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*.
- 115 J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow, "Insurgency of the Powerless: Farm Worker Movements (1946-1972)," *American Sociological Review* 42(1977):249-268.
- 116 McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory."
- 117 Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.
- 118 Jenkins and Perrow, "Insurgency of the Powerless."
- 119 Of course international support, financial and professional, seems to have been available to both MDF and SZDSZ. Unfortunately, there is little available evidence on this support.

120 Zald and Ash, "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change."

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