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4481

#4481

Hungarian Poster Collection,  
1989-1990.

GUIDE

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# 4481

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NYCV-NIC

Hungarian poster collection, 1989-1990.  
ca. 75 items.

Posters were collected by David Stark, Laszlo Bruszt, and others.

Summary: Campaign posters and other paraphrenalia from the major political parties in the Hungarian elections of 1989-1990. Produced by some of Hungary's best graphic artists, these posters are a dramatic depiction of the clash of political symbols in the era of transition to democracy in Eastern Europe.

Forms part of: Data Archive on the Hungarian Transition.

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**The Symbolic Politics of Transition**

These political posters from Hungary in 1989-1990 are part of an archive on the transition to democracy in Hungary that will be housed in Olin Library. Data for the archive were collected by David Stark, Associate Professor of Sociology at Cornell, in collaboration with László Bruszt, Senior Research Associate of the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Visiting Lecturer in Cornell's Government Department during the Spring of 1991. Collection of the archive materials was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

**The Archive on the Transition to Democracy in Hungary**

The collection of political posters is a small part of the data archive organized by David Stark and László Bruszt. Other materials include: interviews conducted by the two investigators with all of the leaders of the major opposition parties as well as with many high-ranking officials of the formerly ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (including members of the Politburo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Internal Affairs); transcripts of the Roundtable negotiations during the summer of 1989 between the ruling and opposition parties that established the institutions for free elections; detailed minutes of strategy sessions and preliminary agreements from these negotiations; and data from public opinion surveys conducted throughout the transition period.

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Brief Chronology  
Hungary, May 1988 - May 1990

May 1988	Janos Kadar replaced as head of the Socialist Workers Party
Fall 1988	Growth of "alternative" organizations such as the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Alliance of Free Democrats, and the Federation of Young Democrats
Sept. 1988	Popular demonstration by ecology activists in front of the Parliament Building protesting the construction of a dam on the Danube. "Democracy or Dam!" was the slogan.
Mar. 15, 1989	Twenty four alternative political organizations hold an alternative demonstration to celebrate the anniversary of the Revolution of 1848
Mar. 23, 1989	Formation of an umbrella federation of the opposition parties committed to public negotiations to establish free elections
June 13, 1989	Opening of the Roundtable Negotiations between the communist party and representatives of the major opposition organizations
June 16, 1989	One-quarter million Hungarians attend the public ceremony in Budapest for the reburial of Imre Nagy, Prime Minister and leader of the 1956 Revolution
Sept. 18, 1989	Conclusion of the Roundtable Negotiations
Nov. 26, 1989	Referendum to decide the timing of the election for the office of the Presidency
Mar 25, and April 8, 1990	Election and run-off election for Parliament
May 1990	Formation of a new non-communist coalition government led by the Hungarian Democratic Forum

Outcome of the Hungarian Parliamentary Elections  
April 1990

Party	Percentage of Parliamentary seats
Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)	43%
Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz)	24
Independent Smallholders (FKG)	11
Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP)	8
Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)	5
Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP)	5
Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSzMP)	-
Social Democratic Party of Hungary	-
Hungarian People's Party	-
Independent Candidates	2

Listing of Posters

[P 1]

SOLIDARITY

VOTE FOR ANNE RADZIWILL  
CANDIDATE FOR SENATE

LECH WALESZA

Each candidate running on Solidarity's list in Poland's elections of June 4, 1989 had his/her picture taken in this same pose with Lech Walesa. In contrast to the candidates of the Hungarian political parties, who are identified by occupation and often portrayed in group photographs similar to those of European soccer teams, Solidarity's candidates are portrayed in their proximity to the charismatic authority of Lech Walesa.

[H 1]

FREE DEMOCRATS

ONWARD TO A FREE FUTURE! SEND THE FREE DEMOCRATS TO PARLIAMENT!

Pictured here are the Alliance of Free Democrats parliamentary candidates from the Budapest voting districts. Under each is the voting district, the candidate's name, occupation, and age. Included here are sociologists, historians, philosophers, legal scholars, economic historians, engineers, and other scientific researchers. Fifty-five percent of the members of the Hungarian parliament elected in the first free election have a doctorate.

[H 2]

FREE DEMOCRATS  
AGAINST THEIR [COMMUNISTS] SALVAGING POWER

Should the presidential election be held only after the  
parliamentary elections? YES

Should the party organization be prohibited from the  
workplace? YES

Should the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party be forced  
to give an accounting of its properties? YES

Should the party's Workers Guard be dissolved? YES

ON NOVEMBER 26TH VOTE FOR A NEW HUNGARY

[H 3]

ON NOVEMBER 26TH VOTE FOR A NEW HUNGARY

YES  
YES  
YES  
YES

THE FREE DEMOCRATS

WHO STAYS HOME VOTES FOR THE PAST!

During the referendum the newly renamed Hungarian Socialist Party urged its supporters to vote to defeat the first proposition in hopes of gaining a victory for their front-runner, Imre Pozsgay, the only presidential candidate with a national reputation. The centrist opposition party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, urged its supporters to abstain from voting in the referendum. The Alliance of Free Democrats slogan "Who stays home votes for the past!" proved decisive in the referendum campaign and the proposition to postpone the presidential election carried by a very narrow margin.

[H 4]

VOTE FOR A NEW HUNGARY

"I'M VOTING FOR THE FIRST TIME"

"ME TOO, BUT I'VE BEEN OF VOTING AGE ALREADY FOR 40 YEARS"

YES YES YES YES

[Emblems of the Young Democrats, the Independent Shareholders, the Social Democrats, and the Free Democrats]

In this poster the parties who initiated and/or supported the referendum try to instill in voters the idea that the first free elections in Hungary will not be the presidential or parliamentary elections scheduled for 1990 but the referendum of the Fall of 1989. If one wants to vote "for the first time" for a "free Hungary," the voter shouldn't follow the advice of the Hungarian Democratic Forum but should go to vote in the referendum.

[H 5]

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY  
HUNGARIAN RESURRECTION



## THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PEOPLES PARTY

[H 6]

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

"THY KINGDOM COME"

[H 7]

FOR HUNGARIANNESS/HUNGARIANDOM  
AND FOR HUNGARY

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

Pictured here is the crown of Saint Stephen (István, crowned in the year 1000), the symbol not only of the Hungarian monarchy but of an earlier and more powerful Hungary. The current day Hungary is a fraction of its earlier size with much of its former territory yielded after the First and Second World Wars now within the borders of Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. The slogan here is almost untranslatable. The Hungarian word "Magyarok" (not used here) would have evoked the idea of Hungarians living inside and outside of the boundaries of the current day Hungary. "Magyarság" seems to refer to the idea of Hungarians (regardless of residence) and to the territorial boundaries of the old Hungary.

[H 8]

VICTOR ORBAN  
INVITES YOU TO A HOUSE PARTY

FEDERATION OF YOUNG DEMOCRATS

A POLITICAL AMUSEMENT PARK, ELECTION BOOK-MAKING OFFICE  
THE MENU: PARLIAMENT COCKTAIL, DEMOCRATIC SANDWICH

In the graffiti script that characterized their posters, the Young Democrats present their three most popular candidates for parliament to the public in a party in the old sports arena. The orthography and the text make it sound like an announcement of an open house in a friend's apartment. Bikini, Vinczelilla, Hobo, and East are rock bands popular among Budapest students.

[H 9]

LISTEN TO YOUR HEART, VOTE FOR FIDESZ!

[In the background are listed the names of the Young Democrats candidates for parliament.]

The symbol of the Young Democrats is the Hungarian Orange, taken from a popular film, "The Witness." In that film, a Hungarian agricultural collective is given the assignment of producing oranges. Against impossible odds of climate, inadequate research facilities, and the absurdities of socialist planning, the collective succeeds in growing one orange. In a ceremony attended by communist dignitaries from the capital city, the orange is to be presented to the Minister of Agriculture on a silver platter carried by a young boy. The child eats the orange. The collective's managers substitute a lemon. The Minister of Agriculture accepts the "Hungarian orange." "It is sour, but after all it is Hungarian."

[H 10]

1890      1990

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

A major theme in these campaign posters is the search for connections between past and future. Stressing here their founding in 1890, the Social Democratic Party attempts in this poster to build on its record as one of the parties from the inter-war period before the Communist takeover in 1947-8. The combination of a modernized rose and the symbol of proletarian power from the early decades of this century should also be noted. Although the party enjoyed wide name recognition at the outset of the campaign, and although public opinion polls registered some support for welfare state expenditures typical of those advocated by Social Democratic parties elsewhere in Europe, the Hungarian Social Democrats' efforts failed completely. No representatives from the Social Democratic Party were elected to the Hungarian parliament.

[H 11]

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM MAJORITY  
NATIONAL UNITY

Images of the Hungarian Parliament building figured prominently in the campaign of the Hungarian Democratic Forum. Their five minute television advertisement in the opening weeks of the electoral campaign featured black and white documentary

photographs of the construction of the Parliament building in the 19th Century as the narrator noted that the building faces to the West. The use of black and white and color elements in the TV ad are duplicated in this poster where we find the colors of the Hungarian flag and -- for a party whose electoral strategy was built around getting a large proportion of voters from the rural countryside -- a modernized flower recognizable from an old peasant motif.

[H 12]

INDEPENDENT SMALLHOLDERS PARTY

GOD      HOMELAND                                  WINE      GRAIN

FAMILY    PEACE

WHO IS HUNGARIAN SHOULD VOTE FOR NONE OTHER THAN THE SMALLHOLDERS  
PRIVATE PROPERTY, FREE ELECTIONS, EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

[H 13]

OUR LAND      OUR NATION  
OUR ECONOMY      OUR CULTURE

FROM WHOM I GET THE LAND  
IS TO WHOM I GIVE MY VOTE!

LONG LIVE THE INDEPENDENT SMALLHOLDERS  
AGRICULTURAL WORKERS AND CITIZENS PARTY!

OUR PROGRAM: FREE ELECTION, PROSPERITY, INDEPENDENCE!

GOD -- HOMELAND -- FAMILY

"From whom I get the land" refers to the major campaign promise of the Independent Smallholders Party to restore property rights to families whose land was collectivized during the communist period.  
Note the typeface from the pre-communist epoch at the top of the poster.

[H 14]

VOTE FOR THE INDEPENDENT SMALLHOLDERS PARTY

GOD, HOMELAND, FAMILY

WINE, GRAIN, PEACE

By almost completely painting over the Communist Red, the Smallholders make a poster with the Hungarian national colors of red, white, and green.

The Independent Smallholders are currently in the governing coalition with the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Christian Democrats. Tensions between the HDF and the Smallholders have developed following the HDF's recent signal that it would not pursue re-privatization of land. Smallholders supporters in some villages have protested the HDF's policy and in several places peasants have occupied land held in the state sector that was formerly owned by their families.

[H 15]

WITH A CLEAN PAST FOR A CLEAR FUTURE

YES

[SEND] THE FREE DEMOCRATS TO PARLIAMENT

[H 16]

A FREE PEOPLE CAN DO WONDERS

FREE DEMOCRATS

[H 17]

DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY

SOCIALIST PARTY

In October 1989, reformers in the old communist party changed the party's name from the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party to the Hungarian Socialist Party. In that restructuring, some of the most conservative hardliners in the party formed another organization that carried on the name of the old. But although reformers hoped that the name change and a new emblem (the red carnation replacing the red star) would signal discontinuity with the past, the slogans and iconography of their election posters bore the legacy of the paternalism characteristic of state socialism.

[H 18]

WITH THE SOCIALISTS FOR THE FUTURE

SOCIALIST PARTY

In the Socialist's imagery, the state's paternalistic hands will provide protection to society. So, too, should an infant democracy look to experienced leadership for guidance and protection during the difficult days of transition. To the Socialists' opponents, however, the poster provided yet another opportunity to scoff at the communists' (renamed Socialists) record. High school and college student activists in FIDESZ (the Federation of Young Democrats) scribbled over it the graffiti: "Watch out, they'll drop the baby!"

[H 19]

TEMESVAR

TIMISOARA

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

The Hungarian and Romanian names of the town in Romania (where began the popular rebellion leading to the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989) frame a crucified arm bearing the Romanian and Hungarian flags.

[H 20]

[In Russian]

COMRADES

[and in graffiti] THE END!

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

This was one of the most popular political posters of the 1990 electoral campaign with thousands of copies sold by the Hungarian Democratic Forum. The same poster could be seen recently in the early months of 1991 in popular demonstrations in the Baltic republics of the Soviet Union.

[H 21]

THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PASSPORT TO EUROPE!



CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S PARTY

Redefining Hungary's relationship to Western Europe was a major theme in Hungary's first free election in over 40 years held in March and April of 1990.

[H 22]

OUR HOME IS HUNGARY, OUR HOUSE IS EUROPE!

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

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[H 23]

WITH A CLEAN PAST FOR A CLEAR FUTURE

ON THE ROAD TO EUROPE

FREE DEMOCRATS

The temporal orientations and the political-economic programs of the two major parties are reflected in these posters about the relationship between Hungary and "Europe." For the centrist Hungarian Democratic Forum, Hungary has always been in Europe -- hence the image of the 19th Century Parliament. For the Alliance of Free Democrats with their base in the broad class of urban intellectuals, Hungary must be taken to Europe -- and the vanishing point indicates some future time when Hungary will arrive there. To bring Hungary to Europe, the Free Democrats proposed a more radical conception of "shock therapy," extensive privatization, and rapid transition to a free market. The Democratic Forum, on the other hand, proposed a slower course of change. Whereas the Free Democrats urged a "Break with the Past," the Democratic Forum cautioned, "No More Experiments."

[H 24]

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S PARTY

A SMALL NATION CAN ALSO DO BIG THINGS IN EUROPE

The Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) won the April 1990 runoff elections gaining 43 percent of the representatives in the newly elected Parliament. The governing coalition includes the MDF, the Independent Smallholders (with 11 percent of the parliamentary seats) and the Christian Democrats (with 5 percent of the seats). The largest opposition party, the Alliance of Free Democrats won 24 percent of the parliamentary seats. Eight percent of the representatives in the new parliament are members of the Hungarian Socialist Party, renamed from the former ruling communist party.

[H 25]

MAY 1st

SzDSz (Alliance of Free Democrats)

May 1st was the highest holiday of the Communist Party, with tens of thousands of soldiers and workers parading past the party elite on the reviewing stand. This poster is a radical attack on the meaning of that holiday. The writing instrument that has just scrawled the word "May" is a broken fork -- inadequate for writing and for eating, just as the Communist Party was inadequate for governing and for provisioning the society.

[H 26]

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

The national emblem under communist rule is being smashed by the emblem of pre-communist Hungary prominently featuring the crown of St. Stephen, first Christian king of Hungary (from the Eleventh Century). This coat of arms of the Hungarian monarchy was recently adopted as the new emblem of the Republic of Hungary, renamed on October 23, 1989 (anniversary of the 1956 Revolution) from the Hungarian People's Republic.

[H 27]

VOTE FOR THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S PARTY!

A CLEAN PAST, A SECURE FUTURE = CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVES

Here the cross of Christian Democracy shatters the red star of Communism.

[H 28]

## COUNTRYWIDE SPRING HOUSECLEANING

## HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

The Hungarian Democratic Forum promises in this election poster to sweep up and throw into the garbage bin of history the iconography and trappings of the old order. In addition to the statue of Stalin and Chairman Mao's red book, note the photograph of Lenin, the writings of Kim Il Sung, a secret police revolver, and the Hungarian communist party's evening newspaper.

[H 29]

[In Russian]

COMRADES

[and in graffiti] THE END!

## HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

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[H 30]

WORKERS GUARD

SzDSz (Alliance of Free Democrats)

This poster from the Autumn of 1989 is part of a series of dramatic posters by the Alliance of Free Democrats (see also the May 1st poster - H 25) that use strong graphic elements to produce an unsettling feeling about the symbols of the old order. The "Workers Guard" to which it refers was the communist party's armed militia, composed disproportionately of older workers who met at their places of work for drills (or, more frequently in the latter days of the regime, simply meetings or idle chatter) while continuing to draw their wages. As they campaigned to abolish the Workers Guard in the referendum of November 1989, the Free Democrats remind the public that the danger of an authoritarian backlash would not be removed until the party's repressive apparatus was fully disarmed. In the meantime, the false teeth were fangs.

[H 31]

COUNTRYWIDE SPRING HOUSECLEANING

HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

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[H 32]

CONSTITUTION

BUT NOT LIKE THIS!

SzDSz (Alliance of Free Democrats)

[H 33]

PLEASE CHOOSE/VOTE

FEDERATION OF YOUNG DEMOCRATS

FIDESZ was founded in 1988 by a group of students in the Law Faculty. Many were only undergraduates at the time. They edited a journal, Szazadveg (End of the Century), that has become a major influence in intellectual circles in Hungary. Several of the party's representatives in parliament are in their early twenties, and the party has quickly earned a reputation for being well-prepared in parliamentary debates. As some of its leadership move into their late twenties, FIDESZ must reconsider its organizational regulation of excluding members over thirty years of age.

[H 34]

THEY KNOW, THEY DARE, THEY DO

Three photogenic candidates running in Budapest on the slate of the Alliance of Free Democrats. Ivan Petö is one of Hungary's leading economic historians; László Rajk is an architect whose father was killed in the Stalinist purges; Bálint Magyar is a sociologist who was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Wisconsin.

[H 35]

THEY KNOW, THEY DARE, THEY DO

IT'S YOUR TEAM

FREE DEMOCRATS

The Free Democrats are a social liberal party -- economic liberals in the European sense as strong advocates of a free market, but with a program of social policies closer to the American sense of "liberals." With about 24 percent of the parliament they are the largest opposition party in Hungary. The Free Democrats and the Young Democrats (with about 10 percent of parliament) consistently vote on the same side of many important issues.