

Summary of PhD Thesis

**The Hungarian Revolution of 1956
and the Restoration at the Budapest University of
Technology**

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On 22nd October, 1956 incredible and at the same time cathartic events were commencing in the main hall of the central building of the Budapest University of Technology (Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem, BME), at the general assembly of the communist youth organisation. The demonstration decided to be held on the following day became the overture of the revolution. The students of engineering and lots of other students had been catalysing the mass movement by wording the dissatisfaction of the society and the claims for changes before 23rd October. On the eve of 23rd though, when armed fights broke out, events passed by them, students were not the central figures any more, they did not play a major part. Works dealing with the revolution show a consensus in this respect. On the other hand, it has not yet been attempted to make a full-scale analysis of the movements of the youth and particularly the students during that autumn, one reason probably being the great number of contemporary memoirs, the other could be the varied nature of the sources. The same applies for the history of BME in 1956, which was one of the most important institutions at the time: there are no comprehensive studies except for my own one dealing with the preceding events as well as with what followed after the Soviet invasion including restoration and retaliation. Only some collections of memoirs and smaller studies on certain aspects or events of the revolution have been published.

Sources of the Thesis

The communist party taking back its power with the help of the Soviet army declared the events of the autumn of 1956 a counter-revolution to make this takeover seem legitimate, therefore studying the course of events of 1956 during the rule of the communists was out of the question before the change of regime in 1989. The legendary “white book”, entitled “*A Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem és az Építőipari és Közlekedési Műszaki Egyetem szerepe az 1956. október–novemberi ellenforradalomban*” (The Role of BME and the University of Building Industry and Transportation /Építőipari és Közlekedési Műszaki Egyetem, ÉKME/ in the counter-revolution of October–November, 1956), which is a propagandistic survey of the events compiled according to the traditions of political brochures, which was typical until 1989. It is rather a result of the retaliation than a produce of writing party history. This document, which was never published, naturally represents the then official concept, mostly using the tendentious sources of the police, to put the people-in-charge in bad light as counter-revolutionist traitors, but at the same time it is an outstandingly rich source of data. It is obvious that its well-informed compilers could study the records of the disciplinary procedures and of the inquiries of the arrested leaders and the documents of the investigations.

The change of regime cleared the ideological taboos away, which brought about a radical change in studying the events of 1956: the “highly confidential” materials have become accessible by researchers and dealing with them has been freed from political determination. As far as our topic is concerned, we had to face an over-abundance of sources and a lack of documents at the same time. There are numerous sources in the archives (in the National Archives, within it, especially in the documents of the Ministry of Education and its preliminary institutions, and also in the archives of BME) in connection with the times preceding and following the revolution of 1956. The most important documents of the Hungarian Workers’ Party (Magyar Dolgozók Pártja, MDP) and the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt, MSZMP) are available in scientific publications, too. However the two weeks of the revolution were not suitable for producing documents in the traditional way. Moreover, there are proofs that the immediate reaction to the news of the Soviet invasion on 4th November was a hurried clearing away of documents. The Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security is an abundant source of documents created during the process of retaliation. The materials found here make a special group within the sources, from the impeachments through the systematic collection of data by the authorities to the police investigations or inquiry minutes or the documents of the cases, which are even more tendentious and distorted ideologically and politically, if possible. However, neglecting this group of documents is impossible because of the lack of other sources, whereas the most one can get to know reading them, even if handled with criticism, is how the machinery of retaliation operated, not what really happened during the revolution.

From 1989 on, historians started to publish the sources. The collection of facsimiles of press and brochures are probably one of the most complete available sources of the 13 days of the revolution. There has been a large-scale research to reveal sources lead by István Vida, as a result of which a thorough publication of sources accompanied by a detailed introductory study was published in 2007 entitled *Diák- és ifjúsági mozgalmak 1956–1958. Forradalom – ellenállás – megtorlás* (Student and Youth Movements 1956–1958. Revolution, Resistance, Retaliation; Bp., 2007.). Another book of documents was published by the Association of the Hungarian Archives of Higher Education entitled *Magyarországi világi felsőoktatási intézmények az 1956-os forradalomban és szabadságharcban* (Non-religious Institutions of Higher Education in the 1956 Revolution and War of Independence; Bp., 2007.), which has become one of the most important resources of those interested in the subject, offering a study on each institution, a bibliography and a chronology. In 1992 The BME–1956 Fund was created at BME with the aim to publish several sourcebooks and memoirs. A former

employee of the archives of BME also published a source book mostly from the materials of the archives in connection with 1956, plus the documents of private archives entitled *A Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem és az Építőipari és Közlekedési Műszaki Egyetem részvétele az 1956-os forradalomban* (BME and ÉKME Taking Part in the 1956 Revolution; Bp., 1994.).

The gap in the written sources in 1956 is bridged by memoirs and life interviews. The authors of these memoirs were mostly former students of that year. They all had their own experience of the events at BME and ÉKME, yet they remember different ways as they considered different things important, the emphasis shifting accordingly. In their interviews or texts it often happens that they also reflect the facts or interpretations that have appeared ever since, doing this with the intention of seeking the truth, challenging their own memories with the descriptions. It is a recurring theme that the author of the memoir was wherever anything historic happened in those days, namely, he was a witness of each and every milestone and he feels obliged to be able to give a sound description of them. The witness emphasises that his is the one and only reliable source even if it is obvious that throughout the course of time memories have been fading, while at the same time they have also been enriched and slightly altered by life experience, acquired knowledge, and besides, they have been filled up with different narratives or myths. Thus these memoirs are primarily the sources of historical memory. Considering all this we still think that without these sources the history of BME and ÉKME in 1956 would be distorted or at least one-sided due to the previously mentioned nature of the written documents. This group of sources help interpret both the rather fractured contemporary written documents and the minutes created in the period of the retaliation. We have made a continuous attempt to clash our sources throughout our thesis.

The Budapest University of Technology in the 1950s

The central venue of the events of 1956 is the building complex in Lágymányos. There were two institutions within this complex in 1956, one of them was the Budapest University of Technology, and the other was the University of Building Industry and Transportation separated in 1952 due to the Rákosi-era's tertiary education policy of splitting up huge universities into small ones specialising on one or two fields of study. The voluntarist policy of economics that copied the Soviet pattern mechanically lay behind this retailoring of technical education. Improving heavy industry in great volume naturally brought about a huge need in engineers. The number of the students was carefully matched with the needs created by the policy of economics and social policy and it was changed accordingly, following the modifications in directions. Greatly increasing the number of students in tertiary education

also meant a transformation in the content of the courses, besides the traditional autonomy of universities was withdrawn. This whole process went along with the expressed wish of changing the elite and creating the new intelligentsia which directly followed from the logics of the system and was a declared aim of the political leaders: the children of the workers and peasants were given extra points at the entrance exams while children of bourgeois backgrounds were refused. Increasing the number of students led to an ever growing problem of lack of space and increasing crowdedness, which had its impact on the conditions of education and accommodation for students from the country, latter meaning over-crowded student hostels which resembled doss-houses. The mass youth organisation, at the time called DISZ (Dolgozó Ifjúság Szövetsége, Union of Working Youth), which was supposed to represent young people's interests concentrated only on political campaigns and ideological education instead of real problems so it had completely lost influence on the masses by 1956. Apart from discussing the questions of education the thesis reveals the circumstances of the students and their living standard.

The great assembly on 22nd October

The school year of 1956/57 started amidst rising political tension. Students were the first to voice demands in the bubbling atmosphere. Gatherings of students attending the same year or living in the same hostel were organised, mostly spontaneously, at the back of the official youth organisation which had lost its credit because of serving the political leadership in all respects with no criticism. The students in Szeged formed an independent youth organisation for university and college students on 16th September 1956 called MEFESZ (Magyar Egyetemisták és Főiskolások Szövetsége; Hungarian Association of University and College Students), breaking the monopoly of the DISZ. Activists of MEFESZ called upon all other universities and colleges to join them and spread their movement nationwide.

Our thesis examines the steps in details that lead to the demonstration which was the overture of the revolution, from the formation of MEFESZ to the formulation of the revolutionary points of their demands at the assembly at BME on the 22nd October. Both the assembly and the demonstration were immediately preceded by a gathering at a student hostel. It took place at ÉKME at the Rózsa Ferenc Student Hostel on 17th October. The students started to complain about their problems in connection with their studies or their circumstances, some of them in such a radical style which could not have been thought of earlier. On the 19th in the evening there was an abrupt meeting about the dissatisfactory supply at the central student hostel of BME at Hess András square. This was the first time the

students wrote their points of their demands concerning mainly student welfare at the time similarly to the students of ÉKME. Apart from this, however, members of the audience started to talk about more general problems concerning student representation when they got the news from Szeged about the foundation of the independent organisation of the students. This program, considering the given circumstances, had more significance than its actual content. The communist party tried to keep this self-raised gathering under control but the activists of the DISZ and the party lost control.

Students who wanted support for their demands started to spread them the next day. The leadership of BME held an irregular open session of the university council where László Gillemot, the Rector, ensured the students present in great numbers that he would support their demands, which he understood were compiled with the good intention of improvements, in case they kept discipline, stuck to rules and continued with their studies. But students wanted more by that time. They started out with the gatherings of the students in different years where representatives were elected to MEFESZ. The artificial splitting of the university did not prevent students from uniting their voices in certain questions. On 20th the students were gathering for a meeting at the student hostel of ÉKME on Bartók Béla street. The intention was to bring the date of the DISZ forum summoned for 25th October, forward onto an earlier date, namely the 22nd. At this meeting partakers voted for the earlier date, 22nd, which was a Monday. The intention of the organisers was to discuss and arrive at a mutual standpoint with the demands of the students of the hostel at Hess András square. The official speakers were pushed in the background among the thousands of students and the atmosphere became more and more radical and MEFESZ was declared to be formed here, too. Then, on the basis of the original program point of DISZ the rewording of the demands was begun and it culminated in demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Hungarian territories. The students decided to take their demands immediately to the radio and have them broadcast and after an unsuccessful attempt they wanted to flood onto the streets to demonstrate. This enthusiastic drive was stopped by the wise and calm interference of a lecturer, the representative of the university party committee, István Marián, an army officer, who managed to convince them to wait until the next day and join the demonstration that had already been organised by several universities and other organisations to express solidarity with the undergoing changes in Poland.

In our thesis we give a detailed analysis of the students' program. There are three versions of their demands, containing 10, 14 and 16 bullet points respectively, but there are no essential differences in them. The original suggestions of the DISZ concerning improvements

in the circumstances of the students were all left out, each and every point expresses an urgent need to change the basis of the whole political system; i.e. the withdrawal of the soviet army from Hungary, equal, general and secret elections involving all the parties, summoning an extraordinary communist party congress, appointing Imre Nagy as prime minister, revising political and economic trials and complete rehabilitation of the innocent victims of false sentences, bringing home prisoners still kept in the Soviet Union and making free access to personal data gathered by authorities. Demanding free press was linked with the intention of starting a MEFESZ newspaper. Apart from wishing to put Hungarian–Soviet economic and political relationships on an equal basis, the claim to regulate Hungarian–Yugoslav relationships also appeared. An earlier demand of the public to be familiarised with the Soviet use of our uranium was reformulated so that it was used according to our own interests. These demands concerning our economy questioned the basis of the whole system, too. The program of the students went further than representing their own interests: for factory workers they demanded a revision of the norm system considering subsistence wages and safeguarding workers’ autonomy, for the peasants they demanded a revision of the system of compulsory delivery to the state and acknowledging and supporting independent farmers. The circle of demands of symbolic importance, which betrayed wounds in patriotic feelings, i.e. replacing the Soviet-type uniforms or celebrating our national holidays, grew wider with the demand for replacing the country’s coat of arms introduced in 1949 with the one used during the 1848–1849 Revolution and War of Independence called the “Kossuth Coat of Arms”, and bringing down the statue of Stalin, the symbol of tyrannical dictatorship.

The Demonstration

The demands of the students spread like wildfire all over the city, flyers were distributed and posters were stuck, besides, students went to the other universities and even to factories. At the same time, in the morning, the party leadership decided to forbid the afternoon demonstration. A strong push from the masses channelled into numerous committees visiting the party leadership, among them the delegation from BME, along with the opinion of the army and police leaders, that they were not prepared to prevent masses from going out into the streets, finally made the leadership of MDP give free way to the demonstration.

On the morning of 23rd the students were preparing for the demonstration in spite of the prohibition. Lecturers went far beyond staying neutral, rather, they firmly expressed their agreement and did not prevent student activities. In the morning the Rector of ÉKME summoned an extraordinary university council meeting, but they could not discourage

students from going out to the streets. MEFESZ, which took over the representation of students, was not willing to resign from going out, but promised to keep order. It was meant to be a silent demonstration with orderly rows of students embracing each other to exclude interference. Crowds had already been gathering on the yard of the university when the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in person told them that the demonstration was permitted. Students of the university and lots of other youngsters who joined them set out in silence around 3 p.m. along the originally planned route towards the statue of Bem.

Everything went according to plan as far as they reached their destination. The square had already been packed with huge crowds and the first flags with the hole in the middle stuck out, showing the radicalisation of the atmosphere. The student demonstrators could hardly get closer to the statue. After laying a wreath at the statue of Bem, the student organisers with the help of communicators were trying to lead the students back to the university on the originally planned route. This was only partly successful, because the majority of them wanted to join the ever growing crowd to go on demonstrating. The university students marched on still in a relatively orderly formation across Margaret Bridge to Pest, to Kossuth square, then to the statue of Petőfi. After the demonstration the majority of students went home in peace, while mass activities lead to serious armed conflicts later that night. The initiating role of the University of Technology ended on the very first day of the revolution.

The Revolutionary Sub-Committee of Students in Buda

We chose not to follow a strict chronological order or the typical chronology of memoirs in connection with the events of the revolution at BME and ÉKME. Rather, we discuss them centred round newly formed boards or institutions. From 24th October teaching was suspended. After the beginning of strikes and armed conflicts the most active members of the new-born MEFESZ tried to join in the revolutionary activities, so the spontaneously formed revolutionary student committees, which became the first self-governing bodies, can be considered the continuations of MEFESZ, which, as an organisation, was not functioning at the time. The students of the then two universities, BME and ÉKME, were working together, without any distinction, as if belonging to the same university. On 25th the Revolutionary Student Committee was formed with the presence of the revolutionary body of ÉKME from the student hostel at Bartók Béla street participating to harmonise activities, and two sub-committees, one for Buda and the other for Pest were formed, too. The Buda Sub-Committee was linked with the university throughout the revolution in spite of some transformations.

The society appreciated students' role in the preparations of the demonstration on 23rd, which is clearly seen in the fact that they successfully joined in helping organise supplies and communal services to advance consolidation. The student committees having been transformed into revolutionary committees helped managing student hostels and canteens with the help of their lecturers. As early as 26th they got in touch with the local council of district 11, offering students' help in distributing food and Red Cross supplies. The student hostel at Bartók Béla street offered meals for elderly people not being able to fend for themselves and they also took food to their teachers from the hostel's supplies. They tried to use their high social prestige to convince factory workers to suspend their strike, which helped life get back to its normal. They also took an active part in maintaining order, and this cannot be separated from their political acts.

The Temporary Revolutionary Committee of Lecturers

Lecturers also joined the revolutionary movement setting up their institutions. After the informal meetings of 27th and 29th the official university council session commenced with the members from both universities, BME and ÉKME. The majority of the participants shared Gillemot Rector's view to unite the two universities and demand autonomy, while Rector Cholnoky was against it, opposing even his own colleagues, thus the decision was postponed. What they could bring a decision about was a mutual declaration by the two leading bodies to support the revolution and the demands of the students. The next day the lecturers formed their temporary self-governing body, the Provisory Revolutionary Committee to join in the efforts to restore order and rebuild society and started to work out how they could reorganise the term by making necessary changes to start teaching as soon as possible. The committee voted for the fusion of BME and ÉKME by common consent, having gained the consent of even Rector Cholnoky by this time. The committee acted with great sense of responsibility throughout the revolution and was successful in consolidation. The most important aim was to protect the university, therefore the national guard was organised, but as soon as the university became the centre of the guardists of the Buda side under the leadership of István Marián, the committee tried to transfer the troops to barracks to avoid becoming a military target by all means. Besides the earlier known minutes of the activities of the body of lecturers we had the chance to study the records of the disciplinary procedures after the fall of the revolution, the results of which we incorporated into our thesis as a novelty.

The University Workers' Council

On 31st October the administrative and physical workers of the university also formed their self-governing body in accordance with the appeal in the press. We managed to reconstruct the activities of this body with the help of some documents that had been missing for a long time but in the last phase of research they came into light. The Provisional Workers' Council in agreement with the political demands of the revolutionary committee of the university considered its primary task to protect the precious equipment of the university. This body took over tasks that had earlier been attended by the trade union committees: they received and distributed the food and clothes supplies among the students and the workers.

Students of BME in the National Guard

Both the student organisations, which were formed at the same time with the ignition of the revolution, and the revolutionary committee of the lecturers, which was formed after the ceasefire was announced on 28th October, tried to act to make and maintain order. Government bodies falling apart, the revolutionary self-governing bodies stepped in their places and took part in the activities of the national guard, which was the armed force of the revolution. The most students who joined the national guard in Budapest were the students of BME and ÉKME, which means that after the demonstration on 23rd, in the second phase of the revolution, when the time came to consolidate, they took an active part in the events in great numbers again.

According to our sources the very first armed forces of the university stood up in the student hostels even before the national guard was started to be organised officially and centrally, which slightly modifies the view having held by researchers. Police forces of the districts where student hostels were located, namely the central hostel in the Castle and the hostels in Bartók Béla and Bercsényi streets, asked the students to join them on duty so that people trust them, as students gained great respect for igniting the revolution. The students who mostly stayed away from the fights that broke out on the 23rd accepted the call and they started serving either with or without arms on the instructions and with the help of policemen guarding their own hostels, the university and other public buildings.

After the 28th the organisation of the national guard at the university it was directed from the university itself again and from that time on it was related to Lieutenant-Colonel István Marián, who appreciated the political changes announced by Imre Nagy and his government. He was a communist army officer who played an important role to maintain peace during the events of 22nd–23rd October, thus the majority of the students accepted him

as a leader. Organising the national guard Marián relied on the army officers and the army itself. He created a system of commanders and officials in charge of specialised tasks on 31st October, later he allocated students to each officer to increase trust in them. The university became one of the most important army centres on the whole Buda side. The next step in this process was to set up a university national guard division. As part of this division he created the Petőfi Sándor First University National Guard Regiment on 1st November. His organisational work was appreciated and he became the member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Committee, the leading body of the armed forces, and he was also chosen to be member of the Revolutionary Home Defence Committee of the Ministry of Home Defence.

On the 3rd November the direct contact between István Marián and the national guard of BME ceased as the lieutenant-colonel was chosen into the operative body of the Revolutionary Home Defence Committee. When the news of the Soviet invasion came at dawn, 4th November, he made a desperate attempt together with Béla Király, the commander-in-chief of the national guard, and Sándor Kopácsi, the leader of the Budapest Police Force to keep control. At the same time he suggested that the national guard at the university and at the student hostels should avoid fighting. The majority accepted that it was hopeless to fight so the buildings of the university were taken over by the Soviet Army without any resistance.

To Save what can be Saved: Autonomy, Rehabilitation

The military success of the Soviet invaders did not mean consolidation: it took months to start teaching. The last third of the thesis discusses the restoration process centred round different topics: the fight of teachers for autonomy, students' fight within the framework of MEFESZ, the fight to avoid gap years, and retaliation itself.

Amidst the general strikes to express refusal by the society, the raids and arrests by the armed forces of the new regime, and the restrictions in movements and meetings, it was out of the question to continue with schoolwork for quite a while. The revolutionary committees, which stood for resistance, together with the workers' councils, which continued organising people, gave hope to protect the results of the democratic achievements. The revolutionary committee of the university, conforming to the new situation, went back to the educational reform program prior to 23rd October and put it on the agenda, closely cooperating with the officially appointed leading bodies of the universities. At that point it seemed there would be a chance for real changes as the new leadership under Kádár was trying to create its own political basis during those weeks and it could have been counter-productive to confront too much. Albert Kónya, reappointed leader as government commissioner of the Ministry of

Education held a briefing for the leaders of the universities and colleges and of the revolutionary committees on 30th November where he promised to restore institutional autonomy and correct previously made mistakes and make up for them. Continuing teaching and finishing the school year in spite of the extraordinary situation was the utmost interest of the universities as well as the intention of the government. However it was stressed by the representatives of BME and ÉKME on behalf of all universities that starting lectures was out of the question as long as the safety of the students could not be guaranteed to by the authorities.

The turn in the policy of the government lead by János Kádár in the beginning of December, i.e. the arrests of the leaders of the workers' councils who fought for keeping the results of the revolution, the prohibition of the revolutionary self-governing bodies, or launching the summary proceedings could not yet be felt at the university. In December, the lecturers trying to go back to normal reinforced the decision of the fusion of the two universities in a formal legal voting procedure with all the faculties of both universities taking part. Several professors of the revolutionary committee, which had been officially dissolved by then, continued working for regaining autonomy in a joint commission of the faculties. At the beginning of January, 1957, although the universities were all ready to restart the teaching it turned out that they could not, despite all earlier promises. First, a one week delay seemed to be enough to clarify the situation of the arrested students, but even then authorities refused to grant permission being afraid of not having enough control over the students. In the meantime, lecturers did not abandon students: allowances were granted to families in need partly on their own expenses, partly using resources from a fund created for supporting students with handicap.

The lecturers who could not start teaching in January were dealing with the proposal for autonomy and working on a draft to rehabilitate employees who were unjustly pushed out of the university during the Rákosi-era, and besides, they carried out the election of the leadership decreed centrally, as a result of which almost all the former leaders were reinstated into their positions. However, by the end of January it became clear that the ministry did not accept even these results in spite of the promises concerning autonomy, the acting leaders were reinstated with no exception until the end of the school year. Rehabilitation motions were turned down and the autonomy concept was refused, too. As the new regime was gradually getting stronger, earlier routines were coming back.

Saving the School Year

In February, 1957 the teaching, suspended in October, could continue but in a completely different atmosphere from what characterised the preparations in January. Authorities made it clear that lecturers must confine themselves only to teaching or doing research, whereas students must only study. Any diversion from this would jeopardise the mere existence of the university, the ministry threatened with cancelling the whole school year. An announcement for the beginning of the term issued by the government commissioner of the Ministry of Education made the standpoint of the new government clear about the events of the previous months, namely, they were declared counter-revolutionary by the Central Bureau of the party MSZMP in a resolution issued in December. At the same time the ministry made some compromises on some questions mainly for political reasons, yielding in suspending teaching compulsory Russian, the ideological subjects, physical education or the military defence course, so that students could have more time for their main subjects. Concerning extraordinary circumstances, universities also lifted some burdens from the students. All in all, efforts proved to be successful. At the expense of a lot of compromises, the chance for students to continue with their studies without losing a whole year was made possible.

Restoration, retaliation

Not only the lecturers but also the students did not want to resign from all the results they had achieved in those two weeks before the Soviet intervention nor give up all hope. In mid-November they started to reorganise MEFESZ, their independent organisation, which had been formed all over the country before 23rd October. The students of BME and ÉKME, set up a mutual executive committee for their MEFESZ in the first half of December. At that time it seemed it could take the role of DISZ, which had fallen apart. In January, however, the people supported by the new regime both by political and administrative means gained more and more influence within MEFESZ and managed to obstruct its efficient work. The representatives of the democratic MEFESZ had to make more and more concessions to save the organisation. At the restart of the school year the election of the leadership commenced, but seeing the narrowing of their margins at great pace the students were losing interest and became more and more passive and disappointed. As part of this process, the renewed university party organisations achieved their trusted workers to be elected into the leadership of MEFESZ according to central directions. Parallel with this, the preparations for re-establishing the unified communist youth organisation was taking place. In March the Young Communist League (Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség, KISZ) was formed on the decision of

the party leadership. For a short while the two organisations existed parallel, but the communist takeover in the MEFESZ leadership was so successful that right after setting up the local branches of KISZ at the universities the members of MEFESZ joined KISZ with hardly any exceptions. The originally independent organisation losing its independence did not make any sense, so it discontinued by the end of the school year.

During the spring of 1957 the most important activity of the reorganised party and KISZ-branches was participating in the disciplinary proceedings ordered by the new regime affecting both lecturers and students. Data were systematically collected, which can be accurately followed in the records of the disciplinary proceedings, some of which having recently been discovered. (Besides this, naturally, the secret network of the police also presented data.) To the best of our knowledge our thesis is the first to present the mechanism of retaliation at BME in such detail. The disciplinary committees of the faculties were trying to avoid giving too serious punishments out of solidarity, but the members of the MSZMP sent their suggestions compiled on the basis of testimonies of witnesses right away to the upper party organs and to the ministry directly and simultaneously, what is more, the investigating authorities could also use them. In most cases the intervention from upper party committees can be proved in bringing serious verdicts. The central proceedings and the disciplinary verdicts in case of the leading lecturers, which we analyse in detail, were meant to send a message to the rest of the lecturers.

Although there was no “BME Trial” as such, some of the important leaders could not avoid being charged. It is generally true for all the cases resulting in a negative verdict that nobody was tried merely for actions at the university even if what they were doing at the university was included in the charges. Serious sentences concerning lecturers or students were all brought in such cases which were in the centre of attention of the authorities in the process of retaliation anyway, i.e. the trials of those who took part in the illegal resistance after 4th November, or were members of illegal revolutionary bodies.

Having the huge wave of disciplinary procedures culminated and arrived at a standstill, at the beginning of the new school year the passivity of the lecturers and students deriving from intimidation was not satisfactory for the party and KISZ leadership any longer and, a new program of demanding ideological identification was launched. However, the debate evenings, the frequent visits of leading politicians and great assemblies were all in vain: reports were always about apathy and indifference. At least there was silence. In return, one had to forget the revolution, though.

Formerly issued publications in the subject

Műegyetem 1956–57. A forradalmi tanév története. Bp., Budapesti Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Egyetem, 2006. 148 p.

„A politikai közömbösség és fásultság konszolidációja.” A monolit ifjúsági szervezet visszaállítása a Műegyetemen. = *Szabolcs-Szatmár-beregi Szemle* 31 (2006) 4. 475–483.

Egy vidéki forradalmár – Szigethy Attila. Az ókortudós és a sors – Brusznai Árpád. Soha nem engedett '56-ból – Krassó György. A valódi munkásvezér – Rácz Sándor. = *Hősök. Akik a nemzetért éltek, haltak.* Szerk. Simon István. Bp., Totem Plusz Kiadó, 2008. 102–105., 114–117., 122–125., 130–133.

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