

# Mihály Csákó and *Educatio*<sup>®</sup>

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Mihály Csákó (1941-2019) was active in the editorial board of *Educatio* during the 21st century, first as a member of the editorial board, then as deputy editor-in-chief, and finally as chairman of the editorial board (*Educatio*, 2001/1: 2; 2009/1: 2; 2015/1: 2). In the current

editing papers was not a new task for him,

he participated in the advisory board of the Hungarian Sociological Association's journal, *Szociológiai Szemle*, and was also

chairman of the editorial board of *Szocio-*

*lógiai Figyelő* (a journal publishing

theoretical articles, mainly translations,

between 1985 and 2002) (*Szociológiai*

*Szemle*, 1991/1: 2; *Szociológiai Figyelő*,

2000/1: 2). Csákó's relationship with

*Educatio* began early on, and as an

objectification of this we can mention that

according to the specific construction of

*Educatio*'s editorial board, the editors of

thematic issues - if they are not members

of the board in the first place - temporarily

become members of the editorial board.

Chaco edited the *Educatio* issue 14.

*Elit* (1995/4).

Csákó had several previous links to the

editorial board. His most frequent co-

author was Ilona Liskó (who wrote under

the name of Gáborné Havas in an earlier

period of her life), who was the editor of

*Educatio*'s permanent column, "Va- lóság".

The founding editor-in-chief, Tamás

Kozma Kozma, was already in 1982-

when Csákó, calling him an active

opponent, invited him to be a

spokesman on the issue of apprenticeship

training on the radio programme he was

hosting (*Petőfi People*, 1982.19 June: 7).

Two members of the editorial board

(Péter Lukács and Géza Sáska) were also

members of the Miklós Szabó housing

seminars, which were of great importance

in the opposition subculture of the 1980s

(László Szentirmay: *Polvax - A political*

*club in the Kádár and Orbán era*. Budapest,

Ir-ma Szamizdat KIADÓ, 2019: 35), and

as a member of the family-friend network<sup>1</sup>

of contacts, Csákó's joining the editorial

board was also welcome. One of *Educatio*'s

founders (Tibor Péter Nagy) was a lecturer

in the sociology of education at the EL-

TE TÁTK, led by Csákó, from the early

1990s. When Csákó became a member of

the editorial board in 2000, Ildikó

Hrubos, who had worked with Csákó on

the board of the Sociological Society and

the Sociological Committee of the

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was also

a member of the editorial board.<sup>2</sup> The

"Research

<sup>1</sup> [https://archive.org/download/Csako\\_Mihaly\\_75/LukacsP20211014.pdf](https://archive.org/download/Csako_Mihaly_75/LukacsP20211014.pdf), [https://archive.org/download/Csako\\_Mihaly\\_75/SaskaG20211014.pdf](https://archive.org/download/Csako_Mihaly_75/SaskaG20211014.pdf) [All internet references -

with one exception - retrieved on 01.10.2021]

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uni-corvinus.hu/download/cv/hrubos-ildiko?language=hu>



while" column was led by Anikó Fehérvári (later for a time Csákó's deputy editor-in-chief, then chief editor during Csákó's presidency), a former PhD student of Csákó.<sup>3</sup>

For many of the members of *Educatio's* editorial board, Csákó, who was not yet a member of the editorial board, was not only a good friend and colleague, but also a strong reference person, who was often asked whether they "liked *Educatio*", whether they liked the studies. (He gave important advice to many studies *during their preparation*, as can be seen from the Csákó correspondence, which is searchable in OSA with permission.)

Csákó brought new people into the editorial work. This is how Csákó's TÁTK roommate, an important colleague of the educational psychology department, Iván Bajomi, joined the editorial board of *Educatio*, and recently Eszter Neumann - the first student of this department - was asked to be the thematic editor of a magazine issue. Csákó retired from TÁTK and moved to the WJLF in 2009, where he worked in the department headed by Péter Lukács and later by Hanna Zsuzsanna Biró, and did research at the Institute of Sociological Research headed by Tibor Péter Nagy.

In the crisis period of 2001 of the Institute for Educational Research behind *Educatio* (the reason for which was - as always - that the maintaining ministry was not very enthusiastic about this independent professional institute), the Centre for Educational and Youth Research and Training of ELTE was "founded under the leadership of Csákó,"<sup>4</sup> inviting Ilona Liskó, Péter Lukács, Tibor Nagy Péter Nagy, Géza Sáska, one of the founding members of *Educatio*, to join the group, and inviting (the then

already ex-*Educatio*, but a frequent author) Ján Setényi, *Educatio* editorial board member Iván Bajomi, István Polónyi.

Three of the members<sup>22</sup> of the sociology of education subcommittee founded by Csákó in 2008 (Péter Darvas, Mária Nagy, János Setényi) have previously participated in the editorial board of *Educatio*, and seven (R. Katalin Forreatio, Ildikó Hrubos, Tamás Kozma, Péter Lukács, Tibor Péter Nagy, István Polónyi, Géza Sáska) were also members of the committee, and apart from Péter Somlai and Gábor Halász, who are the editors of the issue, we can say that this sociological education

Half of the "virtual governing body" of *Educatio*, Chaco saw fit to invite.<sup>6</sup>

As an object of Csákó's appreciation of this circle, we can consider the fact that he wrote a total of five book reviews or obituaries in his lifetime - and most of them took place in the context of an editorial board member. *Hungarian Science*, 2013/5; Ilona Liskó, researcher of reality [1944-2008]. *Beszélő*, 2008/7-8; A book suspected of being a basic work. [Andor Mihály-Liskó Ilona: *Iskolaválasztás és mobilitás*, *Iskolakultúra Könyvek*, 2000].

The clear preference of the editorial board for Csákó can be objectified not only by the fact that Kozma mentions in his memoirs, among the most important personal issues, that he managed to win Csákó for the newly created position of deputy editor-in-chief of the editorial board (Kozma, Tamás: *Erdei Séta*. ÚMK, Budapest, 2011: 291), that Csákó's presidency (death of the

<sup>3</sup> [https://doktori.elte.hu/index.php?menu\\_id=192&lang=HU&sz\\_ID=712&show=1](https://doktori.elte.hu/index.php?menu_id=192&lang=HU&sz_ID=712&show=1)

<sup>4</sup> Péter Lukács: Research or policy-making. *Educatio* 2001/1. pp. 94-102.

<sup>5</sup> <https://tat.elte.hu/kutatokozpontok/oktatas/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://archive.org/details/mta\\_oktatasszociologiai\\_albizottsag/](https://archive.org/details/mta_oktatasszociologiai_albizottsag/)



when the position itself was abolished, the editorial board supported him by consensus, but also by the fact that Hanna Zsuzsan Biró interviewed him for the "Reality" column (*Educatio*, 2007/2: 285), and the only unusual, non-thematic issue of the strictly thematic journal was edited by Péter Lukács from the <sup>7</sup>proceedings of a conference organised by Péter Péter Nagy in honour of Csákó's seventieth birthday (*Educatio*, 2012/2). Csákó in the In a series entitled "Social scientists under three regime changes", he spoke for the first and last time in public about his life and career (answering questions from Péter Tibor Nagy and Csákó student Domokos Sik).<sup>8</sup>

And finally, some further objectifications of the relationship between Csákó's memory and the *Educatio* circle: besides his own obituary (written by Tamás Kozma) (*Educatio*, 2018/3), Géza Sáska remembered Csákó in a co-authored journal (*Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, 2018/11-12). Csákó's legacy of books and papers (one of which has become a special collection of the WJLF, the other of the OSA) is being overseen by Tibor Péter Nagy, in accordance with Csákó's will; three of the four speakers at the Csákó memorial meeting<sup>9</sup> organised at his death were from *Educatio*, and two of the four organisers of the two-day Csákó memorial<sup>10</sup> conference on the anniversary of his death were from the *Educatio* editorial staff. In 2022, Zsuzsanna Hanna Biró will organise a conference commemorating Csákó's last great passion for the profession, entitled *What you [don't] know about political socialisation... - hommage à Mihály Csákó*, and there are plans for a posthumous volume in the *Society and Education* series to be edited by her. The "becoming of history" itself

<sup>10</sup> <http://okrtatas.uni.hu/20200131.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://archive.org/details/csako70/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://archive.org/details/Csako\\_Mihaly\\_75/](https://archive.org/details/Csako_Mihaly_75/)

<sup>9</sup> <http://oktatás.uni.hu/20190220.htm/>

The fact that Réka Heszterényi OSA staff member who processed the legacy *could no longer be* a Csákó student can be seen as a further objectification of the legacy.<sup>11</sup>

In the rest of the paper, we will recall how Csákó's writings in *Educatio* document his various professional interests, and attempt to to "trace" the antecedents of these works, i.e. their embeddedness in Csákó's oeuvre.

### Apprenticeships

Csákó has already contributed a study to the third *issue of Educatio* (Mihály Csákó - Béla Benyó: Vocational training and demography. *Educatio*, 1993/1). Vocational training (more precisely, the social inequalities visible in vocational training) was one of Csákó's long-standing themes, which he came to when - due to the 1970 politically hardening university relations around him - he moved from the BTK to the party's Institute of Social Sciences (!)

"banished", his boss, Ferenc Gazsó, gave him this as a theme. The first visible products have the latter in common (Mihály Csákó - Ferenc Gazsó - Gáborné Havas. *Társadalomtudományi Közlemények: az MSZMP KB Társomtudományének Intézet Intézet Társocialudományének Journal*, 1974/2; Uők. *Ibid.* 1974/3-4). This topic was later also partly examined in close interconnection with Ilona Liskó, as Csákó said, their more important studies - including their joint doctoral dissertation, which for political reasons was only accepted after the regime change (1991) - were written in such a way that it was inseparable which part was written by whom.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://osaarchivum.444.hu/2021/11/19/>, <http://oktatas.uni.hu/20220110.htm> [Retrieved 112021.. 09.]

education from a sociological perspective. *Life and Science*, 1975/8; Pathways to becoming a skilled worker. *Life and Science*, 1976/19; Who goes to industrial school becomes an industrial worker? On the social image of apprentices. *Light*, 1978/1; Towards a sociology of the career development of apprentices. The most striking, "quasi-opposition" paper on the subject was published in *Medvetánc* (Mihály Csákó - Ilona Liskó. *Medvetánc*, 1982/2-3). (*Medvetánc*, published from 1981, was the most radical element of the legal journal field at that time, published by the strongly pro-reform KISZ committee of ELTE - Under the protection of Éva Ancsel, and to some extent with György Aczél behind Ancsel's back.)

The peak of Csákó's purely sociological work was the description of the changes in the social occupational bloc, already after the change of regime (*Szociológiai Szemle*, 1996/1), and although, as one of the directors of the Rézler Foundation, he never lost his interest in the social interdependence of vocational education and training, this was more evident in the fact that he approached his newer interests, such as the inequalities of the path to higher education, from this point (How many, from where, to where? *School Culture*, 1997/6-7), and wrote his next *Educatio study* with this concept in mind (Further Vocational Education. *Educatio*, 1998/3). Also a new interest - Europe studies in Csákó's last period at TÁTK

- is also reflected in a 2016 *Educatio study* (Vocational Education and Training and European Integration, *Educatio*, 2016/1). Among other things, as it has not only examined this in a pan-European perspective, but also in a mid-European perspective (The labour market challenges of the millennium in the Carpathian Basin. *Regio: minority, politics, society*,

2001/4). And the last great love, political socialisation, has also found "apprenticeship-specific" approach (Apprenticeship and democracy: a sketch of the political socialisation of apprentices. *New Pedagogical Review*, 2009/10).

### The road to university

In addition to the above-mentioned article on the pathway to university, two other *Educatio* studies by Csákó deal with the subject of the pathway to university. The article "Reflections on the criteria for admission to higher education" (*Educatio*, 2003/2) looks back over three decades. The thirty-year-old Csákó (*Valóság*, 1971/6) enters the debate with a polemic, getting into a tough argument with the powerful László Kahulits (the ideologically conflicting secretary of the public economic university party and later head of<sup>12</sup> the department of the Ministry of Education, who was one of the most important Hungarian economists of all times), who was discussing the facts of higher education policy in France - in a peculiar way, just after 1968! - to justify the narrowing of the path to university.

An extract from Csákó's writing at the time: the Perspective "I believe in the social elimination of "disadvantage" (currently as an aspiration), the provision of all forms of culture for all, and, regardless of age, regular social support to explore and support the development of individual skills, "building 'bridges' between different sectors and levels of training, providing legally sanctioned qualifications at all levels, which also give access to further learning and work with specific qualifications."

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<sup>12</sup> Who, however, is mentioned in other memoirs as a member of a reformist leadership group (Letter from Il-diko Hrubos: 25.10.2021)

"This is also an indication of the topics on which further research should focus. Precisely those that are not even mentioned in the position we are criticising. In its opinion, scientific analysis should be confined to research into the development of orientation, methods of applying admission criteria, the psychological factors of the entrance examination

- i.e. within the system, by selecting its components - and "by staying on this path, our admission system will continue to meet the requirements of the future".

Csákó later did not diminish his opposition to those who wanted to make the admission system restrictive - his conviction that a highly selective admission system was unacceptably disadvantageous for children from disadvantaged social groups, despite the fact that it was in the group interest of his own "circle" (those who taught social sciences at elite universities) to deal with pre-selected groups already in the 1990s.

By the way, Csákó - who returned to sociology teaching at the request of Tibor Huszár - and thanks to the "good eye" of the young Huszár (who discovered Csákó's talent in the 1960s) and the excellent tactical sense of the elderly Huszár (a leader connected to the Aczél circle), became deputy director and then director of the Faculty after the change of regime, a leader connected to the opposition, who was clearly elected by the staff. (This position was filled once more in the 2000s after the death of Dénes Némedi.) Csákó's management concept - well before the BSc-MSc system - was that of a broad-based, multi-output course with many students, in keeping with the old professional-political values described above, as he later reports (Before Bologna: a forgotten reform plan for sociological and social education. [Addendum to the

the history of Hungarian higher education.] In. *Research in Higher Education*. Edited by Tibor Péter Nagy - Zsuzsanna Veroszta. Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2014: 40-48).

The other *Educatio* article ("... and the doctor's child?: contributions to the higher education of children of certain categories of intellectuals. *Educatio*, 2002/2) is the follow-up to Csákó's biggest project. At the request of the Soros Foundation - also the largest research project in its history - Csákó, in collaboration with Miklós László, carried out a unique international survey of *all* school-leavers in the spring of 1998, linking it to the autumn survey of *all* first-year university and college students. The unprecedented completeness of the research (apart from a Laky-Asztalos data collection in 1930/31, which is now only known from processing) and the 63,000 cases of data collected in the past (later called *data linkage* in the world methodological literature) was also unique in that it was the first to apply the method of linking separately recorded data, and used in the 2000s in the FP-7 research of Viktor Karády and Tibor Péter Nagy on the student population of the 1850s-1950s) and social forces (Jewish and German ancestry, birth occupation, for example, to such an extent that the data were not available in the literature). The study also took into account the influence of the specific school and class community, the comparability of the place of birth, residence, school and further education, subject-specific achievement, motivation, etc.).

Csákó is not published, the higher education his final report on the social laws of selection and self-selection, based on a sample from this huge database,



cited earlier, and the "Doctor's child" article on professional continuing education, are examples of two types of "filtering" of the full database - one for a sector and one for a social group. The latter article is also important for elite researchers, since, rightly assuming that the children of the top educated elite continue their education in full, we get a picture of the middle-aged top elite of the millennium that cannot be reconstructed from anywhere else. Csákó later encouraged many to use the sample database as well as the full database - Mihály Andor, Hanna Zsuzs Zsuzs Biró, Péter Nagy, Tábor Nagy and Péter Róbert have so far made use of his offer, most of the results have been published in *Educatio*, but the possibility of studying the family background of middle-aged graduates in full (i.e. beyond the possibilities of the 2016 microcensus, even for those who graduated in 1998) has not yet been exploited. Csákó also recognised that, regardless of further education, this repository can also be used to show the social push of subject achievement (Subjects, grades and family background. *Educatio*, 2012/4).

the centre, sociologist Mihály Csákó, told our newspaper

### **The sociology of religion, also important in private life**

There is one line of Csákó's interest for which we have not found any evidence quotable from *Educatio*, and that is the sociology of religion. Public interest and commitment to minorities are intertwined with ~~sin~~ objectives in the establishment of the Centre for Information on Religious Studies in 1996. The aim was to reduce the ignorance and intolerance that had been felt in the 1990s, particularly towards small churches (and which, it should be added, was again being played on by the ~~ma~~ the 2010s). "One of the initiators of

said that István Kamarás and János Szántó, sociologists of religion, and Péter Popper, psychologist, among others, participated in the establishment of the institution, which is modelled on the English model. András Veér, psychiatrist and ministerial commissioner, will also be involved in the work.

According to the founders, the centre is needed because the revival and colourfulness of religious movements has led to a rise in religious intolerance in recent years, both in private and public life. According to Mihály Csákó, those who promote exclusionary ideas often take advantage of the public's lack of information, inaccurate and unfounded beliefs, and often spread one-sided and incorrect information about certain forms of religion. The aim is therefore to promote access

to verified, scientific information on churches and religious movements." (*Népszabadság*, 14 June 1996: 4.)

Csákó strongly supported the research of his partner, the eminent church scholar Zsuzsa Horváth (1950-1994), without - at that time - having a clear written record of this. The foreword to the posthumous Horváth Zsuzsa studies, edited into the volume, was written by two leading figures in Hungarian religious studies, István Kamarás with enthusiasm and Miklós Tomka with great disapproval, and portrayed a researcher of religious sociology, deeply committed to religious freedom, but not a believer, from the point of view of a researcher of the same kind (*Holmi*, 1997/8: 1183; *Századvég*, 2004/33: 221). In this work, Csákó raises the question of whether a researcher's commitment not primarily to religious freedom, but to the institutional system of a religion, prevents him from being objective in the sociology of religion. On the sixtieth anniversary of the birth of Zsuzsa

made efforts to organise some kind of research group to work on the Zsuzsa Horváth legacy.<sup>13</sup>

In a lecture on Csákó's last topic, political socialisation, he also analysed the student community, which can be described by the words "attending religious education" and "would like to attend religious education", on the sixtieth birthday of his friend Gábor Iványi - thus contributing to the Hungarian sociology of religion.<sup>14</sup>

### The last love: political socialisation

Csákó's last great passion was linked to political socialisation. His seminal *Educatio* work is *Youth and Politics*, which is part of the *Political Socialization* (*Educatio*, 2004/4). Many of the details of this topic are also discussed in subsequent issues of *Educatio*. *School-school alienation* (2012/4); *School-age alienation* (2011/2); *Secondary school alienation* (2017/3).

An outstanding feature of Csákó's life's work is that he organised a political socialisation survey every election year, which constitutes a timeline of which we know of few other examples in the history of Hungarian sociology - and Csákó, who was otherwise notoriously modest, often mentioned it. Csákó also involved his students in this research (Mihály Csákó - Eszter Berényi - Éva Bognár - Kyra Tomay:

Political socialisation in Hungary in the 1990s. *Szociológiai Szemle*, 2000/1). Although the editorial board of the *Society and Education* series put strong pressure on Csákó in the late 2010s to produce a "collected Csákó", he chose instead to compile a collection of papers on political socialisation

- but this has not happened.

Csákó organized a session at the Congress of the Sociological Society on 26 October 2013, where he invited the first generation of the already elderly political socialization research in Hungary to collect and organize their memories, and asked a young sociologist to record these presentations. Why not - whether by misunderstanding or inattention, we shall never know - the recording did not start, and we found out that evening. Csákó uttered a sentence - rarely heard from his lips, and one that was seriously reproachful: 'it's gone forever, because the former company will never be together again, they will never again spend so much time and energy putting together and interpreting this research story'. This formulation also shows that Csákó really did experience the reconstruction of the research labyrinth of political socialisation as his own task. At the request of Viktor Karády, he wrote a history of modern Hungarian socialisation as part of a European project, but he did not set out to publish it, in stark contrast to one of its sub-chapters on the history of political socialisation, which he wrote in much greater detail, and in which he also writes about himself (!):

"Since 1989 he has been carrying out political socialisation research, but in the nineties his earlier socio-educational themes are still dominant, and he is also leading a national study of upward mobility - and it is crucial that he does not consider himself a researcher on political socialisation. When Daniel German is asked to write a foreword for the aforementioned joint

<sup>13</sup> <https://archive.org/details/VallsszociologiaiKonferencia2010/> After the death of Csákó, the Horváth bequest was transferred from the custody of Tibor Péter Nagy to the OSA.

<sup>14</sup> <https://adoc.pub/megjegyzes-esztes-asked-sazalekaban.html/>



to the edited volume, rejects it on this ground. This only changes in the second half of the following decade, when he not only conducts a forty-yearly survey of seventh-graders in the capital, but also two large and highly publicised surveys of secondary schools (in 2005 and 2008). In these, the links with Ildiko Szabó and István Murányi have become close. And finally, with the organisation of the family research on political socialisation [...] he becomes a political socialisation researcher for good, only since 2012 the education administration has not allowed him to conduct research in his normal research field, primary and secondary schools.) Csákó does not see himself as a theoretician on this issue, nor does he see Ildiko Szabó, the only sociologist who has devoted her entire life's work to research on political socialisation and about whom she has written a book review of academic value (Ku- tatásfejlesztés a politischer szocializáció. [Ildikó Szabó. A politika szerepe az identitások formá lódásában Magyarországon 1867-2006. L'Harmattan, Budapest 2009,], *Szociológiai Szemle*, 2009/2), only his student Domokos Sík, whom he also asked to be his successor in the ELTE TÁTK OITK.

"An important characteristic of Hungarian research on political socialisation is that it has no skeleton, no institutional embeddedness. It is not a priority topic for any research institution, nor a distinguished research direction for any university. In fact, its fate rests on the ambiguity of the Hungarian political situation and, within it, of the orientation of youth, i.e. however scientifically we formulate it, we as researchers are still fundamentally interested in the question of how close the

and further into the future from the snapshots of their sons." (A sketch of the history of Hungarian research on political socialization. *Hungarian Science*, 2017/9.)

## Homo politicus

Csákó, as the chairman of *Educatio's* editorial board, has always been a strong advocate of the position - fortunately held to a greater or lesser extent by all members of the editorial board - that *Educatio's* intellectual independence should be protected from 2010the leadership of the Institute for Educational Research and Development, which was trying to limit it, especially in connection with the so-called *Balance* numbers, and he played an important role in finding *Educatio's* new (no longer threatened by politics) organisational location. (For a while, Csákó seemed to be planning an *Educatio Society*, at other times he was feeling his way towards the Faculty of Social Sciences, but finally he welcomed the ELTE PPK - Academic Faculty construction.) The choice of themes for the *Educatio issues* in the 2010s also reflects Mihály Csákó's marked democratic commitment. This is also reflected in his article with Annamária Sebestyén entitled *An Authentic Student Movement (Educatio, 2017/1)*, which documents the activities of the Independent Student Parliament, which Csákó helped to set up as an expert, and his last article, *Forums and Protest Movements in Public Education (Educatio, 2017/4)*, which, in turn, documents the politicisation of teachers. Considering that over the years, the hatred against migrants and foreigners has become a basic element of Hungarian governmental policy, while his 2011 study on xenophobia, cited above, is only a document of Csákó's last favourite topic, the politicisation debate, the fact that his book on the topic of "*Middle Level of Xenophobia*", entitled



He returned to this in 2017, and can now be considered an active politician.

Csákó has been politicised all his life. The libertarian Csákó cited his communist mother as an important role model, and his father was a prominent leader of the leather trade union. This was not a recent attraction in the family, as it was in many - to the workers' movement that came to power in 1949 - Mihály Csákó (a member of the same village, although we are not sure of their family connection), a member of the generation of Mihály Csákó's father, was a victim of the White Terror in the forest of Orgovány ( *Jövő*, 28 Jun1922.: 6). The sociologist Csákó's father, a shoemaker, had been a member of the illegal Communist Party since 1930 (*Népszabadság*, 22 Oct1966.: 4), was convicted of Communist agitation in 1934 (*Dunán-túl*, 12 Sept. 1934: 7), and in the autumn of 1944 he played a role in one of the very few armed actions against the Arrow Cross in Kőbánya (*Magyar Hírlap*, 3 Jan1970.: 4).

In the early 1950s, István Kemény - the teacher of the teenage "system man" Mihály Csákó - whose difference from the system he still remembers in October.2017<sup>15</sup> As the KISZ secretary of the Petőfi High School, he also told the veterans about the Galilei Circle, the most outstanding institution of the Hungarian civil radio spirit, in addition to the Soviet Republic (*Pedagógusok Lapja*, 15 May 1958: 5). In the meantime, he read Hegel and Marx, considered philosophy his vocation - and was admitted to the BTK as a student of modern philosophy (*Magyar Nemzet*, 27 March 1966: 5). He organizes a film festival at the ELTE BTK as the KISZ's basic organization (*Egyetemi Lapok*, 7 May 1960: 2). In his third year, he was already a member of the faculty KISZ leadership (*Egyetemi Lapok*, 7 Oct1961.: 2), and held the position of teacher training officer

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[http://archive.org/details/Csako\\_Mihaly\\_75/\(14\)](http://archive.org/details/Csako_Mihaly_75/(14))

the contact with the high schools (*University Newspaper*, 25 Nov. 1961: 2), the "curly-haired boy with glasses" is a leader in a youth construction camp, as *Vas Népe* reports (6 Jul. 1962: 3). Tibor Huszár (remembered in 2017 as having tried to found a sociology department since 1963, so it must have played a role in his cadre policy to see a philosopher *with an interest in social sciences* in the young Csáko) was chosen by Tibor Huszár to teach Marxist ethics instead of him, became an intern, graduated with a red diploma (*University Papers*, 3 Oct. 1964: 1). Csáko taught dialectical and historical secularism, and reflected on contemporary philosophers in a short paper (Mihály Csáko - György Józsa: *Annales universitatis scientiarum budapestinensis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae. Sectio Philosophica. Tomus III-IV. Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, 1965/3). That he could not have been

unsuccessful as a teacher can be seen from the fact that he first taught the "Dialmat Seminar" only as a generally compulsory subject for second- and third-year humanities students, but soon he was assigned to teach ethics - teaching third-year philosophy supplementary students was a sign of greater appreciation (*ELTE Értesítő*, 1964. p. 150). He also wrote a textbook with important co-authors (*Essays on Dialectical Materialism, I. The Material*. By Pál Sándor. Compiled by. He published a single classic philosophical essay, entitled *Intention and Consequence*, in the 1966 *Tájékoztató* (a publication of the Ministry of Education, Department of Marxism-Leninism Education), presumably a slightly improved version of his former thesis. His first study in *Világosság* had already



(after a study trip to France in 1968-69) shows a French orientation and anthropological interest, and is part of a doctoral thesis in philosophy (Lévi-Strauss and the dilemma. *Világosság*, 1969/7).

Markedly political - or more precisely lack of policy! - is published as a controversial article in the *University Press* (18 Dec. 1965: 3).

"One of the decisive factors is that our theoretical knowledge is also incomplete, because we don't know the politics theoretically. And often most of us ignore it completely or follow our instincts. But we must realise that we cannot and must not conform to abstract ideals of goodness, truth and justice. We live our whole lives in political relations, and therefore if we want to be socially good, just and fair, we must be political: we must find the abstract ideals in concrete political ends and means. If we do not become politicians, we will always be inferior to events," he writes.

Csákó's lessons are also political - for the post-1975 generation of readers who no longer know the history of Marxist subjects from personal experience, it is important to know that between 1956 and 1989 the fronts were reorganised: in the sixties, progress was the politics of those opposed to the dogmatic digestion of theses, while after the seventies, the transformation into a philosophy of the subject was the more desirable alternative for critics of the system.

Csákó tells us about this in an interview in 1966: "For a long time, the students in the seminars asked and debated about the social causes of the Chinese Communist Party's activities, but now they are more interested in cultural policy and art. The necessity and usefulness of economic reform was never for a moment discussed.

- Are young people just learning dialectical materialism or do they feel it?

- Among my current students, I do not think there are any who are learning materialist theses while preserving their ideological convictions. A thorough knowledge of Marxist philosophy is at the same time its religion (*Magyar Nemzet*, 27 March 1966.).

In 1967 (in the reform spirit), the Ministry announces a competition for the renewal of Marxist philosophy education - and Csákó (as co-author with Hamburger and Józsa) is nominated. But by the time the plan is ready, the political winds have changed and it is subject to some very harsh criticism.

The young politician thus becomes undesirable at ELTE, and from 1971 he becomes a staff member of the Institute of Social Sciences of the MSZMP KB, and it is then that he first studies sociology. His training is led by Zsuzsa Ferge, with whom he maintains a deep friendship, and who helps to strengthen Csákó's French orientation (which later results in a translation of Durkheim and Ariès and a collection of texts). He continued to be political - his articles, studies and lectures on skilled workers and apprentices were a legal critique of the system, about how the party-state's work increased the disadvantages of the supposed ruling class, the working class. His rediscovery of the Mayo experiment in industrial sociology, decades earlier, appeared in *Valóság* (1972/3), as did his already cited discussion of higher education policy. Mihály Sükösd, who wrote the history of *Valóság*, the most influential journal of reformist intellectuals and was then a member of the editorial board, refers to the young Csákó as a member of the last generation of *Valóság* (*Mozgó Világ*, 1993/12: 105).

However, this politicking - if it did not take place at university - was within the bounds of the party-state. "They gave us freedom inside", Csákó recalls in 2017 of the institute, whose management, however, was "free publishing" is no longer a reality.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, because the pro-reform forces were only slowly repressed, and in contrast to the Bishkuks, Brezhnev ended up representing a balance of anti-reform and pro-reform forces (in domestic politics, he sacrificed Rezső Nyers and Jenő Fock, György Aczél, who was not willing to completely oust him, but was willing to reduce him to the position of deputy prime minister, and who was willing to help in the invasion of Czechoslovakia after the attempted mediation in the Branch Churches), on the other hand, because the anti-reform forces, who considered the economists, who were the main enemy of the economists who advocated marketisation and the reduction of income inequalities, were less threatened by the sociologists who protested against the reduction of social inequalities, and, on the other hand, because after Helsinki, the party groups who considered Western relations important were also opposed to any administrative steps.

Csákó's politics - since he was a stable employee of the Social Press Research Institute, which functioned as a department of the KB - was not in the opposition and government, but in the power field of the pro- and anti-reform forces of the state party in the 1970s.

The role played in the cultural alternative movement in his particular life situation of "being an oppositionist as a party employee" was also important, as was the role of the middle-aged at the Marczibányi Square Film Club experiencer - Peter Darvas drew my attention. Attila Kaszás' memories also

are supported by.<sup>17</sup> As a first document of his clear opposition to the party and the government, on 1979.29 October he protested in person against the trial of the representatives of the Prague Charter (the most important democratic movement in 77Eastern Europe at the time) and demanded their release (*Irodalmi Újság*, 4 Nov1979.; *Ameri-kai-Kanadai Magyar Élet*, 5 Jan1980.: 4). Csákó is thus forced to leave the Institute of Social Sciences, but his next job will be at the newspaper Számok István Huszár selected together with the "co-stud" director. The social context of information technology and IT education really excites him - and technology itself: when Csákó was asked what career he was going to pursue, he answered without blinking: I was going to be an electrical engineer (*Magyar Nemzet*, 1966.27 March: 5). Motivated by this 'interest in information technology', he wrote his only book (*Mikrosiker: Mikro- számítógépek a hauskezelőségeket*. Budapest, Institute for Cultural Research, 1987), the subject of the book *Csikócsapat*. An important study on the adolescence of a successful Hungarian institution in the volume celebrating Tibor Huszár's 70th birthday (Erika Iványi, Zsuzsa **Solymosi** [eds.]. Budapest, ELTE Institute of Sociology and Social Policy, 2000<sup>18</sup>), and not out of necessity he publishes about it in *Educatio* and *Iskolakultúra*.)

In 1981, the Institute for Educational Research creator Rogue does not invite Chaco there. "At that time, Mihály Csákó was a very undesirable person for politicians, and it was not possible to gather very many people who were politically problematic at a newly organised institute.

<sup>17</sup> [https://archive.org/download/loadd/Csako\\_Mihaly\\_75/KaszasA20211104.pdf](https://archive.org/download/loadd/Csako_Mihaly_75/KaszasA20211104.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The paper was later published elsewhere (SZAMALK\_es\_ALK) and is available here: <https://itf.njszt.hu/wp->



was considered to be tical. From the very first moment of the organisation, there were criticisms from the ministry and the party centre that there were too many troublesome people here - says Gazsó to Anikó Fe- hérvári in an interview twenty years later (*Educatio*, 2001/1: 128). (Objectively, it should be noted that Gazsó does not remember this, but Csákó does, in an interview with Vera Szabari, that Csákó's main source of livelihood when he became a freelancer in 1985 was a research career in the ministry, which he had obtained with Gazsó's explicit support.<sup>19</sup> Gazsó was moved in this direction, we add, either by remorse or by the fact that we were already in the Gorbachev era.

Thus, Csákó, who leaves "Társtud" - together with Zsuzsa Horváth - becomes an important player of the opposition from three points of view.

The documents kept in the Open Society Archive - which were kindly informed by Iván Székely, the head of the archive <sup>20</sup>- and István Jávör's photo collection show that Csákó was an important participant in the Miklós Szabó seminar on the recent history of the party-state and Soviet history.

Csákó (in the company of Péter Ambrus, Ferenc Erős, Pál Léderer, Endre Sík, Sándor Szilágyi) issued a call for intellectual aid (translation, coding, typing, etc.) for the opposition sympathizers. This became the "MU- KI": the Labour Exchange Office; according to other sources, the Institute for Post-Labour Research. (*Va- lóság*, 1990/4: 136), which was established in August 1980 and 'from October moved into the apartment of Mihály Csákó and Zsuzsa Horváth at 16-18 Dohány Street, VII;

where there were dentistry classes on Thursday afternoons. "The activity of the MUKI was essentially ended by the fact that during the house searches of 1 September the authorities took away the office's files, the registration of job applications and needs, which not only paralysed the office's operation, but also 'criminalised' the MUKI, and thus discouraged many people", recalls Sándor Radnóti (*Beszélő*, Feb. 1998: 88). Csákó and Sík, through the Sociological Society, even made an attempt to save the MUKI's activities under the name of "Information Mediation Office" (MSZT board minutes, 8 May 1981. *Documents on sociological life in the 1970s [Selections from the legacy of Sándor Szalai]*. The Sali Sai Sai Sai Sai Collection (Budapest, 1990) - where, however, they could not win the support of Andorka, Cseh Szombathy.

The great importance of Mihály Csákó and Zsuzsa Horváth is also due to the fact that "they were the founders of the infrastructure of Hungarian samizdat" - recalls János Kenedi (*Magyar Hírlap*, 25 March 1996). To give some concrete examples, Ferenc Kőszeg - when the secret documents became searchable - found a report dated 25 November 1980, according to which "two targets: 'Ingo-vány', i.e. Mihály Csákó and 'Mézes' (?), observed by III/III s, were discussing the plan of a 'magazine with 8-12 sheets', to be published in 400-500 copies" (*Beszélő*, 1999.)

And when it finally - in 1981autumn - gets going the illegal, but now a real printed magazine, *Beszélő*, "the samples were in Mihály Csákó's apartment, he and his wife, Zsuzsa Horváth, were in charge of the type- setting", recalls László Rajk (*Nép- szabadság*, 24 Feb. 2001: 27).

In Csákó, therefore, the party centre, which from December 1980 onwards was determined to pursue a more active policy towards the opposition, and the Soviet or Eastern

<sup>19</sup> [https://socio.hu/uploads/files/2019\\_1/31\\_csako.pdf/](https://socio.hu/uploads/files/2019_1/31_csako.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> [https://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/jD7wXg25/;](https://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/jD7wXg25/) <https://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/jD7JKYVQ/>



unlike its German counterparts, the Hungarian secret police did not have an independent political identity.

The competent department of the KB (an important source because it analysed public documents, reports of state and party organisations and the lessons of the secret service data collection *together*) named Csákó as the sixth opposition leader in its report to the Political Committee of 1982.30 March (the only leaders considered more important than him were György Bence, János Kis, János Kenedi, Mihály Hamburger, Sándor Szilágyi). (After Csákó, the names of Ferenc Kőszeg, Mária Kovács, Gábor Demszky, Ottilia Solt, András Nagy, László Rajk are mentioned in the report.) Report of the Scientific, Public Education and Cultural Department of the MSZMP Central Committee to the Political Committee. Pál Szeredi: *Documents of the nation-building democratic resistance 1968-1987*. Pilis-szentkereszt, 2017: 269.)

Csákó is an active participant in important opposition signature collections, including the one in defence of György Krassó (*Beszélő*, Dec. 1984: 749).

In 1984, it was suggested that the Soros

He and Zsuzsa Horváth would be the secretaries of the foundation, but Csákó, seeing that running oppositionists as exposed as they were would endanger the negotiations between Soros and the MTA, helped Soros' confidants to search instead - writes Béla Nóvé, a researcher of the history of the foundation (*Kritika*, 1998/4: 17). László Kardos became secretary of the Soros Foundation on Csákó's proposal

- recalls István Kémény in his Kardos-nekrológy (*Magyar Hírlap*, 10 Jun 1998: 7) - which also led to conflict, but Soros was able to defend it.

When he was still a "co-student", Csákó began to study the Western European and

forms of academic unionism in the US, clearly recognising that the divide - both between generations and within unions - is whether the union's function is defined in terms of narrowly defined wage and labour advocacy or the broader social engagement of young scientists. When, in the late 1980s, the space for organising was slowly opening up in Hungary too, he wrote in his article entitled 'The Scientist's Specialist': 'It has become clear that the protection of workers', political and professional interests can take many different forms, but the trade union formation that emerges cannot limit its main objectives to the more narrowly defined protection of workers' interests. An inevitable part of this is to change the broader redistribution processes and to protect the interests of the trade unions' (*Magyar Nemzet*, 13 April 1988).

The new unions, including the TDDSZ also joined the LIGA, where Mihály Csákó became a spokesman (*Magyar Nemzet*, 1 September 1989: 5).

Although - according to the Csákó review given to Vera Szabari mentioned above - Csákó's great role in the round-table negotiations between the MSZMP and the opposition can be considered a legend in terms of event history, it is still quite indicative, that during his absence from the roundtable discussions on the roundtable talks with the opposition - supported by Soros subsidies - LIGA leaders, who had reached the point of deciding not to sign the agreement, asked the newly returned Csákó to represent their not without risk position that the agreement would not be signed because the MSZMP was not willing to withdraw from the workplace (*Magyar Hírlap*, Sept 1989: 19: 6). A

"riskiness" is shown by the fact that Huszár Despite his clear call, the rehabilitation of Csákó is delayed.



Just as before the regime change the list of names of opposition leaders in a public party document served as an objectivization for us to judge Csákó's relative weight, after the regime change the list of names in István Csurka's infamous article in his newspaper *Apák és fiúk* (*Hungarian Forum*, 31 March 1990: 2) indicates who the main enemies of the far right were - Csákó is also included in it.

Csákó, however, soon incurred the wrath of the vital labour government (*Népszabadság*, 8 March 1991: 4), because as the League's representative for international relations he complained to the UN labour organization about the MDF-KDNP-Little Farmers government, which had signed the international convention on trade union rights but failed to guarantee them. Chaco warns against an alliance between the old communist bosses and the new managers against the new independent trade unions. A press campaign is also being launched, reflecting the community of interest between union leaders and government inherited from the party-state against the "chakomihályok" (*Népszava*, 29 Jul1991.: 8).

On his American trip - where he arrived at the invitation of the AFL-CIO - he spoke at a huge rally in front of 300,000 people about the Hungarian labour relations (*Kisalföld*, 23 Sept1991.: 16), about which he was obviously able to express his views in a more appropriate form than his style in his lecture on *certain obstacles to the transformation of labour relations in Hungary in Vienna* (25-29 Aug. 1992) (*Szociológiai Szemle*, 1992/4: 61).

Csákó, as a faculty leader, is no longer involved in the professional ~~organ~~ movement, but he finds a solution compatible with his former face of professional organisation and his views on higher education policy when the social-liberal government he supports starts to make cuts. Extract from a newspaper of

the time: 'The management of the Institute of Sociology has reviewed



the situation and realised that we don't have more teachers than we need, so the redundancies would significantly reduce the quality of education. We had to look for another solution," Mihály Csákó, the institute's deputy director, told the paper. The solution seems simple: the amount withdrawn would be charged to the payroll, i.e. all the institute's staff - from the assistant professor to the university lecturer - would be given new contracts at a lower salary. The new contracts will be for the same grade but for shorter working hours. Staff will still retain their status as civil servants. Although the "mastermind" was the Institute's management, they did not want to settle the issue with a word of authority: they called a meeting of all the staff of the Institute of Sociology. None of the fifty-six full-time employees objected to the thirteen percent

pay cut. "Our main objective is to maintain education. We are confident that under these circumstances there will be no significant - to put it mildly - reduction in the quality of the Institute of Sociology." - Csákó told our newspaper." (*Esti Hírlap*, 28 Jul1995.: 3)

After the millennium, Csákó political's activism is mostly manifested in protests, e.g. when the Labour Code was amended in an anti-worker way in 2001 (*Magyar Hírlap*, 9 Apr2001.: 5), when the Church rejected integrated education according to the resolution of Catholic Bishop András Veres ("In Hungary today, at least half of the children of families living in poverty are taught in classes and schools where children from disadvantaged backgrounds attend," the signatories write. *Népszabadság*, 25 Jul2005..) He signs when the flag with the Árpád stripe appears at right-wing protests (*Magyar Hírlap*, 2006.23 September: 14), when the pre-law of the Basic Law appears (*Magyar Hírlap*, 23 September: 14).

ambuluma (*Élet és Irodalom*, 15 Apr2011.: 2), when a Horthy memorial plaque appears on the wall of the Debrecen college (*Amerikai Magyar Népszava*, 18 May 2012: 19).

The last time Csákó became more actively involved in politics was when he became an expert for the Independent Student Parliament in 2015, mobilising not only his advice but also his influence for the benefit of the institution.

\* \* \*

In his favourite poem (Heltai Jenő: *Szabad- ság*), from which these two lines -  
*This is not a gift.*

*They don't give it away for free. / Where there is no sacrifice, there is no freedom - the Csákó memorial plaque unveiled by Gábor Iványi also includes the phrase, for which to act is the most difficult norm to fulfil:*

*As long as you're still free, you're still not free, you're still just...*

*You are a cowardly prisoner.*

Misi was a free man in *this sense* throughout his life, in changing situations.

