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# The Danube Circle and the Global Civil Society in the Last Years of the Cold War

*OSA Visegrad Scholarship Report*

## Introduction: The Large Dams and the Cold War

In this report, I present the preliminary results of the research I conducted in the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives at Central European University with the support of the Visegrad Fund over the past few months. The research serves as a basis for a chapter in a larger work. This part of the work essentially analyses the international relations and activities of the Danube Circle. Before turning to the documents in the OSA Archives, I outline the circumstances that led to the construction tens of thousands of large dams worldwide and the induced emergence of the anti-dam movements in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the post-World War II era of the Cold War, there was a relentless arms race and intense economic, technological, and ideological rivalry between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold War and the building of large dams are closely linked. The United States and the Soviet Union were in a global race for influence, and both saw large dams as a way to project their power and achieve their geopolitical goals.<sup>1</sup>

Established in 1933 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was created to address a range of economic, social, and technological issues – mainly the construction of large dams – in the Tennessee Valley, a region significantly affected by the Great Depression. After World War II, from the beginning of the Cold War, the United States promoted the TVA as a development model to

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<sup>1</sup> Sneddon, C. S. (2015) *Concrete Revolution : Large Dams, Cold War Geopolitics, and the US Bureau of Reclamation*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago.

follow worldwide.<sup>2</sup> Projects like the TVA heralded as a success story<sup>3</sup>, have been offered to transform rivers worldwide, including the Danube.<sup>4</sup> During his visit to the United States in 1946, Ferenc Nagy, then prime minister of Hungary, spoke enthusiastically about his trip to the Tennessee Valley<sup>5</sup>. However, planning and dreaming for a Danube Valley Authority, a DVA<sup>6</sup> came to an abrupt halt after the communist takeover in the late 1940s, and water engineers were from then on inspired by the gigantic Soviet dams.<sup>7</sup> Typically, in communist Yugoslavia, where the Soviet Union did not have direct influence, the TVA was still referred to in 1953 in an article advocating the construction of a Danube dam.<sup>8</sup>

The Soviet Union's influence in dam-building during the Cold War has been extended to its member republics and the so-called satellite countries (e.g. Czechoslovakia<sup>9</sup> and Hungary<sup>10</sup>), and to many other regions on five continents.<sup>11</sup> For example, the Soviet Union has sought to increase its political and economic influence by participating in the construction of the High Dam of Aswan in Egypt and the Euphrates Dam in Syria.<sup>12</sup> However, according to Richard P. Tucker

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<sup>2</sup> Herrey, H. (1945) 'TVA's of the Future', *The American Scholar*. The Phi Beta Kappa Society, 14(4), pp. 488–493.

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive critique of the TVA, see: Chandler, W. U. (1984) *The myth of TVA : Conservation and development in the Tennessee Valley, 1933-1983*. Ballinger Publishing Company Cambridge, MA.

<sup>4</sup> Kiss, G. (1947) 'TVA on the Danube?', *Geographical Review*, 37(2), p. 274. doi: 10.2307/210774.

<sup>5</sup> Hevesi, E. (1946) 'Miért látogatták meg Nagy Ferencék éppen a Tennessee völgyét? TVA - Egy szociálisan átgondolt folyamszabályozás, amely példát mutat a világ valamennyi népének' ['Why did Ferenc Nagy and his companions visit the Tennessee Valley? TVA - A socially minded river management that sets an example for all peoples of the world'], *Új Magyarország*, 25 June, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Hevesi, E. (1946) 'DVA - Jövőbenéző beszélgetés tudósokkal' ['Future-oriented discussion with scientists'], *Új Magyarország*, 13 August, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Mosonyi, E. (1951) 'A kujbisevi és sztálingrádi vízlépcsők jelentősége a Szovjetunió természetátalakítási terveiben' ['The significance of the Kuybyshev and Stalingrad dams in the Soviet Union's nature transformation plans'], *Magyar Technika*, 6(2), pp. 73–83.; Mosonyi, E. (1951) 'A szovjet tudomány példamutatása nyomán nagy béketerveken dolgozunk' ['Led by the example of Soviet science, we are working on large-scale peace-plans'], *Népszava*, 14 April, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Vosnjak, B. (1953) 'Danube Valley Authority', *World Affairs*. World Affairs Institute, 116(3), pp. 72–75. doi: 10.2307/20668768.

<sup>9</sup> Kvěš, V. (1972) 'A csehszlovák-szovjet gazdasági és tudományos-műszaki együttműködés eredményei' ['Results of Czechoslovak-Soviet economic and scientific-technical cooperation'], *Pártélet - A CSKP KB folyóirata*, (26), pp. 21–26.

<sup>10</sup> Dégen, I. (1958) 'Az összefogás nagy alkotásai: a dunai vízierőművek' ['Great works of collaboration: the Danube hydropower plants'], *Népszabadság*, 30 October, pp. 2–3. HU OSA 300-40-1:275/6

<sup>11</sup> 'A Hidroprojekt öt kontinensen' ['The Hidroproject on five continents'] (1977) *Energiagazdálkodás*, 18(6), p. 278.

<sup>12</sup> Ohlendorf, A. (2023) 'The Sister of the Aswan High Dam in Syria. How the Soviet Union Tried to Gain a Monopoly in Hydraulic Infrastructures in the Middle East', *Comparativ*, 33(3), pp. 339–358.

“In the first two decades of the Cold War, a loose alliance of American engineers, managers, and diplomats was a driving force behind the construction of hydro-projects in nearly every country on or near the southern periphery of the Soviet Union, along an arc stretching from Egypt to the Philippines.”<sup>13</sup>

Both superpowers competed closely<sup>14</sup> in the planning, financing, and constructing of large dams, as they did in the arms race<sup>15</sup>, space exploration, heavy industry, etc. The construction of large dams, among other processes, including the plans for the Danube, has been significantly driven by global competition during the Cold War<sup>16</sup>. It resulted in an exponential proliferation of large dams worldwide and caused massive destruction of the freshwater ecosystems of rivers and wetlands, contributing to the ecological crisis of our time. The increase in the number of large dams over a few decades, alongside increases in population, real GDP, transport, telecommunications, water use, etc., is one typical example in a seminal paper by Will Steffen and colleagues, who suggest that the Great Acceleration, which began in the middle of the 20th century, is the most convincing candidate to mark the end of the Holocene and the beginning of the Anthropocene.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the political tensions of the Cold War, the technical communities often maintained a level of international cooperation that sometimes contrasted with the wider political climate. The International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD), a professional and advocacy organization founded in 1928, helped to promote global cooperation among dam builders during the Cold War. Engineers and professionals from different countries, including those from opposing political blocs, have exchanged ideas and information in forums such as ICOLD, contributing to the development of dam building. In 1995 the dam-building industry formed an additional advocacy organization, the International Hydropower Association (IHA), which, according to its website, now has 100 members across 120 countries.<sup>18</sup> One of the founders of the organization was the Hungarian

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<sup>13</sup> Tucker, R. P. (2010) ‘Containing Communism by Impounding Rivers : American Strategic Interests and the Global Spread of High Dams in the Early Cold War’, in McNeill, J. R. and Unger, C. R. (eds) *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 139–163.

<sup>14</sup> Engerman, D. C. (2018) *The Price of Aid : The Economic Cold War in India*. Cambridge, Massachusetts - London, England: Harvard University Press.

<sup>15</sup> van de Giesen, N. C. (2010) ‘A brief history of 20th century dam construction and a look into the future’, EGU General Assembly Conference Abstracts, 12(EGU2010-2185).

<sup>16</sup> Lagendijk, V. (2014) ‘Divided Development: Post-War Ideas on River Utilisation and their Influence on the Development of the Danube’, *The International History Review*, 37(1), pp. 80–98. doi: 10.1080/07075332.2013.859165.

<sup>17</sup> Steffen, W. et al. (2015) ‘The trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration’, *The Anthropocene Review*, 2(1), pp. 81–98. doi: 10.1177/2053019614564785.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.hydropower.org/>

hydraulic engineer Emil Mosonyi, who played a significant role in planning of the joint Czechoslovak-Hungarian Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydropower project (from now on referred to as GN HPP) and forcing them on Hungary.<sup>19</sup> So, we can see that the dam builders have built a global network with considerable influence. Anti-dam movements work with far more modest resources to protect rivers and their wildlife. A further obstacle was that during the decades of the Cold War, the state and the secret police in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries tried by all means to prevent the emergence of independent civil movements and their international relations, not only between East and West but also between the nations of the socialist bloc.

## Anti-Dam Movements

The emergence of anti-dam movements is closely linked to the growing awareness of the environmental and social problems caused by large dam projects. According to the literature, the Indian Mulshi Satyagraha initiative (1921-1924) was the world's first anti-dam movement.<sup>20</sup> However, river protection movements were uncommon before the Second World War. They only began to take off in the second half of the 20th century, when thousands of large dams blocked the world's rivers. There was a growing awareness of the widespread impacts of dams on ecosystems, communities, and cultural heritage sites. The starting point for local anti-dam movements is usually a critique of the large dams by experts and scientists, as was the case with the GN HPP. Such criticism of large dams has induced public opposition to these projects and the emergence of anti-dam movements<sup>21</sup>. By drawing attention to the environmental and social costs of dam building, they provided a powerful intellectual and moral framework for challenging the dominant paradigm of large-scale water resource development.

Even in the first half of the twentieth century, there were reports in the literature about the harmful effects of dams<sup>22</sup>, and in the post-World War II period, there were more and more

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<sup>19</sup> Vargha, J. (1981) 'Egyre távolabb a jótól : Dokumentumok a Gabčíkovo-Nagymarosi vízlépcsőrendszer történetéből [Further and further away from the good : Documents from the history of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydropower system]', *Valóság*, 24(11), pp. 56–69.

<sup>20</sup> Vora, R. (2009) *The World's First Anti-dam Movement: The Mulshi Satyagraha, 1920-1924*. Permanent Black.

<sup>21</sup> Sneddon, C. S. (2015), cited work, pp. 140.

<sup>22</sup> i. e.: 'High Dams and Fish' (1928) *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society*, 58(1), pp. 114–116. doi: 10.1577/1548-8659(1928)58[114:HDAF]2.0.CO;2.; Hora, S. L. (1940) 'Dams and the problem of migratory fishes', *Current Science (Bangalore)*, 9, pp. 406–407.

such critical publications<sup>23</sup>. The first comprehensive study about the social and environmental effects of large dams was published in 1984.<sup>24</sup> By this time, protest movements against the large dams that were destroying rivers had already sprung up in many countries around the world, challenging the decision-making monopoly of politicians and technocracy. These movements became part of global civil society, like peace initiatives, human rights defenders, and anti-nuclear movements. In the foreword of the book edited by E. Goldsmith and N. Hildyard, editors of the journal *Ecologist*, Brent Blackwelder<sup>25</sup> wrote:

«Popular thinking holds big dams to be of great economic and social benefit because they produce clean power, stop damaging floods, and help combat world hunger by providing water for irrigation. Edward Goldsmith and Nicholas Hildyard have pulled together an unparalleled assemblage of data demonstrating that big dams and water projects have not only failed to achieve those basic objectives but are also leaving a legacy of unsurpassed cultural destruction, disease, and environmental damage. This remarkable study of large water development schemes from around the world shows the dramatic difference between the rhetoric of project promoters and the grim reality of the "super-dams".»

In 1986, the second volume of “The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams”<sup>26</sup> was published, containing thirty-one case studies from twenty-three different countries, including N. F. Thorpe's article on GN HPP and the Danube Circle.<sup>27</sup> As a journalist accredited to Hungary, Thorpe has reported extensively on environmental issues, including

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<sup>23</sup> i. e.: Vogt, W. (1948) *Road To Survival*. New York: William Sloane Associates.; Garde, R. J. (1955) *A Report on Degradation Below Dams*. Colorado: A. & M.College.; Thomas Jr., W. L. et al. (eds) (1956) *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth : International Symposium*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.; Baxter, R. M. (1977) 'Environmental Effects of Dams and Impoundments', *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*. JSTOR, 8(1), pp. 255–283. doi: 10.1146/annurev.es.08.110177.001351.; Stanford, J. A. and Ward, J. V. (1979) 'Dammed Rivers of the World: Symposium Rationale', in Ward, J. V. and Stanford, J. A. (eds) *The Ecology of Regulated Streams*. Boston, MA: Springer US, pp. 1–5. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4684-8613-1\_1

<sup>24</sup> Goldsmith, E. and Hildyard, N. (1984) *The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams: Volume I. Overview*. A Report to the European Ecological Action Group (ECOROPA). Camelford, UK: Wadebridge Ecological Centre.

<sup>25</sup> Brent Blackwelder's Environmental Legacy - [International Rivers](#) December 22, 2023

<sup>26</sup> Goldsmith, E. and Hildyard, N. (eds) (1986) *The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams: Volume II. Case Studies*. Camelford, UK: Wadebridge Ecological Centre. The third volume of the book: Goldsmith, E. et al. (1992) *The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams: Volume III. A Review of Literature*. Edited by D. Trussel, E. Goldsmith, and N. Hildyard. Camelford, UK: Wadebridge Ecological Centre.

<sup>27</sup> Thorpe, N. F. (1986) *The Danube Dam and the Hungarian Greens*, *Ibid.* pp. 78–81.

the Danube. The OSA Archive also holds documents from these.<sup>28</sup> In 1986, when representatives of the Austrian Green Party protested in Budapest against the construction of the Nagymaros dam, the police arrested Thorpe and the photographer working with him.<sup>29</sup>

## The Danube Circle

From the beginning, the Danube Circle, working to prevent the construction of the GN HPP on the Danube, faced the challenges of international cooperation during the Cold War. The authorities tried to limit the exchange of information between citizens, travel, and meetings, not only between the countries of the two power blocs but also between the countries of the communist bloc. The spirit of the Iron Curtain was also present to some extent between Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

I briefly summarise the circumstances of establishing the Danube Circle in the following. After my lecture about the GN HPP's case in February 1984 in the Rakpart Klub<sup>30</sup>, with around a dozen Hungarian citizens, we decided to organize public awareness and collect signatures for a petition<sup>31</sup> demanding the suspension of the GN HPP's construction and start an open social debate involving all stakeholders<sup>32</sup>. As G. Béki wrote: "In this way, the Rakpart club was the cradle of what has since become a nationally known Danube Circle."<sup>33</sup> As the group gradually extended, we organized several lectures and two public debates with the dam builders. However, in April 1984, the authorities banned all public events related to the GN HPP. Despite this, we continued to collect signatures in a smaller group and started to organize a samizdat newsletter.<sup>34</sup> Besides me, other participants of the gradually expanding group at this time included architects Anna Perczel and Tamás Tóth,

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<sup>28</sup> *'Chernobyl Legacy Dooms Danube Beauty Spot'*, The Independent's article by Nicholas Thorpe in Budapest, B-Wire, London, 31, October 1986, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/3

<sup>29</sup> *'British journalist also detained yesterday in Budapest'*. A-Wire, London, 14, May 1987, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/4

<sup>30</sup> Béki, G. (1988) Rakpart Klub. In: *Lel-Tár*, pp. 64-65. HU OSA 205-4-140:42/33

<sup>31</sup> Kasza, L. (1984) A Bős-Nagymarosi vízlépcső építése nehézségekkel: társadalmi tiltakozás ellenére esetleg osztrák kölcsönrel. [The construction of the Bős-Nagymaros dam with difficulties: Despite social protests, possibly with an Austrian loan], In: Ribánszky, L. (Ed.) *The Wave Lengths of Tomorrow*. Radio Free Europe, Hungarian Broadcasting Department, Air date: 18 November 18 1984, HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8

<sup>32</sup> Reynolds, D. A. J. (2020) 'Let the River Flow: Fighting a Dam in Communist Hungary', *Hungarian Cultural Studies*, 13, pp. 111-130. doi: 10.5195/ahca.2020.391.

<sup>33</sup> Béki, G. (1988), *ibid.* p. 65. HU OSA 205-4-140:42/33

<sup>34</sup> The first issue of the samizdat newsletter was published in December 1984. under the title "A Duna Kör Hírei" [News of the Danube Circle], with a summary of the contents in Slovak and German. See: Vásárhelyi, J. (1988) *Duna mozgalom*. (manuscript, typed on stencil paper but not copied), HU OSA 362-0-2:5/10

civil engineers Ágoston Péterffy and László Vit, economists Tamás Fleischer and Ferenc Lagmár, film director and writer András Lányi, professor of law László Sólyom, historians István Rév and Gábor Pajkossy, literary translator and editor Iván Bába, media sociologist and film historian András Szekfű, painter and writer Gábor Karátson, hydrobiologist János Tóth, librarian Judit Vásárhelyi, and many others. The group had extensive contacts with experts, scientists, and officials in various fields, who provided the Danube Circle with a solid scientific background and a wealth of relevant, sometimes confidential information to publish in the samizdat newsletter.

## International relations and activity of the Danube Circle in documents of OSA Archives

There were several reasons to extend the group's relations and activities beyond Hungary's borders.

At the end of 1984, Austrian environmentalists succeeded in preventing the construction of the Hainburg dam on the Danube downstream of Vienna. Subsequently, to take advantage of the unused construction capacity, the Austrian company Donaukraftwerke, with the support of the Austrian government, contracted the Hungarian state to build the Nagymaros hydroelectric power plant. At the initiative of the Danube Circle, intensive cooperation between Austrian and Hungarian environmentalists began to stop the construction of the Nagymaros plant. Austrian-Hungarian environmental cooperation was discussed in D. Neubacher's PhD thesis<sup>35</sup> published later as a book<sup>36</sup>, and two short papers by M. Simonkay published in April this year.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Neubacher, D. (2021) Stop Nagymaros! Die Geschichte einer Grenzüberschreitung [Stop Nagymaros! The story of a border crossing]. PhD Thesis, Andrásy Gyula Deutschsprachige Universität Budapest.

<sup>36</sup> Apaydin, D. (2023) Stop Nagymaros! Die Geschichte einer Grenzüberschreitung [Stop Nagymaros! The story of a border crossing]. Göttingen: V&R unipress (Zeitgeschichte im Kontext #19). doi: 10.14220/9783737015448.

<sup>37</sup> Simonkay, M. (2024) Environmental Movements Linked Across the Iron Curtain in the 1980s: Hungary, Austria, and the Danube. Szeged, Hungary: Department of Contemporary History, University of Szeged, and Simonkay, M. (2024) Vízerművek és környezetvédő mozgalmak : Adalékok az 1980-as évek osztrák–magyar kapcsolataihoz [Hydroelectric power plants and environmental movements : Contributions to Austrian-Hungarian relations in the 1980s], Századok, 158(1), pp. 95–110.

The GN HPP was a joint project of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, built on their territory. Thus, it was obvious that we should reach out to Czechoslovak citizens and their civil movements, who held similar perspectives on preserving the natural integrity of the Danube.

The Danube Circle has also established many links and cooperation with other local, national, and international NGOs dealing with global environmental issues, including the environmental impacts of large dams. We also had links with Green parties in Western countries.

In the following, I describe, grouped by type, and illustrate, through examples, the documents available in the OSA Archives that can be used to study the international relations and activities of the Danube Circle and its role in global civil society.

## International press coverage

The activities of the Danube Circle have been extensively covered in the international press, facilitated by our press releases, statements, press conferences, and interviews. The BBC and Radio Free Europe broadcast also helped disseminate information in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. There are many documents about all this in the OSA Archives. It contains many news agency reports, press clippings from the European and North American press<sup>38</sup> about the GN HPP, the protest against the project, and, in many cases, specifically about the activities of the Danube Circle. Many articles on the same subject in the international press are published in full or in part, in the original language or translation, by news agencies, or in the Hungarian press. Furthermore, there are many references to articles from the international press in analyses, situation reports, and transcripts of radio broadcasts prepared for RFE/RL. The following are just a few examples of how the protests against the GN HPP and the activities of the Danube Circle have become widely known worldwide.

## News agency reports (one example each)

- **AP** [Associated Press], Gabčíkovo, Czechoslovakia, 5 July 1984, Giant Danube Project Meets with Protest. B-Wire 5 July 1984, HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8

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<sup>38</sup> My collection, still to be processed, includes numerous articles and press clippings from other continents, too.



- **AFP** [Agence France Press], Wien 19 September 1984. Ungarische Bürgerinitiative protestiert gegen oesterreichs Beteiligung an umstrittenem Kraftwerksprojekt in Ungarn [Hungarian citizens' initiative protests against Austria's participation in controversial power plant project in Hungary], HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8
- **APA** [Austria Presse Agentur], Vienna, 7 October 1988 (Special/Eggleston). Report on Nagymaros Debate in the Hungarian Parliament [in German], HU OSA 300-40-1:278/2
- **ČTK** [Československá tisková kancelář - Czechoslovak News Agency] report: "Equal Priority to Ecology", Munich, 8 March 1989 (CMD), from Pravda, Bratislava, HU OSA 300-40-1:278/5
- **Reuters**, 12 October 1992, Hungarian "Greens" Plan Danube Dam Protest. HU OSA 300-120-13:38/2
- **UPI** [United Press International], 19 January 1986, Hungarian Environmentalists Protest Danube Project, B-Wire, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/1

## Newspaper articles (examples)

- n. a. (1984) Ungarische Umweltschützer appellieren an Österreich [Hungarian environmentalists appeal to Austria]. **Die Presse**, Vienna, 20 September, HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8.
- n. a. (1984) Kippen und Schwellen [Tilts and thresholds] (**Der Spiegel**, Hamburg, December 16), HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8.
- Flottau, H. (1984) Ein ungewöhnlicher Stau an Protesten []. (**Süddeutsche Zeitung**, Germany, August 10), Munich, August 10, 1984 - (CND/AD), HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8.
- Stipsicz, K. (1984) Neues Bett für Donau? [A new bed for the Danube?] (**Die Zeit**, Hamburg, December 7), Munich, December 6, 1984 - (CND/EC), HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8.
- Ströhm, C. G. (1984) Donau-Kraftwerk: Unmut in Ungarn [Danube Power Plant: Displeasure in Hungary] (**Die Welt**, Germany, November 23), Munich, November 23 - (CND/EC), HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8.
- Bassett, R. (1985) Danube Power Plan Upsets Hungarians (**The Times**, August 27), Munich, August 27 - (CND), HU OSA 300-40-1:275/9.
- Diehl, J. (1985) Danube Plans Rile Hungarians (**The Washington Post**, December 12), B-Wire 12 December, 1985, HU OSA 300-40-1:275/9.

- Soulé, V. (1985) Hungary: Green Make the Reds Retreat [in French, original French title is missing] (**Libération**, Paris, February 20), Munich, February 26 - (CND), HU OSA 300-40-1:275/9.
- n. a. (1986) Rendőri erőszak a természetvédőkkel szemben [Police violence against environmentalists] (**Irodalmi Újság**, Paris, 1986/2). [with reference to **Le Monde**, Paris], HU OSA 300-40-1:276/1.
- Partos, G. (1986) Austro-Hungarian Deal on Danube Dam. BBC Current Affairs Research & Information Section, CARIS Report 34/86, 29 May 1986. "...last month, 30 prominent Hungarians placed a full-page open letter in the Vienna newspaper **Die Presse** appealing to the Austrian public to put pressure on their government to withdraw from the scheme. [The Austrian Greens, who last year succeeded in stopping the construction of a dam at Hainburg, near Vienna, have argued that their government is now exporting its environmental problems to a neighboring country.]" HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4.
- Reed, H. (1986) Hungarian "Greens" Petition Austrian Parliament, RFE/RL RADBackground Report/96 (East-West Relations) 11-July. "The Vienna daily **Die Presse** reported that 19 members of the leading Hungarian ecological group, the Danube Circles, had addressed a petition to the Austrian parliament." HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4.
- Echikson, W. (1987) Hungarians Blue Over Fate of Danube. B-Wire 17-Nov-87 (**Christian Science Monitor**, Washington), HU OSA 300-120-13:38/2
- Neidhart, C. (1987) Wie Ungarn und die CSSR mit österreichischen Krediten oppositionelle Umweltschützer auf den Plan rufen - Eine Pyramide für Husak, eine Pyramide für Kadar. [How Hungary and the CSSR use Austrian loans to call against environmental opposition - One pyramid for Husak, one pyramid for Kadar] (**Die Weltwoche**, Zürich, July 2, 1987) Munich, July 3 - (CND/EC) HU OSA 300-40-1:276/5.
- n. a. (1988) Im Parlament Debatte über das Donaukraftwerk Nagymaros Das tschechoslowakisch-ungarisch-österreichische Gemeinschaftsprojekt soll weitergebaut werden / Kritik [Debate in Parliament on the Nagymaros Danube power plant - The Czechoslovakian-Hungarian-Austrian joint project is to be continued / Criticism] (**Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**, Frankfurt, 7 October 1988), Munich, 8 October 1988 - (CND), HU OSA 300-40-1:278/2.
- Colitt, L. (1988) Call to Free Hungary's Greens. (**Financial Times**, London, January 22) [Press clipping] Munich, January 22 - (CND), HU OSA 300-120-13:38/2
- Lipták, B. (1989) További feladatok a Duna védelmében [Further challenges to protect the Danube] (**Bécsi Napló**, Vienna, 10/6 November-December), HU OSA 300-40-1:280/2.

- n. a. (1990) A Dunatájvédők nyilatkozata [Statement by the Danube Defenders] (**Nap**<sup>39</sup>, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2/35, May 4), HU OSA 300-40-1:280/3
- n. a. (1990) Das Kraftwerk Gabčíkovo - eine Industriearuine? Ungewisse Zukunft des slowakisch-ungarischen Grossprojekts [The Gabčíkovo power plant - an industrial ruin? Uncertain future of the major Slovak-Hungarian project] (**Neue Zürcher Zeitung**, November 4/5), Munich, November 5 - (INCA/EC), HU OSA 205-4-140:47/4
- Bohlen, C. (1990) Czechoslovakia and Hungary at Odds Over Danube Dam. (**The New York Times**, December 5). B-Wire 05-Dec-1990. HU OSA 205-4-140:47/4
- Ingram, J. (1991) Environmental Activist Feels Vindicated by Parliamentary, Calls to Reject Dam. B-Wire 08-May-1991 (**Christian Science Monitor**, Washington), HU OSA 205-4-140:69/5
- Mayer, G. (1991) Die Rückkehr des Sauriers - Wollen die Slowaken den Ungarn bei Gabčíkovo doch noch das Donauwasser abgraben? [The return of the dinosaur - Do the Slovaks still want to steal the Danube water from the Hungarians near Gabčíkovo?] (**Profil**, Vienna, April 22, 1991) [Press clipping] Munich, April 22 - (NCA/EC), HU OSA 205-4-140:47/5
- Tuba L. (1991) Szárnyaszegett C-változat - Mit rejt a környezetvédelmi hivatal bösi 19 pontja? [Unwinged C-version - What is in the 19 points of the Environment Protection Agency about Bős?] (**Új Szó**, Bratislava, September 11), HU OSA 205-4-140:48/1
- Maass, P. (1992) Hungary Demands Halt in Slovakia's Diversion of Danube (**The Washington Post**, Washington, May 22), B-Wire 22-May-1992, HU OSA 205-4-140:48/3
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<sup>39</sup> Independent public weekly (Bratislava, from 1993 Dunaszerdahely, 15 Dec. 1989 - Aug. 1995). Founded by the Independent Hungarian Initiative. It was the first independent Slovak press publication after World War II. Szlovákiai Magyar Adatbank, [Szlovákiai Magyar Adatbank » Nap](#)

Austrian loan], In: Ribánszky, L. (Ed.) The Wave Lengths of Tomorrow. Radio Free Europe, Hungarian Broadcasting Department, Air date: 18 November 18 1984, HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8

- Kasza, L. (1985) A bős-nagymarosi vízlépcsőrendszer megépítésének káros következményei Csehszlovákiában és a magyarországi tiltakozások folytatása [The adverse consequences of the construction of the Bős-Nagymaros hydropower system in Czechoslovakia and the continuation of protests in Hungary] In: Ribánszky, L. (Ed) The Second Public Opinion No. M-36, Air date: 23 November 1985, HU OSA 300-40-1:275/9
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- Kasza, L. (1986) Interjú Günter Schobesbergerrel arról, hogyan akadályozhatják meg magyar állampolgárok a bős-nagymarosi vízlépcsőrendszer osztrák finanszírozását [An interview with Günter Schobesberger<sup>40</sup> on how Hungarian citizens can prevent Austrian funding for the Bős-Nagymaros hydropower system] In: Ribánszky, L. (Ed) The Second Public Opinion No. M-64, Air date: 21 June 1986, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4
- Kasza, L. (1988) Interjú osztrák politikusokkal a Bős Nagymaros-i erőműről [Interview with Austrian politicians on the Bős Nagymaros power plant] In: Ribánszky, L. (Ed) Second Public Opinion A-22, Air date: 1 October 1988, HU OSA 300-40-1:278/1

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<sup>40</sup> Member of the Austrian Nature Conservation Council

## Situation reports and studies (examples)

The Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Reports can be found online in the OSA Archivum; many are in the thematic dossiers. The introduction of the Situation Report's online collection on the OSA Archive website describes these reports' origins, sources, and purposes. As explained, "Every attempt was made to ensure that SRs met a high journalistic standard and were factually accurate so that they could serve as a source of reliable information about the Soviet bloc." Some Situation Reports about Czechoslovakia and Hungary contain detailed descriptions of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydropower system's problems and the Danube Circle's and others' protest actions. The thematic collections also contain shorter and longer studies from other sources.

- Pataki, J. (1984) Ecological Protest Against Danube Dam. In: RFE Research (1 June 1984) Situation Report: Hungary, p13-16, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4
- Stankovic, S. (1984) Belgrade Daily on Prague-Budapest Conflict Over Power Stations. RFE Research, RAD Background Report/146 (Eastern Europe), 11 August 1984, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4
- Reisch, A., and Pataki, J. (1984) Controversial Dam and Ecological Protests. In: RFE Research (7 December 1984) Situation Report: Hungary, p14-16, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4
- n. a. (1985) Ecological Issues That Will Not Lie Down. In: RFE Research (4 March 1985) Situation Report: Czechoslovakia, p7-12, HU OSA 300-8-47:16/1-4 [[online](#)]. Also available in the Open Media Research Institute collection, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4.
- Wagner, K. (1986) Nagymaros : Eine Informationsbroschüre. WWF Österreich, Wien, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4.
- Ostry, D. (1988) The Gabcikovo-Nagymaros dam system as a case study in conflict of interest in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Slovo: Journal of Contemporary Soviet-East European Affairs 1(1), 11-24, HU OSA 300-40-1:277/1
- Knabe, Hubertus (1989) Umweltproteste in Ungarn. Innen— und außenpolitische Implikationen [Environmental protests in Hungary. Domestic and foreign policy implications]. Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, No. 65, pp. 41, HU OSA 205-4-140:70/4
- Kusin, V. V. (1989) Gabcikovo-Nagymaros: The Politics of a Project. Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report /206 (Eastern Europe), 24 November, pp. 1-5, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.

- Markos-Oltay, E. (1989) Government Suspends Work on Nagymaros Hydroelectric Project. 30 May, RFE/RL Research, Situation Report: Hungary 8/4, pp. 21-24, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- Obrman, J. (1989) Is Unease about Gabčíkovo Growing? 18 August, RFE/RL Research, Situation Report: Czechoslovakia 17/7, pp. 29-35, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- Oschlies, W. (1990) „Öko-Kriege“ in Osteuropa - Ausgewählte Tatorte grenzüberschreitender Umweltzerstörung [“Eco-wars” in Eastern Europe - Selected scenes of cross-border environmental destruction]. Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, No. 29, HU OSA 205-4-140:70/4.
- Reisch, A. (1990) The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project: A Wasteland Awaiting the Fruits of Political Change. Report on Eastern Europe, 1 (26 January) pp. 25-29, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- Várkonyi, A. (1990) A Monster Born of Politics: The Danube Remade. The New Hungarian Quarterly, No. 120, pp. 68-79, HU OSA 205-4-140:47/5, and OSA Archivum Off-Site Storage Box 611.
- Okolicsányi, K. (1992) Hungary Cancels Treaty on Danube Dam Construction. RFE/RL Research. Report 1(36), pp. 46-50, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- Fisher, S. (1993) The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Controversy Continues. RFE/RL Research. Report 2(37), pp. 7-12, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.

## Hungarian and Czechoslovak samizdat materials (examples)

- n. a. (1986) Fokozott nemzetközi támogatás a Duna Körnek [Increased international support for the Danube Circle]. AB Hírmondó, Vol 4. Issue 20, January-February, HU OSA 362-0-2:1/3.
- n. a. (1986) A KÉKEK - Interjú a független környezetvédők képviselőjével [THE BLUES - Interview with the representative of the independent environmentalists]. AB Hírmondó, Vol 4/Issue 21, April-June, HU OSA 362-0-2:1/3.
- n. a. (1988) Vízválasztó [Watershed]. Túlélés, Vol 1/6, 7 June, HU OSA 362-0-2:4/10.
- Havel, V. [and 25 other signatories] (1988) [Open letter in Czech language to the Federal Assembly of CSSR; the Environmental Council of the Government, CSR; and the Austrian Donaukraftwerke AG joining to the Danube Circle’s protest against the construction of the Nagymaros dam.], HU OSA 300-30-15:1/8.

In the Situation Report: Czechoslovakia 17/7 [see above], Jan Obrman wrote: “[...] Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros has become an important topic for independent groups. Charter 77

has discussed the dam in several of its publications; and other outlawed groups, such as the publishers of the samizdat journal *Ekologicky Bulletin*<sup>41</sup>, have repeatedly voiced their concern and frustration over the project. The petition that has become known as "Just a Few Sentences" and which has reportedly been signed by more than 18,000 people to date, requests that "all projects, both planned and already under construction that would permanently change the environment in our country" should be reconsidered. It is obvious that the statement was directed at Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros. There have also been reports that residents of Bratislava and Gabčíkovo fear that they would lose a lot of money if the project is abandoned."

## International events and actions (examples)

This section lists some of the Danube-related events or actions involving activists, experts, groups, or organizations from two or more countries.

### Contact with Austrian environmentalists (September 1984)

In September 1984, the Danube Circle sent an open letter to the Austrian environmentalists opposing the construction of a dam and hydroelectric power station at Hainburg. In the letter, the Danube Circle drew attention to the fact that Austria and Donakraftwerke AG. are planning to participate in the construction of the Nagymaros dam and that the construction costs would be financed by Austrian banks. The letter was reported in the Viennese daily *Die Presse*<sup>42</sup> and the science weekly *Nature*<sup>43</sup> in London.

### Charter 77 (1985)

The Danube Circle sent detailed information to the Charter 77 spokespersons in Prague in 1985, who released a statement on the GN HPP. This was reported by the Vienna daily *Die Presse*: "Charter 77 appeal against Danube power station. In an urgent appeal, three

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<sup>41</sup> The 1987-1989 issues of the *Ekologicky Bulletin* are available [online](#). This samizdat newspaper was edited by the prominent opposition activist and ecologist Ivan Dejmal. In several issues he addressed the ecological problems of the GN HPP and published the relevant documents of Charter 77.

<sup>42</sup> n. a. (1984) Ungarische Umweltschützer appellieren an Österreich [Hungarian environmentalists appeal to Austria] *Die Presse*, 20 September, HU OSA 300-40-1:275/8

<sup>43</sup> Rich, V. (1984) 'Danube environment: Hungarians seek outside support', *Nature*, 311(5984), pp. 293-293. doi: 10.1038/311293b0.

spokespersons of the Czechoslovak civil rights movement Charta 77 have called on the Prague government to allow a public discussion on the controversial Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Danube power plant project. Over the past few days, a Charter 77 document has been circulating in the capital of the CSSR calling for the Danube, "this irreplaceable natural asset and symbol of the common destiny of the Czech, Slovak and Hungarian peoples", to be saved. These statements were taken verbatim from an appeal by the "Danube Circle", Hungary's ecological movement, on whose information the Czech-Slovak civil rights activists are obviously based. The arguments of the "Danube Circle" against the project have met with great interest from the public and in some cases also from the relevant authorities in Hungary. However, Prague has so far firmly rejected any attempt to review or even discuss the matter."<sup>44</sup>

## Right Livelihood Award (1985)

In 1985, the Danube Circle was awarded the prestigious Right Livelihood Award in recognition of its work to date and to support its future activities. The award was reported by the UPI news agency:

"Stockholm. Oct. 8 (UPI ) -- Two North American researchers, a group of Hungarian environmentalists and an Indian human rights network today shared the 1985 Right Livelihood Award, dubbed "the alternative Nobel Prize." The winners selected among 80 nominations around the world, were announced by Jakob von Uexkull, a Swedish-German writer who sold a collection of stamps to institute the prize in 1980. He told a news conference "the theme of this year's Right Livelihood Award was human rights in the broad sense of the term." [...] For the first time the prize was shared by a group from an East block nation. The Hungarian environmental group

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<sup>44</sup> The original text in German: "Charta-77-Appell gegen Donaukraftwerk Eigenbericht der „Presse“ PRAG/WIEN (d. v.). In einem dringenden Appell haben drei Sprecher der tschechoslowakischen Bürgerrechtsbewegung Charta 77 die Prager Regierung aufgefordert, eine öffentliche Diskussion über das umstrittene Donaukraftwerksprojekt Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros zuzulassen. In der Hauptstadt der CSSR zirkulierte in den vergangenen Tagen ein Dokument der Charta 77, in dem zur Rettung der Donau, „dieses unersetzlichen Naturguts und Symbols für das gemeinsame Schicksal des tschechischen, slowakischen und ungarischen Volkes“ aufgerufen wurde. Diese Aussagen sind wörtlich einem Aufruf des „Donau- Kreises“, der ökologischen Bewegung Ungarns, entnommen worden, auf deren Informationen die tschechoslowakischen Bürgerrechtler auch ganz offensichtlich aufbauen. Die Argumente des „Donau-Kreises“ gegen das Projekt sind in der Öffentlichkeit und teilweise auch bei den zuständigen Stellen in Ungarn auf großes Interesse gestoßen. Prag hat jedoch bisher jeden Versuch einer Überprüfung oder gar einer Diskussion entschieden abgelehnt.“ Die Presse, 21 October, HU OSA 300-120-13:21/1



Duna Kör, or Danube Circle, was cited for its vocal opposition against the construction of a hydro-electric power plant near the Czechoslovak border."

The Hungarian authorities imposed a complete news blackout on the prize, which was broken only in 1988. The prize money of 20,000 Swedish kronor was used by the Danube Circle to set up the Danube Fund<sup>45</sup>, which used the prize money to organise the 1988 international conference about the Danube dams, to publish two books, to cover the costs of the September 1988 demonstration and to support other environmental groups through a grant scheme.

## Press conference in Vienna (18 December 1985)

This press conference took place after the Right Livelihood Award event in Stockholm. The event was reported by The Financial Times:

"Hungarian and Austrian Greens will step up their campaign to oppose the construction of a large dam in Hungary, spokesmen for environmentalist movements from both countries said in Vienna this week. Hungary is the only Communist country which allows the existence of an independent Green movement. Mr Janos Vargha, a Hungarian biologist and prominent environmental campaigner, said in Vienna on Wednesday that Hungary's Greens would intensify their opposition to the Nagymaros dam which is part of a network of dams to be built jointly with Czechoslovakia. [...] Mr Gunther Nenning, a leading spokesman for the Austrian environmentalists who was recently thrown out of the Socialist Party for his activities, accused the Austrian Government of exporting its problems. He warned that Austria's Greens would consider protest actions in Hungary similar to the ones that forced the Austrian Government to abandon the Hamburg project."<sup>46</sup>

## International meeting and press conference (18 January 1986)

The event was held by the Danube Circle at Budapest's Zöldfa (Green Tree) Restaurant held the event. "Environmentalists from Hungary and the West say they intend to bring all

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<sup>45</sup> Pajkossy, G. (1988) Duna Alapítvány [Danube Fund]. In: *Lel-Tár*, pp. 18-19, HU OSA 205-4-140:37/35

<sup>46</sup> E/W Hungarian and Austrian Greens Step Up Protests. Munich, December 20 - (CND) - following appeared in The Financial Times. December 20, 1985 [press clipping], HU OSA 300-40-1:275/9.

pressure legally possible on the governments of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austria to persuade them to stop a power project on the Danube River. Western correspondents say the environmentalists signed a declaration of their intention at a meeting in Budapest yesterday. About 60 people reportedly attended the meeting, held in a cafe. Present besides Hungarians were Austrian and West German activists. The French news agency AFP says plain-clothed police observed the gathering, but did not attempt to break it up. AFP quotes a copy of the declaration as saying the environmentalists would use all possible democratic, peaceful and constitutional methods to try and change the intentions of the three governments. They believe the big power project will damage the ecology of a lone stretch of the Danube, endanger the drinking water of millions of Hungarians and destroy historic landscapes. [...] AFP reports that among those at yesterday's Budapest meeting were Hungarian biologist Janos Vargha — the founder of a non-official environment group called Danube Circle — and a spokesman for the Greens Party in the West German state of Bavaria, Hans-Dietrich Reichhelm.<sup>47</sup>; At this meeting, Hungarian and Austrian environmentalists announced that they will organize an environmental education walk in Budapest in early February.

## Cancelled environmental educational walk (8 February 1986)

The purpose of the environmental education walk, which was announced but later cancelled due to the threat of the political police, was – despite the press ban on any criticism of the GN HPP since April 1984 – to continue the information campaign on the damaging environmental effects of the Danube dams. The route of this walk would have led from Batthyányi Square, easily accessible by public transport in the capital, to Margaret Island, where there are a number of bank-filtered wells, like those on Szentendre Island, which supply the capital with drinking water. With the construction of the Nagymaros dam, the water yield of these wells would have been significantly reduced. During the walk, Danube Circle experts would have informed the participants about this. The Austrian participants also arrived at Batthyányi Square, and although they knew about the cancellation, they started walking towards Margaret Island. At the next street corner, however, the police attacked them with truncheons and tear gas and dispersed the group. The incident received press coverage<sup>48</sup> and was discussed in studies<sup>49</sup>. Some people

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<sup>47</sup> A-Wire E/W--2115 (1990) Intro Danube, Budapest, Vienna, 19 January, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/1. Declaration adopted (in German): Text and Signers of Danube protest. CND/HBD, Munich, 24 January, 1986, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/1.

<sup>48</sup> i. e. Seinitz, K. (1986) Police disperse environmentalists' demonstration [in German], Neue Kronen Zeitung, Vienna, 10 February, B-Wire, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/1.; n. a. (1986) AP on Hungarian environmentalists dispersed. 8 February, B-Wire, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/1.

<sup>49</sup> i. e. Ostry, D. (1988) and Várkonyi, A. (1990) [see them above in the "Situation reports and studies" section]

criticized the cancellation of the walk in the samizdat press, and the official Hungarian press also published a commentary condemning the environmental movement:

"It is quite acceptable that, invoking democratic forms, petitions, and leaflets are formulated without listening to the opinions of others, in which views that have already been taken into account or are not professionally correct are stubbornly repeated. But when, on the pretext of representing Hungarian society, they organize street parades - mostly with protesters imported from abroad, from Austria - what they call environmental walks - well, there is hardly any room for tolerance and calm discussion of ecological issues, any more than there would be in Vienna or Munich. The cause of environmental protection at home cannot be taken over by any grouping, and we certainly cannot allow certain foreign factors to interfere with our internal and inter-state relations."<sup>50</sup>

## Conference of the International Rivers Network, (7-11 June 1988)

IRN organized an [international conference of dam activists](#) from 26 countries in San Francisco. The group drew up the San Francisco Declaration, which sets guidelines for deciding on dam projects. László Vit represented the Danube Circle at the conference. The conference and the declaration are mentioned several times in documents<sup>51</sup> in the OSA Archives. For more information, see the article<sup>52</sup> by László Vit, in which he debates with engineer Imre V. Nagy about the conference.

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<sup>50</sup> [The original Hungarian text in Hungarian: "Az még csak hagyján, hogy a demokratikus formákra hivatkozva — mások véleményét meg sem hallgatva — petíciókat fogalmaznak, rölapokat terjesztenek, amelyekben makacsul ismételnék már figyelembe vett, vagy szakmailag nem helytálló nézeteket is. De amikor a magyar társadalom képviselőire hivatkozva — java részt külföldről, Ausztriából importált protestálókkel — utcai felvonulást, ahogy ők nevezik: környezetvédelmi sétákat szerveznek — nos, itt már aligha van helye a toleranciának, az ökológiai kérdések nyugodt megvitatásának, mint ahogy hasonló esetben Bécsben vagy Münchenben sem lenne. A hazai környezetvédelem ügyét nem sajátíthatja ki egyetlen csoportosulás sem, és kivált nem engedhetjük meg, hogy bizonyos külföldi tényezők zavarják belső viszonyainkat, államközi kapcsolatainkat." Bánki, A. (1986) Környezetünkért [For our environment]. Magyar Hírlap, 24 April, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> F.S. (1991) A bósi szörny ellen - Dokumentumok a vízlépcső elleni harcról [Against the Beast of Bős - Documents on the fight against the dam]. Új Szó, 19 July, p4, HU OSA 205-4-140:48/1. and Forró, E. (1991) Vavrousek felszólalna a magyar parlamentben [Vavrousek to address the Hungarian Parliament]. Magyar Hírlap, 3 August, p2, HU OSA 205-4-140:48/1.

<sup>52</sup> Vit, L. and V. Nagy, I. (1988) Miről is vitatkoztak San Franciscóban? [What was the debate about in San Francisco?], Magyar Nemzet, 31 August, p. 7.

## “Danube Dams” international conference (2-4 September 1988)

The conference, one of the most important international events in the history of the Danube Circle, organized together with the International Rivers Network and the Worldwide Fund for Nature, brought together renowned national and international experts and public figures to discuss the expected environmental and social impacts of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydropower project. In the following year, selected conference proceedings supplemented with other documents were published in a book.<sup>53</sup> The press ban imposed in 1984 is no longer in place. The conference received considerable press coverage; some newspapers even wrote about it in advance<sup>54</sup>. The conference participants' resolution was published in *Heti Világgazdaság*.<sup>55</sup>

## Protest at the construction site of the Gabčíkovo power plant (16 December 1989)

On December 16, 1989, there was a demonstration of 2000-3000 people at the construction site against the construction of the Gabčíkovo dam, which was reported by Hungarian Radio and the Hungarian and Czechoslovak press.<sup>56</sup> The Danube Circle also participated in the demonstration. As noted in the *Heti Világgazdaság*: “Demonstrators demanded that the Ecological Commission should be the primary consideration and that an independent international team of experts should investigate the consequences of the construction. Speakers included one of the founders of the Danube Circle, János Vargha, and the Slovakian Deputy Prime Minister of Hungarian nationality, Sándor Varga, who said, “The voice of the people is our command” and that they would do their utmost to make amends for the mistakes of the previous government.”

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<sup>53</sup> Dobos, L., Rácz, J. and Vit, L. (eds) (1989) *Utánunk az özönvíz [After us, the deluge]*. Budapest: Duna Kör / ELTE-ÁJTK Politikatudományi Tanszékcsoport. In HU OSA Library, under processing.

<sup>54</sup> MTI (1988) *Környezetvédelmi konferenciát rendeznek Budapesten a dunai vízlépcsőkről [Environmental conference on the Danube dams to be held in Budapest]*. *Népszabadság*, 29 August, HU OSA 300-40-1:277/2.

<sup>55</sup> A Bős-Nagymaros konferencia állásfoglalása [Resolution of the Bős-Nagymaros Conference], *Heti Világgazdaság*, 10 September 1988, HU OSA 300-40-1:277/2.

<sup>56</sup> D[éli] K[rónika], nemzetközi összefoglaló, 16 December, 1989, Hungarian Monitoring, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/2.; (baranyai) (1989) “...a nép hangja: parancs...” - Vízlépcsőellenes nagygyűlés volt Bősön [“...the voice of the people: a command...” - Anti-dam rally in Bős], *Új Szó*, 18 December, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/2.; n. a. (1989) *Demonstrációk Bős ellen [Demonstrations against Bős]*. *Heti Világgazdaság*, 23 December, p. 10, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/2.

## “Danube Charta” declaration (1990)

On April 8, 1990, representatives of several environmental groups and organizations from Austria, Czechoslovakia, and the Danube Circle from Hungary met in Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Austria. At the meeting, they adopted a joint declaration, the "Danube Charter"<sup>57</sup>, proposing the establishment of a trilateral international nature park.<sup>58</sup> In Slovakia, prominent environmental scientists supported their statement about the trilateral park concept, suggesting “that the tasks related to the environmental issues of the Gabčíkovo dam area and the preparation of the Danube Trilateral National Park be fully transferred to the Slovak Environmental Commission”.<sup>59</sup>

## NGOs and green parties (examples)

The following list is intended to show how many different types of organizations the Danube Circle was in contact with in other ways, such as through information exchange, joint actions, statements of support, etc. After the organization's name, I give the catalog number of a folder in which the organization is mentioned in connection with the protest against the Danube Dams. Only such organizations are listed, which can be found in documents I collected in the OSA Archive.

- Charter 77, Czechoslovakia, HU OSA 300-30-15:1/8.
- Danube-Morava-Dyje Committee, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/3.
- Ecologist, Dorset, United Kingdom, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- Euro Chain (Eurolánc), Slovakia, HU OSA 205-4-140:47/5.
- European Greens, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- Friends of the Earth International, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/2
- Global 2000, Austria, HU OSA 300-40-1:276/5.
- Green party, Austria, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- Green party, West Germany, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/4.
- Greenpeace, HU OSA 205-4-140:48/2.

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<sup>57</sup> In 1997, independently of this, a group opposing the Danube Circle's river rehabilitation proposals was formed under the name "Duna Charta".

<sup>58</sup> A Dunatájvédők nyilatkozata [Statement by the Danube Defenders] See above, in the “Newspaper section.

<sup>59</sup> Miloš Lichvár et al. (1990) Állítsák le az egyoldalú kampányt! Nyilatkozat A Gabčíkovo-i gáttal kapcsolatos jelenlegi törekvésekről [Stop the one-sided campaign! Statement on current efforts regarding the Gabčíkovo dam]. Új Szó, 31 August, p. 3, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/4.

- International Rivers Network, Berkeley, California, HU OSA 300-40-1:277/4.
- Österreichisches Ökologie Institut, Austria, HU OSA 300-40-1:277/4.
- Slovenský zväz ochrancov prírody a krajiny [Slovak Union of Nature and Landscape Protectors] (SZOPK), HU OSA 205-4-140:48/4.
- Strana Zelených [Green Party], Czechoslovakia, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/3.
- The WWF Institute for Floodplains Ecology, Rastatt, Germany, HU OSA 205-4-140:49/5.
- WWF Austria, HU OSA 205-4-140:48/1.
- Zelený kruh (Green Circle), Czechoslovakia, HU OSA 300-40-1:280/3.

HU OSA 300-40-1:280/3.

## Closing remarks

A large amount of mostly important and relevant material about the Danube Circle and the Danube movement in general can be found in the OSA Archives.

Part of it contains a lot of relevant information about the international relations of the Danube Circle.

The expected processing and researchability of my collection, donated to the OSA Archive, may also provide further important contributions to research in this respect, too.

From the initial processing of the material I have now collected, it is clear that the activities of the Danube Circle were linked to environmental movements in other countries.

Finally, I quote two opinions on the relationship between the Danube Circle and global civil society.

According to M. Glasius, the acceptance speech at the Right Livelihood Award ceremony was an indication that the Danube Circle considered itself part of global civil society:

“Janos Vargha, a Hungarian environmental activist, begins his acceptance speech for the Right Livelihood Award with a story from Gulliver’s Travels and goes on to mention deleterious dam projects in Brazil, Egypt, West Germany, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the USSR, and anti-dam activism in the Philippines, the USSR and Austria before actually describing his own group, the Danube Circle. Thus he places himself and his group in the context of the emerging global anti-dam movement.”

R. D. Lipschutz and J. Mayer suggest that:

“The most significant element of global civil society to emerge during the 1980s was the Danube Circle (Duna Kör), sparked by the 1977 agreement among Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austrian financiers to build a series of dams, barrages, and channels on the Danube, between Gabčíkovo and Nagymaros.”<sup>60</sup>

The latter may be an exaggeration, but both views indicate that the Danube Circle has become part of global civil society through its activities and impact.

## Acknowledgments

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## Annex: Folders

Following the "Quick Guide to Visiting the Research Room," I scanned all the relevant documents from the folders listed here and collected them into one searchable PDF file per folder. I have integrated these files into reference management software. I have not included the folders I have examined, but I have not found any relevant documents in them.

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<sup>60</sup> Lipschutz, R. D. and Mayer, J. (1996) Global civil society and global environmental governance : the politics of nature from place to planet. Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY Series in International Environmental Policy and Theory). p. 142.

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20. "HU OSA 205-4-140:42/1 Egyesületek: Nyilvánosság Klub 1988-1993."
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