

Environmental and Housing Movements

Grassroots Experience in Hungary, Russia and Estonia

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Housing and housing policy

The worsening of the economic situation in the country — currently felt by policy-makers as well as a broadening range of the population — has been developing since the late 1970s. A slow increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) could be maintained until the late 1980s through foreign loans, but due to a debt crisis (and, of course, other economic circumstances) GDP started to decrease in the early 1990s. During this long period the living standard and real wages of the population have steadily decreased. Government expenditures and social expenditures from the budget have not decreased at the same rate, which can be primarily explained as political concerns to mitigate emerging social tension.

Formation of a new structure of housing expenditures in the government budget

Here we intend to give a brief summary of how housing policy was affected by the previously mentioned economic processes. While in the second half of the 1980s both the GDP and social expenditures from the budget, as well as incomes of households, nominally doubled, housing assistance through the Government budget increased from 9 milliard forint in 1985 to 69 milliard forint in 1990 (770 per cent increase; 1=170 Hungarian forint). However, whereas the proportion of housing assistance within the GDP tripled, consumer subsidies, considered equally important, fell back to one-third of their previous percentage, and budgetary subsidies for construction companies and local governments decreased as well. To sum up, the internal structure and philosophy of Government subsidies for housing changed substantially.

Subsidies to state housing construction and maintenance through enterprises and local governments were drastically cut. However, the system of low interest (state subsidised) bank loans for individual housing construction was retained. As interest rates on loans were sharply increasing, caused by accelerating inflation, this subsidy expenditure in the Government budget grew exponentially until 1989/90, when the system of interest subsidies was significantly cut in order to reduce the burden on the budget.

Owing to the worsening of living standards and cuts in Government subsidies, the rate of state (and local government) housing construction has gradually faded to zero. Due to inflation, changes in demand and interest rates on loans, as well as the introduction of several new taxes, the volume of individual house building has dwindled too (though its proportion has increased — see appendices.)

Housing regulation system

The regulations and legal environment governing rental housing in local government ownership have remained essentially unchanged in the period under examination. However, as a 'compensation' for severe cuts in subsidies related to the maintenance of rental units, sitting tenants have been given additional ownership rights and obligations. Although the majority of local governments have not raised rents even after 1990, there has been a sharp growth in utility charges which currently tend to exceed rents. District heating charges have significantly grown, which affect in the first place working-class households living in housing estates (high-rise blocks made of prefabricated panels) from the period of 'quasi-welfare socialism'. Electricity and gas have become more expensive too. Ineffective IKV's under local government control have 'withdrawn' from the units, thus all maintenance and repair work has been left to the tenants. At the same time, a quasi market in rental housing has been operating; tenants can exchange rental units in a sales-purchase way, regardless of the reason for which the local government allocated them the units.

All in all this had led to important changes in the rental housing sector by the early 1990s, which will be discussed further below.

The major characteristics of housing policy in the period under examination were as follows:

- set rents for housing in state (local government) ownership;
- transfer of ownership of state housing to local government;
- sharp increases in maintenance costs;
- dynamic cessation of budget subsidies;
- further widening of the gap between deteriorating conditions and

maintenance/renewal;

- sales of rental housing in local government ownership to tenants;
- changes in regulation concerning rents, and in privatisation of rental housing in local government ownership at the end of the period;
- above-inflation increase in costs of housing construction, purchase and private market renting; and
- worsening of loan conditions (increasing interest rates).

Political changes and transfer of assets

Of course it is not within the scope of this study to present, let alone analyse, the historically significant political changes that have occurred since 1990 in Hungary and in Eastern Europe as a whole. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention some of the most important events.

Parliamentary elections in 1990

In the spring of 1990, after four decades of one-party rule, free, democratic, multi-party elections were held in Hungary. A characteristic of the political transition in Hungary was that by that time the Communist Party, previously in full power, organisationally and politically, had become considerably weakened due to the internal economic crisis, and to reform processes in communist parties abroad and at home, as well as to domestic opposition movements offering political alternatives. At the same time, newly created civil political parties within the technocrat reform wing of the Communist Party formed the so-called Opposition Round Table, a tool to negotiate the schedule and process of a peaceful change of regime as well as a legal framework for the most important political and constitutional institutions serving the transition and to identify persons for key positions in these institutions (Election Law, one-chamber Parliament, a representative President, Constitutional Court etc).

The new Government was formed by a centre-right party (Hungarian Democratic Forum; MDF), in coalition with two smaller parties, the Independent Small Holders' Party (FKGP) and the Christian Democratic Popular Party (KDNP). Liberal parties became strong opposition parties: Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and the Association of Young Democrats (Fidesz). The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), the successor of the reformed wing of the previous Communist Party, obtained a few seats in the March 1990 elections (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1
Parliamentary voting shares May 1990

MDF	42.7
SZDSZ	24.4
FKGP	11.4
MSZP	8.5
Fidesz	5.7
KDNP	5.5
Others	1.8

Local government elections: the new system of local governments

Within six months (October 1990) of the formation of the new central government, elections were held to establish local governments. The outcome of the local government elections differed significantly from national elections partly for historical reasons, and partly due to disappointment in the central government. In rural areas several local leaders retained their positions running as independent candidates, whereas in cities, including Budapest, liberal parties gained a majority.

In each of the 22 districts of the capital with 2 million inhabitants, bodies of representatives were elected. With one exception all mayors came from liberal parties, and liberal parties won a majority in the Assembly of the Municipality of Budapest too.

Together with local government elections, a new local government system was introduced in the country and in Budapest at the turn of 1990/91. In decision-making the rigid, direct-command hierarchy of central Government, regional and local levels was abolished. Now each local government could make its own decisions in compliance with the law and taking its financial resources into account. This new system also applies to the 22 districts of Budapest. In the financial assistance to local governments by the central government, occasional assistance has become less significant, and subsidies in relation to permanent activities, so called 'normatives' have become dominant. The major part of real estate assets connected to communal services has been transferred from state ownership to local government ownership. Decentralisation of decision-making and asset ownership has not been accompanied by a parallel decentralisation of financing: the overwhelming majority of local government revenues is made up of central budget transfers.

After a six-month period of confusion, in Spring 1991 the relationship between Budapest and its 22 districts was regulated through the Municipal Act. District governments with their own budgets and bodies of represent-

atives control primary education, health, cultural and social care. The ownership of state housing and of state housing maintenance agencies (IKV) was transferred to local governments. The municipalities control utility companies (gas, water, sewage and public transport, etc.) and primary schools, and together with the central government they finance major infrastructure investments (roads, bridges, water treatment plants, incinerators etc.) as well as the operation of theatres, secondary schools and hospitals.

Movements, civil initiatives, and the new structure of local governments

The transformation of the political and local government structure has created a quite new environment for civil organisations and initiatives. Changes in the environment had begun well before the change of regime, though there was not a great number or many types of independent civil organisations in the period prior to the creation of political parties.

Civil initiatives and proto-parties

Civil initiatives (some with political goals but the majority with only indirectly political aims) have always existed in Hungary. A description of them can be found in the literature analysing the second economy, second culture and second society. In fact the number and types of civil initiatives spectacularly multiplied in the years prior to the change of regime—in the second half of the 1980s. Political parties when coming into being relied heavily on these civil initiatives and organisations both in terms of ideology and their activists and organisational structure. Indeed, new political parties, before their formal creation, had functioned as proto-parties or movements. None of the three main parties—MDF, SZDSZ and Fidesz—included the word 'Party' in their names as a reminder of their origins. These parties are not reborn historical parties that had existed before communist rule (like the much smaller and much less successful Small Holders' Party or the Christian Democratic Party), but new ones originating in the ideologies and power of groups emerging at the end of the 1980s. MDF defined itself as a typical umbrella organisation or movement: a forum engaging in politics, open for every group or movement to join it that wished to promote democracy and the Magyar people. Similarly, SZDSZ was formed out of an umbrella organisation called the Network of Free Initiatives that sought to function as an alliance of civil initiatives with very differing aims. Also Fidesz had a strong background in students' clubs and a network of several independent and autonomous extracurricular university colleges.

Table 3.2
Budgeted revenues of the Municipality of Budapest in 1993, and change relative to 1991

Revenue	HUF milliard	Proportion of total (%)	% increase, 1991-93
Central government subsidies for current spending (normatives)	16	27	25
Refunded personal income tax from central government	9	16	-1
Subsidy from social security to operate hospitals	15	27	0
Total from central government	40	70	0
Own revenues	17	29	54
Other	1	1	-31
Total	58	100	4
Loans	5	9	
Total	63		

The importance of movements and civil initiatives grew considerably in this period both in forming new proto-parties and the ruling state party. New political organisations competed to win civil initiatives, including their ideologies and activists. However, the growth of movements was accompanied by several problems. True, it was an unexpected success to acquire influential positions as a result of their increased importance; the new broader structure of parties offered opportunities for personal careers. At the same time, however, movements started to link up with one proto-party or another, creating tremendous conflicts between and within movements. Their aims had to be adjusted (had to become more radical or alternative, expanded or reduced, modified or more nationalistic) and they also suffered from 'brain drain', a typical effect caused by the parties.

All that has been said depicts a background for what happened on the local government scene. By the time local elections took place in autumn 1990, national parliamentary parties had gone through the stage of crystallisation, burdened with conflicts and also witnessing clashes between 'movement activists' and 'politicians' within parties. Such clashes have been present since then, in different parties with different intensity, leading to serious gaps and traumas both within parties and the party structure as a whole. The majority of civil initiatives of that time either became parts or satellites of a party, or else their leading personalities stood also as party

Table 3.3
Budgeted expenditures of the Municipality of Budapest in 1993, and change relative to 1991

Revenue	HUF milliard	Proportion of total (%)	% increase, 1991-93
Operating hospitals (financed by Social Security)	16	26	-4
Operating local government institutions	24	39	22
Public transport	9	14	-5
Total operations	49	79	7
Investments, renewal	9	14	7
Reserve	5	7	
Total	63	100	16

politicians; or they had to redefine their positions on the new political map closer to or further from a certain party.

Civil initiatives and local elections

In the local elections 'local people' and 'local interest groups' had to be presented to voters. This led to a recognition of:

- how small and badly organised local civil initiatives were;
- how, if they existed, inexperienced they were in active policy-making;
- that local bases, local organisations and local contacts of bigger (national or regional) movements, civil initiatives and interest protection organisations were rare or altogether absent; and
- that local bases of parliamentary parties too were insufficient, occasional, and haphazardly organised and lacked contacts.

Doubtless, however, they were the best organised as they had already gone through a parliamentary election campaign.

Local elections were characterised by the fight between parliamentary parties. The bigger the locality was, the more true this was. In localities with a small population, truly or ostensibly independent candidates stood greater chance, and their membership of a local interest group or a civil initiative as well as their personal qualities, and past and present contacts,

were more important. In bigger cities and in Budapest, the party affiliation of the candidate, and of voters as well, was the decisive factor. Here we will discuss local elections in Budapest.

In Budapest local government elections were clearly dominated by a political battle between parliamentary parties. Party candidates fought party candidates and civil organisations and their candidates had to be in fact supported by one of the parties. This was the result of several factors: as has already been said, parties were the best organised; civil initiatives possessed poor financial and other resources; and the media concentrated on parties in the multi-party system. Other organisations and initiatives received little attention.

The case of Budapest was not only unique because parties had fairly well-developed structures but also because movements and organisations often had their centres there and their influence was concentrated there. Important differences can be seen among organisations in districts, however. In local elections where an organisation chose to have a candidate, he/she could run as an independent or could join one of the major parties. Where an organisation did not have a candidate, it could either ignore the elections or support the candidate of a party. Parties needed to organise and maintain their bases in every constituency primarily in order to organise the political background for and carry out their election campaigns. In the case of civil initiatives the picture is much more heterogeneous. Many of them had been created to promote a national aim or some general interest, often without a local or regional base or organisation. Conversely, clearly local organisations in big cities could hardly compete with parties which were well known by the public. (In this respect housing and homeless organisations which we examine below can be regarded as unique as they have both national and to a certain extent local organisations.)

Movements, as well as parties, responded in a variety of ways to whether candidates from organisations should be helped by parties to be elected to local decision-making bodies. On the one hand there are serious disputes within organisations over whether (party-)neutral organisations should be involved in politics at all, and if so how they should preserve their independence. The answers are mostly local: in some districts representatives of tenants, environmentalists, groups of urban protection or local organisations are elected to the body of representatives of the local government through the support of a party, while other civil organisations choose to remain 'outside' the party system and use traditional tools of pressure. On the other hand, parties too differ considerably in what relationships they build with different movements, and how far they are willing to adopt the objectives of such organisations in their local politics, or at least on the level of promises during elections.

On both sides the history of organisations and parties, as well as personal

preferences and contacts — as in the creation of national parties — tend to continue to play an important role. This can be seen especially well in Budapest where the two-level — district and municipal government — system of setting local candidates on the local level as well as party lists at municipal level provided a 'mini-version' of national elections.

The lists reflected relatively strong connections and relationships between parties and civil organisations. While at the local level it was mostly local citizens and party members without an 'organisational back-up' who were elected to bodies of representatives, lists of SZDSZ and Fidesz for municipal elections offered a number of celebrities. A conscious selection of well-known figures opened the way for professional groups (engineers, urban planners, investors, entrepreneurs, educational, health care, social policy and environmental specialists) as well as representatives of different movements to enter the Municipal Assembly. In the case of SZDSZ, selection seemed to rely heavily on connections with organisations; Fidesz appeared to have fewer contacts, whereas new parties had almost no connections.

Civil initiatives and the functioning of bodies of representatives in local governments

Looking at the three years of operation of new local governments and bodies of representatives leads us to the conclusion that organisational and personal contacts between civil initiatives, organisations and local parties and representatives played an important, though not decisive role. This role of interrelations was manifested in direct or indirect forms.

The direct form is when a representative, activist or one committed to such a civil initiative, becomes a local representative to help his civil initiative to become stronger and increase its resources. Some common forms of this include: allocating a rental office in local government ownership, ensuring infrastructure (phone, photocopier, fax, etc.) and assistance from local government funds. A 'necessary condition' to this, of course, is that the organisation itself and its activity are recognised by the local government, and that its goals are acceptable or necessary from a local government perspective. Typical of such cases are organisations for people in need, and social problem groups or organisations working in the field of culture, education and health care. Such groups practically assume local government responsibilities.

Relationships of indirect form aim at advancing the goals of an organisation rather than the organisation itself. The most frequent form is lobbying. In this case the representative-activist primarily tries to 'organise' and 'mobilise' within the decision-making and decision-preparing body. (He or she may also perform an activity outside this body.) In this case, too, the aim is to 'reallocate' assets and resources in favour of a certain goal. With

lobbying, many types of interrelations of inner and outer pressure practices can be detected.

One of the basic types is when a civil initiative makes something into an 'issue' through a variety of ways (petitions, letters, articles in the press, meetings, demonstration etc.) in order to highlight an unsolved problem. The point is to put the issue on the agenda. In this phase it is extremely important to have a 'spokesperson' for the issue or the organisation in the sphere of decision-making so that the problem can enter the decision-making and resource allocation process.

An interesting type of relationship is when the lobbying representative(s) encourage(s) 'outside' groups or organisations to be more active and exert greater pressure, thus increasing the chances of lobbying. This can be very effective first of all in the beginning of the decision preparation phase, such as when the issues to be decided upon are selected. In such cases the relationship is dynamic and mutually strengthening.

However, decision-making requires compromises in most cases. The original aims and demands are not truly met and a tension between 'outside' people and 'inside' spokespersons arises. In the phase of decision-making, relationships are usually tense and conflicts may arise which, however, do not prevent parties from allying with each other for some other purpose next time.

The work of bodies of representatives in local governments is highly influenced by these types of relation. The chances of success of civil initiatives are determined by whether they affiliate with the majority or the minority of the local political power, or whether they can win the support of the majority. In 'simple' cases, supporters and opponents of a certain decision are the different political parties. In 'complex' cases it is not so clear cut. This is a rather contradictory situation: while civil initiatives often find it impossible to have their objectives adopted by local (party) politics, they have greater chances to break down party lines and generate coalitions and lobby groups of a different structure in the decision-making sphere. These can be occasional alliances limited to one problem or decision, or permanent lobby groups. If permanent lobby groups come into being, and especially if the problem is fundamental and grave, eventually the whole (party) political structure may change. In such cases local party factions break up and reorganise. In Budapest in many districts there have been such conflicts, break-ups and reorganisations in relation to the issue of the privatisation of rental housing.

Civil initiatives, body of representatives, the apparatus and enterprises

Although in this chapter we focus on the system of relations between civil initiatives and local politicians, this cannot be fully understood without

examining two further essential interest groups: the local apparatus and local (and local government-controlled) business organisations. Compared with the former regime, in the new local government system the role and power of the body of representatives in the decision-making mechanism has considerably increased. This has affected most seriously the local apparatus and local enterprises within the system of organisations. Their influence on decisions has decreased and they have had to adopt new forms of pressure. Nevertheless, their influence is far from small.

Both the apparatus and local government-controlled enterprises select systematically what problems should become issues to be decided upon, prepare plans and proposals, and continue to have a considerable influence on decisions. They cannot, however, make decisions on their own any more but have to win the support of the majority of representatives. This means they have to get involved in 'politicising' and lobbying and eventually enter lobby groups.

The apparatus and businesses are segmented in terms of spheres and issues they are interested in, which again makes it necessary for them to participate in politics. Their interests often clash. Such clashes can be mitigated through careful organisation and control, but cannot be eliminated altogether. Short- and long-term alliances and conflicts emerge within the system of representatives, apparatus and business, and civil organisations can join such existing relations: according to experience, civil organisations are able to join the system through representatives (political influence, personal contact, 'infiltration' and pressure etc.). In several instances, representatives join civil organisations in fighting against the apparatus in order to protect their interests against bureaucratic interests. (It should be noted, though, that at other times civil organisations regard the bureaucratic apparatus and representatives as one Authority. The border between 'Us' and 'Them' tends to change.)

The new Social Act, Rental Housing Act and the privatisation of rental housing

Here we give a summary of changes in the law and regulations that constitute the background to the recent development of the civil organisations we chose to examine.

The Social Act

The issue of homelessness and the problem of the homeless population emerged in Hungary at the end of 1980s as a symptom of a deep social crisis. Raising the problem, explaining it, calling attention to it and making it an issue was done principally through movement devices. Immediate

demands (such as ensuring shelter for people sleeping in the streets) and indirect demands (such as guaranteeing citizen and social rights for those without a permanent dwelling, who 'belong nowhere') were formulated at the same time. Agencies and authorities responded with measures meeting the two types of demands. The legislation and codifying rights and criteria of eligibility for services reflected this duality too.

During the period of the last government before the change of regime, a procedure was created by which civil organisations with social aims could apply by competition to the Ministry of Welfare for funds for a 'professional pilot project'. This formerly unheard-of procedure in itself was a pilot programme to 'involve' civil organisations and to categorise them by goals, as well as to 'encourage them to co-operate with society separated from central power, and with prominent professional groups'. However, very small amounts of money were available.

Presumably for political reasons and in order to preserve interest groups for the coming years, the pilot programme of competitions was enlarged and institutionalised in 1989/90, and the homelessness issue came under the heading 'crisis management programmes'. Owing to several factors (its nature was critical and provocative, it was raised by a movement, and the appropriate institutional response was late) the homelessness issue was handled from the beginning as a 'separate chapter' or problem package in the programme. However, what was offered was far from being adequate or sufficient with respect to the above-mentioned immediate and indirect demands. The achievements by civil initiatives, however significant, were but occasional and uncertain.

The most desirable achievement would have been if institutions for the homeless had been granted central government normative subsidies to cover their operational costs, like the rest of social and educational institutions. In other words, the problem would have been 'institutionally recognised', and clients and institutions and organisations in a client-like situation would have become less vulnerable. Some progress has been made as normatives in financing have been created, though funds are still only available by competition (though perhaps less occasionally than before).

As a result of pressure, the amounts of the normative subsidies were determined for different levels of homeless care. Though first it was provided in a Ministerial Decree, which did not state to which services homeless people have a right but only a categorisation of different shelters, it was then but one step to include the homeless issue in the draft social bill. This step required the skills and permanent pressure of activist groups and movements on institutions.

The Social Act — a new and unprecedented law in Hungary — codified certain social rights for homeless people and persons without a permanent dwelling as a reaction to the events which occurred in a relatively short

period since the late 1980s. Besides this significant — though, from the perspective of the problem, only partial — progress, the act sets out the obligations of local governments concerning homelessness, whose implementation will probably lead to further fights.

The Rental Housing Act

Central government agencies started to consider changing the regulations concerning rental housing (which was at that time in state ownership) well before the change of regime, the 1990 parliamentary elections. Provision for the privatisation of rental units was made law in 1969, while measures to allow the leasing of non-residential units (offices, shops, workshops and restaurants etc.) had been passed in the 1950s. Although in the regulation of the housing sector there was a great deal of disfunction and contradiction, which was apparent to the public and the political leadership as well, decisions to correct the system were not made for several years — primarily for political reasons: opposing ideas and interests regularly led to deadlock and there was no general support for reforms to follow a particular concept or go in a particular direction.

In 1990 the new government inherited, among many other things, this problem package with the economic crisis, shrinking investments and high inflation in the background. The new government's incompetence became evident right from the start as it scattered housing responsibilities among six ministries, which made it impossible to prepare coherent and comprehensive legislation and a central housing policy. Nevertheless, the government had to meet a parliamentary decree requesting it to draft a new Housing Act. Such a new act was indispensable because, with the transfer of state owned housing to local governments, it became impossible to regulate rental housing through government decrees. The situation was rendered more difficult by the fact that neither the political forces now in power nor opposition parties had a viable, generally accepted conception of how to change rental housing regulations.

First, the Ministry of Welfare was in charge of forming the government's housing concept. However, due to the fact that the Ministry had no experience in this field and was heavily attacked by other ministries (financial, construction, interior), by the end of 1991 its work came to a dead end. Yet the government had to do something as the parliamentary decree and the transfer of assets had taken place. The Ministry of Interior, which also controlled local governments and where several specialists in rental housing regulations had worked already in the former regime, assumed the responsibility. The job became limited to drafting regulations concerning tenants, the privatisation of rental units and non-residential units, without attempting to place the task in a theoretical and political context.

A Rental Housing Bill was submitted to the Parliament in April 1992. Interest protection organisations claimed that it lacked an underlying conception, while local governments suggested that the regulations were not sufficiently differentiated, and that regulations concerning subsidies were missing. (See more details in the case studies.)

Eventually discussion of the bill by Parliament was postponed to early 1993 and it was passed in July 1993. The Act abolished the allocation of housing in local government ownership by the central authorities, changing drastically the system in place since as early as the 1950s when multi-unit buildings had been nationalised. The Act also abolished several provisions protecting tenants; such measures can now be adopted by local governments at their own discretion. The Act regulates non-residential units in the same way. Probably the most important provision of the Act is to give the right to buy to tenants of both residential and non-residential units. According to the Act, tenants may decide whether they want to buy their rental units on very favourable terms with the local government only carrying through the purchase process. (More details are given in the following sections.)

The so-called 'framework act' will be in effect from 31 December 1993, by which date local governments will have created their appropriate statutes. Currently the Act is being examined by the Constitutional Court to see if it fully complies with the Constitution (for example, the right to buy property owned by local governments), so the actual date of validation is unknown at the time of writing (November 1993).

Privatisation of rental housing

The privatisation of rental housing in Hungary is a huge subject which deserves extensive analysis and studies. Here we summarise some of the most important factors.

Around one-quarter of the national housing stock and half of the Budapest housing stock (the housing stock of the capital is around 800,000 units) became rental housing in state ownership after nationalisation in the early 1950s. (This percentage had not changed significantly until recently.) Consequently, private ownership of houses has always been dominant and at several points of time former owners have been allowed to re-purchase their units (mostly in smaller buildings). Legal provisions to allow the purchase of rental units on a mass scale were created in 1969 with the introduction of the so called New Economic Mechanism. However, in practice this was only allowed for certain elite groups of people close to councils and the party apparatus, as buildings for sale were identified by local councils. Apart from purchases by these political and economic elite groups, the issue of privatisation on mass scale was not even raised.

In the late 1980s and especially immediately before the change of regime,

the situation changed considerably. Central subsidies for the rental housing sector were stopped, the rate of inflation increased rapidly, making maintenance costs soar and new construction dwindle; in many sectors market processes started operating; the attitude of both political circles and the public toward private property changed radically. At the end of the 1980s a rapid, almost forced privatisation of rental housing began — on favourable terms. This was an instrument to democratise an opportunity formerly available only to a closed elite. The core of the motivation was growing fear of public attacks. It was also a way for the political level to avoid taking responsibility for the failure to regulate, maintain and manage the rental housing sector; an expression of the inability to make decisions and to avoid the political tensions, at least temporarily, caused by further substantial rent increases.

The new government, formed in 1990, considered changing the regulations on rental housing privatisation for two reasons

- to open up privatisation on a mass scale for ordinary people; and
- to offer compensation to the original owners prior to nationalisation.

Local governments were given discretion in the application of the legislation. As a result, from the government's point of view the whole process seemed uneven, but the tiniest change would have provoked resolute resistance, so changes did not take place.

Local governments were in an even more difficult situation. With regulations and circumstances unchanged from the socialist period, financial conditions favourable for tenants were definitely unfavourable for local governments. Tenants were supposed to pay only 15-30 per cent of the market price of their units in case of privatisation. Of this they had to pay only 10 per cent in cash and could pay the rest in instalments over 35 years at an interest rate of 3 per cent (at a time when the rate of inflation was 25-30 per cent). Several local governments had considered reforming rental housing regulations to make them more workable, but this was prevented by the government, which feared public opinion. On the other hand, with centrally set and fixed rents, maintaining rental housing meant a huge loss, and groups of residents exerted powerful pressure on local decision-makers to carry on with privatisation on favourable terms for tenants.

All this led to accelerated privatisation of rental units under favourable conditions for the tenants in the early 1990s. However, it is local governments who continue to identify dwellings for sale. The process of privatisation in various settlements has become differentiated due to variations of local government policy and the effect of local pressure groups. In certain places, officials decided to sell everything; in other

places nothing. The capital city, where the majority of the rental housing stock was concentrated, showed a very heterogeneous picture. Owing to the new decentralised local government system in the capital, the rate and volume of privatisation varied greatly from district to district. Recognition of such substantial differences has led both local governments and tenants' organisations to demand the regulation of the right to buy by law at national level.

Another important phenomenon in relation to the acceleration of housing privatisation is the compensation policy of the central government. Its essence is that, after the change of regime, those whose property had been nationalised at the early period of the communist regime could not regain their actual properties but were offered compensation vouchers for which they could buy either land or shares in state-owned enterprises. This process was much slower than expected, and many people are not able to use their compensation vouchers to invest in land or business. They more often sell them on the open market at a reduced value. Tying the privatisation of residential and commercial units to the right-to-buy primarily aims at encouraging people to use their 'frozen' compensation vouchers to buy their rental units. (However, this raises the question of what local governments themselves can do with the compensation vouchers they receive as payments for their property.)

Case study 1. Tenants' Association

Among the housing movements, the Tenants' Association will be discussed in detail. This was the first organisation to be formed in the field of housing. It has the largest membership among organisations of its type and its brief history demonstrates well the difficulties of the institutionalisation of civil initiatives, the problems to be solved and its manoeuvring through the specific Hungarian conditions complicated by the social, political and economic change of regime.

Why and how was the Tenants' Association created?

The Tenants' Association was founded in 1988 after about one year of preparation. First, the so-called external social and political conditions leading to its foundation will be discussed, since in the case of the Association they cannot be separated from the internal, personal motivations, and their translation into action. We assume that the organisation would probably not have been created, or more precisely the founders would not have created it, in the absence of changed political conditions.

The most important change was the legal possibility to found associations. The Association Act was an essential condition. According to the

Association Act, as few as ten persons may form an association. The Act also prescribes the documents that are needed for the foundation. In any case, it prevents the suppression of gatherings. The possibility of legal organisation was not only important from the point of view of the founders' personal motivation, but it also meant that they did not have to operate in illegal, semi-legal conditions, or on the verge of illegality with all the consequences. It was important primarily because they had to counter an existing bureaucratic institution, to represent the members' interests. This could only be done in the framework of a legal, acknowledged and authorised organisation.

Organising interest representation against the IKVs and having the organisation accepted was not easy in view of the power that managers had. These IKVs were state-owned companies which had an exclusive right to operate and manage state-owned rental houses: collecting rents, monitoring tenants and assigning rental units and blocks for renovation. In fact, in practice they had more power than they were given by acts and decrees. They had the opportunity to manipulate empty rental units, to use budgets allocated for renovation arbitrarily and irrationally. They operated practically without any social control and asserted their will by making themselves independent from local councils which, in theory, were their superior authorities. The process by which IKV managers established their specific explanation and ideology as to why rental units were in such a bad state, and how this explanation and ideology were influential in the legislative process, deserves a separate study. The ineffectiveness of IKV managers was legalised and admitted; at the same time, their existence was stabilised. They were not 'deprived of rights, only of obligations:

The idea [for the Tenants' Association] was born when, together with many of my fellow sufferers, we lived through the activity of the IKV management companies in the framework of socialist housing. I had a concrete conflict. It lasted for 30 years. Once my flat was broken up in January on the pretext of water pipe and sewage pipe replacement ... they left the flat as it was at the end of February and restored it in May only because I left no stone unturned (founding President).

Here, in fact each of us tried to do something in his own interests, for his own purposes. Thus everyone has a private incentive. For instance, M. Sz.'s chief problem was that he lived in a villa at Pasarét that he wanted to buy. And IKV has not allowed him to buy it up till now. ... Mr. V. lived in a house on Rózsadomb which used to be a wonderful villa. As a result of IKV's philosophy, mortar was already starting to fall out from between the bricks ... it was in a terrible state. Our Secretary General joined because of what he went through in connection with a loft conversion. ... There is a dentist in the presidency who lives in a

large flat with his parents and has his surgery there. They want to make him rent it at market price (former organising secretary).

It was quite obvious—and it turned out to be true—that only an officially registered, politically authorised organisation could take up the fight against the IKV. (The movements' different forms and effectiveness will be discussed later.) The 'founding father' and chief organiser of the association says the following when he recalls the period as early as two years before the foundation (i.e. in 1986):

I threatened them [i.e. the Budapest Municipal Council] that I would found a movement ... at that time, however, the objective conditions were missing ... the political conditions were not yet ripe for spontaneous civil organisations ... When at the end of 1987 or the beginning of 1988 something was already stirring I began to consider it.

The legal possibility, however, was only one of the essential conditions. Another very important factor was the attitude of the authority (in this case the Budapest Municipal Council) to the association. Legal provisions on their own were useless since the authority could hinder the foundation of the association by delaying the different stages of administration, as it did when it wanted to. It could deploy several more or less sophisticated methods of discouraging civil initiatives, and these were often employed with success.

The situation was different in the case of the Tenants' Association. At the time of its foundation, the attitude of the Budapest Municipal Council was characterised by a certain ambivalence. For instance, they provided a hall for the statutory meeting. The Secretary of the Executive Committee was among the founders (later he left the organisation and perhaps even cancelled his status of founder). After the statutory meeting, however, the Council did not provide a hall and did not support the association any more. It is now difficult to identify the reasons for this official behaviour. In 1988, the political situation in the country was already such that the previously expected attitudes were being questioned. It was impossible to know how to behave 'correctly'. To support the organisation overtly and try to take part in it, to direct it from the inside? Or not to take part in it but support it in secret? Or to remain outside and wait to see in which direction it develops and then decide whether to support it or not? And should a civil initiative be supported under changing conditions if it is not necessarily looked upon as an 'opposition'? Can the authority remain neutral, though this was rarely the case in the socialist period?

Can an initiative that tries to build itself up from below and that intends to assert its interests against a state institution be politically neutral? Who is not against us is with us', but who knows whom is actually with us and, if they are not with us any more, is it certain that they are not against

us? On the other hand, the movement might be politicised if the authorities attempt to hinder its foundation. There were former party members among those who organised and created the movement, with intricate political connections. The situation was not simple.

At the same time, as soon as it turns out that two similar organisations are intending to form, bureaucratic reflexes start to work immediately: one organisation is (perhaps) supported, the other is not, which has several consequences. This is one reason why the two organisations—the Tenants' Association and the Tenants' Association of Budapest—are not on the best terms and, more precisely, ignore each other to this day.

At the level of the authority, the above dilemmas reflected the different standpoints of representatives belonging to different political groups. They included reformers and orthodox communists, and those who occupied an intermediate position. The development and the evaluation of political processes, however, was not unequivocal.

To sum up: the establishment of a legal framework and the increase in political tolerance gave citizens the prospect that, by organising themselves and thus increasing their influence, they would be treated by the authorities as equals and could achieve some results against the 'mighty and omnipotent' authority.

The Tenants' Association was founded by about 30 people, mainly the founding father's acquaintances, and to a lesser extent the acquaintances of these latter. Two among the founding members participated in the statutory meeting after reading a newspaper advertisement:

[After its foundation] the operation of the association was made possible by two things. One was receiving premises in Sallai Street from Novo-trade Corp., the managing director of which was a friend of mine. They also undertook to pay overhead expenses for one year ... Novo-trade helped us later as well.

The majority of the founders were intellectuals ranging from film directors to journalists and lawyers: that is, highly qualified people, such as engineers. Thus, they were slightly more resolute than ordinary people.

Why do people participate in the Tenants' Association?

In Hungary, most people living in rental blocks until the beginning of the 1990s had some smaller or bigger conflict with the real estate managers. The rental blocks and units were often abandoned and their condition deteriorated. The IKV managers either did nothing, put off the tenants with empty promises, or carried out unsatisfactory work. They were also often corrupt. And citizens were practically helpless since they had no

legal right to demand work from the IKV. The IKV managers put them off, saying 'there is no money for it; the rent is so low that there is not enough for anything'. The fact that there were great scandals in certain districts, that some IKV leaders were caught, did not really change the situation. IKV as an institution was untouchable. It was a state within the state.

The point is that discontent and indignation with IKV managers were always present, and when the grip of socialist power became less tight and citizens got the possibility to organise themselves and assert their interests, many people suddenly felt that it was a good opportunity to achieve something, to show the authority that they could not be trifled with any more and to expose the authority's illegalities. In this respect, there was no great difference between the founders and the ordinary members who joined later. As usually happens in the case of civil initiatives, it was quite natural that the founders brought in their own personal conflicts. How and into what the founders' and the leaders' motivation arising from personal conflicts transformed later is another matter. At the outset the difference between founders and members lay 'only' in their capability of creating and running such an organisation.

The functioning of the organisation

In the few months following its foundation, membership grew to a few thousand persons, a size which already demanded some kind of operational structure based on different groups. District groups were created in Budapest and some groups outside Budapest, too. In theory, the aim was that the local organisations should attempt to remedy the individual grievances of the local residents and to contact and fight against the local IKV managers.

This idea did not really work, partly because the different groups were led by people of different abilities. The groups could not be organised everywhere in such a way that they could provide a stable basis for the protection of interests. On the other hand, the local IKVs had different ideas as to how to deal with the Association, too. In any case, IKVs were still very powerful and could not be forced. The most effective — although not the only — way of dealing with them was publicity. After a time, however, it lost some of its effectiveness.

Another problem was that the material and objective conditions for creating a greater organisation were also lacking. Employees could not be paid and no infrastructural resources were found. State or council support was sought and membership fees were kept very low. There were problems with the membership fees anyway: while everyone paid them on joining, later not all members paid them on a regular basis. Those whose problems could not be solved often left the movement.

The Association had a President and a Secretary General who were volunteers and did not receive any payment for a long time. Later the Secretary General did the job part-time and then full-time. The President and the Secretary General were elected by the conference of deputies, as was the Presidency. The division of work between, and sphere of authority of, the Presidency, the President and the Secretary General served as a basis for continuous discussions. In practice, they departed from basic principles on several occasions.

Similarly, the division of work between the groups and the centre of the Association was not clear cut, either. The task of the local groups was to settle specific problems, to manage conflicts and to protect and represent the interests of individual tenants. The centre's role was to represent a more general protection of interests, not limiting itself to settling individual problems but extending to participation in the processes of legislation, preparing decrees and working out concepts in order to represent tenants' interests. Not everybody agreed on these aims, however, which divided the leadership and members in many respects.

In principle, the conference of deputies was called together once a year. The presidium met much more often, but due to different conflicts, sometimes it was not convened for months.

Why and how did the Tenants' Association survive? The role of success and the strategy of the authority

Discussion of the above topics within a single chapter is necessary since some kind of chronological order should be followed in order to avoid confusion.

Besides the external conditions, the existence of the Association depended largely on its ability to represent the interests of its members against the real estate managers and the council offices effectively and successfully.

The Association had very good publicity in the media after its foundation. Articles of varying lengths on the impossible and defenceless situation of tenants, on their struggle against authorities portrayed as a dual between 'good' and 'evil' were published almost daily in newspapers or broadcast on radio. The great stir in the press and the soaring membership allowed the participants to hope for quick and spectacular success. Naturally the leaders were aware that the first real success, a membership of a few thousand people, meant great responsibility as well. They had to fulfil the members' expectations and achieve good results. The most tangible results were settled cases: cases in which they succeeded in forcing the IKV to retreat.

IKV managers and councils — in the latter case primarily the technical

and housing department — were doubtless unable to keep pace. Although they were most experienced and well trained in 'handling' individual conflicts, they were not prepared for an organised attack that questioned their very existence.

Probably for this reason a great number of cases were settled in the initial period. The authority tried to defend itself by emphasising that these illegalities were exceptional, that they resulted from the error of individual officials. In order to prove that statement some concrete cases had to be settled in the tenants' favour. This was one of the characteristic tactics. Another was based on the assumption that the tenant was wrong:

I had the opportunity to study the Swedish rental housing system where the representation of lessors and tenants has worked for several decades in a highly developed form. At that time here they [the Tenants' Association] existed in such a way that a few people shouted all kinds of nonsense about IKV, but without any effect. Their role was not important; nobody took them seriously. It was at this point that we decided to improve our working method and that they should do the same, after which we could jointly establish different forms of co-operation ... Negotiations started, but they did not lead to great results since in my view the Tenants' Association at that time was full of people who were not in favour of reaching agreements, but who wanted to fight against something. IKV and the councils were a good target ... I thought that one had to differentiate between demagoguery and real things ... We are not willing to concern ourselves with demagoguery, also; we do not have time for it. It was just a passing thing that is published in the newspapers five times. Some journalists take it up, but then it ends and people go back to work. So we did not bother about it, we did not even answer the letters. I was the one who wanted to leave the whole thing alone, because there was no sense in arguing about foolish things ... why were people unsatisfied with the rental housing system? Not because of IKV. Hell to that. Because the rental housing system was a totally senseless and badly organised system in Hungary. (Interview with former director of 7th District IKV).

(The IKVs, by getting into the real estate management section of the Chamber of Commerce, successfully infiltrated the apparatus that developed the new housing conception affecting the rental housing system as well, and represented the real estate managers' interests with success. This process was disturbed by the transformation of the political system.)

There used to be a third, more sophisticated tactic as well:

We fully recognise the necessity of interest representation; at last such an organisation has come into existence. Now there is someone to

co-operate with in order to eliminate mistakes and insufficiencies, to help each other's work in the interest of tenants.

This was the surface beyond which there was only idleness and the defence of positions.

As the above interview excerpt shows, a mix of these tactics could be found in use by different local IKV managers, but it was essentially over time that they changed. All in all, the authorities resorted to these three tactics.

At the outset, however, there were successfully settled cases. The Association began to identify the most effective methods and infrastructure for advocating concrete cases. It became evident that this would cost a lot of money and therefore some additional resources should be sought. The most viable solution seemed to be asking money from the councils, more particularly from the Budapest Municipal Council. A legal aid service was set up which operated primarily in the capital, where most tenants lived. The purpose of this was to enable tenants to settle their own cases with the help of legal and technical advice. The Association, its centre or its representatives would only intervene if the outcome was unsuccessful.

As members joined they brought into the Association so many problematic and unsettled, often really outrageous, cases that it soon became clear that they could not all be handled by the Association. To do this a separate apparatus was required. Money should be supplied by the Budapest Municipal Council since the problems arose from their faulty operation. Fear of getting lost amidst the jungle of unsettled cases, and fear that after a certain time failures would outnumber successes on the one hand, and rational considerations on the other, led to a demand for the revision of the Association's operation and the redefinition of its aims.

The redefinition of the Association's aims was complicated by personal conflicts within the leadership, as mentioned above; these conflicts and the factors underlying them were also rather complicated. In part they were connected to the personal aspirations of the leaders. In the initial period, success in the press, with public opinion, and with the increase of membership could be relied on, and the expansion and development of the association could be linked with the building up of personal careers. At the same time, it seemed unavoidable that such a big organisation would sooner or later need a small independent apparatus. The press had a key role in this respect. A lot depended on who appeared more frequently in the media among the leaders, what they said, and whose opinion was published on behalf of the association.

Members of the leadership had different views on the future of the Association. The founding President, encouraged by the increase in membership, would have gone in the direction of expanding the organisation. Besides the tenants he intended to involve other groups' interest protection

as well and was thinking in terms of a conglomerate organisation. Another leader wished to push the movement towards professional interest protection. Instead of solving 'petty' cases, he preferred negotiations with the authorities, and involving the organisation in the transformation process of rental housing, and the whole housing system. Others believed that the solution of individual cases, the fight against the IKV managers that had become spectacular with the support of public opinion, could not be pushed into the background otherwise the membership would dwindle. Some kind of balance had to be found since both forms of interest protection were necessary. In others' views, the Association should prove that the state-owned rental blocks can be maintained at an acceptable level, or can even be restored from the existing rents, provided this is not done by IKVs. The Association should break the IKV's monopoly and the management of rental blocks should be given to the tenants. (Although the idea of so-called self-governing housing associations was present in the Association all along, attempts to realise it failed repeatedly.) There was no consensus with respect to how the material conditions of operation should be met. Some said that money could not be requested from those against whom they represented interests — i.e. from the councils or the government — since this would increase the danger of being corrupted. Others saw no real alternative in view of the small and randomly-paid membership fees.

When the conflict reached a certain level, the Secretary General of the Association, who could perhaps have acted as a kind of arbiter but refused, resigned. The conflicts were further aggravated after the Secretary General's resignation. It became increasingly a fight between two persons: the founding President, who was already about 70, and the newly-elected young Secretary General.

Meanwhile, the political crisis had deepened, and the change of regime became more and more unavoidable, which politicised the Association as well. And although the Association as a whole kept apart from politics, the personal conflicts within the leadership were burdened with the members' different political views. The good old 'comradely connections' were less useful now. Matters were worsened by the President's past involvement in the AVO (State Security Authority) which he admitted and, as a consequence of which, he had to remain in the background. He could not realise his own ideas any more. In the end he resigned and founded another organisation (the Residential Interest Protection Union) which was joined by some of the other leaders.

All this took place over about a year. During this year, significant changes began and accelerated in politics as well as in the housing system, primarily the privatisation of rental units. One of the results of privatising rental blocks was the decrease in rental housing in the big cities and the structure of the remaining rental housing became characterised by poorer quality.

The development of this process had two effects from the point of view of the Association. Partly it had to face a situation in which tenants whose interest they protected would all of a sudden disappear or few would be left. On the other hand, the remaining rental units would be occupied by members of those social groups which always have less chance to become organised and to protect their interests. At the same time, new interest groups came into existence in favour of privatisation of housing and as a result of corrupt practices in the selling process.

In our view, the Association had to face one of its most important decisions at this point. The question was whether it should remain the interest protection organisation of tenants or whether — giving in to pressure — it should widen its activity and take up the representation of tenant groups interested in privatisation. Quite a significant part of its membership belonged to the latter group and, at the same time, the privatisation of certain houses was carried out in a scandalous, often unlawful way.

The opinion within the Association's leadership was that a very negative process had started and the majority of tenants would make a bad bargain by buying their homes. This process was artificially stirred up by some people and was reinforced by bad historical experiences. But to advocate such an opinion would have been highly unpopular given the situation.

The actors remained in the changing circumstances; only their names changed. The councils were now municipalities; the IKV managers were now called privatisation companies and, as for the tenants, they were not tenants any longer but neither were they owners as yet. They could be simply called citizens.

One way of describing the situation is to say that the interests of the organisation conflicted with its original aims. The progression of events, the unadvocated expert opinion, the personal aspirations that were built upon the organisation, all moved the Association in the direction of a new kind of interest representation. That was the basis of the Assembly's decision in autumn 1990 to transform the Association into a Federation. When the transformation of the Association began, its more independent units started leaving. As independent organisations they were to express their intention of forming a federation and they were to be joined by some new groups, primarily from outside Budapest. At this point the organisation's first Secretary General, who was acceptable to both the members and the leadership, was invited to the position of President. This was done with the consent of the Secretary General performing the duties of the President. As President of the Tenants' Association, the largest member organisation of the future Federation, he was to act as President of the Federation.

Finally, the foundation of the Federation failed after two attempts, the background of these failures being little known. Therefore the newly elected

President put an emphasis on strengthening the Association and on interest protection activity. He realised that the protection of interests had two separate areas: the professional interest representing against the government and the municipalities in transforming the housing system, and the representation of individual or small group interests in particular cases. He wished to leave the former to the Secretary General, who preferred this kind of interest representation, and had already worked himself into it and had connections. The President took upon himself the second. Probably this also contributed to the fact that the federation came into being at the end of 1991:

Conceptions of the local municipalities and decrees relating to sales were published one after the other and these provincial organisations gradually came to feel that they were too weak to oppose the municipality ... And they began to ask: 'Why don't we form a federation?' ... The federation was then created with nine member organisations, but in a much healthier way than had been originally planned. The Federation was now consciously created in such a way that it became not only the organisation of tenants' associations but also that of the Association of House Management Communities. Former members of the Association who were tenants quite evidently turned to the Association as before. But it would be foolish and unfair to say that here we protect only tenants' interests ... We would like to avoid the words 'owner' and 'condominium' and therefore speak about house managing organisations. The growing membership is clearly constituted by new owners, especially outside Budapest. (Interview with President of Tenants' Association)

Changes in the strategy of the authority and the transformation of demands

The so-called professional interest protection was done with the participation of the Secretary General. If one takes a closer look, this did not really differ from the form of the interest protection of the Kádár era, which was characterised by negotiations behind closed doors, with the exclusion of the public, and with personal interests and motivations strongly mixed with those of the organisation.

Establishing relations with government offices had started before the so-called political change of regime. The aim of the Association was to participate in shaping the housing conception and to achieve that as a significant interest protecting organisation. It needed to be invited and its opinion heard, thus influencing the new housing concept.

The process is inseparable from the fact that the association's Secretary General, a determined and ambitious young man with a degree in engineering, linked his personal professional career more and more tightly with

the organisation. A founding member, he was a member of the presidency as a 'volunteer', President of the Technical Committee then, after about nine months, Secretary General, still as a volunteer. He received only his expenses from the summer of 1990. From the autumn of 1990, the Association was without a President. From April 1991 — when the old Secretary General was elected as new President — he worked part-time, and from April 1992 full-time.

Meanwhile, the material conditions of the organisations were changing all the time. Every year it was uncertain where they could find necessary resources. At a certain period it was the capital (still the Budapest Municipal Council) that supported the Association; later it was partly supported from the budget that Parliament allocated to different social organisations. Sometimes they received money from government offices that commissioned expert studies from the Association. After having succeeded in establishing a close connection with the International Federation of Tenants and with the Swedish parent organisation, they received some support from these as well.

Co-operation with the government was nevertheless motivated by several factors. The Secretary General thought it important to maintain good relations, partly because he considered them one of the conditions of being successful in influencing the housing concept. He also had good personal relations with the ministerial commissioner appointed by the Ministry of Social Welfare. He wished to achieve two purposes. One was to gain professional authority in government circles so that he would be invited as the representative of the largest interest protecting organisation. The other was to ensure the material conditions of the operation were met.

One of the consequences of the confused circumstances was that criticism became less sharp, and the public was less often informed about the standstill in the process of policy-making or about clashes of views and interests. Another consequence was that criticism took a different course. The main emphasis was laid on measures depending on Parliament (voting against the establishment of the Housing Office) and municipalities. Government actions received less criticism and this confined itself to generalities. At the same time, they were afraid to use publicity to criticise the Government for neglecting some of its obligations, for instance, that it did not convene the Civil Conciliation Council. In these situations they considered whether the good relationship established would not be threatened by such steps. This could also explain why the Secretary General was often viewed as an adherent of government parties.

This strategy had several consequences. The most important was perhaps that 'one had to be careful' about what appeared in the press and therefore the Secretary General kept a firm hand on the press. He

would usually be the one to speak on behalf of the organisation, which resulted in several personal conflicts. For example, it was said that the Secretary General did not speak for the organisation, but that he only expressed his own views. The other consequence was that the Association was ignored as an interest protecting and expert organisation. When as a result of the struggle for power within the government (which was a struggle between the experts of the old bureaucracy and the experts nominated by the new political regime on the one hand, and certain interest groups who wanted to seize the power of decision in order to be able to influence the legislative procedure according to their own economic interests, on the other), responsibility for housing policy was transferred from the Ministry of Social Welfare to the Ministry of the Interior, the Tenants' Association—if not formally, but in reality—was no longer regarded as a partner.

The too-close relationship with government officials, particularly with one group of them, led to a situation in which the Tenants' Association lost all influence on the policy development process, aimed at changing the rental housing system radically.

The relationship between the local organisations, groups and local authorities changed fundamentally as well. This of course applies to those districts—primarily in Budapest—in which such groups existed and had established some kind of relationship with IKV managers and the councils. In some districts (e.g. in the 6th, 7th, 9th districts) one of the leaders or active members of the local groups was elected as a representative at the municipal elections. As experts they were invited to participate in the respective committees by the elected body of representatives. In such cases the efficiency and the effectiveness of their activity did not differ from that of the other representatives.

The struggle around the privatisation of rental blocks divided not only the bodies of representatives at the municipalities, but also the local groups of the Tenants' Association, which shifted towards interest protection. The transformation of IKV management companies, one of the aims set out during the elections, became officially the responsibility of the new bodies and new municipalities. Whether the representatives of tenants participated in these or not depended on local power relations. They participated more often than not. But the IKVs proved to be too strong to cope with, even for the new municipalities. (The reasons for these deserve a separate study.)

The activity of the local groups also shifted towards the preparation of decrees on privatisation and the struggles surrounding it. Since the Association itself did not have any explicit view on privatisation, the local groups showed considerable divergences over this issue. More precisely, the group's strategy was determined and the group itself was possibly divided by the personal opinion of some local leaders, their fears and

interests in connection with selling the rental blocks and whether they should face conflicts or should avoid them. Since the bureaucracy had no real strategy at that time, one would exaggerate by saying that the strategy of the local authority at this time was 'involving'. The outcome, however, was the same, since in fact they got involved in one of the divided bodies of representatives.

At the present time, in October 1993, the existence and the role of the Tenants' Association is completely uncertain. The act on rental units, which was adopted in summer 1993, restricts the system of rental housing to a small number of social rental units. If any organisation at all is willing to represent the interests of the tenants living in the latter, it will certainly not be the Association. The owners living in the newly privatised rental units will shortly have unsolvable problems. Today it is difficult to predict how these problems (delayed rehabilitation, high maintenance costs, the operation of condominiums, etc.) will be solved. It is also hard to see against whom their interests should be pursued.

Case study 2. Initiatives supporting the homeless

The present study does not embrace all the civil initiatives that have focused on homelessness up to 1993—their number today is not small—but it deals with or at least mentions the most important types, the major organisations. The SZETA, the Shelter Foundation, the Association for the Support of Teenagers and the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service will be discussed in greater detail. Besides these, some others should also be mentioned.

The first, perhaps most important, organisation to be mentioned is the ÚJCSAKÖ (abbreviation of the Újpest Family Support Centre). The leader of ÚJCSAKÖ has been working in the social field since the second half of the 1970s. Probably we would not exaggerate by calling him the *enfant terrible* of the profession. The reason for this is partly his continuous innovative activity, some elements of which have, temporarily or permanently, pervaded the profession. The other reason is the incessant struggle and conflict with the authorities, which can be explained by the powerful innovative activity, the protection of certain marginal groups (e.g. squatters), the rigidity and intolerance of the bureaucracies and the official institutions, and reasons of personal character. At the moment this group and its leader himself are in an impossible situation and are trying to find a way out of a major crisis. The direction in which the situation will develop is not foreseeable yet.

In the second half of the 1980s homelessness started to become visible on a larger scale, partly due to the lack of provision for persons leaving institutions such as state care and prison. At this time the phenomenon

was limited to men. The state social policy institutions had no means to tackle such a crisis. They were unable to react to the new challenge and simply ignored the problem. In this case — just as in that of SZETA — a very small professional group, the Social Committee for the Homeless, was formed primarily in order to make the problem public, and to publish reports about its existence and its development.

The Social Committee for the Homeless came into existence as a result of a campaign. Its founders were mainly professionals working in the field of social welfare, but who were strongly critical of current policy, theoretical experts, activists and one homeless person. The latter homeless person was the one to give the last impulse to create an interest protecting organisation by initiating a protest movement against a measure of the Budapest Municipal Council: a radical increase in rents in temporary hostels. The Committee was active for about a year, but its activity gradually ceased after its mediating and interest protecting role during the 1989 demonstration of the homeless finished. Its members continued their activity in different organisations or as politicians.

One of the most important differences between the organisations dealing with the homeless is the degree to which they can and/or want to preserve their independence from bureaucracy and the authorities, thus facing the uncertainties resulting from such independence.

SZETA — Foundation for the Support of the Poor

It should have been already emphasised that the political system that functioned for 40 years after World War II was — not incidentally — an over-politicised system in which the small details of everyday life took on direct political significance, especially in the case of organisations. Although this aspect will not be analysed here, one has to be aware of it as background information in order to understand the events.

The foundation of SZETA, the Social Committee for the Homeless and the Shelter Foundation are all connected with different turning points in Hungarian political and social history.

Why and how was it created under the given social conditions?

SZETA (Foundation for the Support of the Poor) was created in late 1979, four years after the birth of the KOR supporting Polish workers, and a few weeks after the first action of the Hungarian Democratic Opposition — the collection of signatures in solidarity with the Prague Charter movement, and ten months before the outbreak of the historic strikes in Danzig. As one of the founders puts it:

We called together a small and more or less random assembly on the

impulse of collecting signatures. Since for nearly ten years we had been unable to achieve any results from our proposals submitted to different government offices, we wanted to try to mobilise society, public opinion in favour of the poor. ... We thought that our individual engagement on the side of the most oppressed, most exploited strata of society would be backed by other people's helpfulness and perhaps engagement. We would considerably widen the interest protecting activity that we had pursued, although we could help only a few families. ... We wanted to call people's attention to the fact that despite the official statements traditional poverty exists in the Hungarian society of our days [in the socialist period]. That it concerns huge masses and that something should be done as the state social policy based on the official methods does not point towards a solution (extract from an interview, Beszélt, 1985).

Originally, SZETA was not created as a response to a new social phenomenon. It was created rather to call attention to the continual presence of poverty that was hidden from publicity and denied by institutions. The last impulse to its creation was given by the political events and actions, some of which were mentioned above. The founders were mainly socially (and politically only to a somewhat smaller extent) critical independent intellectuals (sociologists, lawyers, teachers). The intermingling of charitable and political elements was reinforced by the fact that SZETA carried out a 'pioneer' task. It was formed in a social environment where such alternative organisations hardly existed at all. (One needs to know that at this time the Association Act had not yet been incorporated in to the Hungarian legal system.)

Why and how has the organisation survived? The evolution of SZETA's activities — the collection of clothing and donations, the organisation of solidarity actions, handling the affairs of the poor and supporting those poor who turned to SZETA — was mainly influenced by the political changes of the past two decades. The two or three years following its foundation — after the failure of the Polish Solidarity movement — were followed by long, rather silent years during which the operation of the organisation became more and more limited. Then in the period preceding the collapse of the one-party system, the activity of the organisation, already reinforced by new activists, increased once again. As a result, SZETA's Home for Abused Mothers came into being.

The foundation of SZETA's Home for Abused Mothers was not preceded directly by any action by the movement. An existing alternative organisation was attempting to respond to a special social problem. Thus, although the Home for Abused Mothers is an independent initiative with an independent life, the SZETA organisation is always there in the background, enabling it

to operate and survive. The Home for Abused Mothers, which operates in a large detached house, can take in about a dozen broken families (mother and children) for a longer or shorter period. These women have fled from their home following a family fight. They are in the process of divorcing their husbands, and staying at home would be dangerous for them. In other cases, they were single homeless mothers or pregnant women. Many of them had grown up in state care and have no relatives. They turn to the SZETA assistance office in a critical situation and can obtain accommodation in the Home through the social workers of the office. Since there are many such homes in Budapest, often other organisations turn to SZETA to help them accommodate the mothers who had turned to them in similar crises.

Besides providing temporary accommodation, the Home for Abused Mothers fulfils resocialisation functions as well. Characteristically, the mothers learn the routines of looking after small children and the skills of educating children mainly from one another. SZETA's activists also try to resolve their family crisis. SZETA allows the mothers staying in the Home to lead an independent life. It tries not to interfere forcibly in the organisation of their lives within the Home. A social worker visits the home regularly to help deal with social and family matters, to assist with finding a job, and with placing children in nurseries, kindergartens and schools.

In fact, at the beginning the social worker was also an unskilled SZETA activist who had herself earlier turned to SZETA as a client and whose situation had been similar to that of the mothers staying in the Home. Such client participation in giving assistance and in maintenance often occurs in the case of the Shelter Foundation as well. Apart from a number of important and successful attempts at resocialisation, this solution often fails. In the case mentioned above, for instance, the woman herself came from the problem group and decided not to go on helping, as she was afraid of 'sliding back' into the condition of clients instead of advancing. Therefore today it is a professional social worker who visits the Home and looks after the mothers.

From the second half of the 1980s, the period when the number of alternative social initiatives grew considerably, one of the most crucial problems of such groups has been to find resources for their operation. In the first period, these organisations would manage with very small amounts of money. They would normally have no full-time employees. There would be one or two administrative workers, who would collect money at charity events and on collection days (SZETA operated similarly), the collected sum having been almost entirely used for the specified purpose (supporting the ill, the poor, or those with a special handicap).

In the last year or two, however — partly as a result of the appearance of new economic actors, partly as a result of the tax system — the different

banks and major entrepreneurs have been willing to support the initiatives that turn to them by donating greater amounts, thus increasing their goodwill. At the same time, the attitude of the state, government and municipal sectors is also beginning to change. They have created larger financial funds and foundations for further financing from which money can be received by application.

Originally in the socialist period, SZETA was based on non-official, non-state financing, which limited the available resources to a large extent. It can afford to maintain an assistance office and pay honorariums only now that the funds have been created in the banking and entrepreneurial sector and some foreign resources have appeared. Financing based on these sources means complete independence since these private funds rarely attach any strings. Such problems, however, as SZETA's protective attitude towards squatters, discourage major resource owners from supporting such non-conforming political groups. If, however, their activity concentrates on the support of children suffering from tuberculosis, they are more likely to be supported by banks and business. Some of SZETA's founders undertook a political role at the time of the change of regime in Parliament or at the municipalities, but they also participated in the training of social workers. In some form or other they are still in touch with the organisation.

How does the organisation operate as a group and why do people participate? SZETA itself has established a number of auxiliary offices throughout the country in recent years. The head office is in the capital where the original group operates. The earlier set-up has undergone considerable change. At the time of its foundation and in the following years the core of the organisation was constituted by a small and very active team of intellectuals of changing membership (5-25 people), which made collections among a relatively large circle of intellectuals and entrepreneurs, thus calling attention to the problem and emphasising their solidarity. Today a part of this small activist group constitutes SZETA's board of trustees which runs the central office of SZETA. The board of trustees does not participate as a body in the everyday work, but some of its members assist with social work from time to time. The head office has fewer employees than the Shelter Foundation (5-10 people) but, like the latter, it consists of full-time and part-time employees, and activists with various skills or none. Activists are partly attracted by the organisation's good reputation and partly by its methods which are completely different from those of state social policy. Human relations also represent an attractive force (to supplement the 'activist recruiting' professional courses organised by SZETA) that inspires unemployed people, pensioners, and students with free time to participate. The atmosphere of the assistance centre and its method of operation are based on direct human relationships and not on a bureaucratic division of

labour.

How does the organisation achieve its aims? Ensuring the financial conditions for survival is one of the constant tasks of the organisation. Although it has had its ups and downs, so far it has been successful in this respect. Apart from survival, success is defined as achieving the results in different actions (fairs, money-collecting programmes) and of interest representation against authorities. Its relationship with a certain part of the press (those which are independent or socially sensitive) is decidedly good.

Strategies of the authorities SZETA's relationship with bureaucracy at both the municipal and national level is characterised by strong conflict. At the local level such conflict is always connected to the protection of problematic, marginal groups. The situation is somewhat more complicated at the level of national institutions. It could perhaps be summarised by saying that their relationship to the institutions can hardly disregard the personal opinion they have formed about the possessors of power. Municipalities mostly reject SZETA and do not show any readiness to regard it as a partner. As for the Ministry of Social Welfare, it is politically antagonistic (MDF dominated) towards SZETA, which has a reputation for being politically close to the Free Democrats. In the case of the Budapest Municipality, the relationship is very good both professionally and personally with SZETA. This is also due to the fact that the capital has a different strategy concerning civil initiatives compared with the MDF-led national level.

The Shelter Foundation

Why and how did it come into being under the given social conditions? The other organisation that was studied is the Shelter Foundation, the formation of which differs considerably from that of SZETA in several respects. The Shelter Foundation was organised in a legal form (as a foundation) immediately before the change of regime occurred in 1990. Besides professional intellectuals, the homeless also had an important role in its creation. It is an initiative that was formed in response to the appearance of a completely new and basic social crisis phenomenon, homelessness.

For the previous 40 years, homelessness, like poverty, was not acknowledged. The number of the poor, however, shows relative permanence over time: according to Hungarian researchers they constitute circa 15 per cent of the population; that is, their number is around 1.5 million. This number has increased recently to an estimate of 2-2.5 million given by researchers. Major changes have also occurred in their composition. In this context, homelessness — and actual unemployment, which will be discussed later — was a completely new phenomenon. There had been homeless people

before, but they became a mass crisis phenomenon only in the last few years. The kind of homelessness when people sleep in the street or at railway stations, or can only find refuge in shelters reserved for the homeless, is often preceded by a state of latent homelessness. In the latter case, someone is under state care, stays in prison, a mental asylum or a workers' hostel (that is, in institutional accommodation) or is a subtenant (stays with a friend for an uncertain, shorter period).

At the end of 1989 there was a change in attitude towards homelessness. To understand this one should know that in the last years of the 1980s — as a result of the deepening economic and social crisis, and with the proximity of the fall of the old regime and the birth of a new, more democratic political regime — the number of alternative initiatives (environment protection movements, associations helping groups of ill people, interest protection groups, independent trade unions, etc.) grew in civil society. And what had a direct impact on the homeless was that the direct repression by the police weakened. As a consequence, a few large groups of homeless people appeared in public spaces of cities — such as subways, major public squares and railway stations — especially in the capital. In response to this, the authorities closed down major railway stations for the night. Homeless people reacted by launching a spectacular sit-down demonstration. Their demand was the free use of public space, access to empty flats or some kind of acceptable accommodation. Their action won the support of the above-mentioned professional organisations (SZETA, Social Committee for the Homeless) and, as a result, the first post-war shelter for the homeless was opened in Hungary. It was at this time that the Shelter Foundation was created with the participation of activists of the organisations mentioned above and of some other alternative social organisations for the maintenance of the shelter and for the further support of the homeless.

How does the organisation operate as a group and why do people participate? The Shelter Foundation was thus created in the wake of the spontaneous demonstration of homeless groups. Formally it was founded by five alternative social organisations. Informally it was created by the few activists who had participated in supporting the demonstration of the homeless and in obtaining, establishing and operating the first shelter. Characteristically enough, the marginal groups of the homeless were helped by relatively marginalised people. Some helpers, however, were social workers, sociologists, teachers, housewives, divorced mothers, and young people seeking a place to live.

At the outset the organisation was just needed to act as a name, an organisation that would take responsibility for the dilapidated building received for the purpose of establishing the shelter, and to which the sums

necessary for maintenance could be transferred immediately. The shelter was furnished by activists and the 50 homeless people moving in at the first phase. The homeless participated actively in decision-making and in management both individually and through the regular tenant meetings. The role of the founders remained formal. In practice, they did not take part in events. The professional staff (mainly unskilled social workers) stayed and participated in the maintenance of the shelter and the assistance of the homeless out of solidarity. After a few months they did the same for symbolic payment, and later on some of them worked for full-time or part-time salaries at the Shelter Foundation. Their number has been about 20 at any time, smaller at the outset and gradually growing.

The organisation became more and more differentiated and enriched with new elements. As homelessness suddenly became a mass phenomenon, the shelter was complemented by the Office for the Assistance of the Homeless, which deals with about 100 clients a day. The Office handles the affairs of the homeless turning to it and supports the homeless financially and otherwise. A Day Care Centre for the Homeless was also established where personal assistance is given to those whom, through intensive social work, can be led out from their marginal situation. Street social worker groups were organised in order to support those who did not turn to the Foundation. Today training courses are arranged for the activists and social workers of the new organisations that have started to deal with the homeless.

As a result, the original small activist team has grown (today it consists of about 30 persons) and is divided into subteams for different activities. Each of the units has its leader, and the whole organisation is held together and co-ordinated by a leader. He is the employer of those working for the foundation, and is employed in turn by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation consisting of the representatives of the founding organisations. Although this reflects the structure of a typical hierarchical organisation, its actual operation differs from that of a state organisation. One of the main differences is that the Foundation is entirely independent organisationally. It is not subordinated to any state or other major systems. This means that it has greater freedom in everyday work, and is more responsive to new challenges than other organisations. (These latter do not have organisational limits either, 'only' financial ones.) Its rapid differentiation according to the different activities reflects the same phenomenon. Another difference is that the internal organisational units are also relatively independent, reinforcing the flexible operation of the organisation as a whole.

Differentiation did not go hand in hand with a sharp distinction of the different fields of activity. Therefore there are no hierarchical relations dividing the activists and the employees. From time to time everyone does the job that would be normally performed by someone else. The training

and professionalism of new staff is continuously assured through the internal and external training system. There are always full-time and part-time employees, those receiving an honorarium, as well as volunteer activists. The seemingly less organised, less transparent internal system of operation appears to be an adequate form from the point of view of solving the social problems of the homeless.

Why and how has the organisation survived? The relatively short time that has elapsed since the turn of 1989/90 — that is, since the first, initial period of the appearance of homelessness as a mass and public phenomenon — has seen significant changes. The most important of these is probably the fact that the volume of unemployment has increased sharply in the past four years (today it amounts to about 600,000 persons, 10 per cent of the working age population) which has resulted in tens of thousands of people ending up in the streets after the closure of corporate workers' hostels, mass mobility from depressed regions towards the capital, the appearance of homeless families and homeless mothers with children in the poorest social strata, and squatters. As far as the two organisations we studied are concerned, this had — among others — the following consequences: the Shelter Foundation is under enormous social pressure which exceeds by far the capacities of an independent, alternative organisation. As for SZETA, it has been overwhelmed by the problems and struggles of homeless, squatting families within the wide, differentiated group of the poor. The Home for Abused Mothers was created by SZETA (partly with the help of the Shelter Foundation) as a direct reaction to this at the end of 1990.

The basic operation of the Shelter Foundation — which was created to maintain a new shelter — is financially ensured by annual financial support from the Budapest Municipality. Although such support has to be won from year to year, its operation has so far been considered indispensable to the city. If financial support were not granted, new crises would arise, producing political tension as well. At the time of its foundation, a very significant dilemma appeared in an explicit form: why is the new shelter not operated by the city directly, why create an organisation over which it may eventually not exercise full control?

The dilemma can be explained by some relatively simple factors:

- the city and its institutions were so unprepared for the new challenge that they could not have provided any social workers to participate in looking after the homeless;
- non-professional helpers and activists can join alternative organisations;
- authorities and alternative organisations often find it hard to develop good relationships;

- the city did not possess the means necessary for handling the problem and managing the institution; and
- the internal operation, the system of financing and the procedures of social care in the case of such a special institution are completely different from the procedures and norms of state and municipal institutions specified in regulations.

As a result, the Foundation had no place in the regulated state/municipal social policy institutions. These factors, together with the great pressure (of demonstrations), compelled the city to support the prompt creation of such an organisation, even without being able to control it directly.

All this, however, does not mean that the Shelter Foundation and the Budapest Municipality are mutually dependent on each other, or that they constrain each other as far as financing is concerned. As already mentioned, the appearance of new financial resources has been an important development in recent years. The Shelter Foundation also attempts to move towards 'multi-financing', to receive money from as many sources and by way of as many applications as possible, since such diversification increases its independence. It also receives money from foundations and from applications to the Ministry of Social Welfare. All these lead to great uncertainty, especially with regard to the ability to plan its activities. Another problem is that generally new resources are not given for basic operations, while access to new resources involves undertaking new tasks that are difficult to carry out (for instance, special training for social workers, redeployment of a street social care network, opening a day care centre). Therefore, today in the event of the radical dwindling of sources, although the Foundation would not be dissolved, it would lose its independence and would be engulfed by the city bureaucracy. In the case of the successful diversification of resources, however, it would have greater independence and more room to manoeuvre.

TINTA — Association Supporting Teenagers

... we used to be ardent little ones ...

Why and how did it come into existence under the given social conditions? TINTA as an association was formed in 1987, not without any antecedents. The 'host of the idea' — who is a strong personality shaping the organisation right up till the present — used to work for the KISZ (Communist Youth Organisation) in Budaörs, dealing with youth policy and student movements. He was one of those within KISZ who believed in the reformability and the transformability of the organisation and the creation of some kind of real youth interest representation. At one stage of the

institutional transformation of youth interest representation and of the struggle for positions, certain tasks were taken over by the municipalities, together with posts and money allocated to them. This is how the founder of TINTA became an employee of the Budaörs Council.

Before that, however, while still working for the local KISZ, he organised a so-called Teen Club with different programmes and lecture series for secondary school (14-18 year old) students. It was out of this initiative that TINTA emerged with the participation of the young people who gathered in the Teen Club. Although TINTA was created with the support of the local council, the money incontestably came from above and was specifically addressed to TINTA. (At that time it came from the State Youth and Sport Office, which took over one part of KISZ together with its functions and employees.)

The original idea had been teenagers helping teenagers. 'Teenagers should give advice to teenagers. Teenagers in a better position to those in a worse position.' One of the important factors leading to the foundation of TINTA was that its creation was officially authorised. The task was relatively easily defined: to help young people to solve their problems. The direction in which the organisation developed was determined by the openness of its members to all kinds of problems and situations in life. In other words they were not frightened of tough situations, they did not turn a deaf ear to these and could even face conflict with the authorities. Thus the function that had been created from above and from outside gradually came to operate as a real civil initiative.

Why do people participate? In the case of the participants — especially the leaders who are all teenagers — the answer is to search for a task, for work or simply their search for their role in life. Thus here the individual's search for a role has great significance. A short excerpt from the interview with the first leader of the association summarises the above:

And then I became chief official responsible for youth policy at the council ... and a chief official responsible for youth policy is all eyewash, a good bureaucrat ... I had this past ... having spent much time with the kids and run a lot of holiday camps ... So I thought it could be done. The team is already there to create some anti-office ...

Another group of participants — from the initiative preceding the setting up of the organisation — came from among its first clients. These were teenagers, mainly secondary school students who were motivated by some kind of wish to belong together, to a certain group and the values represented by this group. Later the circle of participants and clients altered, but this sort of connection, of participation, has always been present to some extent.

How does the organisation operate as a group? The Association has developed three areas of activity which are reflected in its current structure: it consists of three horizontally equal units. Each unit is headed by a co-ordinator. The units are independent: they submit applications, organise their programmes and their activities independently. The Association is directed by the so-called Board of Co-ordinators, its members being the three co-ordinators and an accountant. They discuss matters relatively frequently, every two weeks. If the problem requires it, they meet every week. Decisions concerning the whole Association are made jointly, such decisions being preceded by the discussion of the current situation (e.g. dividing the money that had been received or, for example, the issue of purchasing, renovating and moving into a house) in the individual units, sometimes involving clients as well.

There is a Work Programme for unemployed young people. They weave, do batik work, work with the leader, prepare different objects and sell them. Here, there are at least two part-time employees (one in charge of the workshop and a manager responsible for organising the procurement of materials, the sales, etc.). They also have an Information Service that is open every evening on weekdays and handles individual and family problems. Twelve university and college students work for the service and receive a small honorarium. The third unit is a shelter for the young homeless with sixteen places and all-day care. Six people work in it. (In the case of all units, those working full-time or part-time receive 10,000 forints, the honorarium being 3,000 forints.)

Why and how has the organisation survived despite the strategy of the authority? The history — or the history of the survival and evolution — of TINTA can be related to its detachment from the authority followed by its antagonism towards it. Under the previous regime, it was a part of supported youth policy and later became tolerated by the bureaucracy. Then, like some foreign body, it was rejected and sometimes the bureaucracy went to such extremes as trying to disband not only the office, but also the village of TINTA. This process was closely linked with the fact that TINTA gradually became involved with more and more marginal groups.

The leader of TINTA went on with the youth policy activity that he had started at KISZ as chief official at the council, within an organisational unit that was supported from the outside, but whose office and its head also supported its ideas. And TINTA, although it was independent from the council, received money through it and premises from it: it first operated in the council building. It was ejected from the building gradually, first the clients were unhappy to see its supporters in the council offices, later the founder/leader himself felt the same way. His post was reorganised and his function redefined. He left of his own free will.

TINTA was sheltered by the Budaörs Community House which had been built by the Patriotic Popular Front. The change of regime, however, swept away the Patriotic Popular Front, its institutions being restructured by the new municipality.

The Association was ousted from the Community House when it was on the point of expansion: they were planning to extend the consulting service from three days a week to a daily service. They struggled to get a wooden house on the edge of the housing estate where the consultancy service could be continued. (All this happened after the local elections in the autumn of 1990.)

In summer 1990, just before the local elections, although the Executive Committee voted against it, with the approval of the very 'sympathetic council Presidentess', the leader of TINTA succeeded in obtaining a small office building for the purposes of accommodation, the overheads of the building being borne by the council. TINTA's exclusion from the bureaucracy went on after the new municipality had taken over. The physical exclusion was followed by financial exclusion:

Our match with the municipality began at that time ... We attended a number of municipal meetings, which were like important matches for us. There were always a lot of us attending, we always took the kids too. And they were always terrified at how well we spoke: sometimes we told breathtaking stories, at other times we would bang the table. And they hated us and still hate us terribly. Anyway, it happened so that although it depended on one or two votes, we could still get the wooden house and we were not evicted from the building that functioned as a hostel. That last year 200,000 forints support was still voted for us. That for a while paid the overheads. They don't any more. Also, we have to give back the building. Well, such a regressive tendency characterises the attitude towards TINTA (interview with TINTA's first leader).

The first clients had been secondary school students who had turned to the initiative which was then still called Teen Club with different family and personal problems. (Some of them later became TINTA's activists.) The clientele was widened by the fact that TINTA itself also tracked down problem groups. That is how they reached young people in state care:

There was a rush when those who were in special need came to see us. These latter became the advisers of the advisers. Then there was a pause. It was at this stage that we started to track down problem children ourselves. And this continued when we became TINTA as well. Groups ... in different life situations came. Groups consisting of the inhabitants of a certain village, of a circle of friends and they brought along one another (interview with TINTA's first leader).

In fact, the conflicts for the organisation began when it got in touch with young people in state care, since these people introduced severe problems into TINTA: the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, glue sniffing, homelessness, unemployment and criminal behaviour. And TINTA chose to deal up to the conflict with the local municipality instead of refusing to deal with these problems. Its exclusion was eventually due to this attitude.

Parallel to this process (exclusion from the office, and involvement with increasingly marginal groups), another process was also beginning: that of moving from amateurism to professionalism which represent two different periods in TINTA's history. Another excerpt from the interview already quoted:

I had then already been learning the profession for years: problem-solving techniques, self-knowledge techniques, management techniques. ... We had been ardent little ones with small expertise — especially in financial and legal questions — but with a warm human heart, with enormous energy. And we had little experience. ... There was the first team that dealt with what they had turned to the organisation for. Actually, they needed support and help and were very glad to be able to give advice to some others. At this time a change occurred in TINTA: a new group — university students — came in with whom we have been working ever since. But there is another change: the arrival of social work students of working-class origin who were sent by the college for training and stayed here while others chose such a profession and went to university/college after having worked for TINTA. This was the third stage of TINTA. And the fourth is the present, which ... there is no denying is its 'institutionalisation' (in quotation marks since TINTA still has no place among traditional institutions). We are a special institution with this six-year evolution of ours.

Interestingly enough — according to the members of TINTA — no major conflict has developed with the local residents. Smaller conflicts are natural and mostly manageable. More account is given of some local representatives attempting to influence the direct environment in order to corner TINTA on the basis of public feeling, hitherto with little success.

The Association had finally succeeded in becoming virtually free of the municipality by the middle/end of 1993. This is largely due to the fact that they made successful use of the expanding application system and therefore became increasingly independent financially, without having to compromise with the municipality. (They applied for money successfully to the Ministry of Social Welfare, and received support from the Szerencsejáték (Gambling) Fund and the József Attila Foundation.)

Curiously, while they had been in constant struggle with the municipality, they endeavoured to avoid a conflict in their relationship with the Ministry of Social Welfare. Whether this can be preserved in the long run remains to be seen:

We avoid fighting. We do not try to change the Ministry. We achieve results where we need them — i.e. the support — otherwise we leave each other in peace.

How does the organisation achieve its aims? Even today, the central person in the organisation is the founder himself, the 'father' of the whole idea. He was the one to launch the association and to put it on its current track. He was its leader as well until 1992 when the management structure was altered and transformed into the current system of co-ordinators in which the head of each programme is independent.

There are some professional differences between the heads of the three programmes: they work with different methods, they have different approaches and they handle affairs differently. Apparently, however, the first crisis within the management of the organisation was not due to professional differences. It is much more connected with the operation of the co-ordination system, or rather its roots had already been present in the idea of setting up a co-ordination system. As the conflict had been in a very early phase, little could be discovered about its origins. One cannot be sure whether the aspirations for independence of one of the units — the consulting service — will eventually lead to its detachment from the organisation or whether some kind of compromise will be reached.

The participants consider themselves members/leaders of a successfully operating organisation. Such a feeling has both internal and external manifestations. Doing well at applications is considered to be a success. Neither do they feel losers in the fight with municipalities. They think that because of their 'being different' the municipality has no real alternative but to avoid them. Their external — professional — reputation also means success to them. The same applies to their relationship with other organisations. Although their professional line provides few opportunities for success, they like what they do and where they do it. On the whole they are satisfied. This, of course, does not mean that they do not have daily struggles with the clients, with the environment, and so on.

They have a very good relationship with the press and, if they need some publicity they can organise it through their connections:

The press is splendid. The press has always supported us. We have the name and address of those who are socially very aware. In times of great danger we have always invited the supporting press and the media and this has hitherto helped (says the founder).

TINTA is also in touch with other organisations that think in a similar way — SZETA, Shelter Foundation, Maltese Charity Service — and, although contact between them is quite rare, their relationship is amicable.

At the same time, they are members of a national network, the so-called PÓKHÁLÓ (Cobweb) which is the Hungarian acronym of the Patronising, Supporting and Protecting Community Network. This national organisation was created by self-organised youth groups in order to strengthen small local groups on the occasion of applications and so on. They organise joint training, summer camps and international relations. They meet every one or two months and organise joint weekend programmes in cultural centres. The organisation seems to have been created and based on the personal relationships that had been established in the youth and student movement of KISZ.

The Maltese Charity Service

The above title is somewhat misleading since of the whole Hungarian Maltese Charity Service, only the Budapest organisation dealing with the homeless has been examined. And within this we attempted to learn some details about the organisation of the shelter for homeless families.

Why and how was it created under the given social conditions? The Knights of Malta used to have an organisation in Hungary before 1945, which was discontinued after 1945, its members having emigrated. In Hungary, the Order was reorganised after more than 40 years of interruption, which event was preceded by the foundation of the Charity Service. All these resulted in the strange situation that in Hungary the Maltese Charity Service is a stronger, more widely known and larger organisation than the Order which is supposed to be in charge of it, and that the overlaps that are characteristic of their operation throughout the world have not developed. In each country the Order supports and supervises the charity and aid services of the Maltese Charity Service. This does not apply to Hungary, where the Order is still just taking shape today. Meanwhile, the Charity Service has evolved into one of the most significant social institutions in Hungary focusing on the poor.

The foundation of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service as an organisation actually started in West Germany. At the end of 1968, it was registered under a German name. This is a so-called sister organisation of the Hungarian one. The bilateral contract between them states that, if one should cease, its property passes to the other. The main purpose of the German organisation is to support the Hungarian one. Nor was the Hungarian organisation created out of nothing. Over several years a charity group was formed around the Catholic rector in Zugliget:

The same sort of work had been going on for at least a decade under the guidance of Father Kozma in Zugliget. Therefore it is not by chance that they found him. In fact, we had been growing so as to be always ready for action. Going to the railway stations at Christmas, for instance, was not a Maltese task. The support of the disabled in Baba Street was not connected to Malta. It was rather Malta that made use of the good small community that was developing under the father ... Besides Father, we did not even notice whether what we did became Malta or not (excerpt from the interview with the leader of the Budapest organisation).

The first Hungarian Christian association, the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service was incorporated as an association in February 1989.

The East German refugee 'bomb' exploded almost at the same time of the foundation, during the spring and summer of the same year. The garden of the Zugliget rectory practically became the centre for East German refugees. Finally, due to their activity during the German events, they received a former militiamen's barracks, which was later turned into the first shelter for the homeless, run by the Maltese Charity Service:

It was Chancellor Kohl who arranged a base for us in Budapest. We received the building from the Nemeth Government at the request of the German Government (recalls the Budapest leader).

They got involved in the problem of the homeless more or less incidentally. In the Autumn of 1990, MAV (Hungarian State Railways) once again decided to close its Budapest railway stations overnight in order to get rid of the homeless seeking shelter at the stations. The situation was rather tense. By that time the Maltese had become known for several charity actions (for example, at the time of the 1989 revolution in Romania). Within the Ministry of Social Welfare, a newly established Crisis Office was responsible for action on homelessness. They negotiated with MAV, with no real success. The majority of social workers and experts responsible for the issue and problem of homelessness belonged to the opposition. They shared the views of the opposition and many of them had some personal conflict with the head of the Crisis Office. These circumstances evidently contributed to the fact that the head of the Office asked the Maltese Charity Service to participate in settling the problem. I personally believe that he intended to establish a professional counterpart on the government side. We will see later with how much success.

As a result of these events, the Maltese Service became involved in the issue of homelessness in September 1990. With the financial support of the Ministry of Social Welfare, they set up a night shelter for 50 people in a building that had partly been used for storage, the other part having been disused.

Why do people participate? We have already touched upon this question when discussing the organisation that emerged from the Zugliget rectory. The mental and personal drive is quite evident. The circle of participants and activists expands through family ties, former school connections and/or ties of friendship. The story of how the first manager of the shelter — today the manager of the shelter for homeless families — became involved is a good example of these ties:

When I learned about the task I hadn't seen P. for eight years. During our grammar school years we would often go down to Moszkva Square, the two of us, and would watch people. And even at a distance of ten years it seemed to me that we had known precisely what we wanted to do. And P. would always say that he would not continue his studies unless he could find the place where he could be among wolves. ... Then I started to look for him. And I told him that I would ask him something that requires time, but I couldn't give any money for it. And it was so terribly interesting. I had hardly begun to say what I wanted when P. said that he had half a year off and was ready to help. This was brilliant (Budapest leader).

The Budapest leader ... used to be my classmate in grammar school, and we used to be good friends. ... and at that time he would try and think about who and what he should become ... We had not met each other for years. And then he suddenly remembered that picture, our conversations ... that I had always wanted to go among the wolves ... That's a symbol. He got in touch with me, told me what the situation was, that someone was needed. Although I had no idea about what it was all about, M. used to be a good friend of mine and I just thought I would help my friend. And I undertook it. I told him that he could not go alone until he could find the man for the task and he could establish the whole thing. That is the only thing I knew. So I joined him. (Manager of the shelter)

How does the organisation operate as a group? The authors do not have a precise picture about the whole structure of the Maltese organisation since only a relatively small part of it was part of our investigation.

The Hungarian Maltese Charity Service consists of territorial organisations, one of them being the Budapest organisation. The Budapest organisation is directed by a body of seven members. This body makes decisions about development, the tasks to be shouldered, and the division of money and support.

The different units are independent financially. (Such units are the shelters, the 'soup' kitchens serving free meals, the clothes-distributing centre, the medical centre, the day care centres, and so on.)

One can join or work for the organisation in different ways. There are the members, about 200 people. One is eligible for membership after a year of voluntary work and on the recommendation of two members. The fundamental rule is to be a practising Christian. Although the Maltese Order is Catholic and only Catholics can be its members, people of other religions or non-believers can also offer voluntary services for it.

Apart from the members there are volunteers whose number is around 4-500, according to the Budapest leader. Much greater than that is the number of sympathisers who can be mobilised if needed for ad hoc help: estimated to be 2-3,000 persons. The majority of members and activists are young: the average age is estimated to be about 30.

Why and how has the organisation survived? As opposed to the other movements launched in the middle of the 1980s, in the case of the Maltese Charity Service survival is not so much the main issue as the direction of its development.

If TINTA's history can be described as that of an organisation that became detached from the bureaucracy, as a move from an official organisation to a civil initiative, then in the case of the Maltese it would not be far-fetched to say that while the exact opposite did not happen, something close to it did.

The Maltese Charity Service that had evolved from a charitable civil initiative of a religious organisation was contacted and has been supported by official social policy, primarily on the grounds of common ideology. The Government of the time advocated Christian values similar to the Maltese ideology. As already mentioned, the Ministry of Social Welfare wanted to establish a counterpart to the already operating social civil initiatives that were not close to the government. And at the time of the change of regime in 1990, the Ministry did not want to use the Red Cross for this purpose since it seemed to be a communist fossil. (Later its scruples loosened for many reasons.)

The government was also fortunate to have found in the Maltese an organisation that on the one hand operated without getting involved in politics, without expressing any political views, and on the other hand had a good professional reputation as well. Since the social work profession as a whole was anxious to free itself of its connection with social policy administration by government and to escape from the previous and continuing conflicts, the authorities could not but accept the status quo and treat these organisations accordingly.

The development of its support for the homeless constitutes a separate chapter within the history of the Maltese Charity Service. The establishment of the shelter for homeless families is a part of that chapter.

If one can say that they got involved in the issue of homelessness

incidentally (as far as this can be regarded as incidental if someone wishes to deal with the socially deprived), then their involvement in operating a shelter for homeless families was to some extent incidental.

From the middle of the 1980s the number of squatters had risen in the capital and so had the intolerance of the authorities towards these groups. The majority of squatters were gipsy families with two, three or four children. In some districts of Budapest, huge eviction campaigns were launched against them occasionally: without much success. Even if they succeeded in evicting a few gipsy families, they would reappear in another district. Neither the councils nor the new municipalities were able to deal with the problem. In November 1991 the municipality of Zugló decided to evict a whole building for reasons of renovation. More than half of the flats in the building were occupied by squatters, 22 gipsy families with several children. Several organisations supporting the homeless — among them SZETA, the Shelter Foundation and as a new development the Maltese Charity Service — also protested:

At the time of the evictions, we only asked first that it should be done in November. That is, we did not stand by them at the beginning as we should have. But we wanted to let people know that the families don't use the parquet to light a fire as the prejudice goes, and that they live in as civilised a way as anyone else. We only insisted that the families with altogether 30 children should not be put on the street in November. And all this evolved into what we undertook with great pleasure because it is a very exciting task (the Budapest leader).

We were contacted by the 14th district municipality two weeks before the eviction and were asked whether we could give shelter to the squatting families because they were going to demolish part of the building. The greater part of the building is safe and they were offering it for social purposes. We said we would take it but on condition that the eviction was not carried out and that the gipsy families would be the first to stay there. We did not want to take sides with the squatters, nor did we support turning them onto the street in winter (the Manager of the shelter).

The attitude of the municipality to the situation was rather confused. While turning to the Maltese Service to work out a concept for how to help, at the same time it started evicting people. Although it offered for the Maltese Service a building, this building had been condemned as dangerous for habitation. The Municipality wished to avoid scandal, but it also wanted to get rid of the squatters. It would have been inclined to a compromise to reach a more humane solution, but it was afraid of encouraging other squatters. Accordingly, its actions were muddled and

resulted in a great deal of attention from the press, television and the public. Finally, the resistance proved to be stronger: the families stayed, and the Maltese Service was given the building. This, however, only meant the end of the story's preface, the story itself starts here.

How does the organisation achieve its aims? The organisation is able to mobilise a fairly large network of people through ties of friendship and family connections. This way they usually manage to overcome the difficulties which would be beyond the capacity of the organisation.

Success is seen as appreciation by the social work profession and by the neighbours who have often protested against the appearance of shelters for the homeless in their neighbourhood. The Maltese Charity Service has good connections with other organisations supporting the homeless, although the intensity of such connection varies. They are probably closest to the Shelter Foundation:

The T-shirts with the Pope on them come here. Those of the Budapest Festival go there. They (that is, the Shelter Foundation) inform us immediately that they received 5,000 T-shirts for free to allocate for the poor and they send over 2,000 of them for us. We do the same for them. And the relationship is very good. This, however, has not worked with the Red Cross.

Just like other civil initiatives, they are in good connection with a certain part of the press. They do not make extensive use of these connections, but then they do not have conflicts with the authorities like, for example, TINTA and SZETA have.

Other movements

Attempts to form tenant communities (Csengery Street and Kőrakspark)

Two types of civil initiatives were observed in the field of housing. One type came into being as a result of the self-organisation of small local communities and sought to protect the interests of that particular group against the local authority or its representatives. The group was therefore territorially limited (for instance, one house in the case of the tenant community organised at 48 Csengery Street, or a few houses in the association of tenants of Kőrakspark in Újpalota). The group's aim was also clearly defined: to restore and maintain their houses.

The members of the group knew each other personally, which made the relations within the group and the interest-asserting processes very clear. In this case, territorial unity was as important an organisational factor as common interest.

The first type is also characterised by the group's concern to handle their affairs themselves. This also applies to the case when they elect leaders from among the group to negotiate with the authorities, to organise interest representation and so on. The elected leaders had normally been initiators or cohesive elements of the organisation. The success of the protection of interests depended partly on the leaders' personalities, which was shown in the way they organised and kept together the group, and also on the efficiency of their work.

Another characteristic is that the limits to the growth of the organisation are self-evident. A movement starting from a particular rental block of houses is joined by neighbouring houses, a street, a square or a block of houses, but it has intrinsic limits. Development and the transformation of this type of movement is best demonstrated by the tenant community at 48 Csengery Street. Similar attempts were made in other houses as well, but these remained mostly unsuccessful.

One of the reasons for the success of the Csengery street tenants is apparently the date of their organisation: not too early, not too late. Determined and armed with a clear-cut concept, they had hoped to confront the real estate management company as early as 1984, but lacked the certitude of success. At the same time, the privatisation of rental units was only weakly developed and those living in rental units had no real alternative but to remain tenants. (In contrast, by the time the tenants of Kőröspark had gone this far in their struggle with the authorities and in self-organisation, the possibility of purchasing their rental units eventually resulted in their organising the management of their houses as owners.)

Their success was also due to the fact that after lengthy discussions, the supreme authority of the local council — the Budapest Municipal Council — suddenly agreed to their terms. Third, their success was due to the leader of the tenant community, to his personality. He considered his job as a movement leader a vocation and had specific ideas about how the movement could realise its aims.

Since they proved successful in managing their own rental block, some neighbouring houses joined them. In the meantime, the tenants of Csengery Street were swept up in the 'rush to buy' too. They bought their own rental units, and the blocks became condominiums. Since the quality of their maintenance and management work was much higher than blocks in the normal council case, more and more condominiums asked them to 'take care' of their houses. Today, they operate as an enterprise and manage houses in other districts of the capital as well as in their own neighbourhood.

Associations of tenants and home owners

The second type of initiative is organised around the common interests of

tenants. With the exception of the few founders, members had not known each other previously and the members joining expected the organisation to handle (or at least help handle) their affairs. Such organisations were not created in order to achieve a particular purpose, but to achieve a more general purpose: to protect and assert the group's interests (even if only some of the members had particular problems).

In principle, there are no limits to the growth of this organisation. Only a well-structured and manageable organisational form had to be developed. The field of interest assertion is also different: that is, there are several fields, from the local community level to the national level, depending on the structure of the organisation. This type of movement is also more widely known and has greater publicity than local initiatives. The Tenants' Association described earlier, which is the best known and largest initiative in the housing sector, belongs to this type.

The Home Owners' Association also belongs to this type. An important difference between them is their central interest, which largely accounts for the differences between them in size, activity and the extent to which people are familiar with them. The Home Owners' Association is mainly constituted of home owners who had not been tenants previously. These ownerships usually started after the 1960s, when private ownership became more widespread. The condominiums that came into being as a result of the privatisation of rental blocks do not belong here, because the Association does not welcome them as members. They argue that it is a different group representing different interests and having different problems. Let us note that this exclusion, in our opinion, is also due to the fact that these groups belong to different social strata. Long-term house owners were better off than those who remained in the council rented sector and had only recently been privatised.

The Association was founded at a time when the government was planning to raise retroactively the 2 per cent preferential interest rate on house-building credit. We believe that their first success was only partly due to their action as a uniform interest-representing organisation. The fact that their arguments were precise and legally well based must have had greater significance. The Constitutional Court annulled the government's decree. A year later, however, when in a different legal framework the government proceeded with more caution, it succeeded in abolishing the preferential interest rate, and the Association could not do anything effective against it. Although some compensation was achieved, the rate of interest has increased. However, the Association was successful in participating in shaping the government's newly-developed housing policy.

Other organisations and action groups

By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, new movements were starting to emerge in the field of housing: new from the point of view of interests to be represented and of the character of their organisation. People living in rental blocks do not primarily fight to compel real estate management companies to do their jobs properly, but to become owners. The tenants threatened with large-scale rent increases awaited the improvement of their situation due to the seemingly favourable purchasing conditions.

These movements were always formed against particular draft decrees on housing privatisation prepared by the municipalities. Their organisers were those tenants who lived in good-quality housing units in attractive parts of the city — those for whom purchasing would have been advantageous. They organised some successful actions (demonstrations, petitions) which led the uncertain and divided municipalities to abandon changes in the conditions of privatisation of rental housing.

As the Housing Act comes into force, these organisations may gradually lose ground. Due to the success of their actions and the retreat of the municipalities, their activity has already decreased considerably.

The interests of people waiting for or living in rental blocks were not represented by either of the organisations. In the autumn of 1993, following the adoption of the 'right to buy' regarding rental units, some weak efforts were made: The Association of Temporary Accommodation Claimants was formed in Erzsébetváros. Its future development cannot be foreseen yet.

The National Alliance for People Wishing to Buy Their Rental Units was characteristically created by those who once had worked in one field of the housing sector or other. Depending on the conjuncture of circumstances, they founded various interest protection organisations at various dates and with varying membership but without any support.

Conclusion

Until the end of the 1980s, social alternative initiatives and organisations were very rare. Their number has increased, however, since the political, economic and legal changes made the creation of such organisations somewhat easier (this is naturally only the initial phase of a process). Before the 1980s they can be called 'pioneer' alternative initiatives, but not a network of alternative organisations, their number being so few. At that time, already important contacts were developing between organisations of different character (environment protecting, cultural, religious, social, proto-political); these were, however, mostly based on personal relationships between the members. Sometimes the same person participated in

several organisations at the same time, or went over from one organisation to the other.

The relatively sharp rise in the number of initiatives focusing on the homeless promoted an inter-organisational network of connections (from the 1980s onwards). Such a network-like character increases the financial security and the independence of alternative organisations. It contributes to the self-inducing process of the foundation of new organisations and initiatives. This does not mean that they do not get into trouble regularly, particularly those marginalised social organisations that support especially marginal people. Examples to illustrate this: SZETA, the Social Committee for the Homeless and the Újpest Family Support Centre which all participated in the foundation of the Shelter Foundation, both from the organisational and the financial point of view. The foundation of SZETA's Home for Abused Mothers was in turn also supported by the Shelter Foundation. At the same time, the Shelter Foundation and the Újpest Family Support Centre jointly founded the Oliver Twist Foundation, which focuses on the homeless as well. Later the Oliver Twist Foundation and the Maltese Charity Service, together with several other organisations supporting the homeless, created an interest-protection organisation for the homeless called HÁJSZOLT (the word meaning 'quarry' in Hungarian).

We hope to have succeeded in giving an outline of the great economic, social and political transformation process that has occurred in Hungary in recent years and of the crisis phenomena that accompany it. This process has also resulted in considerable changes in the field of alternative social initiatives. The case of Hungary is not primarily characterised by a process full of conflicts in which the non-state sector is beginning to occupy the place of the established, over-etatised social policy (welfare) institutions (although partly such a process is present too). Much more that — as shown by handling the issue of homelessness — the alternative organisations, in an environment that is short of welfare institutions, try to respond to the old and new social challenges that have not been dealt with by state institutions before. However, the fact that, as a result of this, tasks that would normally fall within the responsibility of the government are tackled by alternative, non-state organisations, leads to serious tensions and complications.

In this case the price of independence and autonomy is considerable uncertainty regarding financing as well as uncertainty about whether society and politics are willing to undertake the management of social crisis situations of marginal people and to operate a network of institutions permanently or whether these new institutions will remain on the periphery of the network of social institutions. The question of which of them remains on the periphery and which of them moves into the official network of institutions and what causes these patterns, thus stabilising their operation

and existence, remains an open one.

Note

1 IKV refers to the state company in charge of maintenance of council houses.