

**Pázmány Péter Catholic University,
Faculty of Humanities**

ARGUMENTS OF THE PHD THESIS

Dávid László

László Nickelsburg and the Baross's square activists

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I. Summary of the aim of the project(project summary).

Until these days no one studied the history of the Baross's Square activist, neither their most wellknown leader László Nickelsburg role in the 1956 revolution. Some other essays has been written about them, but no major research with deep scrutiny had detailed their role in the history. That is why I choose to study and summon, his activity, and , his group's history in 56, through his personality. Had no chance to get into a deeply scrutinised research, because of the size limits of the current project. I tried to focus on the reconstruction of events on the Baross square, according different sources. The main step of these were:

- events of formation of the Baross square group
- structure and the chain of command at the Baross square group
- the leadership of the group, with the emphasis on L Nickelsburg's personality
- their relationship with the national guard, and other groups
- lawsuits concerning the Baross's square leaders
- reliable sources on the Baross square group

II. Methodology:

Mainly I was using official archives, which mostly were produced under communist ruling by the descendant organisations of the so called AVH. The strange historical paradox is that the reconstruction of the events were built by the help of the retaliating powers documentation. So it has been viewed by the glass of the AVH. These facts could be misleading as I emphasised in my studies before, because we will get the suppressor's point of view. From now on we have to be sure: only the critical analysis of the real events described could get us close enough to the truth. At the difficulties of my research in the archives prof. Dr. Sándor M. Kiss professional guidance helped me all along:

Resources:

- Official archives

A. Official records of the Security services.

Documents concerning the Baross's square group, the first investigative period's docs, especially the Nickelsburg's ,a Géza Péch and Co, dossiers are the main resources. Most of the papers are the interrogation reports, but there are also secretagent reports, and event summaries also. The importance of those which were belong to the first investigative period, came to light when the processing of the Hungarian National Archives documents has been finished. Then I had a chance to compare those with the documentation of the second investigation period's reports. Comparison of documents from different periods gives us the opportunity to evaluate the statements, and the accusations in many different lawsuits. We were already succeeding in proving that the events statements and so called proofs are based on the invented events, and fictiously created papers of the AVH.

B. Hungarian National Archives:

The most important documents are the documents of the Lajos Timus and Co case, later they changed the dossier's name to Benjamin Herczegh and Co. This change wasn't made by accident and gives a plentiful explanation later on. The second investigation period documentation concerning the Baross square group and their lawsuit are also researchable in the HNA.

- Contemporary publications

Contemporary publications are helpful if we are going to understand the public opinion on the matter, they might help the understanding of their motivation, but doesn't help to much in the processing of the history of the Baross square group. Even if they are not considered strictly as a publications, the flyers of that time could help a lot to understand the political views of the national guard.

- Literature

I hadn't found any thoroughly deep research on the matter, concerning my research. But for the placement of their history in the events of 56 revolution, I had to read through some very significant research materials, and essays. One of them among these were professor Sándor M. Kiss, and Miklós Horváth publications, which they were the most helpful in the organization, and accomplishments of my research.

- Memoires and interviews:

I had a opportunity to make an interview with Mr. József Rácz, and László Soós. Even if they were able to enlighten the era of the revolution, they had not too much extra information, comparing to the those in the archives.

I also quoted interviews made by Éva Orbán, which also hadn't had any additional info, but they were helpful in the controlling process.

The situation was the same with the interviews with Géza Pásztor.

III. Summary of my scientific results:

László Nickelsburg's role in the history of 1956, and the presentation of the Baross's square group's history were based on the literature above. Most of them were mirroring the opinion of the political investigators of the subject. As their name already proves these so called „political investigative units”, the communist regimes did not believe the Montesquian theory: separation of the different power groups. The political motives in these reports are producing a great burden in the understanding, and the motivation of the events in reality. I tried to concentrate on the analysis of the lawsuits against the political leaders. These lawsuits are providing a plentiful proof to show the communist justice is not equal with the civil justice. The summary of the thesis of my most important scientific result in this essay are the next:

1. The formation of the Baross square group was a logical answer for the contemporary events of the revolution and the following freedom fight. In the vicinity of the Eastern train station, at the 19. of Baross square the youths of the area had found shelter, and has been forged together by the events. Later they were even hosting larger outsider groups providing shelter for them also. At that time their leader was Sándor Pásztor.

2. When László Nickelsburg showed up on the scene radical changes took place: he integrated them into the forming National guard. According to the differences in the witnesses it took place between 29-31 of October. Soon, with these integration the group became the largest and the most organized among the others.

3. Their membership grew most after they won the battle of the Koztársaság square. We have to declare those are fictitious presumptions that that was a joint action of the Baross square group and the Corvin group. No proof available to substantiate it. The following Kadar's regime were stating it at the retaliation, so they were executing people with the help of these fictitious motives.

4. Their structure after they conjoined the National guard were more paramilitary like, which were the contribution of the military officers among them. The structure became final at 1 of November László Nickelsburg became the commander in chief, the Pásztor brothers the 2 deputies, László Balogh became a commander of battalion, and they ranked company, platoon and squad commanders also. I am taking an emphasis on the role of the 3 Pásztor brothers, because the investigators were confusing their roles in their reports. They were mixing up their personal deeds until 1959. These confusion almost cost a life of Géza Pásztor who was the brother of the founder: Sándor Pásztor.

5. Their story ended when the Russian occupiers attacked them at 4 of November, 1956. They dispersed among the different fraction of the national guard, or between the freedom fighters, and continued their heroic struggle against the foreign suppressor. They changed their base to the hospital Péterfy, where they were not the only one who showed up. Their story goes on many interesting threads but in my essay I am focusing on the Baross square group history mainly.

6. The leadership moved to a Sándor Péterfy Hospital on the 4 of November, where they were sharing the space with the ambulance personnel. They organized an inner and outside patrol, the outside patrol's aim was reconnaissance and report of closing armed forces, and block them out as long as they can. The revolutionaries in the hospital were the part of unarmed resistance, most of them printed flyers.

7. The operation of the so called Vienna's Revolutionary group became also interesting beside their connections with the Baross square group the investigators later on started the retractions, by following this lead. Self-expressive that chart presented in my dissertation which describes the relationships among the revolutionary groups around the Péterfy Hospital.

8. Those cases presented has special value which are allowing us to take a peak at the work of the 2. department of the Interior Ministry. For the presentation how they built up their informant system I am detailing the case of Gyula Pásztor which caused the ill fate of the Benkovic brothers. The case of Gyula Jancsó is the example to that the investigators had the opportunity to avoid any kind of impeachment if their personal interest dictated it. (of course only because of operative reasons)

9. Beside the events of 1956, the large part of my dissertation is the description of the era of retaliation. The reason for it not the great timely disproportion, the 2 weeks of revolution followed by the 7 years of

retaliation until 1963 officially. But the code name „operation Fall” presented in my essay is showing it lasted much longer. The real reason behind is that we could cover up the events of 1956 from the documents of retaliation. Those person’s point of view who had participated in the retaliation caused the distorted historical view of the events. We never can be sure in the truth content of the documents in the archives. Along my research I was trying to correct these distortions and I tried to cover up the events in their reality. And when I found something seemingly unbelievable than I brought up my arguments also. It is very hard to get real argument from an also probably distorted documentation. In the presentation of László Nickelsburg and Géza Pásztor’ lawsuits beside showing the accusations, I am trying to point out these general features of the retaliation system.

10. For the succesful analysis I had to know the retaliation personnel also. With the help of some interesting publications on the matter, I am trying to show some persons also, this might help us to understand the directional changes in the investigators work from 1957.

11. I did a detailed research on the case of Sándor Pásztor and Géza Pásztor. The detailed case of Géza Pásztor is different from the other cases of the Baross square group, because with the help of it we could get a much better look on the investigators job, and unfolds their internal conflicts also. The first interogator of Pásztor senior, (Gábor Vagyon) noted himself that the accused did not commit those actions which later shoved up in the indictment. Because of it the case had been taken from him, and the next interrogator had no moral issues to write down the investigation closing papers, but he wrote the accusations instead of the prosecutor. The same documents presented to the judge they already put the prosecutor’s signature of course. For formal reasons.

12. Later on they take the case of Géza Pásztor from the Benajmin Herczegh case and conjoined it with the case of László Nickelsburg who has been sentenced to death and executed in 1961.

13. The aim of the presenting the „Operation Fall” to prove that the retaliation has been finished with the 1963 amnesty decree. The operation was closed in 1980.

IV. Publications:

Presentations on conferences.

- Tér és történelem: 1956. Baross tér címmel a tér jelentőségéről a Baross téri csoport esetében. A Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Történettudományi Doktori Iskola által szervezett konferencia. (2005. november)
- Baross téri csoport 1956 Forradalom és szabadságharc ötven év távlatából címmel, az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, az Eötvös Collegium, a Lengyel Intézet és a Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem által szervezett emlékkonferencia. (2006. november 6-7.)

Publikációk

- Tér és történelem: 1956. Baross tér című, a Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Történettudományi Doktori Iskola által szervezett konferencián elhangzott előadás. (megjelenés alatt)
- Nickelsburg László, a Baross téri főparancsnok, In.: Életünk XLIX. évfolyam, 2011. július.
- Nickelsburg László és a Baross téri csoport (megjelenés alatt)