New Temporary Exhibition of the Library – The Meanings of ’56: Amateur Photographs and Recollections

2026/10/21 - 2027/01/29



The NSZL commemorates the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence with an exhibition organised by its Research Room of the Historical Photography and Interview Collection.



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The Research Room of the Historical Photography and Interview Collection of the National Széchényi Library presents a temporary exhibition entitled ***The Meanings of ’56: Amateur Photographs and Recollections*** to mark the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and War of

Independence.

The exhibition is open from 21 October 2026 to 29 January 2027.

Opening Hours

- Tuesday–Thursday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (ticket office closes at 5 p.m.)
- Friday: 9 a.m.–7 p.m. (ticket office closes at 6 p.m.)
- Closed on Mondays and Saturdays

Venue: **Chapel Hall, 7th floor,** National Széchényi Library, Building F, Buda Castle Palace (1014 Budapest, Szent György tér 4–5–6)

Admission is free!



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The Meanings of ’56: Amateur Photographs and Recollections
Temporary exhibition organised by the Research Room of the Historical Photography and Interview Collection of the National Széchényi Library

Amateur photographs taken during the days of the Revolution and subsequently kept hidden, at considerable personal risk, play an important role in collective memory. These amateur images are both historical documents and representations of the perspectives of ordinary people caught up in history. They also serve as starting points for the stories we tell about the past. Memory imbues these images with meaning, building a form of “visual history” from them; yet the meaning we attach to them is inherently subjective.

At the same time, a revolution also has a shared meaning that applies to everyone. Images can help shape this collective understanding by capturing scenes and imbuing every phase of the Revolution with meaning—from enthusiasm to violence, from happiness to despair. The photographs evoke concepts such as freedom of the press, solidarity, the destruction and creation of symbols, mourning, and a world turned upside down.



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Oral tradition has also played an important role in the collective memory of the Revolution, particularly during the Kádár era, when the events were suppressed and rendered taboo. Life-story interviews with witnesses, participants, and key figures of the Revolution have preserved its oral history for future generations.

The exhibition draws on both types of source material held in the collections of the National Széchényi Library: oral testimonies and visual records. The photographs and interview excerpts are organised around concepts associated with the memory of the Revolution. The exhibition design also follows the course of events, with the sections distinguished chronologically.

The photographs, arranged in thematic groups, are complemented by interview excerpts available to view on monitors throughout the exhibition space. Together, these short personal accounts and the visual documentation of the Revolution offer a picture of how ordinary people and those who shaped the events experienced these two weeks.

Curator: Réka Sárközy
Interview excerpts edited by: Luca Hanák and Bea Lukács
Exhibition design: Katalin Füri
Graphic design: Éva Tóth
Installation: Gergely Szűcs, Ádám Kovács



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Kizökkent világ
Feldöntött villamosok
A World Off-Kilter
Toppled Trams

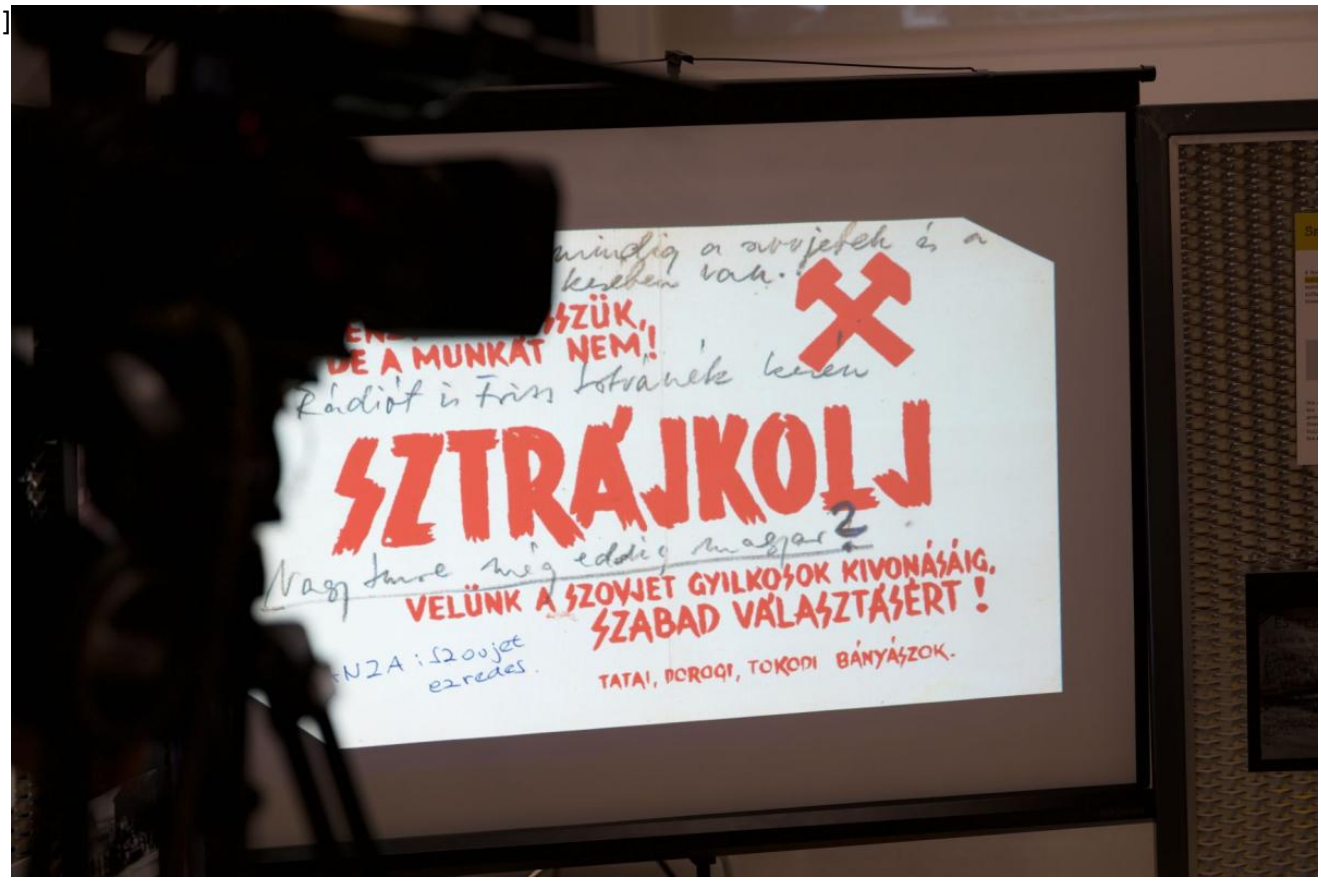
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Solidarity

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SZTRÁJKOLJ
VELÜNK A SZOVJET GYILKOSOK KIVONÁSÁIG,
SZABAD VÁLASZTÁSÉRT!
TATAI, DOROGI, TOKODI BÁNYÁSZOK.

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2026/11/20 - 14:09

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