

Pre historical times

December 1981. The hungarian punk band Rottens split up after a scandalous concert, followed by an interrogation at the youth protection department of the police.

In february '82, we formed the first line up of Trottet on the ruins of Rottens. The name was chosen from a german dictionary coz a punk band must have a hard sounding name. We were 15 and a half years old without any knowledge about music but it didn't matter at all. We were loud and harsh. After a year and a half of noise making our drummer went to Yugoslavia to by records. He never came back, we got a letter from the austrian refugee camps in Traiskirschen, he applied for refugee status in Australia.

We spent the next months looking for a new drummer with Lörke/guitar/ but finally, at the end of '83 we gave it up. This was the end of Trottet's pre historical times, and it really was histerical as well. Typical hungarian punk band story in those times. No recording left, the short and very bad quality live stuff is on the 'Pajtás Daloljunk X' compilation LP. In spring '84 we formed Marina Revue, the first hungarian hardcore band.

The first rehearsal of the brand new Trottet happened on the 7th of november, 1985, the day of the Big Russian Revolution/ after Marina Revue split up. With Ildi as lead singer, the new and very serious concept was to make a more complex music and a self managing band. Ildi went to the Jarocin punk fest. in Poland and met all sorts of punks there. After this we started to correspond with dozens of punks from abroad Poland, Germany, France, England, Sweden, Brazil and South- Africa... Soon we were getting more and more music, tapes, fanzines from everywhere. The international D.I.Y. movement was huge, a large and energetic scene. It really was fascinating for us here, behind the Iron Curtain. We wanted to be part of it. Letters and parcels were coming and going in big numbers, with soaped, re useable stamps.

Our first practicing place was at Ildi's step father's office. We didn't rehearse too much but for some of us it was already enough. Szűcs, our first guitarist playing in Emigránsok and Sanatorium on this record, left us because of his girlfriend.

We had our first gig in the spring of '86 and slowly we started to realize our vision to be a self sufficient band. We recorded our first demo, put together the first 'Pajtás Daloljunk' hungarian punk tape compilation and we formed Trottet distribution the first illegal tape label. Illegal, as duplication of printed and sound materials was forbidden over here. We copied tapes with one, soon after two Hitachi cassette players, cut and glued stickers on them and we made photocopy covers in small quantities in different copy places in town. The number of our correspondents was growing week after week. Many of them still are in the underground, we still work together in organizing concerts making records and so on, or just stayed friends with which isn't bad after some 35 years. We were deep in the international alternative culture and all this had a huge impact on us. Some people, bands laughed at us but we didn't care much. We wanted to take part, to create our own possibilities.

In the meantime the Chernobyl catastrophe happened. Life and things were getting more complicated and so did our music. We played every 2 months, there wasn't many concert possibilities for a band like us, guitar players came and left then one night at the end of '86 we met Kaktusz /guit. Lenin krt./ who wanted to play with us so he joined Trottet. We lived in a summer cottage in a village near Budapest and we had to heat permanently in the winter coz one of the walls was just glass. We soon drew the attention of the local people. The news was spreading in the village that we sometimes dance naked in the garden. We released our Christmas demo '86 at the end of december and we had our first gig outside of Budapest. We went to play in Győr some kind of illegal theatre in a flat, together with the local punk band Aurora and an experimental group called Teknősbika. By the time we got home all the clothes soaked in the bath were frozen, we had to hammer them out. It was the winter of 1987/88 and -27 celsius.

From the freezing cold we escaped to the city centre in a flat which belonged to a member of the Democratic Opposition who immigrated from Hungary. We were invited by a friend from Inconnu group and it was great, a warm place but it was wired up by the police so we had to speak the language of flowers when we were in.

To use up our creative energy we made a fanzine in french about the hungarian underground politics and music scene. It was called 'Il Fait Froid chez nous' / 'It's cold around us' and a friend, Eddy Basset from the zine Caladeshnikov distributed it in France. We also translated booklets of bands to hungarian: Chumbawamba Pictures of starving children, Never mind the ballots but i think the first one was Crass' Ten notes on a summer day. It was about the english band's anarchist point of views, i must say we totally agreed with them by then.

One part of the public didn't really understand what we wanted with all this shit, but slowly a small alternative scene grew with fanzines, little distributions and so on. In this period our concerts were regularly attacked by nazi skinheads because of private and political reasons. In spring '87 we organized the second Hungarian punk fest., Total '87 in Süttő. It worked out so well that local farmers run out to the vineyard for the week-end coz 'punks are coming!' and we even had the welcome of a police helicopter when arriving to the little village. Basically, it was quite similar to the first Hungarian punk/hc fest in Paks, the Total '85.

We had some little jobs, rehearsed daily and we were doing the thing we believed in. We got a lot of help from groups from the Democratic Opposition, Inconnu and AB illegal book publisher who gave us place to stay in their house. We moved to Pilisborosjenő, another small village around Budapest. They also gave us occasional jobs when we were in need of cash, we printed books and samizdats in secret houses with a stencil machine.

In March '88 a new political organisation formed by people from the Opposition. It was called 'The Network of Free Initiatives' and it was about taking our lives in our own hands ... what to say, that's what we thought and wanted as well.

Once Kaktusz got a flat! His father applied for it when his son was one year old and he got the 33 square meter council flat 16 years later. That was sometimes the time you had to wait but at least the rent was very very cheap.

The legendary Black Hole opened in Budapest, it was apparently the first alternative club in Eastern-Europe. Concerts in other cities were finally possible too. Going to Debrecen 240km took 5 hours with Ildi's mother's east German Trabant. In Miskolc we had to escape from the nazis – unfortunately we had this all the time in our home town too, so we weren't surprised. The system was shaking, many things and many shit happened, we didn't really need this kind of stuff to be true. The first anarchist group Autonomia formed and we joined immediately. We organised talks before our concerts and distributed written stuff in our mailorder. It was important for us that not only the music but also our thoughts get to the people. We also wrote a small fanzine called 'Vörös és fekete' / 'Red and Black'. We came across some flyers made by the young independent student movement Fidesz and decided to distribute their material. It is nowadays the ruling party in Hungary with Orban as their leader forever.

In the autumn '88, I finally got back my passport taken away at the end of '84. A new horizon opened. By that time we've sent so many tapes out that we knew people from all over Europe, we could start getting more serious about the whole band thing.. We talked to Marsu who was managing Berurier Noir and Bondage records in Paris, but he preferred funnier music. Trottet was too depressing for him. He introduced us with Gougnaf Mouvement, another alternative label who's founder Rico Maldoror was crazy enough to invite us to record our first album to Montpellier. Rico always was a big example for me as a record label even if he was the total chaos himself.

The only little problem was, that our drummer Auschwitz could not believe that thing like this can happen to such a small Hungarian band, and he kept annoying us with some kind of contract he absolutely wanted to see. He got so mad about it, that we got scared that the whole recording plan collapses, and changed drummer just 3 weeks before the studio. This is how Garfield /Nagy Péter/ who came from the hardcore band Kazányi plays on the Borderline album. This was the beginning of Trottet's legendary drummer changing story which still happens time after time. After 3 weeks of practicing madly, in November '88 we went to the sunny Montpellier, and recorded Borderline syndrome under the palm trees in 4 days. Without any knowledge or routine, without even having a proper distortion guitar effect.

We made the journey with an old friend's Skoda car which gave up a couple times during the road and we had the chance to experience how is it to push a car in Paris at the Arc En Ciel, 6pm rush hour time, in a six lane round about, complete traffic jam.

Thinking back, this was the first one but not at all the last car pushing situation...with the years it even got worse. On the way home in Munich, the police took the car while we were visiting a friend, we got a heart attack coz all of our gear was in it. We got it all back a few hours later for a good amount of German marks, so we could keep slipping home on the icy roads.

As soon as we got home, we started organizing our first tour. None of us had a phone landline at home so we spent our life in phone cabins on the streets, calling everywhere in the continent. The rest of the time we were trying to get all the invitation letters and to get visas. In this situation we really didn't have time for work. Kaktusz was taken out from his job with a letter from the psychiatrist friend of the drummer.

We had many possibilities and we wanted to go everywhere. For the first try we managed to get together a 2 months long tour for the spring of '89. We hired an east German Barkas van in the suburbs, but it died in the city centre, so we arrived to east Berlin in the night of February the 2nd by

train, carrying all of our equipment for the 2 months tour. I will never forget it. It was freezing cold all grey and very depressing. A friend of the drummer came from west Berlin with his old VW van to pick us up. Border guards at the Check Point Charlie - east/west Berlin border crossing, kept looking at the thousand tour posters with a tied hand on it but finally we could go. The first Trottel concert abroad happened in Blockshock, West Berlin 3rd of february, 1989. Next gig in Braunschweig at some kind of winter chasing party. It was crazy to see that the first line of the audience was a horse, a vampire and Santa. Then Bonn. There we met Ernie our organizer we only knew by letters. He was so happy to meet that he drunk all night and shit his pants after the gig. Nice but very smelly guy. Years later i heard that he died in cancer after working for years in some chemical factory.

From Germany, we drove down to the south of France, then to Switzerland and Italy. We did 11000kms which isn't that much considering that it was a 2 months tour. The 18 years old borrowed VW car kept running well. We had many off days too in France, we spent those in Lyon where our label came from. The girl who always gave us her flat to stay, she's now amongst the most popular writers in France. We've played in all kind of places and it is still our ars poetica. It was quite surreal for everybody seeing this hungarian band coming from behind the Iron Curtain...and it really was surreal for us too. We saw incredible things, the alternative culture everywhere, squatts, associations, small radios, fanzines in big cities or in little towns. Legendary places like L'Usine in Geneva, The Reithalle in Bern, El Paso in Torino or the Wolnitza in Lyon. Our last gig happened in Roma, in the occupied Forte Prenestino. The soundman found our name funny.. He was called Trottolino ☺ The Forte is still there but Trottolino moved to a small mountain village near Bologna. We visited him few years ago on the way down to Sicily. He cooked a huge pasta for us and talked about the good old times.

After the last concert our drummer decided to stay in the West. He met a girl in France. The rest of us went home with some kinda false train tickets made by our friend from Attrito in Roma.

Time passed by but our album was still under preparation, quite stressy times with all sorts of complications.

Temporarily we were cleaning the Black Hole and putting up their poster for money, and we practiced during the day. We started to organize concerts there for foreign bands, the first one was the french Parabellum, then Haine Brigade from Lyon. It was easy, so many people came to the concerts that time even for unknown bands' gigs. One day we got a call from a big magazine. They wanted to write a huge article about what punk means. First we really didn't want to do it but they were very positive about it, so finally they made huge interviews with all of us. It really was a serious stuff, it came out in 6 pages but i don't think they've managed to get a clue about punk coz from the 6 pages long article there were 4 full page size photos of us and only little parts from the interviews.

However, this was the first time that an official magazine published such a long article about punk or Trottel.

Our album finally came out in France and we could get them in the summer. It was such a great feeling! Friends from Autonomia smuggled 100 copies through the border so only these copies ended up in hungarian collections. During the summer of '89 we had 2 more gigs in Hamburg, The Störtebecker, huge squat then the Grosse Freiheit a purely commercial rock disco whatever kind of place, and we had our debut in Austria, Arena in Vienna and Linz where people were totally shocked to see us coming with the Trabant, bassdrum on top and the 2 guitars like 2 canons left and right of it. The air was shaking in Hungary. We buried Imre Nagy, priminister of the '56 Revolution.

We just got home but we already wanted to go on tour again, with new songs and a new set.