YEAR: *1943*
LOCATION: *Danube Promenade in front of Grand Hotel Hungaria*
IMAGE NO.: *07575*
DONOR: *Fortepan*

ANDRÁS TÖRÖK

Thinking – in Three Ways – about the Fortepan Online Community Photo Archive

In memory of the unknown fire chief who introduced the annual clearances in Budapest

1 LYRICALLY, WITH GRAND WORDS

TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE PAST – IS THIS POSSIBLE?

On 20 August 2010, a new type of community photography website was launched as a private initiative. Even the owner of the more than five thousand photographs that could be downloaded in large format and used freely did not know what or whom the pictures portrayed. Ten years after the idea for the website was born, we now present the phenomenon – the most interesting pictures and stories, a physical imprint of the digital archive – at an exhibition at one of the most prestigious exhibition halls in Hungary, the Hungarian National Gallery, seeking also to describe the movement. A sister website already exists in Iowa (United States), and at the time of writing, preparations are underway in Denmark, Malta, Russia, and Costa Rica for the launch of similar websites. At least five hundred families have donated photos to Fortepan, doing so without requiring any

papers to be signed by the private people behind Fortepan – latterly a Fortepan foundation – who use the pictures. During these ten years, people's attitudes towards old photographs have changed considerably (at least in Hungary). At the risk of hyperbole, we might say that our relationship to the past has been fundamentally altered. A great "community board game" is being played by hundreds of thousands of people: some of these people simply view the Fortepan photos; others are rummaging through their family belongings and write the first email offering up their pictures; others are making modest donations; others are downloading pictures to be used during the next history lesson; others, on seeing the pictures, are inspired to write articles about them; and still others are looking at their native towns and regions, perhaps discovering grandpa's old shop or even – and this is really fantastic – spotting their younger selves in miniskirts at the first Hungarian Formula One Grand Prix, which was held at the Hungaroring near Budapest.

For many people, Fortepan has become a source of joy and pleasure, a useful tool and even a role model. It is, to a core, a twenty-first-century phenomenon. To come into being, it required several things: passionate individuals devoted to their hobby; the Internet; the Creative Commons revolution; the advent of digital photography; a decline in the value of old negatives; and an appetite on the part of the media for old pictures – an appetite that could not be fully satisfied by Hungary's relatively slow and somewhat stiff public institutions. And for the success of the project, much work had to be put in by volunteers willing to invest time and effort in developing the Fortepan website.

HOW DID I GET INVOLVED IN FORTEPAN?

When people first discover Fortepan, they immediately start looking for photos of the town and region of their youth and the street on which they lived. This was how I, as a local historian in Budapest, became a Fortepan enthusiast; I was looking for illustrations for a book of mine. I was astonished to find that the images on the Fortepan website can be used free of charge under the Creative Commons (CC) licence.

Soon a kind of personal ritual developed: whenever I heard of an update of the website, I would look through the new photos one by one. Gradually, my knowledge of old Budapest grew. I felt more and more emboldened and wanted to know everything about the reality of the city's past. And I mistakenly became convinced that I was making good progress towards this goal. I would simply have to live long enough, and then I would know everything to the "upper threshold limit", which we had learnt about in the maths class at school. Although I would get closer and closer, I would never actually reach the destination.

An acquaintance told me about Mr. Fortepan, the founder-editor Miklós Tamási, at the time when the website was still under construction.

Then, at an auction held by the NGO where I worked while Fortepan was still in its infancy, we managed to make a sizable sum of money to be used as funding for Fortepan.

I steered clear of the project for the next four years but then summoned up my courage and made an offer: I would serve as a general backup for Fortepan, with my little company performing the accountancy and administrative tasks. Yet being in the core group meant more than this; here, everyone mucks in, in addition to doing their specific tasks. Slowly I became the face of Fortepan, and this is now always the case abroad and often so in Hungary too, whenever there is a live event. Making statements to the press remains the founder's task, but receiving pictures is the greatest joy of all.

It is likewise a great feeling when success is achieved outside Hungary: for instance, when after seven months of writing letters and being insistent the Swiss university archive, ETH Zürich, donated 218 fantastic stills depicting Budapest in 1944 from the legacy of Carl Lutz, the Swiss diplomat, who famously rescued Jewish people in the worn-torn city. Or when Fortepan Iowa was launched at Cedar Falls (IA), and the dean of the University of Northern Iowa concluded his speech at the university's main library with the words "This is a great day in the life of Iowa."

Unloading a bequest of photos from the laundry. The donor, Sára Schulhof, widow of the photographer, is standing on the corridor (photo by Miklós Tamás, 22 February 2016)

Left: photo by Antal Braun, 1967, Fp.59441.
Right: photo donated by István Fodor, ca. 1900, Fp.59441

THE JOY OF THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

I was ten years old when I first saw the tree in question in the City Park. It stood in front of the decorative building where my beautiful young mother was working while doing her university degree at evening classes.

In front of the flight of steps leading to the main entrance there was a large mature tree. This perplexed me even as a young boy. Who could have been so crazy as to plant a tree right in front of the steps? I was sure that no one could have been so crazy. I already knew that seeds were spread by the wind and that any seed might germinate. But how did this tree survive subsequently? A sapling coming up in front of the steps would surely have been removed by the caretaker or by the park warden with his pointed stick...

The matter continued to bother me, as I passed by the building a good number of times. As in the solution of so many puzzles, here too Fortepan

offered help. At some point in the spring of 2012, a picture of the building appeared in front of me. The date given was 1900, but perhaps this was simply because the timeline stretched no further back. In the photo the main entrance is open, and there are several ladders beneath it. Evidently, an opening or inauguration ceremony is being prepared for. But does the photo depict the building's inauguration in 1885 or the opening of the Healthcare Pavilion in 1886 or the Municipal Museum in 1907? The ominous tree, however, is nowhere to be seen.

But something is wrong with the picture. After staring at it for several minutes, I realised that the broad strip of asphalt (Stefánia út) in front of the building is completely absent. Indeed, it is! Because we are looking at the building from behind! Originally, the main entrance and the steps leading up to it, were on that side of the building!

When the building was reconstructed after the war the main entrance was moved from one side

of the building to the other, where, however, a full-grown tree already stood. The steps are a little arduous to climb, as the limited space – due to the tree – meant that they had to be steep.

2 FACTUALLY: FORTEPAN'S DEVELOPMENT UNTIL NOW

THE BEGINNINGS, THE NAME, AND THE CUT-OFF YEAR

In the late 1980s, Ákos Szepessy and Miklós Tamási, two students from Kaffka Margit High School (Budapest) with an interest in old artefacts, began going to the annual rubbish clearances held at different times of year in the various districts of Budapest. They developed a passion for collecting old photos. They mostly found negatives, which they then stored. For many years the strips of negatives lay forgotten in paper bags. Finally, it occurred to them that something should be done with the material. The initial thought was to publish a book, but then they came up with the idea of uploading the pictures to an image-hosting site. In late 2009, one of them, Miklós Tamási, began scanning the pictures. He soon realised, however, that he had no interest in some of the images. He thus started to select pictures from among the material. After months of work, around ten thousand pictures were ready. Five thousand of these were then uploaded to the Fortepan website, which was launched on 20 August 2010.

The basic objective was to encourage visitors of the website to examine and reflect upon the pictures, which they doubtless would never have searched for on Google. Accordingly, the website had no search function at first. Indeed, the developers of the website were not driven by practical goals but by the desire to make people contemplate and reflect upon what they see.

The Kodak Company opened a photochemical plant in Vác in 1922, which was then sold to a Hungarian bank in 1947. In that year, the firm was renamed Forte. The photochemical plant was nationalised a year later. One of the most well-known products of this Hungarian company was Fortepan negative film.

The name turned out to be a good choice. It sounded good and was easy to remember. The combination of vowels gave it a somewhat mysterious feel. It was certainly a suitable brand name, being easy to pronounce and memorise in any language. It was just as "sticky" (to use the term mentioned in Malcolm Gladwell's book *Tipping Point*[1]) as the use of the website has become. People come to the site looking for something specific and then stay and browse. They start thinking about things, and their own memories become merged with the visual world of the photos.

In early 2010, the two founders finally decided that, instead of sharing their collection on an existing image-hosting site, they would launch a very simple website, to which they would then upload the roughly five thousand images that they considered interesting. At this time, they still had no specific objective. Yet they felt strongly that the material should be in the public domain and that the general public should see these photos. Although they might have chosen a topic-based classification, their strong interest in history meant that they decided ultimately on a chronological approach. The time slide thus became a central element of the website.

Fortepan collects pictures from the initial era of photography until 1990 – this was the irrevocable decision of the founder-editor Miklós Tamási. Some people think that the 1990 cut-off was made in reflection of Hungary's transition from communism to democracy. In fact, however, there is no historical connection. On several occasions, people have wondered whether it would be worth extending the period until 2000, but Tamási has always resisted such a change. It is his conviction that around 1990 something happened in Hungarian visual culture, or in the "visual spectacle".

One may add to all this that time is widely regarded as the great ally of photography. As the decades pass, so a photograph attains its true value, becoming saturated with additional meaning. Several decades are needed for this to come about and to be acknowledged. However, the meaning of "average" (i.e., not significant) photographs remains unaltered.

WHY IS THE HIGH RESOLUTION IMPORTANT?

An important tip for users who are currently getting to know Fortepan is that the search photos are in low resolution to speed up the process. By clicking on "download", however, the same image can be obtained in high resolution, varying between 3 and 20 megapixels.

High resolution is required if one is to make use of all the details. For instance, the details will reveal which shops were in operation at the Pest bridgehead of the Chain Bridge in the late nineteenth century and even the prices of items in the shop windows, and so forth.

Fortepan favours negatives, because they can be digitalised the most effectively and in the highest resolution. Moreover, the biggest surprises are often found in negatives. Often even those donating the reels do not know what is on them.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNEXPECTED POPULARITY

On 20 August 2010, Fortepan was merely the hobby of two private persons. It was a "start-up" for social benefit rather than private profit, with a "product" that evidently possessed a huge growth potential. But even the founders of Fortepan did not know this at the time. It was no more than a static, albeit chronologically organised, collection of images, which, however, was a pleasure to view. The home page was simple and basic, with a randomly generated photo in the middle. At the bottom of the page, there was a row of images, indicative of the diversity of the collection. And at the very bottom, there was a timeline showing when the randomly generated photo had been made. Originally, no information was given under the photos. In other words, people were "to view and wonder at them". Nor was there a search function. Indeed, in the initial period, Fortepan had the effect of a self-serving game, suitable for igniting people's imaginations, so that they might guess the identity of the people in the pictures.

The unanticipated popularity surprised even the creators of the website. Over time greater public awareness led to growth, because more and more families expressed a willingness to donate pictures. (Fortepan returns all original pictures to the donors after scanning them. The team is convinced that pictures are best left with the families who have kept them with such care.)

Growth and awareness soon required, however, the introduction of keywords/tags and search functions, in the absence of which Fortepan would have failed to meet its full potential. The principal spontaneous change was the appearance of the "codebreakers". The volunteers who joined (mostly using nicknames) the "Fortepan forum" hosted by the Index news website took part in fierce debates concerning the correct identification of the various photos (the locations, events, people, etc.). The forum's success in its chosen task meant that there was no choice but to add descriptions to the photos. The captions, which are extremely concise but also precise and accurate, are overseen by Fortepan's editorial staff. A small and unchanging group of people have been editing and verifying the captions for what is now almost nine years. Without such captions/descriptions and the keywords/tags that are added by users online and subsequently edited, the mass of photos would be unmanageable and perhaps pointless.

HOW CAN THE FORTEPAN PICTURES BE USED AND WHAT ARE THE RESTRICTIONS?

The founders of Fortepan were determined to ensure the free use of pictures without a licence. Crediting the source in full is, however, required. Accordingly, it is not enough to write "Source: Fortepan.hu". Rather, for each picture, the name of the original donor must also be given.

1 Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 2000).

Since 2014, Fortepan has functioned in line with the Creative Commons 3.0 licence. This describes clearly the almost unlimited opportunities open to users. The pictures can be used not only for artistic/creative purposes but also for commercial purposes. Subject to the source being indicated, the pictures can also be altered, incorporated in any manner into new pictures, or an extract may be used as a separate picture.

One thing is not permitted, namely the sale for money of Fortepan's pictures in digital form. Whenever the team becomes aware that this is happening, it speaks out against the practice – usually successfully.

OLD AND NEW DEMANDS

In the early stages, Fortepan clearly sought to satisfy people's nostalgic needs: "Life used to be better and more beautiful." As changes in people's social and material environment became rapid, so their desire for nostalgia grew. This was particularly true in the postcommunist countries.

Only after a considerable delay did the Fortepan editors realise that the photographic material was appealing to people's emotions, giving rise to an "emotional appeal fallacy" or "cuteness fallacy". This is because from the early twentieth century onwards, at which time amateur photography became popular in middle-class families, the people taking the photos were (generally) adult men recording joyful moments in family life: Christmas and birthday celebrations, summer holidays. For a long time Fortepan was synonymous with a depository for "sweet old photos".

Since 2016 the editor of Fortepan has intentionally sought out material showing the darker sides of Hungarian life in the past. In cooperation with the Budapest City Archives, Fortepan was given the opportunity to publish the post-1956 photographic material held by the Crime Scene Investigation of the Budapest Police Headquarters. The Fortepan community then decided that it would not publish any pictures documenting suicides, even in the

absence of the dead people. Photos used by crime scene investigators to reconstruct crimes were, however, uploaded to the website. Such photos give a depressingly realistic picture of "Hungary as it truly was" in the late 1950s.

3 AN ATTEMPT AT INTERPRETATION: ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF FORTEPAN

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A PRIMARY (ESSENTIAL) EXPERIENCE: SIX PHOTOGRAPHS

New users soon learn how to search for pictures and can start following the news about updates. Newcomers inevitably turn into "ambassadors" of Fortepan – even without any contact with the Fortepan team. They mention the website to friends and acquaintances, especially when someone inquires what should be done with a suitcase of negatives found in the attic of the newly purchased family home.

Later, they show an enduring fondness for Fortepan and may make a financial donation or purchase Fortepan's publications. On moving to a new flat, some will print pictures on the wall and then have mounts and frames made for them.

Perhaps a user will even choose the six following photos.

SIX RANDOMLY CHOSEN IMAGES

In the first photo, children are sitting at a table in a garden in Buda and in the middle a fair-haired little boy is explaining something. The senior citizen who submitted the photo – NP's neighbour in his youth – wrote this brief caption: Peti Nádas. It turned out that the child was in fact Péter Nádas, one of the greatest living authors, who started out as a photo reporter. He is now 77 years of age.[2]

In the second photograph, we see a horrific scene: it is 1944 and Hungarian Jews in a Budapest side street are scrambling to obtain a Swiss letter of safe-conduct.[3] The Swiss diplomat Carl Lutz made

YEAR: 1954
LOCATION: Garden of 12-14 Gyöngyvirág Street, Budapest, Hungary.
IMAGE NO.: 128695
DONOR: Fortepan / Sándor Csonka

YEAR: 1944 | *LOCATION:* 29 Vadász Street, Budapest, Hungary | *IMAGE NO.:* 105735
DONOR: Fortepan / Archiv für Zeitgeschichte ETH Zürich / Agnes Hirschi / Photo by Carl Lutz
REMARK: The Swiss Embassy Representation of Foreign Interests' emigration office, in the "Glass House", issued visas to Jews, thus protecting over 2,000 people.
TAGS: waiting in line, crowd, Holocaust

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2 Donor: Sándor Csonka (the little boy standing). The photo was made in 1954 in the garden of a house on Gyöngyvirág Street in the Svábhegy area of Budapest. Fp. 128695.
3 1944, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte ETH Zürich / donated by Agnes Hirschi. Fp. 105735.

YEAR: *1963*
LOCATION: *Várkert Bazaar, Buda Youth Park, Budapest, Hungary.*
IMAGE NO.: *137192*
DONOR: *Fortepan / Zoltán Szalay*
REMARK: *The Buda Youth Park (nicknamed "Ifipark") was located at the Várkert Bazaar from 1961 to 1984, and was the site for numerous musical events and concerts.*
TAGS: *dance, fashion, twist, sandals, slip-on shoes, suit, skirt*

YEAR: *1940*
IMAGE NO.: *43736*
DONOR:
Fortepan / Tamás Konok Sr.
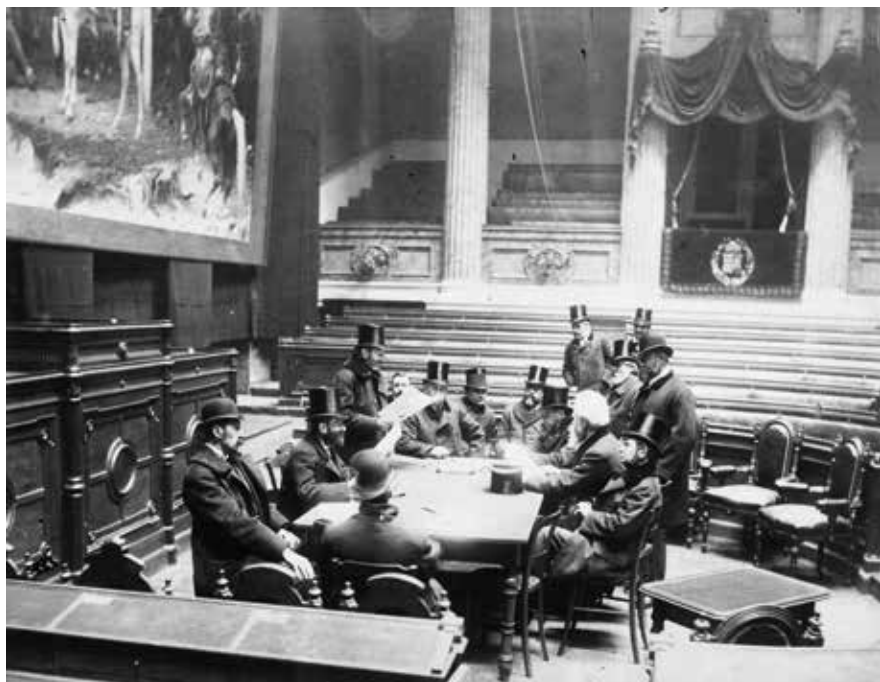
YEAR: *1894*
LOCATION: *The ceremonial hall of the Hungarian National Museum, then used as the chambers of the upper house, Budapest, Hungary*
IMAGE NO.: *96118*
DONOR: *Fortepan / Géza Buzinkay*
REMARK: *The unveiling of Mihály Munkácsy's painting (Hungarian Conquest) at a session of the Executive Committee of the Houses of Parliament. Béla Neÿ (reading seated) is giving a speech, to his left is Count István Szapáry, and on his right is Miklós Szmrecsányi. Opposite them is Mihály Munkácsy (the figure not wearing a hat), with Imre Steindl standing behind him, Károly Telepy next to him, and Baron Frigyes Harkányi on the artist's left.*
TAGS: *painting, top hat, national symbol, famous person, bowler hat*

YEAR: *1937*
LOCATION: *Hungary*
IMAGE NO.: *118671*
DONOR: *Uj Nemzedék Napilap (New Generation Daily)*
REMARK: *From the left, the photographers Tibor Inkey, Gyula Pálházy (standing), Sándor Jakab, Károly Ráth, and an unidentified person.*

the photo – a precious historical document. (As I already mentioned, 218 photos by Lutz, who was stationed in Budapest from 1942 to 1945, have come into the possession of Fortepan. Where are the other pictures that he took in the city? There are said to be several thousand frames.)

In the third picture, young people are dancing the twist in the Castle Garden, formerly known as the Buda Youth Park.[4] The despised "imperialist" dance symbolised freedom for the younger generation. The photo was taken at a time when to gain entrance you needed to be wearing a tie but when dancing the twist was no longer forbidden.

In the fourth picture the great Hungarian artist Mihály Munkácsy, who lived in Paris, submits his finished painting, which is destined for the new Parliament building, to a committee in the ceremonial hall of the National Museum.[5] One can see that most of the men in attendance are wearing top-hats but there are also several in bowler hats. All in attendance are wearing great coats. It turns out that the ceremonial hall in the National Museum, the venue for the grand event, had no heating until 1920. We received the picture from the great-grandson of the secretary of the committee.

The fifth picture shows a woman's eyes. It's not known whose eyes they were – the photo is evidence that Fortepan is also in part an archive of art.[6] The website has many hundreds of such pictures, not all of which stem from the legacies of professional photographers.

The sixth photograph depicts a group of photographers playing cards, sometime in the 1930s.[7] Presumably, they are waiting for an event to start. Fortepan's "codebreakers" have so far succeeded in identifying four of the photographers. The fifth man, on the far right, remains unidentified. But it is quite possible that his name will be known by the time this catalogue is published.

Zsuzsa Rakouszky, Fortepan (Budapest: Magvető, 2016)

Bettina Fabos, Proud and Torn (A Visual Memoir of Hungarian History). https://proudandtorn.org/

SELECTING "MEANINGFUL PHOTOS"

When launching the website, the founders of Fortepan began selecting the photos prior to uploading the material that had been collected. They knew from experience that not every old photo will elicit a reaction or set off a chain of memories. After a decade's work as curator, when Fortepan's editor, Miklós Tamási, was asked to explain his method of selecting or rejecting pictures, he spread out his hands and said that he did not select technically imperfect pictures – or did so only under extraordinary circumstances. Other than this, he said that in general terms his aim was to select "meaningful pictures", pictures that tell us something about the past. This could be clothing, interiors, streetscapes, technical equipment, automobiles, festivals, and holidays – anything that provides factual or emotional information that may be of worth to users of Fortepan. Or simply put, anything that is beautiful.

AN APPETITE FOR OLD PHOTOS IN PERPETUAL MOTION

Even in its early stages, Fortepan provided a growing number of topics for the internet portals. It soon became apparent that such articles were popular and widely read. Prior to the launch of Fortepan, websites with free content could not even dream of buying old pictures from museums and archives in Hungary for large sums of money. An "appetite for old photos" on the part of the news websites was the main reason for the growing public awareness of Fortepan in Hungary. Each article written about Fortepan added to its fame, and every newly donated picture resulted in donations of money. This is how the "Fortepan perpetual motion machine" came into being.

Fortepan pictures also began appearing in scholarly and popular works as well as in school textbooks. Although there was an existing and real demand for images, it had simply been too costly or even impossible to provide an abundance of photo illustrations prior to the advent of Fortepan. The increase in the number of online press publications addressing the past is in part thanks to Fortepan.

There are two works of art that the founders of Fortepan could never have envisaged.

Bettina Fabos, a U.S. media researcher with Hungarian roots, processed her family history in the twentieth century in an online publication.[8] In the course of this task, she used both her own family archive as well as several hundred pictures in the Fortepan collection. It is no exaggeration to state that this family history work would not have been created without Fortepan. The work was clearly inspired by the community archive.

As already noted, the founders of Fortepan originally intended the site to be a playful media creation. As the project developed, the focus became providing a useful service. The editors slowly grew accustomed to the constant inflow of large quantity of photos, many of them being excellent in quality. However, they never envisaged that Fortepan would inspire poetry. Yet this is what happened. Zsuzsa Rakovszky (1960), one of the greatest living Hungarian poets, published a series of poems and then a whole volume entitled Fortepan.[9] The various poems received three or four of the keywords as their title. In 2015 the book was awarded the Libri Prize for Literature, awarded for the first time in Hungary. The title of this album is taken from one of the poems by Zsuzsa Rakovszky.

4   Photo by Zoltán Szalay, 1963. Fp. 137192.
5   Picture of an unknown photographer, 1894. Donated by Géza Buzinkay Fp. 96118.
6   Photo by Tamás Konok Sr, 1940. Fp. 43736.
7   Photo appeared in the daily newspaper Új Nemzedék [New generation], 1937. Fp. 118671.

8   Bettina Fabos, Proud and Torn (A Visual Memoir of Hungarian History). https://proudandtorn.org/.
9   Zsuzsa Rakovszky, Fortepan (Budapest: Magvető, 2016).

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AS A DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The gradual increase in the popularity of the Fortepan archive set in motion a stealthy and subtle underground change in Hungarian society. Unintentionally, Fortepan gave rise to a democratic movement with several thousand members, whose joint intention is to gradually establish a Hungarian visual memoir. The magic of this is that the "members" can choose how they wish to contribute to the major common objective: by donating photos or money, by identifying or scanning the pictures, by spreading the word about Fortepan, by writing newspaper articles, or by using the images in education. Being part of the Fortepan community is popular because it entails great flexibility in terms of the tasks at hand. Moreover, everyone immediately receives a worthy reward. Thus, Fortepan is not just something that is pleasing to the eye; doing something for Fortepan gives one a good feeling. Anyone who contributes can bathe in the love which outsiders feel for the Fortepan website.

Fortepan is comparable with the táncház (folk dance) movement that emerged in Budapest in the 1970s, which likewise was a mediator of values and in which it was good to take part.

Fortepan has a hierarchical structure: it is the editor alone who decides which photos should appear on the site. Yet, the array of pictures from which he chooses depends on many random factors, given that all the photos have been donated.

4 EPILOGUE: A CHRISTMAS GIFT

In my childhood I often heard how the last war had begun in 1939 and had lasted almost six full years. I imagined that the blackouts, the bombings, the starvation, and the atrocities had begun straightaway. A photo gathered from a rubbish clearance prior to the launch of the website revealed a very different set of circumstances.

According to Fortepan "codebreakers" the photo was taken in 1943. We do not know the identity of the elegant and well-nourished man standing in a café on the Danube promenade, but we can see how the waiter is hurrying to take the man's order. The true horrors of the war were drawing ever closer to Budapest, but when the picture was taken the world was still more attractive and interesting than it was in my childhood and youth. Of course, we are very much aware that things were not going well for everyone. Nor did they subsequently – sadly, this is the way of the world.

I am especially fond of this picture because the original physical copy is mine.[10] I received it – after it had been framed – from Miklós Tamási, aka Mr. Fortepan. The gift served as evidence that I had irrefutably been accepted into the Fortepan team.

Now hanging on my office wall, the picture serves as a reminder of how great things can come from small seeds – like, for instance, the Fortepan archive.

APPENDIX

THE PROCESS LEADING TO THE INCLUSION OF A PHOTOGRAPH ON THE FORTEPAN WEBSITE:

→ A meeting with the donor (alternatively, material can be sent to the addresses indicated).
→ The material is taken to the Fortepan Workshop, a small apartment on Batthyány Street in Budapest.
→ The member of staff responsible for scanning takes the material home.
→ The material awaits processing.
→ Scanning (the editor scans the large format film material and the glass plate negatives).
→ The donated material is returned to Batthyány Street.
→ The scanned version is copied to Fortepan's backup storage.
→ The editor decides whether to include an image on the website – and then collects separately the material to be uploaded.
→ The negatives and prints are returned to the donor (if they are unwanted, they are deposited at the Budapest City Archives).
→ Volunteer editors mark the year in which the photo was made on the timeline.
→ Volunteer editors add data to the various pictures.
→ The material awaits uploading (uploads are made monthly).
→ The photo appears on the Fortepan website.
→ Hundreds of users view the new picture (by clicking on "Refresh").
→ At the Fortepan forum, the "codebreakers" begin adding data to the various pictures. Fortepan editors accept the data subject to evidence being provided.
→ Users add keywords/tags to photos, including perhaps the new picture in question.
→ End of the process: a journalist, teacher, or researcher downloads the image.
→ And so forth.

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10 Picture from a clearance, Fp. 07575, the photographer and the subject are unknown. Size of original photo: 43 mm × 54 mm. (Please note: the five-forint coin is to show the size of the photo.)