

NOVEMBER 2008
HUNGARIAN—ENGLISH EDITION

TROOP 214

214-es CSAPAT

The story of the Cold War through the eyes of Hungarian Scouts

At age 11, filmmaker George Csicsery was a member of a troop of ethnic Hungarian Scouts in Derby, New York, during the late 1950s. The 45 boys in the troop lived together in a boarding home run by the Piarist Fathers, a teaching order of Catholic priests, most of them recent immigrants from Europe. At Derby, they created a Hungarian enclave in the American Midwest. The Hungarian Scouts at Derby were also known as Troop 214 of the Boy Scouts of America. This film is a capsule history of the Cold War in which the ideological struggle that dominated the 20th century is reflected in two conflicting youth movements that divided one small Central European culture.



Troop 214 deploys interviews and archival footage to trace the history of scouting in Hungary from its origins before World War I, through suppression and exile after 1948, to the legal return of Scouts to Hungary in

1989. It is a journey with unusual twists and turns.

In 1948, the Communist government of Hungary banned scouting and replaced it with the Young Pioneers. With membership compulsory, three generations of Hungarian children were raised as Pioneers. The Scouts survived underground and in exile. One Scout leader in Hungary describes losing everything to the Pioneers. Another takes us to the woods, where his Scout troop met in secret until they were caught in 1961. Archival footage of Pioneer activities document visits to Hungary by Ho Chi Minh and Fidel Castro's son. A lavish 1961 film about the Pioneer Railroad operated by children is juxtaposed with footage of a Pioneer Railroad nostalgia event in 1995. But the fate of the Pioneers was linked to that of the one-party state: An interview with Károly Grósz, Hungary's last hardline Communist prime minister, reveals his surprising role in the legal return of scouting to Hungary in 1988.



Throughout the period of Communist rule in Hungary (1948-1989), the traditions of Hungarian scouting survived among exiles in Western Europe, the Americas, and in Australia. Today there are over a dozen troops of Hungarian Scouts active in the United States alone. For nearly 50 years, scouting provided Hungarian émigré communities with a way to preserve their cultural heritage and transmit it to their children.

The 2008 DVD edition of *Troop 214* released by Zala Films includes the original film subtitled in English, plus extra features in English only.

Produced and directed by GEORGE CSICSERY Co-produced by ÖDÖN PÁL/SUPERPLAN FILMS With the participation of GÁBOR BODNÁR, KÁROLY GRÓSZ, LÁSZLÓ SURJÁN, SCOUTS, and PIONEERS. Cinematography by JOHN KNOOP, LESLIE GLADSIJØ, BALÁZS BÉLAFALVY, RICHARD MORSE Hungarian version edited by GABRIELLA KONCZ English-subtitled version and extra features edited by ANDREA E. HALE Music by MÁTYÁS IVASIVKA



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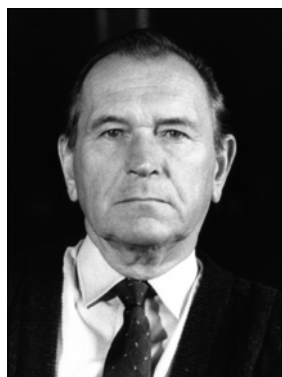


TROOP 214

214-es CSAPAT

A film by
George Paul Csicsery

Filmed in Hungary and the United States between 1988 and 1995, *Troop 214* is a personal odyssey of exile and return. Music, pageantry, and clashing ideologies mark this historical exploration of two competing youth organizations—Hungarian Scouts and Communist Pioneers. It is a journey with unusual twists and turns.



Extra features on the DVD include:

- Eugene's Story
- In Exteris: Scouting in Exile
- The Piarist Fathers Boarding Home
- Three Generations Later

DVD

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