

2015. II. évfolyam 2. szám – Vol II. No 2. 2015.

# Délvidéki Szemle

Történettudományi folyóirat – Historical periodical



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# DÉLVIDÉKI SZEMLE

## Délvidéki Review

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On the cover: **Magyarkanizsa, The new city hall (Photo Archives – Délvidék Kutató Foundation)**

The periodical is published twice a year: in autumn and in spring. The magazine publishes academic, peer-reviewed articles, source reviews and critiques on the past and present of the Southern Region (Délvidék) and the Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euro-Region, as well as articles on public life in the Délvidék, interviews and conference lectures.

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Publishing Office:

Délvidék Kutató Központ Foundation, Szeged

License number: CE/2237-3/2013.

ISSN 2416-223X

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# AMERICAN PROPOSALS TO REVISE THE HUNGARIAN–YUGOSLAVIAN BORDER OF TRIANON, 1943–1944

LÁSZLÓ GULYÁS

## ABSTRACT

*President Franklin Roosevelt founded the organization “Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy” in December of 1941, shortly prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The chairman of the committee was Secretary of State Cordell Hull, with its members and experts coming from two circles: they were diplomats from the Department of State and university professors of social sciences. Under various names, the committee was active during the war and produced tens of thousands pages of situation analysis. A significant part of these studies was about the potential state borders of East-Central Europe after the war. To minimize ethnic–national hostilities, the Committee strove to synchronize linguistic and political borders.*

*On the basis of the Committee’s documents, this paper presents the ideas that resulted from these efforts, focusing on the Treaty of Trianon (1920) borders between Hungary and Yugoslavia.*

## DEBATES OF THE REGIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy set up a so-called Regional Subcommittee, in order to investigate and form a standpoint about border issues. This Subcommittee discussed the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border on February 12,

1943 for the first time,<sup>4</sup> with Cyril Edwin Black, a young historian (associate professor) of Princeton University, submitting the problem. Black examined the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border of Trianon (1920) and distinguished five disputable border sections:

1. North-West Area 1: Prekomurje (Muramente in Hungarian)
2. North-West Area 2: Medjumurje (Muraköz in Hungarian)
3. North-East Area 1: Baranya
4. North-East Area 2: Bácska
5. North-East Area 3: Bánát

Black described North-West Area 1 (Prekomurje or Muramente) as having a population of some 90 thousand people, the vast majority of whom being Slovenian and only 12 thousand Hungarians lived there. However, these 12 thousand Hungarians lived in 25 settlements that were very close to the Hungarian–Yugoslavian Trianon border; in addition, railway lines ran oriented Southwest–Northwest, so the Hungarian border would not cross them. As a consequence, these 25 villages could be separated from the Yugoslavian state and be given to the Hungarian state, with no disadvantage caused, neither ethnically nor regarding traffic, to the Yugoslavian state. Black also pointed out that there were three villages with a German majority population near the border – Kramorovci (Határfalva), Ocinje (Gedőudvar), Fiksinci (Kismáriahavas). These could also be easily separated from Yugoslavia. It must be noted that, though the documents contain no information about this but it is probable, these three German villages were to be annexed to the Austrian state and not to Hungary.

As to the North-West Area 2, Medjumurje (Muraköz), Black argued that the region was almost exclusively inhabited by Croats, there were no settlements with a Hungarian majority, there were 6 thousand Hungarians altogether, so the Hungarian minority accounted for a mere 7% of the population. (It is to be noted here that Black found the numbers about the 7% and 6 thousand people of the Hungarian minority in the data of the 1910 Hungarian census; a background material dated February 9, 1943 cites the data of the 1920 Yugoslavian census, mentioning only 2 thousand Hungarians. See *Table 1.*) Nevertheless, as Black continues, the Hungarian army occupied Muraköz in 1941, on the argument that it had belonged to Hungary before. But there were neither ethnical arguments nor strategic reasons for letting Hungary keep Muraköz after the war.

In the case of the three North-Eastern areas, Black first intended to give an ethnic description as follows: about North-Eastern Area 1, Baranya, he argued that there is no such county within the region where any of the three linguistic groups (Hungarian, German and Yugoslavian) had a majority.

In the case of North-Eastern Area 2, Bácska, there were two counties where one linguistic group was in majority, and it was the Serbo–Croatian in both cases.

Black pointed out that the ethnic picture was even more varied in the case of North-Eastern Area 3, Bánát, where there were counties with Romanian majority as well, in addition to those of Hungarian, German and Serbian majority.

It must be noted here that some days before the February 12, 1943 session of the Regional Subcommittee, on February 9, 1943, a background material was made about the ethnic relations of the disputed territories of the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border. Black later used the numbers of this background document, somewhat generously rounded, for his February 12 document. These figures are summarized in *Table 1*. It is also worth mentioning here that the committee members used the various national-ethnic categories rather inconsistently, speaking of Yugoslavs or South-Slavs or Serb–Croats in their discussion. To provide an example: the population of Muramente is referred to as Yugoslavs in the February 9 background materials and they are called Slovenes in the minutes of the February 12 debate.

*Table 1. The ethnic relations of the disputed territories*

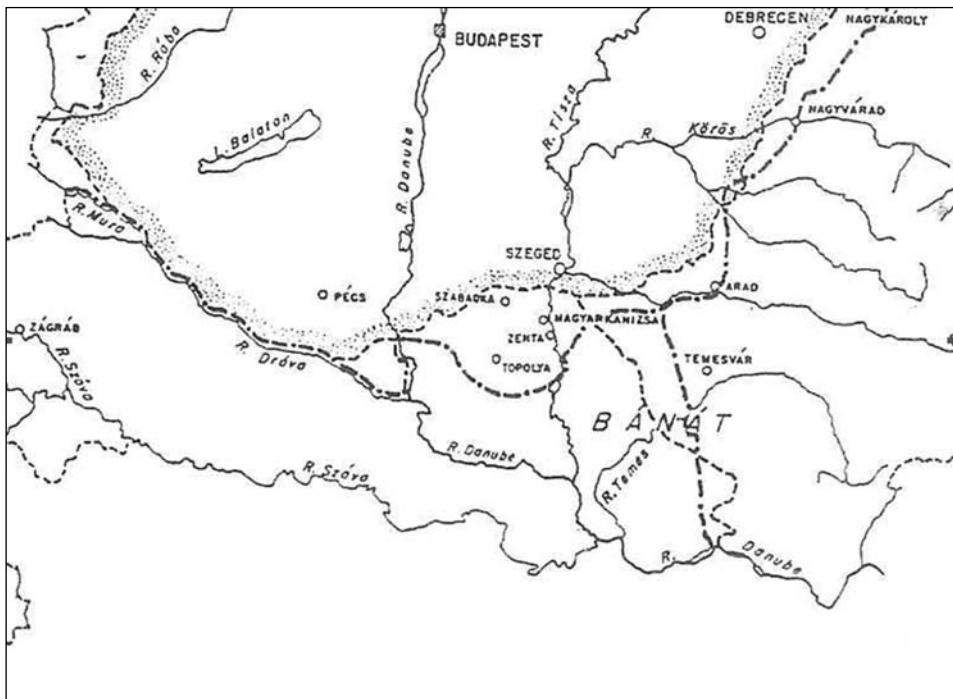
Nationality	Muramente	Muraköz	Baranya	Bácska	Bánát
Hungarian	14 000	2000	17 000	261 000	99 000
Yugoslavian	74 000	94 000	15 000	246 000	241 000
German	3000	1000	17 000	174 000	126 000
Romanian	–	–	–	–	68 000
Other	–	–	–	54 000	28 000
Total	91 000	97 000	49 000	735 000	562 000

*Source: Author's own data*

After providing the ethnic picture of the three North-Eastern regions, Black emphasized two issues. On the one hand, the region had an extensive network of ship and railway traffic. The Danube, the Tisza and the Franz Joseph Channel were international waterways, so regardless of the future state authority, transport and traffic in the region would remain unhindered. On the other hand, he stated that the real value of the region was the production of wheat, so its possession was more important for the Yugoslavian state than for the Hungarian state, as Hungary was able to produce sufficient wheat even within its Trianon borders. Following this introduction, Black said that there were three potential ways of solution for the three North-Eastern territories:

1. Bácska, Baranya and Bánát would be fully reclaimed by Yugoslavia. The reasons include Yugoslavia's positive role in the war and satisfaction of the wheat demand of the Yugoslavian state.
2. All three territories would be annexed to Hungary because the Hungarian state demands so. No ethnic or economic arguments would be in favor of this, though.
3. The region would be divided between Hungary and Yugoslavia. The division could happen according to the 1919 border proposal of the American delegation. In other words, in the 1943 session of the Regional Subcommittee, Black revisited an American proposal from 24 years earlier.

This division would have meant that Hungary could have retained a 6000 km<sup>2</sup>-large area of Voivodina after World War 2. On the basis of Black's calculations, Table 2 presents what the ethnic picture of Voivodina would have become after the division. It is worth mentioning that Black projected the data of the 1921 Yugoslavian census to the 1919 border proposal.



Map 1. The Yugoslavian-Hungarian border proposal of the 1919 American peace delegation

Source: Romsics, 1992. Maps



Table 2. *Ethnic consequences of the border proposal of 1919 (number of inhabitants)*

Nationality	Ethnic relations of territories to Hungary	Ethnic relations of territories to Yugoslavia
Hungarian	227 000	150 000
South-Slav	174 000	328 000
German	79 000	238 000
Romanian	–	68 000
Total	480 000	784 000

Source: Author's own data based on Black's proposal of February 9, 1943.

Black's argument in favor of the 1919 border proposal was that this solution would leave a Hungarian minority of 150 thousand people in Yugoslavia, while resulting in 175 thousand Yugoslavians within the borders of the Hungarian state. This would be important, as Black argued, because the situation could induce three further scenarios. Firstly, it could provoke a forced population exchange but secondly, it could lead to a voluntary exchange of populations, and thirdly, it could result in the creation of a Yugoslavia–Hungarian minority protection treaty. Actually, the Hungarian side argued before WW2 that there would be no use of having a minority protection treaty with Yugoslavia as there was no significant Yugoslavian minority in Hungary. In other words, between the two World Wars the Yugoslavian state had had no interest in creating and enforcing a minority protection treaty with Hungary.<sup>5</sup> However, Black argued that if there was a nearly as large Yugoslavian minority in Hungary as there were Hungarians who lived within the boundaries of the Yugoslavian state, then both states would have in their interest to create a functioning minority protection treaty.

At this point, we have to stop momentarily and draw the attention to the first two of Black's three scenarios, as the question arises: Why did Black consider a forced or voluntary population change as being positive?

The answer is simple: the Committee intended to define borders in Central Europe so that political and ethnic boundaries would more or less coincide. If such borders could not be defined for some reason, then a population exchange (whether voluntary or forced) or a minority protection agreement, as a last resort, could minimize ethnic conflicts. These efforts are clearly detectable in Black's proposal, which refers back to the 1919 border proposal.

In the last section of his draft, Black discussed the matter of Romanian minority in South-Banat and proposed that the Romanian-inhabited territories should be annexed to Romania.

After Black's proposition, members of the Subcommittee disputed among themselves about the possible ways of solution. Several officials of the US Department of State, Adolf Berle, Cavendish Cannon and Leo Pasvolsky, attacked the ethnic principle that was the basis of Black's document; they emphasized that Yugoslavia was fighting on the Allied side in the war with Hungary being an enemy belligerent which "broke its word in 1941 and misbehaved". The Berl-Cavendish-Pasvolsky standpoint gained the upper hand by the end of the session and the Regional Subcommittee decided that there was no good reason for the US to propose a border revision regarding the Trianon borders of Yugoslavia and Hungary. The decision was unanimously accepted with no votes against.

### THE PROPOSITION OF THE DIVISION OF POLITICAL STUDIES

By the summer of 1943, the work of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy had advanced significantly, thus Secretary of State Cordell Hull reorganized the peace committee and in order to summarize the actual propositions, he set up the Division of Political Studies. The office's summaries on the Hungarian borders were done by January of 1944. As to the Hungarian-Yugoslavian border, the summary was completed on August 6, 1943.<sup>6</sup>

The document, handed in by Black again, was divided into two parts. The first section described the ethnic situation of the disputed territories as shown in the following table:

*Table 3. Ethnic data of the August 6, 1943. proposition*

Nationality	Baranya	Bácska	Bánát	Altogether
Yugoslav	15 604	246 598	240 213	502 415
Hungarian	16 638	260 998	98 471	376 107
German	16 253	173 796	126 530	316 579
Other	957	53 725	96 744	151 426
Total	49 452	735 117	561 958	1 346 527

Source: Romsics, 1992. p. 200.

Two things were emphasized in the conclusion of the first section: One was the fact that Baranya-Bácska-Bánát were the best cereal-growing areas of Yugoslavia and were therefore much more important for Yugoslavia than for Hungary. The other was Hungary's referring to primarily historical arguments with only secondary regard to ethnic or economic reasons.

In the second part, Black presented the three potential suggestions for solution that emerged during the debates of the Regional Subcommittee. The first solution

was to give back the disputed territories to Yugoslavia, favored by the Subcommittee in the past discussions, as Black explained. Two facts would determine this decision. On the one hand, the disputed region had a crucial role in the Yugoslavian state economy since it greatly contributed to the grain supply of the state. On the other hand, as Hungary had decided to attack Yugoslavia in 1941 and committed cruelties on the Yugoslavian population, the country lost its right to modify the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border.

The second solution was to cede the territory in question back to Hungary. The argument in favour of this was that the summed numbers of Hungarians and Germans exceeded the number of South-Slavs in Bácska and Baranya (See *Table 3.*) the Germans being likely to vote for joining the Hungarian state in the case of a referendum.

However, the Subcommittee agreed on the issue that the Hungarian ethnic arguments are insufficient for annexing the territory to Hungary. What is more, the fact that Hungary had broken its treaty with Yugoslavia and was fighting for the Axis powers further justified the refusal of the Hungarian demands.

The third was a solution of compromise. “*No subcommittee had discussed this solution*” – were Black’s surprising introductory words to the issue. It was surprising, because as we have seen, the February 12, 1943 session of the Regional Subcommittee had closely discussed and rejected the proposed compromise solution. Black was not much disturbed by that and he argued on August 6 that the essence of the solution was that the Hungarian and South-Slavic ethnic groups must be separated by such a dividing line that leaves more or less the same number of Hungarians under Yugoslavian authority as Yugoslavians under Hungarian rule.



Map 2. Black's proposal of August 6, 1943.

Source: Romsics, 1992. Maps

Black suggested the following particular ideas about the regions to be given up to Hungary:

- The 25 villages of Muramente with 12 400 Hungarian inhabitants of the region shall be annexed to Hungary.
- There is no reason to modify borders in the case of Muraköz.
- In Baranya, Hungary shall have the greater part of Kiskőszeg village.
- In Bácska, Hungary shall have the settlements of Zenta and Topolya, a part of Zombor municipality, and the three towns of Szabadka, Magyarkanizsa and Zenta. However, the town of Zombor and the Zombor–Óbecse railway shall remain in Yugoslavia.
- In the Bánát region, Hungary shall have the towns of Törökkanizsa and Nagyikinda and a part of Módos but not the village of Módos itself.

The final result of Black's above proposition was not really different from that of the February, 1943 proposition. (See *Table 2*.) The proposition of August 6, 1943 differed from the February proposition in that the population of the Hungarian-bound territories decreased from 480 000 to 435 000, with South-Slavic population decreasing from 174 000 to 146 000. Meanwhile, the number of Hungarians who would remain under Yugoslavian authority would have grown from 150 000 to 160 000.

#### LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF THE AUGUST 6, 1943 PROPOSAL

The August 6, 1943 proposal of the Division of Political Studies entered a higher level of the hierarchy and was examined by the Inter-Division National and Regional Committees. The plural is due to its being composed of several smaller partial committees; matters of the Hungarian borders were handled by the Inter-Division Committee of the Balkan-Danube Region. On its April 19, 1944 session, the office accepted Black's proposition of August 6, 1943, suggesting that they favored the concept that the Northern part of the Baranya–Bácska–Bánát region should be annexed to Hungary.<sup>7</sup>

However, just half a month later, on May 1 of 1944, when the Inter-Division Committee of the Balkan-Danube Region completed its large summative report titled "*Handling the Hostile States: Hungary*",<sup>8</sup> the following statement was made regarding the Hungarian–Yugoslavian border (its importance allows to cite the text in full):

*"4. The Hungarian–Yugoslavian border*

*The population of the territories disputed by Hungary and Yugoslavia and partially occupied by Hungary in 1941 is about 1 500 000. About 40% of them are Slavs, 26% Hungarians and 21% Germans. The United States argues that the 1940 borders should be restored, but the US is not biased against any compromise solution that may be agreed between Yugoslavia and Hungary. While the greater part of the*

*Hungarian minority in Vojvodina lives in the Northern territories neighboring Hungary, the presence of Slavs is also significant. In general, ethnic situation is so varied that from the involved 24 administrative areas, only eleven has an ethnic majority.”<sup>9</sup>*

The above statement of the Inter-Division Committee of the Balkan-Danube Region is clearly a step back, compared to the August 6, 1943 proposal of the Division of the Political Studies. Especially considering the part where the document discusses the US supporting the compromise solutions “*that Hungary and Yugoslavia are willing to make*”. In other words, the US would not suggest a territorial revision, but would just support the agreement in case the Hungarian and Yugoslavian parties make a deal. There was not much chance for such a compromise, however, as all three of the major Yugoslavian power factors – the emigrant government, the chetniks and the Yugoslavian Committee of Liberation, led by Tito<sup>10</sup> – definitely favored the restoration of the Trianon borders. What is more, both the Communists and the chetniks pondered even the modification of the Trianon borders in favor of Yugoslavia. The chetniks intended, for example, to annex the entire Baranya, along with Pécs, to Yugoslavia.<sup>11</sup>

The above cited May 1, 1944 recommendation of the Inter-Division Committee of the Balkan-Danube Region was elevated to the next and higher hierarchy level in the peace-preparation process of the US, before the so-called Committee on Post-War Program, chaired by Secretary of State Cordell Hull himself. On the basis of the various received recommendations – the issues of which included the Hungarian–Yugoslavian border, the Hungarian–Czechoslovakian border, the Hungarian–Romanian border and internal politics – the office agreed on and accepted a statement, which was the systematic definition of the American policies to be followed in Hungary’s matters. The statement was modified only with regard that its length was reduced to four pages on July 26, 1944, and then to one and a half pages on September 1, 1944.

Due to the abridgements, the passages about the particular border sections were significantly shortened. The four-page document, which was created on July 26, 1944, summarized the intended US policy towards Hungary and, regarding the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border it stated the following under chapters 5 and 17: “*5. In theory, the US is supposed to support the restoration of the 1939 borders between Yugoslavia and Hungary. None the less, the US is supposed to be favorable toward any border revision that may be achieved by Yugoslavia and Hungary, through free and direct negotiations or by any other peaceful means. ...*

*17. In accordance with the general principle of not recognizing any forceful territory gain, the US government is to support that the territories taken by Hungary from Czechoslovakia in 1938/39 and from Yugoslavia in 1941 be restored to these countries, immediately after their liberation. Giving these back to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the transitory period must not influence any later actions, as stated in points 3, 4 and 5.”<sup>12</sup>*

One and a half page long, the document from September 1, 1944 was even more concise about the Hungarian–Yugoslavian border. It reads: “*a) we shall support the restoration of the territories taken by Hungary from Czechoslovakia in 1938/39 and from Yugoslavia in 1941, immediately after these countries are liberated ... c) [the US]... shall be favorable toward any revision of the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border revision that is achieved by the two countries through free and direct negotiations or by any other peaceful means.*”<sup>13</sup>

When President Roosevelt left for the so-called second Québec conference in September of 1944, the text of the above cited September 1 document was included in the presidential information material, which was compiled by the Department of State. In our opinion, this minimized the chances of the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border revision in favor of Hungary and supported by America. The quotations clearly present that US officials did not wish to be initiative in the case of these borders, though they would possibly support it if some voluntary agreement could form between the Yugoslavian and Hungarian states. The supposed technical details of this included the restoration of the Trianon border between Yugoslavia and Hungary once the war ends, as a first step. Then the Yugoslavian and the Hungarian sides could peacefully negotiate a potential border revision.

The standpoint of the US was rather erratic, which is shown by the following: despite the statements from July 26, 1944 and September 1, 1944, the US delegation suggested at the Potsdam meeting in July of 1945 that the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border should be modified in Hungary’s favor, on the basis of the ethnic principle.<sup>14</sup> However, the suggestion quickly disappeared from the agenda, with the Allies agreeing that the Yugoslavian Trianon borders were not to be revised. Thus, in the September 1945 meeting of several ministers of the exterior in London, the great powers unanimously decided to restore the 1938 situation in the case of the Czechoslovakian–Hungarian border and the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border. With that, the issue of revising the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border permanently left the agenda of the US Department of State.

## CONCLUSION

Our paper investigated the standpoints that were adopted by the US peace-preparation offices of various levels with regard to the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border of Trianon. On the basis of these, it seems clear that the different offices in the hierarchy, working on the peace-preparation project, had an inconstant standpoint about the Hungarian–Yugoslavian border. Sometimes they stressed that the Trianon borders were not to be changed, sometimes they made an explicit proposition to change the borders. The question arises: Whence this uncertainty?

Our opinion is that the inconsistency can be traced back to two causes. One is that these offices were unable to reconcile the various principles that emerged during the war and defined the US foreign policy. One of these basic principles was ethnic correctness or ethnic fairness in other words. The consistent realization of the principle meant the synchronization of the linguistic and political barriers, that is, to create borders that minimize the national minorities that are left within the states. But there was another principle opposing the ethnic one: when defining a disputed border (section) it must be taken into consideration on which side were the two involved states fighting in the war, if they were enemies or allies of the USA.

The confrontation of the two principles is precisely detectable in the case of the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border, as the Yugoslavs fought on the Allied side and Hungary was on the side of the Axis Powers, but there was a significant – more than half million – Hungarian minority living under Yugoslavian authority between the two World Wars. This posed a severe problem to the various US peace-preparation offices. Indeed, supporting the territorial demands of an enemy state (Hungary, in this case) against an allied state (Yugoslavia) is a critical moral issue as well. Then again, these political experts knew that if Hungary's ethnic demands were ignored, then the long-term peace of the region could be threatened. The controversy was solved by the various peace-preparation bodies in a way that they simply ignored either of the principles. The session of the Regional Subcommittee shows this, where the ethnical principle was questioned and they decided that Yugoslavia, the ally, is to be supported against Hungary, the enemy.

Our opinion is that personal factors significantly contributed to the inconsistency of the opinions of the various offices. Let us observe two examples: a positive and a negative one, from a Hungarian viewpoint. The positive example: The minutes provide evidence that Cyril Edwin Black, as an expert, continuously supported the idea that the Hungarian–Yugoslavian border should be defined on an ethnic basis. Thus, as the presenter of the proposal, he had a significant part in the turn that the Division of Political Studies advised to annex the Northern part of Baranya–Bácska–Bánát in the August of 1943.

The negative example: At the February 12, 1943 session of the Regional Subcommittee, several officials of the US Department of State – Adolf Berle, Cavendish Cannon and Leo Pasvolsky – attacked the ethnic principle and emphasized instead that Yugoslavia was fighting on the Allied side while Hungary was an enemy state. They had the debate result in the Subcommittee deciding that there was no reason for the US to propose border revision in the case of the Yugoslavian–Hungarian border of Trianon. The next level of the hierarchy, the Division of Political Studies accepted Black's border proposal on August 6, 1943. This accepted proposal was brought before the Inter-Division Committee of the Balkan-Danube Region, which

practically rejected Black's proposition on its May 1, 1944 session. This is interesting as Adolf Berle, Cavendish Cannon and Leo Pasvolksy were present and voting members at this session. It is only a pleasantry from bureaucracy and the hierarchy of American foreign policy-making how and why these members of the Regional Subcommittee joined an office two levels higher in the hierarchy. Here, they were practically enabled to overrule the decision of an office – the Division of Political Studies – that had overruled the previous decision of the Regional Subcommittee. This way they could override an office that had overridden their own original decision.

Based on the above negative and positive examples, it can also be claimed that the personal constitution of each of the peace-preparation bodies heavily influenced the standpoint of the given body.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Abstrakt: "Under various names, the committee was active during the war and produced tens of thousands pages of situation analysis" – Romsics, Ignác: *Az 1947-es párizsi békeszerződés*. Budapest, 2006. pp. 50–56.
- <sup>2</sup> Abstrakt: "A significant part of these studies was about the potential state borders of East-Central Europe after the war." – For plans and records related to the borders of Hungary see Romsics, Ignác: *Amerikai béketervek a háború utáni Magyarországról*. Gödöllő, 1992. (Henceforth: Romsics, 1992.)
- <sup>3</sup> Abstrakt: "On the basis of the Committee's documents, this paper presents the ideas that resulted from these efforts, focusing on the Treaty of Trianon (1920) borders between Hungary and Yugoslavia." – For details of history of the Yugoslavian–Hungarian borders see Gulyás, László: *A magyar–délsláv határ története. Trianoni határaink története IV. Kapu*, Year 1992, Issue 11. pp. 70–75.; Gulyás, László: *Hogyan lett a szerbeké a Délvidék?* Nagymagyarország, Year III. (2011), Issue 1. pp. 4–9.; Gulyás, László: *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája 1. Az első évek 1919–1924*. Máriabesnyő, 2012. pp. 16–18.; Gulyás, László: *Az első jugoszláv állam felbomlása. Államszerkezeti és etnikai következmények 1941–1944*. Mediterrán és Balkán Fórum, Year VII. (2013), Issue 1. pp. 24–35.
- <sup>4</sup> For records of the Subcommittee see Romsics, 1992. pp. 118–130.
- <sup>5</sup> Vizi, László Tamás: „Hiszem és remélem, hogy... hamarosan visszatérhet a régi barátság és megértés” Horthy Miklós mohácsi beszéde és a szerb orientáció alternatívája a magyar külpolitikában. *Közép-Európai Közlemények*, Year VI. (2013), Issue 4. pp. 7–38.; Vizi, László Tamás: *The Hungarian Effort to Dissolve the Unity of the Little Entente in 1926*. Prague Papers on the History of International Relations, Year 2013, Issue 2. Prague (–Vienna) pp. 134–150.; Gulyás, László: *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája 2. A húszas évek második fele 1924–1931*. Máriabesnyő, 2013. pp. 40–52.
- <sup>6</sup> For full summary see Romsics, 1992. pp. 200–202.
- <sup>7</sup> Romsics, 1992. p. 34.
- <sup>8</sup> The summative report, Romsics, 1992. pp. 230–239.
- <sup>9</sup> Romsics, 1992. pp. 233.
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- <sup>11</sup> Hornyák, Árpád: *Péccsel Baranyával. Délsláv területi követelések 1941–1947*. Rubicon, Year 2007, Issue 1–2. pp. 16–19.
- <sup>12</sup> Romsics, 1992. pp. 240–241.
- <sup>13</sup> Romsics, 1992. p. 243.
- <sup>14</sup> Haas, György: *Második Trianon*. Budapest, 1995. pp. 25–49.; Fülöp, Mihály: *A befejezetlen béke. A Külügyminiszterek Tanácsa és a magyar békeszerződés 1947*. Budapest, 1996. pp. 32–40.



## EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN MAGYARKANIZSA DURING THE DUALIST ERA

SÁNDOR FEJŐS

### ABSTRACT

*After the establishment of the Austro–Hungarian Empire (1867), during the dualist period, was when Magyarakanizsa was closest to the oft mentioned Western Europe. A significant portion of its administrative, educational, religious and economic institutions were founded during this time. Apart from the rapid economic development the self-aware middle-class was also gaining strength. The desire for quality entertainment and community culture also grew which the Délvidék’s (Southern Region) townships sought to satisfy.*

*The turn of the century can be considered the golden age of civil organizations. Belonging to a civil organization as a sign of middle class poise and serious societal rank is characteristic of this period. The most active organizations’ pre-WWI ( First Magyarakanizsa Table, Lords’ Casino, The Ó-Kanizsa Volunteer Firefighters’ Society and the Jewish Women’s Society, the Magyarakanizsa Youth Society for Community Culture, etc.) function, work, community forming power and effect on local cultural life are discussed by the author.*

*There were two important periodicals during the dualist era in Magyarakanizsa the Kanizsai Újság (Kanizsa Newspaper, 1908–1915) and the Kanizsai Ellenőr (Kanizsa Inspector) from 1911. The subjects covered by the aforementioned media faithfully represent the most important scenes of local social, economic and cultural life during the period.*

With all its contradictions, the Dualist era can be considered one of the most prosperous periods in the history of Magyarkanizsa.<sup>1</sup> Following the Austro–Hungarian Compromise (1867) Magyarkanizsa’s economy experienced an upswing.<sup>2</sup> In 1870 the municipality purchased its pastures and public spaces from the state in a compensation treaty. Renting out the lands bought from the crown meant a significant source of income for Ó-Kanizsa due to the ever-increasing numbers of livestock. With the upswing in agriculture began not only the allocation of land for pastures, but within the framework of water regulation flood control works began as well. Flood control (draining of fields, building embankments) were carried out under the supervision of the Tisza Regulation Association of Bács.<sup>3</sup> Article XVIII of the 1871 Act establishes the administrative and organizational framework for the municipality.<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the municipality act, Ó-Kanizsa qualified as a large-municipality and could elect leaders: judges, notaries, public trustees, treasurers, doctors. The law, documenting significant advances in administration, provided interoperability between the different municipality types, due to the fact that the decision fell solely under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Internal Affairs. The status of a *town with an organized council* could only be modified to *legislative authority* by passing a law.<sup>5</sup> After changing its name from Ó-Kanizsa to Magyarkanizsa in 1904, the municipality took this opportunity and achieved the status of “*city with organized council*”<sup>6</sup> in 1908. Since the principal of municipal virilism applied, the majority of the members of the Representative Body were from among the well-to-do farmers who owned the rich fields of Bácska (Mátyás János Dukai, József Tóth Jr. etc.), wealthy businessmen of incorporated companies (Herman Grünfeld, József Milkó, etc.), and to a smaller extent tradesmen, merchants as well as the city’s intellectuals who held administrative power. Due to the process of urbanization a large number of the municipality’s administrative, educational, religious institutions, the hospital (1886), the school (1901), the new town hall (1911/12) and the Szent Pál Church (1912/13) were established during this period.

Apart from agriculture being dominant, the development of industry and commerce also accelerated starting with the 1880s. At the turn of the century, besides a relatively advanced milling industry and construction industry, small scale processing industry played the most important role in the city’s economy. Of the factories employing mass work forces (80-150), only the First Brick and Tile Factory of Magyarkanizsa Inc. (1903) and the Vilmos Milkó and Sons’ First Steam Saw and Steam Mill Inc. (1909) are worth mentioning.<sup>7</sup> Commerce was practically limited to the grain and livestock trade, despite this fact a colonial products shop and a hardware shop also operated in Magyarkanizsa. Modernization of transport and infrastructure was urgently needed, the steam-boat station built in 1872, the pontoon-bridge erected in 1886, railway transit implemented in 1889 all foresaw economic advancement. Credit institutes meant financial stability.<sup>8</sup> The Savings Bank of Ó- and Törökkanizsa Inc., registered

in 1869, was the first legally operating financial institution, but the Ó-Kanizsa Mutual Cooperative, established in 1884 and the Christian People's Bank, founded in 1903 also reinforced this tendency aiding the quicker transmission of cash-flow.

The population of Magyarkanizsa, on the track of capitalization with a rising middle class, grew in numbers decade by decade: in 1880: 13 689 citizens<sup>9</sup> resided in the town, in 1900: 16 532<sup>10</sup> and in 1911: 16 899<sup>11</sup>. The growth was slowed mainly by the emigration of migrant construction workers (kubikus). When we examine the religious and ethnic circumstances we can determine that during the period of Dualism, the population of Magyarkanizsa was over 90% Hungarian in ethnicity and of the Roman Catholic faith, while the Orthodox Christian Serbian nationals represented 5% of the population. It is interesting to note that their numbers decreased constantly (in 1857 there were 741 Serbian nationals, while in 1900 only 308)<sup>12</sup> over time, this tendency is in correlation with Hungarianization and emigration.

Most of the Magyarkanizsa population worked in agriculture in the Dualist era (95%) as well. It is characteristic of this period that only a small number of large landowners owned several hundred or possibly several thousand acres of land. The majority of landowners were small farmers, out of 5308 farmers 3866 owned less than 3.5 acres.<sup>13</sup> In contrast with other North-Bácska townships, Ó-Kanizsa did not distribute significant amounts of land (15266 acres) among landowners, but left it instead to be managed by the town. Letting pastures became a major source of income, which could be used as a resource for developing administration, public health, education, etc.<sup>14</sup> As a result of the economic changes, at the turn of the century, the number of tradesmen and merchants increased. Aside from the small scale processing industry, most people worked in construction, many of them became factory workers employed by large businesses. The intellectual strata (teachers, doctors, lawyers, government officials) played a large role in public life also due to Magyarkanizsa becoming a city with organized council. Besides the economic and social changes, modernization also took place in the areas of education and culture. The emerging middle class transformed the lifestyles of the different social classes. Among the factors of the middle class' lifestyle changes was that reading, going to the theater, social life, sports, bath-culture and spending leisure time in meaningful way all became fashionable. The main reason behind the advancement of education and culture is that the desire for higher culture had grown. On the other hand, during the implementation of the Dualist state's institutional system, the civil state strived to satisfy the ever-rising need for professional workers. In my study I will attempt to point out the most important elements of community cultural learning in this small, Southern Region (Délvidék) town during the Dualist period through the defining scenes of cultural life (education, civil society organizations, press and bath-culture), its advancement and gap-filling endeavors in certain segments.

**THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Minister of Religion and Public Education, József Eötvös' post-Compromise Public Education Act (Act 1868:38.) had a major effect on public education in Ó-Kanizsa as well. The implementation of general compulsory education, establishment of primary- and higher level people's school systems, providing the opportunity to attend state civil school, regulating the formation of school boards all meant the organization and modernization of the educational system.<sup>15</sup> The liberal-minded act, allowing for denominational schools, merely made the founding of state and municipal schools possible. Consequently, the Public Education Act made it possible for local Serbian nationals and Jews to study in their mother tongue in church schools. Teachers' salaries were determined with no regard to religious faith.<sup>16</sup> During Ágoston Trefort's term as minister, in accordance with the act pertaining to school authorities (Act 1876:28.), the system of school supervision was implemented, and besides the denominational people's schools, school boards were also organized.<sup>17</sup> Among the supervisor's tasks was the oversight of municipal and church schools. In Ó-Kanizsa, based on the Representative Body's decision, the Catholic school board, made up of local chaplains and teachers, comprised 34 members, while the Serbian Orthodox and Jewish denominational school board had 7-7 members each.<sup>18</sup> In 1879 it was made mandatory by law to teach the Hungarian language in all institutions of public education (Act 1879:18.), which modified the regulations pertaining to the operation of denominational schools somewhat.<sup>19</sup> Between 1868 and 1886 the teaching staff in the town doubled in numbers.<sup>20</sup> However, for decades in Ó-Kanizsa education was limited to church schools and there were three unauthorized schools operating in the neighboring rural farming communities. 15% of children were not enrolled in any sort of educational institution.<sup>21</sup>

The turn of the century period was a milestone in the life of the municipality's educational institutions. This was when the third preschool was opened, the first having been formed in 1867. In 1893 the six-grade state elementary school for boys was founded where students could learn Latin and French languages.<sup>22</sup> As a result of the upswing in industry and commerce, by 1897 there were four trade and commercial apprentice schools. As regards profession, most students chose to learn the trades of bricklayer, tailor, carpenter, miller, shoemaker or smith.<sup>23</sup> The most significant endeavor turned out to be the building and opening of the Lajos Haynald Girls' Institute. In 1890 Lajos Haynald, Cardinal Archbishop of Kalocsa donated a sum of 40 000 forints to the municipality going toward the building of a girls' school and a Catholic hospital.<sup>24</sup> Heated, recurring disputes lasting for years preceded the founding of the school. It became clear that to the municipal Representative Body and the city officials that the interest-bearing donated sum would not be enough to build the girls' institute and the public hospital. In 1895, council member,



*Image 1. Dr. Sándor Király,  
First Mayor of Magyarakanizsa City  
with Organized Council*



*Image 2. Mátyás Márton,  
honorary prelate, provost*

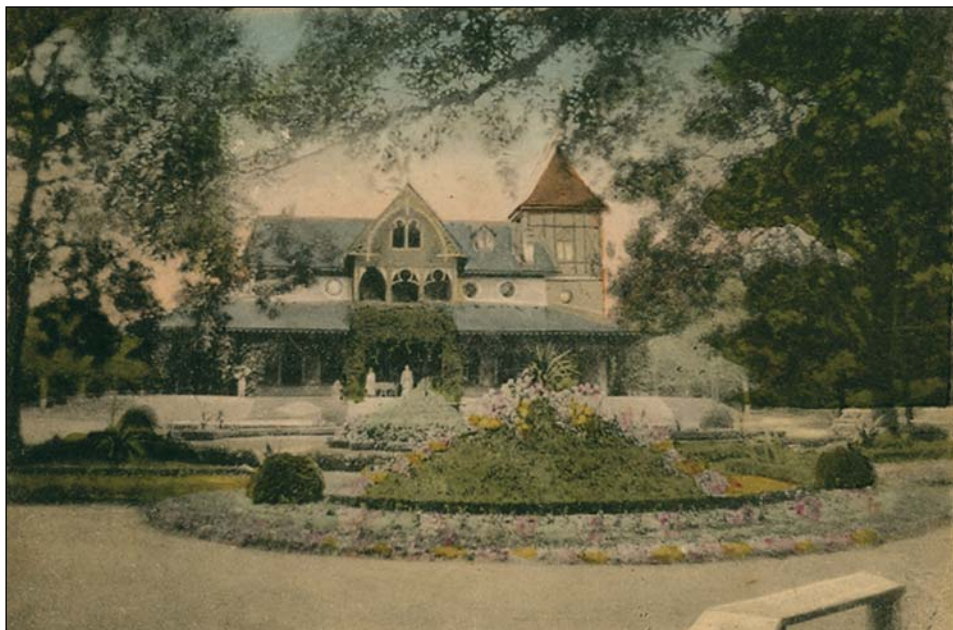
Sándor Király (who would later become mayor) emphasized the need for a new institution of public education. Although his initiative was accepted by the Representative Body, this was not the end of the matter.<sup>25</sup> One year later Mátyás Márton, honorary prelate, provost, and deacon chaplain recommended that a new preschool be built. Dr. Gyula Roxer, a city physician opposed this due to its denominational nature, while Sándor Király advocated for another four-grade girls' school.<sup>26</sup> The year 1887 brought about the anticipated change, thanks to the organization of deacon chaplain Mátyás Márton and György Popovics, municipal judge, the decision was made that the proposition to build a modern girls' school suitable to the needs of the era would be accepted.<sup>27</sup> György Császka, who was Archbishop of Kalocsa at the time, donated an additional 10,000 forints to aid construction.<sup>28</sup> The modern, imposing building was consecrated on 9th of September, 1901.<sup>29</sup> A few days later the school was up and running and functioned as the most renowned girls' institute in the region during the latter part of the Dualist era. After the regime change it was nationalized and operates to this day as a primary school. During the period of Dualism plans of a high-school and a vocational secondary school of commerce were proposed several times, articles published in the local newspaper advocated for this matter.<sup>30</sup> However, the plans did not materialize (mostly due to a lack of funds), so secondary school students and students of commerce of the Tisza region would continue to pursue further education in the public institutions of Szeged, Szabadka, Zombor and Zenta.

**THE LEVERS OF COMMUNITY CULTURE: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

One of the implications of modern, middle class development was spending time in a meaningful way and the increase of forums for social interaction. With people being selective with how they spend their leisure time and the growing desire for higher cultural learning, the urban municipalities of the Southern Region sought to satisfy these needs. In this respect the Reform Era marked the initial period of the formation of civil society organizations. The “*Provisorium*” era after the defeat of the 1848/49 Revolution had a very negative effect on the function of civil society organizations. Along with the other cities of the Southern Region, Magyarkanizsa’s economy and social structure were seriously impacted by the Compromise. Churches were built, the People’s Bank opened, the Lords’ Casino and Haynald’s Girls’ Institute was built, a building that is used today as a primary school. It was not only the political situation and the swift economic growth that benefited the effective operation of community organizations, but also the entailing rise of the empowered middle class. During the time of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, high quality social life became commonplace.<sup>31</sup> The main scenes of social interaction were the associations, civil organizations and clubs. In accordance with the 1868 Act on the subject of equal rights for nationalities (Act 1868:44.), citizens could, within the framework of the law, group into different societies and organizations.<sup>32</sup> The languages of different scientific, economic and cultural organizations were determined by the founder. They could make rules, keep a house treasury and promote their culture and native language.<sup>33</sup> Government control was practically limited to a minimum.<sup>34</sup> As a result of the beneficial economic and social environment civil organizations sprang up like mushrooms.

The Ó-Kanizsa and later Magyarkanizsa organizations were formed almost without exception after the Compromise, primarily due to the influence of the larger cities’ civil society organizations (Zenta, Szabadka, Szeged). The records of the city and municipality council meetings and articles published in the local newspapers document the activities of 18 societies. The majority of the associations differentiate by religion (Jewish Women’s Society, Chevra Kadisa, Christian Women’s Society, Catholic People’s Circle), profession (Farmers’ Circle, Tradesmen’s and Citizens’ Choral Society, Young Men’s Economic Society) and nationality. The statutes of the Ó-Kanizsa Volunteer Firefighters’ Society, the First Magyarkanizsa Table and the Ó-Kanizsa Art Appreciation Association have all been preserved for posterity. The Ó-Kanizsa Volunteer Firefighters’ Society was formed in 1889. The reason for its establishment was mainly the spread of serious fire damage. The statute regulated the rights of the members and the tasks of the commanders, the officers and staff.<sup>35</sup> Anyone could join regardless of gender, as long as they were morally upright, at least 24 years of age and 150 centimeters or taller.<sup>36</sup> The volunteer firefighters

of Magyarkanizsa achieved world fame after winning first place at the 1911 world championship in Turin, Italy.<sup>37</sup> The members of the First Magyarkanizsa Table Club, formed in 1906, were mostly of the town's political and economic elite. They used most of the exemplary revenues from their charitable efforts to support disadvantaged children.<sup>38</sup> The most important sections of their statutes emphasized the spoken Hungarian language, community culture and the cultural conservation. Section 21 of the statutes, which forbids discussion of denominational and nationality matters within the society, exemplifies their openness and code of moral conduct.<sup>39</sup> The statutes of the Ó-Kanizsa Tradesmen's Literary Circle were registered in 1883. Within community cultural education their aim was to spread knowledge in the areas of economics and industry.<sup>40</sup> Apart from increasing their exceptionally rich library, they held readings and dance events. The roots of the theater in Magyarkanizsa date back to the beginning of the 19th century. Among its most notable proponents were: Árpád Ozorai, Gyula Káfga and Ármin Reisinger. Until WWI the majority of civil society organizations (Lords' Casino, MIKE, Christian Women's Society, etc.) also included drama in their activities. On December 19, 1895 the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Internal Affairs validated the statutes of the Ó-Kanizsa Art Appreciation Association, thus making it possible for local amateur actors to form an organization.<sup>41</sup> The amateur company is one the oldest societies, as their first performance was



*Image 3. Elizabeth's Park*

in 1848. In accordance with the statute: “*The aim of the association is to form community and foster a tendency for cultural learning, to stimulate society, to provide it with noble and witty entertainment, to uplift it in the Hungarian spirit, especially to popularize theater among the citizens. (...)*”<sup>42</sup>

The two most active associations mentioned in the local press were the Lords’ Casino and the Magyarkanizsa Youth Society for Community Culture (“MIKE”). The town’s political elite (Gyula Roxer, István Huszág) and wealthy businessmen were represented in large numbers among the members of the Lords’ Casino.<sup>43</sup> They organized events such as carnival balls, Lent merriments and musical evenings.<sup>44</sup> MIKE functioned as the largest youth cultural society in Kanizsa of the Dualist period. Apart from organizing many plays and readings, they also took on a major role in public life. Building an ice-skating rink was on their agenda,<sup>45</sup> but they were also responsible for the foundation of the Kanizsa Marksmen’s Society.<sup>46</sup> For over a year in 1911–12, the local newspaper, the *Kanizsai Ellenőr* was published as the Magyarkanizsa Youth Society for Community Culture’s newspaper.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE EMERGENCE OF THE LOCAL PRESS

When it came to the appearance of the civil press, Hungary had to make up for a century of deficit. In the Southern Region, it began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was relatively late even when compared with the rest of the country.<sup>48</sup> This is when the first civil media of Szabadka and Zenta emerged serving as a positive example and encouraging the appearance of the Magyarkanizsa local press. Based on the March 12, 1908 Decree 10018 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on January 1, 1909 Magyarkanizsa became an organized town.<sup>49</sup> One of the main criteria for the status of a “*town with organized council*” was that there should be local press operating within the municipality. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century two outlets sought to satisfy the needs of the readership in Magyarkanizsa.

Between 1908 and 1915, the *Kanizsai Újság*, dubbed a “*social and administrative paper*” was issued once a week, every Sunday. The four-page periodical, apart from discussing national matters, informed the residents of Magyarkanizsa primarily on local political, economic and social events. Its publisher, Pál P. Bruck was a local press owner and businessman, Zoltán Tóth acted as editor for a year.<sup>50</sup> Between 1910 and 1915 Bruck ran the newspaper as publisher and editor-in-chief. In the fiction column, apart from news of local events, short stories and poems were published on a weekly basis. Articles on agriculture, industry and commerce were published in the administrative column. The paper regularly informed its readers of different tenders, official news and the annual balance sheets of local businesses.<sup>51</sup> A lot of gossip news was also published, this was in order to increase sales and make the periodical profitable.





The weekly *Kanizsai Ellenőr* reached its readership regularly from 1911 to 1918 with a few interruptions, often acting as the *Kanizsai Újság*'s competitor. Its first editor-in-chief was János Mányi,<sup>52</sup> who was succeeded by Illés Víg and József Pósa, who edited the periodical from 1911 to 1913. During WWI there were efforts to relaunch the *Kanizsai Ellenőr*, however, only one issue was published in 1915. The paper was relaunched in 1917 under the direction of Andor Pulay,<sup>53</sup> but due to economic difficulties caused by the war and the approaching regime change it was permanently discontinued in October of 1918.

Upon analyzing the articles in the two newspapers we can determine that their role in the city's cultural life, in maintaining a desire for cultural learning was indeed notable. These media, strongly representing the "*couleur locale*", reflect the socio-economic processes of the period as well.

### **THE SPREAD OF BATH-CULTURE IN MAGYARKANIZSA DURING THE DUALIST PERIOD**

The history of the spa in Magyarkanizsa dates back to the 1890s. As an increasing number of artesian wells were bored in the municipality, it followed that the rural town with a rising middle class would build an artesian bath that met all the modern hygienic requirements. As a result, Sándor Csuka, municipality engineer drew up the plans of a Tisza-bath and an artesian bath in the public park in 1895.<sup>54</sup> Representative Dr. Gyula Roxer, chief physician argued that the maintenance of the Tisza-bath would mean a greater cost for the municipality and proposed that the Representative body accept the plans and budget for an artesian bath in the Népkert (People's Park).<sup>55</sup> In the next year, city authorities took into notice the Bács-Bodrog County Municipal Commission's decision to build the public park bath, however the construction of the bath was delayed for an indefinite time due to financial difficulties.<sup>56</sup>

The Dualist period heyday of the Bácska small town with a rising middle class was shaken up by a sensational piece of news. It was discovered that the water of the artesian well bored in Járás in 1908 had healing properties. City officials operated a rudimentary spa on the scene with nine basins from 1909 to 1913. Gyula Köves's pub and József Börcsök's restaurant provided hospitality services to its guests.<sup>57</sup> As early as the first bathing season, in 1909, wealthy local businessmen came up with a completely new idea on how to use later the waters of the Csodakút (Magic Well). Herman Grünfeld, local businessman and municipal council member (director of the First Brick and Tile Factory of Magyarkanizsa Inc.) drafted ideas of the construction of a spa in the Népkert (People's Park) to the Representative Body.<sup>58</sup> Headed by Grünfeld, the Csodakút Artesian Spa Incorporated was formed on May 29, 1912, with which the municipality made a concession agreement.



*Image 5. The Artesian Spa of Magyararkanizsa*

According to the agreement the incorporated was granted exclusive use of the water from the two artesian wells bored in Járás (30 years), with the purpose of using their water for the spa, under the condition that they have the Csodakút's water transferred to the Népkert via iron pipes where they would build a spa to fit all contemporary needs.<sup>59</sup> After Gyula Porgányi, certified engineer drew up the plans necessary to transfer the water, construction could begin, which lifted Magyararkanizsa to the ranks of the modern European bath-cities.

On Sunday morning, August 10, 1913 the Csodafürdő (Magic Bath), built in the Népkert (People's Park), opened its gates.<sup>60</sup> Its hallway, designed by István Király and noted by Budapest architect Zoltán Reiss, provided visitors with an imposing sight.<sup>61</sup> The Venetian Mirror placed opposite the entrance, the Zsolnay flower pots and the tapestries all attested to results of high-quality work. The institution ran a first class luxury bath and a luxury bath with earthenware tubs as well as a second class tub-bath. There were a total of twenty tubs for patients to use, the medicinal water was heated and used by bathers in its natural state.<sup>62</sup> On doctors' orders patient could take mud- and carbonated water baths, the Csodakút Artesian Spa's water was well suited for treatment of arthritic muscle and joint ailments, gout, sciatica, but proved effective for anemia, neurosis, heart problems and female troubles as well.<sup>63</sup> The Csodakút's water was later bottled and used to treat people with gastro-intestinal

illnesses in the form of drinking-cures. At the time, the plant's medical oversight was carried out by the town's chief physician, Dr. Miksa Dömötör.<sup>64</sup>

A summer swimming pool with 28 dressing cabins and a boiler room providing steam-heating also belonged to the building.<sup>65</sup> The park, which surrounded the modern spa complete with electric lighting and central heating, and its establishments (The building of the Vigadó [*entertainment hall*], József Longa's confectionery, the tennis and bowling courts and the small lake for row-boating) also served the comfort and entertainment of the guests. The Erzsébet Park (today known as People's Park) was illustrated by the county monograph as "*the beautiful Népkert (People's Park) under Magyarkanizsa, along with its excellent tree nurseries and flower gardens, meets all the requirements of modern gardening and will surely satisfy even the most particular of tastes. Its ornate paths, English Gardens and flower-circuses and shady groves leave one with a most pleasant impression and could easily compete with the resorts of other towns.*"<sup>66</sup> The groves of the Népkert, which transformed it into a charming French landscape garden, were maintained by Károly Bednárz, head gardener of the city, with great professional competence.<sup>67</sup> One was in front of the spa building with a statue beside it, the other decorated the English garden in front of the Vigadó and the confectionery.

Despite the difficulties of the regime change following WWI, the spa retained its former glory, in fact its management even made smaller investments. In 1936 a whirlpool bath and a modern mud bath were built. The concession agreement between the city and Csodakút Artesian Spa Incorporation expired on May 1, 1943; therefore the operation of the spa was now in the hands of the municipality. On February 29, 1944 the city council rented the buildings of the spa and the Vigadó to the First Magyarkanizsa Savings Bank Incorporated.<sup>68</sup> After WWII, within the framework of Yugoslavia, factories and companies were nationalized. The Kanizsa spa and the neighboring Vigadó suffered the same fate.<sup>69</sup> Sadly, the ornate walkways of the Népkert were not maintained with the appropriate know-how, the imposing buildings fell into disrepair and slowly deteriorated. The spa's hallway was transformed to fit the requirements of the era, strongly bearing the marks of socialist realist architecture. The situation improved somewhat, when in the middle of the 1970s the co-operative of Kanizsa Banja Health and Resort Center initiated that a new spa be built in the Népkert. In 1980, near the old Monarchy era spa (today: Hotel Abella) a new health and resort center was opened (Hotel Aquamarin).<sup>70</sup> The building of the old spa was renovated, but along with its surroundings it lags far behind its shining turn-of-the-century status as a modern spa meeting all contemporary requirements. Since the spa is an establishment that enriches our city's history, generates tourism and plays a defining role in its economy, it is rightfully listed among the Municipal Values of Magyarkanizsa.

## SUMMARY

The economic and social changes of the Dualist era significantly influenced the small Southern Regional town's cultural life. Development can be well-documented through certain areas of education and culture (education, civil organizations, etc). The ever-growing middle class's desire for community culture increased, which resulted in a rise of the standard of education. The modernization of public education had an especially positive effect on the cultural life of Magyarkanizsa. With the establishment of preschools and schools illiteracy was decreased to a minimum and the problem of the lack of trained workers was also on its way to being solved. The civil society organizations, in their heyday faithfully carried out their community-forming roles in societal life. While the emergence of local newspapers sought to make up for a century's hiatus, a new industry took root with the spread of bath-culture and the establishment of the spa. We must mention that following the regime change (1920) and amid transformed circumstances, the town retained its success achieved in the areas of education and culture for in the operation of the schools and civil societies one can see continuity during the period between the two World Wars, which drew from their roots planted firmly in the Dualist era.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Fejős, Sándor – Forró, Lajos – Kávai, Szabolcs (ed.): *Kanizsai Képeslapok*. Szeged, 2013. (Henceforth: Kanizsai Képeslapok, 2013.) p. 9.
- <sup>2</sup> Zenta Historical Archive. (Henceforth: ZHA) F.004. Magyarkanizsa City with Organized Council. Council meeting records 1870–1874. No. 1870/20.
- <sup>3</sup> ZHA F.004. Magyarkanizsa City with Organized Council. Council meeting records 1870–1874. No. 1871/6.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ezer év törvényei*. [www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=5484](http://www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=5484). (Last downloaded: 2016. 03. 28.)
- <sup>5</sup> Kozári, Mónika: *A dualista rendszer (1867–1918)*. Budapest, 2005. pp. 210–211.
- <sup>6</sup> A town with an organized council (rendezett tanácsú város) was one of the administrative categories for Hungarian towns from 1870–1929. As result of the so-called municipal laws rural towns which did not have the economic capacity to form their own legislative authority became "towns with organized council". They were directly under the jurisdiction of the county.
- <sup>7</sup> Urbán, János: *Parázsöld*. Kanizsa, 1988. (Henceforth: Urbán, 1988.) pp. 57–58.
- <sup>8</sup> Appel, Ede: *Ó-Kanizsa nagyközség történelmi, helyrajzi, gazdasági, népművelési és statisztikai ismertetése*. Szabadka, 1886. (Henceforth: Appel, 1886.) pp. 44–46.
- <sup>9</sup> Dobos, János: *Kanizsa múltjából*. In: A csönd városa. Újvidék, 1982. (Henceforth: Dobos, 1982.) p. 17.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> National Széchenyi Library Microfilm and Photograph Archive B1 FM3/4374. Kanizsai Újság, Magyarkanizsa, 1911. IV. Vol. 8. No. 2.
- <sup>12</sup> Kávai, Szabolcs: *Magyarkanizsai társadalmi egyesületek 1945-ig*. Szeged, 2008. (Henceforth: Kávai, 2008.) p. 12.
- <sup>13</sup> Urbán, 1988. p. 59.
- <sup>14</sup> Dobos, 1982. p. 17.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ezer év törvényei*. [www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=5360](http://www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=5360). (Last downloaded: 2016. 04. 28.)

- <sup>16</sup> Appel, 1886. p. 38.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ezer év törvényei*. www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=5741. (Last downloaded: 2016. 04. 30.)
- <sup>18</sup> Appel, 1886. p. 38.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ezer év törvényei*. www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=5848. (Last downloaded 2016. 04. 30.)
- <sup>20</sup> Appel, 1886. p. 38.
- <sup>21</sup> Kanizsai Képeslapok, 2013. p. 15.
- <sup>22</sup> Szöllősy Vágó, László: *Iskolánk krónikája*. Kanizsa, 1991. p. 58.
- <sup>23</sup> Urbán, 1988. p. 19.
- <sup>24</sup> Kávai, Szabolcs: *Emberségünk vára*. Tóthfalu, 2001. (Henceforth: Kávai, 2001.) p. 10.
- <sup>25</sup> ZHA F.004.23. Magyar Kanizsa City with Organized Council. Council meeting records. No. 203.
- <sup>26</sup> ZHA F.004.23. Magyar Kanizsa City with Organized Council. Council meeting records. No. 216.
- <sup>27</sup> Kávai, 2001. p. 15.
- <sup>28</sup> Kávai, 2001. p. 16.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> Kanizsai Újság, Magyar Kanizsa, 1909. II. Vol. 4. No. 1.; p. 20. No. 2–3.
- <sup>31</sup> Kávai, 2008. p. 11.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ezer év törvényei*. www.1000ev.hu/index.php?a=3&param=5366. (Last downloaded: 2016. 04. 30.)
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Kósa, László (ed.): *Magyar Művelődéstörténet*. Budapest, 2006. p. 362.
- <sup>35</sup> ZHA F.127/1. Statutes of the Ó-Kanizsa Volunteer Firefighters' Society, Ó-Kanizsa, 1890.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Kanizsai Újság, Magyar Kanizsa, 1911. IV. Vol. 60. No. 2.
- <sup>38</sup> Kávai, 2008. p. 25.
- <sup>39</sup> Statutes of the First Magyar Kanizsa Table, Magyar Kanizsa, 1906.
- <sup>40</sup> ZHA F.374/5. Statute of the Ó-Kanizsa Tradesmen's Literary Circle
- <sup>41</sup> Statutes of the Ó-Kanizsa Art Appreciation Association. Ó-Kanizsa, 1895.
- <sup>42</sup> Statutes of the Ó-Kanizsa Art Appreciation Association. Ó-Kanizsa, 1895.
- <sup>43</sup> Kávai, 2008. p. 41.
- <sup>44</sup> Kanizsai Újság, Magyar Kanizsa, 1909. Vol. II. 49. No. p. 3.
- <sup>45</sup> Kanizsai Újság, Magyar Kanizsa, 1909. Vol. II. 39. No. p. 3.
- <sup>46</sup> Kanizsai Újság, Magyar Kanizsa, 1913. Vol. VI. 7. No. p. 3.
- <sup>47</sup> Kanizsai Ellenőr, Magyar Kanizsa, 1912. Vol. II. 1. No. p. 1.
- <sup>48</sup> Pető, Bálint: *Magyar Kanizsa városi státusának első esztendeje a helyi sajtó tükrében*. Délvidéki Szemle, Szeged, 2014. Vol. I. No. 1. pp. 31–32.
- <sup>49</sup> Baráth, Katalin: *Revolver és vasvilla. Kisvárosi médiaritusok. (Magyar Kanizsa 1909–1914)*. www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2006\_03\_osz/03\_kisvarosi\_mediaritusok. (Last downloaded: 2016. 03. 24.)
- <sup>50</sup> Kanizsai Újság, Magyar Kanizsa, 1909. Vol. II. No. 1. p.1.
- <sup>51</sup> Kanizsai Újság, Magyar Kanizsa, 1910. Vol. III. No. 1. p.3.
- <sup>52</sup> Kanizsai Ellenőr, Magyar Kanizsa, 1911. Vol. I. No. 1. p.1.
- <sup>53</sup> Kanizsai Ellenőr, Magyar Kanizsa, 1917. Vol. VII. No. 1. p.1.
- <sup>54</sup> Valkay, Zoltán: *Gyógy- és szikósfürdők Kanizsán és környékén*. Új Kanizsai Újság, 2009. Vol. XVI. No. 41. (Henceforth: Valkay, 2009.) p. 13.
- <sup>55</sup> ZHA F.004.23. Magyar Kanizsa City with Organized Council. Council meeting records. No. 29.

- <sup>56</sup> ZHA F.004.23. Magyarkanizsa City with Organized Council. Council meeting records. No. 330.
- <sup>57</sup> National Széchenyi Library Microfilm and Photograph ArchiveB1 FM3/4374. Kanizsai Újság, Magyarkanizsa, 1910. Vol. III. No. 28.
- <sup>58</sup> Fejős, Sándor: *A Csodakút*. Szeged, 2008. (Henceforth: Fejős, 2008.) p. 23.
- <sup>59</sup> ZHA F.004.23. Magyarkanizsa City with Organized Council. Council meeting records. No. 428., No. 429.
- <sup>60</sup> ZHA F.435.1. Kanizsai napi- és hetilapok gyűjteménye 1911–1944. Kanizsai Újság, Magyarkanizsa, 1913. Vol. VI.
- <sup>61</sup> Valkay, 2009. p. 13.
- <sup>62</sup> *Tájékoztató a Magyarkanizsai Csodakút Ártézifürdőről*. Magyarkanizsa, 1915.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> Fejős, 2008. p. 33.
- <sup>65</sup> Fejős, 2008. p. 34.
- <sup>66</sup> Borovszky, Samu (ed.): *Magyarkanizsa*. In: Magyarország vármegyéi és városai. Bács-Bodrog vármegye I. Budapest, 1909. p. 319.
- <sup>67</sup> Kanizsai Képeslapok, 2013. p. 23.
- <sup>68</sup> ZHA F.101.2. Magyarkanizsa Város (1941–1944). 6/kgy.ad 4.049/kgig. No. 1944.
- <sup>69</sup> Fejős, 2008. p. 47.
- <sup>70</sup> Fejős, 2008. p. 57.

# HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

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## ABSTRACT

*In my study I aim to show the circumstances of the inception of “ideological” or, to put it another way, “parallel” departments of Ferenc József (Francis Joseph, in English) University, the predecessor of the University of Szeged, in the 1920s and 1930s through an accurate and complete exploration of archival sources. Also, by using a historical–sociological perspective, the religious affiliation and composition of students is examined as a supposed basis for the transformation of the university system in the early 1920s.*

*The denominational composition of students enrolled in the University in the 1920s suggests that among the university students who moved from Kolozsvár to Szeged the Protestants were in a larger number than their proportion in contemporary Hungarian society.*

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study, beyond briefly introducing the higher educational policy of the Horthy era in Hungary, is to open a window on a less well-known episode in the history of higher education policies, which serves very well to symbolize the educational policy conditions of the time, namely the history of the parallel departments established at the Ferenc József (Francis Joseph) University of Szeged. My goal, besides an accurate and comprehensive exploration of archival sources,



has been to establish a historical–sociological perspective which, through the actual denominational division of the students of the period, sheds light on the rationale of the efforts to transform the university according to the denominational composition of the student body. In order to do this, after reviewing earlier literature I consider it necessary to show the contemporary departmental structure of the Faculty of Arts, Languages, and History<sup>2</sup> which was affected by the establishment of new “*ideological departments*”, and place the new departments within that context. The subject of my study also includes the presentation of the denominational composition of the students studying at universities in the 1920s, and especially the changes that may have taken place in that decade. Finally, relying on primary sources, I would like to reconstruct a coherent view of events which led to the establishment of parallel departments.

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The iconic figure of the cultural policy of the Horthy-era is unquestionably Kunó Klebelsberg, Minister of Religion and Public Education. During the ten years while István Bethlen was prime minister, from 1921 to 1931, he formed four governments. Klebelsberg was one to remain longest among his colleagues, and in December of 1921 entered the cabinet as Minister of the Interior, then from 1922 to 1931 was head of the ministry responsible for cultural affairs.<sup>3</sup>

He was given the post to lead cultural and educational policy during a time that was difficult historically and financially, and soon he came to bear great responsibility. First, he had to modernize the internal structure of the school system in the country, since at the time of the Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy several new types of schools were created, ones which were supposed to be in harmony with the organization of a new educational system. Besides this, there could be no avoiding the need to modernize the curriculum in each type of school.<sup>4</sup>

His educational reform – as his whole cultural policy – was based on the idea of neo-nationalism or, to use another term, cultural nationalism. According to the theory of “*cultural supremacy*” it was necessary to raise a new kind of national feeling in as many people as possible in an ever widening spectrum of society, based on a new realization: we, Hungarians may not have any special, significant material or economic resources but we possess a vast cultural repertoire of values, and in this respect, we stand above the neighbouring countries created in the wake of the Treaty of Trianon after World War I.<sup>5</sup> Culture was the single area in Hungary, which even in a most critical historical period was able to give the country some kind of a leverage, a chance to put an end to the situation at the periphery so that the country could catch up with mainstream development.<sup>6</sup> As C. H. Becker, the Prussian minister of public education writes about Klebelsberg: “*All of Europe was impressed by this intention*

*to advance culture, this unshakeable belief, that Hungary might again be great if the world were to regard it not as a small military power but a defining and essential cultural factor.*"<sup>7</sup> It is important for this to appear in the educational system based on a realistic national self-consciousness as well as an emphasis on sensible national self-esteem. This requires a modern system of educational institutions of a European standard.

### **KLEBELSBERG'S EDUCATIONAL REFORM**

Between 1926 and 1930 Klebelsberg undertook a large-scale construction project for community public schools and teachers' housing: mostly from state funds, nearly five thousand community primary schools and homes for teachers were built in the rural areas of the Great Plains. In 1928 a bill was worked out proposing four-year rural elementary schools to be transformed into eight-year community primary schools. Due to the economic crisis the plan began to be implemented only in the early 1940s. In the 1920s primary schools received a new curriculum while the theoretical and practical programs of industrial as well as commercial apprentice schools were modernized, too. The reform of eight-year secondary schools was introduced in 1924 and 1926. From then on secondary school students could learn at one of six types of institutions, all providing general education though with different curricula.<sup>8</sup>

As minister in 1923, he created the five-year modern college of education for lower primary teachers, and in 1926 kindergarten teacher training was converted into a four-year institution. In 1928 in Szeged, he founded the Apponyi Kollégium, a college for the training of teachers of pedagogy, an entirely new institution in the history of Hungarian education. In 1928 the foundations of upper primary school teacher training were also upgraded along with the opening of the state-run Upper Primary School Teacher Training College in Szeged.<sup>9</sup>

He had a significant role in transplanting the Mining and Forestry Academy from Selmechánya to Sopron, and in establishing the College of Physical Education in Budapest. He created the National Scholarship Council, the Hungarian Historical Institution opened its doors in Rome, and the Collegium Hungaricum did so in Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. In 1930 a law was signed creating the National Natural Sciences Foundation as well as the National Natural Sciences Council, about the large-scale development of natural sciences departments at the universities of Budapest and Szeged, grand construction projects in Szeged, Debrecen, Pécs and Sopron. This is when the National Archives of Hungary's modern complex was built in the Castle District. Klebelsberg founded the Tihany Biological Institute and the Svábhegy Observatory in Buda.<sup>10</sup>

He had an unshakeable faith in the civilizing effect of universities and the intelligentsia.<sup>11</sup> He believed in the fruitful relationship between the middle class and the "people", that a national influence from above and a popular one from below would unite.<sup>12</sup>

## HISTORY OF THE FERENC JÓZSEF UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED

The development of the Ferenc József University in Kolozsvár (today named Cluj in Transylvania, Romania) was uninterrupted until the outbreak of World War I. A defining turn in its history occurred when the Romanian army entered Kolozsvár on December 24, 1918.<sup>13</sup> On May 12, 1919, the Romanian military occupied the university as well, then appointed the professor of the Romanian department as head of the rector's office.<sup>14</sup> After the Romanian occupation of the city, university instructors refused to take an oath necessary to attain Romanian citizenship, so they were expelled from the city. The teachers thus forced to flee first continued work in Budapest (typically in the Paedagogium). The exiled Hungarian university opened its first academic year on October 9, 1921, which marked the beginning of university education in Szeged. Legally, this took place within the framework of the University of Kolozsvár since it did not involve founding a new university. There was no change in the organization of the university, it continued operation with four faculties: liberal arts, law, natural sciences and medicine.<sup>15</sup>

Thus there were four universities in operation in Hungary between the two World Wars: in Budapest, Debrecen, Pécs, and Szeged.

## COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY AT THE FACULTY OF ARTS IN LIGHT OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

One of the striking structural consequences of the breakup of historic Hungary was ethnic unification, which led to the homogenization of religious affiliations. According to data from the censuses of 1920 and 1930 (*Table 1.*), the religion of nearly two-thirds of society was Roman Catholic. Besides this, the role of the Reformed denomination can be considered to be substantial, since one in every five Hungarians belonged to this faith. Finally, there was a nearly identical representation of the Evangelical/Lutheran (~6%) and the Jewish (~5.5%) faiths.

*Table 1. Confessional distribution of the population of Hungary 1920–1930.*

	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Eastern Orthodox	Augsburg Evangelical	Reformed	Unitarian	Jewish	Other	Total
1920	63.9%	2.2%	0.6%	6.2%	21%	0.1%	5.9%	0.1%	100%
1930	64.8%	2.3%	0.5%	6.1%	20.9%	0.1%	5.1%	0.2%	100%

Source: Gyáni, Gábor – Kövér, György: *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a reformkortól a második világháborúig.* Budapest, 2001. pp. 212–219.

The denominational affiliations of students at the university in Szeged (similar to other contemporary educational institutions) at this time was considered a matter of public record, at the time of enrolment the student's religious affiliation was recorded in the register. Among Roman Catholics, the proportion of university students (49.43%) was nearly 15% less than that in the population as a whole. (Table 2.) No doubt, the reason for this was that in Northern Transylvania the proportion of Roman Catholics was only 20%, and many of the students of Kolozsvár followed their alma mater and continued their studies in Szeged. This explanation is supported by the fact that in the academic year of 1926/27, the number of Roman Catholics was already approaching two thirds, almost 60%. Nevertheless, this proportion still did not reach the one measured in the population as a whole, although at the university in Szeged there was a conspicuously large number of students who were nuns. The reason for this was that upper primary school teacher training by female religious orders had been terminated by Kunó Klebelsberg, the minister in charge, and the higher education of nuns was to take place at the University of Szeged instead.<sup>16</sup>

The Transylvanian connection may also have been the reason for the high representation of Unitarians, since compared with their 0.1% share of the total population, in the academic year of 1922 they represented 2.19% of students at the university.

The third denominational group, which was greatly over-represented in higher education in comparison with the general population, was that of the Jewish faith. The changes in their number and percentage in time clearly show the effects of the discriminatory law called *Numerus Clausus*. While in 1922, 20.28% of enrolling students were Jewish, in 1926 this dropped to 12.1%.

Table 2. Confessional distribution of students at Ferenc József University.

Academic Year	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Greek Orthodox	Augsburg Evangelical	Protestant	Reformed	Jewish	Total
1922/ 23. I.	563 stu. 49.43%	12 stu. 1.06%	7 stu. 0.62%	60 stu. 5.27%	241 stu. 21.15%	25 stu. 2.19%	231 stu. 20.2%	1139 stu. 100%
1923/ 24. I.	642 stu. 54.18%	18 stu. 1.52%	7 stu. 0.6%	68 stu. 5.73%	241 stu. 20.34%	23 stu. 1.94%	186 stu. 15.6%	1185 stu. 100%
1924/ 25. I.	578 stu. 53.03%	12 stu. 1.1%	9 stu. 0.83%	61 stu. 5.6%	257 stu. 23.58%	21 stu. 1.93%	152 stu. 13.93%	1090 stu. 100%
1925/ 26. I.	605 stu. 55.97%	11 stu. 1.02%	7 stu. 0.65%	50 stu. 4.63%	247 stu. 22.85%	19 stu. 1.75%	142 stu. 13.13%	1081 stu. 100%
1926/ 27. I.	697 stu. 58.57%	14 stu. 1.18%	7 stu. 0.59%	67 stu. 5.64%	250 stu. 21%	11 stu. 0.92%	144 stu. 12.1%	1190 stu. 100%

Source: *Beszámoló a Szegedi M. Kir. Ferenc József Tudományegyetem 1922/23–1926/27. évi működéséről. Szeged, 1929. pp. 396–397.*

Looking at the confessional distribution of students at the Faculty of Arts in Szeged (*Table 3.*) it becomes clear that in the first half of the 1920s their religious affiliations were similar to those of the student body as a whole, except for the fact that Unitarians did not show at this faculty. In the second half of the decade, however, following the process outlined earlier, the proportion of Roman Catholics rose by almost 10% (from 54.84% to 63.33%), and thus it nearly matches their percentage in the population as a whole (64.8%). Between 1922 and 1926, the representation of the Reformed faith fell by nearly the same proportion as that of the Roman Catholics rose, that is, by nearly 10 percentage points (from 25.8% to 16.67%).

Thus, not only at the university as a whole, but also within the Faculty of Arts we can see signs that the composition of the student body with regard to religious affiliation changed quite quickly and significantly in the years following the relocation of the university. This was a process which clearly favoured Roman Catholic representation.

*Table 3. Confessional distribution of students at the Faculty of Arts.*

Academic Year	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Augsburg Evangelical	Reformed	Jewish	Total
1922/23. I.	17 stu. 54.84%	–	1 stu. 3.23%	8 stu. 25.8%	5 stu. 16.13%	31 stu. 100%
1923/24. I.	22 stu. 55%	–	2 stu. 5%	10 stu. 25%	6 stu. 15%	40 stu. 100%
1924/25. I.	30 stu. 60%	1 stu. 2%	2 stu. 4%	11 stu. 22%	6 stu. 12%	50 stu. 100%
1925/26. I.	37 stu. 64.91%	1 stu. 1.75%	2 stu. 3.51%	11 stu. 19.3%	6 stu. 10.53%	57 stu. 100%
1926/27. I.	57 stu. 63.33%	–	8 stu. 8.89%	15 stu. 16.67%	10 stu. 11.11%	90 stu. 100%

Source: *Beszámoló a Szegedi M. Kir. Ferenc József Tudományegyetem 1922/23–1926/27. évi működéséről. Szeged, 1929. pp. 396–397.*

### The creation of parallel departments

In 1921, when the university was relocated to Szeged, positions remained vacant in 20% of the 15 liberal arts departments of the Faculty of Arts. The reason for this could be that a certain number of the professors did not relocate with the university from Kolozsvár to Szeged. Although the departments were set up in the first academic

year, they still needed to be staffed with appropriate experts who first had to be found and invited to the university. The remaining 12 departments were also staffed by a total of only 10 professors.

As we saw in the previous section, from year to year an ever greater percentage of students belonged to the Catholic denomination, and there were a large number of nuns as well. During this period both Lajos Dézsi, director of the Institute of Hungarian Literary History, György Bartók, director of the Philosophical Institute, and Sándor Imre, director of the Pedagogical Institute, were Protestants.<sup>17</sup>

On October 20, 1926, at the second annual meeting of the Faculty of Arts, Dean György Bartók announced that the minister of religion and public education wished to establish new departments at the university. The faculty considered Sándor Imre's proposal for a pedagogical–psychological department, Árpád Buday's proposal to organise an art history department and a department of ethnography to be the most urgent and the most important.<sup>18</sup>

These proposals helped Klebelsberg to push through his earlier plans, and so that this would not hurt knowledgeable and hardworking professors, the minister wanted to solve the issue by creating parallel departments.

On June 29, 1928, at a special session of the Faculty of Arts, the question of parallel departments was discussed. The chair, Dean Antal Horger asked for the faculty's opinion as to requesting the minister to establish a second philosophical or a second pedagogical department. Sándor Imre and György Bartók did not recommend establishing parallel departments, they asked for the establishment of a pedagogical–psychological department instead, which proposal was eventually accepted by the faculty.<sup>19</sup>

Based on decree No. 51.587-1928. IV. of the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Religion and Public Education it seemed that the debate was closed, and the minister made the decision that "*Ferenc József University of Szeged shall have four new departments organised, namely for ethnography, for a second philosophy, a second Hungarian literary history and for a second pedagogy department*".<sup>20</sup>

Despite the issuance of the decree there was continued resistance by the faculty to creating new departments. In December 1928, Gedeon Mészöly, dean of the Faculty of Arts informed the minister that the members of the committee tasked with filling the second philosophical department had resigned their posts on the committee for "*a wide set of reasons*".<sup>21</sup> Among these reasons was an editorial in the December 16, 1928 issue of the *Nemzeti Újság* newspaper, which quoted Klebelsberg making the following statement: "*At the university in Szeged, I am ready to establish parallel departments besides those filled by non-Catholic men, and to name Catholic teachers to those positions so that the lady mother superiors*

*of the province should have no concerns. Let the female religious orders educate teachers here for their primary and secondary schools as well as for their (lower primary) teacher training colleges.”*<sup>22</sup>

Through informal channels Klebelsberg learned that a petition was being prepared against the changes in Szeged and he addressed a resentful letter to the rector of the university, who in 1928–1929 happened to be Lajos Dézsi. In his letter, the minister remarked that the Savings Committee had recommended the complete closing down of the whole university in Szeged, an intention which was supported by the low number of enrolled students. As one member of the committee sardonically noted, *“the Faculty of Arts departments have more teachers than students”*.<sup>23</sup> Klebelsberg also stated in his letter, that without his intervention the Faculty of Arts in Szeged would have hardly survived his ministerial term. What had he done to preserve the University? He had initiated the construction of university buildings; *“one of the reasons I moved the Paedagogium and the college of the Erzsébet Women’s School to Szeged was to help fill the Faculty of Arts.”*<sup>24</sup> and this is how the upper primary school teacher training of the nuns got to Szeged. *“My motivations were again pedagogical, namely raising the standard of education by female religious orders since for a significant proportion of Hungarian girls this is the only source of education. But besides this, I also had in mind to further popularize the liberal arts departments in Szeged because these departments can only flourish if they have a truly large number of students.”*<sup>25</sup> He also mentioned the fact that although the article that had appeared in *Nemzeti Újság* presented the plan to create the ideological departments as his own, in fact, it was the position of the bishops. He rejected the charge of denominational bias in the most forceful possible terms, referring to recent changes in the staff: *“I have just named (...) József Baló, Gyula Darányi, Endre Jeney, and Albert Szent-Györgyi (...), all of whom are Protestant men. This is not a consideration when it comes to making my choice, but it may also not be a consideration when discussing the interests of the university in Szeged, or the interests of other denominations, which are equally justified.”*<sup>26</sup>

The claims about the size of the student body are not exaggerated. In the first academic year after the institution was relocated, in contrast with the total size of the student body in all of the different faculties (1007 students), there were surprisingly few students enrolled at the Faculty of Arts. There were only 29 regular and 10 irregular students registered in the yearbooks. Over the following years this number slowly rose, and so, for instance, in 1924/25 there were 48 regular and 2 irregular students, and in 1930/31 there were 215 regular and 3 irregular students enrolled at the faculty. As a consequence of the number of enrolled students, in the 1920s institutes (departments) at the Faculty of Arts were made up of the heads of the institutes. They taught all the courses by themselves.<sup>27</sup>

In January 1929, as suggested by Bishop László Ravasz the presidium of the ecumenical convent of the Reformed Church, and in accordance with Bishop Ravasz and chief caretaker Jenő Balogh, the ecumenical convent also submitted a proposal to the prime minister on the issue, but a proposal was also submitted to the government by the leadership of the Evangelical Church in this matter.<sup>28</sup>

Klebensberg did not retract the decree made earlier to establish parallel departments, and so in the end the administrative process to fill the departments of the Faculty of Arts did take place. On June 13, 1929, the applications that had been received were presented at the faculty meeting. A total of nine applications had been received for the three newly organized departments. For the Second Philosophy Department Dr. János Mester, Dr. Cecil Bognár, Dr. József Somogyi and Dr. István Boda submitted applications. For the Second Pedagogy Department Dr. Hildebrand Várkonyi, Dr. János Mester, Dr. Lajos Berenkay applied; for the Second Hungarian Literary History Department Sándor Sík and Dr. Gyula Földessy submitted applications.<sup>29</sup>

By the beginning of the academic year 1929/30, the applications had been judged. The faculty chose Dr. József Somogyi as head of the Second Philosophy Department in the first place, Dr. Cecil Bognár in the second and Dr. János Mester in the third. For the Second Pedagogy Department Dr. Hildebrand Várkonyi was selected as the first and Dr. János Mester as the second candidate. Sándor Imre continued to feel it important to emphasize his disapproval of the establishment of new departments, and so he moved to have all the documents related to the creation of the new departments to be made public. He asked the faculty to end the secrecy of these documents. Following the decision of the faculty, he put his request before the University Senate.<sup>30</sup> According to the University Senate's decision, however, the records of the faculty would not be made public.<sup>31</sup>

In December of 1929, the first "*ideological*" department was filled. Kunó Klebensberg appointed the Benedictine monk Dr. Hildebrand Várkonyi to head the Department of Pedagogy–Psychology.<sup>32</sup> Catholic professors also became the heads of the other two parallel departments. Sándor Sík became the head of the Second Literary History Department, and János Mester became the head of the Second Philosophy Department.<sup>33</sup> (*Table 4.*)

The parallel departments did not last long. After the death of Lajos Dézsi in 1932, the Piarist professor Sándor Sík united and led the two Hungarian literary history departments. After Sándor Imre left for Budapest, the new Pedagogy–Psychology Department merged with the earlier Department of Pedagogy in 1934; later when Hildebrand Várkonyi moved to Kolozsvár (Cluj) in 1940, the Second Philosophy Department ceased existence and János Mester took over of the Department of Pedagogy–Psychology.



Table 4. Changes in the institutional structure of the Faculty of Arts

Academic year 1921/22	Head	Academic year 1930/31	Head
Department of Philosophy	György Bartók	Department of Philosophy I.	György Bartók
		Department of Philosophy II.	János Mester
Department of French Philology	Lajos Karl	Department of French Philology	Béla Zolnai
Department of Greek Philology	Gyula Hornyánszky	Department of Classical Philology	Aurél Förster
Department of Indo-Germanic Linguistics	Unfilled	Department of Indo-Germanic Linguistics	Henrik Schmidt
Department of Latin Philology	János Csengery	Department of Classical Philology	Aurél Förster
Department of Mediaeval and Modern History	Sándor Márki	Department of Mediaeval and Modern History	József Fögel
Department of Hungarian Literary History	Lajos Dézsi	Department of Hungarian Literary History I.	Lajos Dézsi
		Department of Hungarian Literary History II.	Sándor Sík
Department of Hungarian Cultural History	László Erdélyi	Department of Hungarian Cultural History	László Erdélyi
Department of Hungarian Linguistics	Antal Horger	Department of Hungarian Linguistics	Antal Horger
Department of Hungarian History	László Erdélyi	Department of Hungarian History	Elemér Mályusz
Department of German Linguistics	Henrik Schmidt	Department of German Philology	Henrik Schmidt
Department of Ancient Cultural History	János Csengery	Department of Cultural History	Árpád Buday
Department of Ancient History	Unfilled	Department of Ancient History	Aurél Förster
Department of Pedagogy	István Schneller	Department of Pedagogy	Sándor Imre
		Department of Pedagogy–Psychology	Hildebrand Várkonyi
Department of Ural-Altai Philology	Unfilled	Department of Ural-Altai Linguistics	Gedeon Mészöly
		Department of Ethnography	Sándor Solymossy

Source: Szentirmai, László – Ráczné Mójzes, Katalin (ed.): *A Szegei Tudományegyetem múltja és jelene, 1921–1998*. Szeged, 1999.

**SUMMARY**

In my study, I aimed to show an interesting episode in the history of the Royal Hungarian Ferenc József University, by briefly presenting the educational policy of the time along with the history of the establishment of some “ideological” departments. In addition to the circumstances under which the university was relocated to Szeged, my study showed the political and social environment in which these events occurred.

Results show that although most of the city of Szeged which was the new home of the university was of the Catholic faith, the confessional distribution of members of the university at the beginning of the 1920s did not match that of the whole country following the Treaty of Trianon. Within a few years this situation changed radically, and the representation of Catholics in the student body came close to matching their representation in the population as a whole. Besides a desire to maintain the status quo in the composition of the staff since the university had been removed from Kolozsvár, a religious shift may have been another reason for the development of a conflict between the university and the minister, as far as the establishment of parallel departments is concerned. Klebelsberg’s educational policy strove above all to strengthen the position of higher education, and in particular the role of higher education in Szeged, and for that he needed university students. Since a part of these students came to the university from religious schools or in lack of religious higher education, the minister made concessions to the Catholic lobby.

However, the story does not end there. In 1940, the university moved back to Kolozsvár, and pursuant to the reorganization of the university that was “left in Szeged” the Philosophy Department remained again without a Catholic professor. A Protestant, Dr. József Halasi Nagy from the University of Pécs was appointed professor to follow the papal prelate János Mester.<sup>34</sup> However, this episode expands the scope of this study and it may be a subject of further research.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Natasa Fizel is a PhD-candidate at the Faculty of Arts, University of Szeged.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth: Faculty of Arts.

<sup>3</sup> Romsics, Ignác: *Bethlen és Klebelsberg*. (Henceforth: Romsics, 1995.) In: Zombori, István (ed.): *Gróf Klebelsberg Kunó emlékezete*. Szeged, 1995. (Henceforth: Zombori, 1995.) p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Mészáros, István: *Klebelsberg Kunó, az iskolareformer*. (Henceforth: Mészáros, 1995) In: Zombori, 1995. p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 48–50.

<sup>6</sup> T. Kiss, Tamás: *Állami művelődéspolitikai az 1920-as években*. Budapest, 1998. pp. 13–14.

<sup>7</sup> Translation by Natasa Fizel. Original: “*Imponierend war für ganz Europa dieser Wille zur Kultur, dieser unerschütterliche Glaube, dass Ungarn nur wieder gross werden könne, wenn die Welt in ihm nicht eine kleine Militärmacht, sondern einen grossen und unentbehrlichen Kulturfaktor zu würdigen lernen würde.*” (*Gróf Klebelsberg Kunó emlékezete (1932–1938.)*). Budapest, 1938. p. 78.)

<sup>8</sup> Mészáros, 1995. pp. 52–56.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.



*Image 1. Franz Joseph University of Szeged*



*Image 2. Dóm Square, Szeged*



*Image 3. István Tisza University of Debrecen*

- <sup>10</sup> Ibid. pp. 56–59.
- <sup>11</sup> Romsics, 1995. p. 42.
- <sup>12</sup> Romsics, 1995. p. 43.
- <sup>13</sup> Benda, Kálmán (ed): *Magyarország történeti kronológiája*. III. kötet. Budapest, 1982. p. 846.
- <sup>14</sup> Makk, Ferenc – Marjanucz, László (ed.): *A Szegedi Tudományegyetem és elődei története (1581–2011.)*. Szeged, 2011. p. 10.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 12.
- <sup>16</sup> Pukánszky, Béla: *Pedagógia és Pszichológia*. (Henceforth: Pukánszky, 1999) In: Szentirmai, László – Ráczné Mójzes, Katalin (ed.): *A Szegedi Tudományegyetem múltja és jelene, 1921–1998*. Szeged, 1999. (Henceforth: Szentirmai – Ráczné, 1999.) p. 219.
- <sup>17</sup> Péter, László: *A magyar Göttinga. Klebelsberg és a szegedi egyetem*. In: Zombori, 1995. pp. 124–128.
- <sup>18</sup> Jegyzőkönyv. Bölcsészettudományi Kar II. rendkívüli ülés, October 20, 1926. CSML 167. bk. 8 7.
- <sup>19</sup> Jegyzőkönyv. Bölcsészettudományi Kar V. rendkívüli ülés, June 29, 1928. CSML 651 bk 1927/28.
- <sup>20</sup> M.Kir. Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi Minisztérium 51. 587–1928. IV. sz. rendelet
- <sup>21</sup> Mészöly Gedeon dékán levele Klebelsberg Kunó miniszterhez. Szeged, December 21, 1928. MOL K636-1929-30-410-05
- <sup>22</sup> Nemzeti Újság, December 16, 1928. p. 1.
- <sup>23</sup> Klebelsberg Kunó miniszter levele Dézsi Lajos rektornak. Budapest, January 4, 1929. MOL K636-1929-30-410-05
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Szentirmai – Ráczné, 1999. p. 127.
- <sup>28</sup> Ladányi, Andor: *A polgári iskolai tanárképzés reformja Klebelsberg minisztersége idején*. In: Kiss, Róbert Károly – Vajda, Tamás (ed.): *Az Állami Polgári Iskolai Tanárképző Főiskola Története (1928–1947)*. Szeged, 2010. pp. 75–76.
- <sup>29</sup> Jegyzőkönyv. Bölcsészkar X. rendes ülés, June 13, 1929. CSML 689. bk 1928/29.
- <sup>30</sup> Jegyzőkönyv. Bölcsészkar II. rendes ülés, October 29, 1929. CSML 174 bk. 1929/90.
- <sup>31</sup> Egyetemi Tanácsi Jegyzőkönyv. December 11, 1929. CSML 1111-1929/30.
- <sup>32</sup> Várkonyi Hildebrand kinevezése. Budapest, December 27, 1929. dr. Petri István államtitkár s.k. MOL 410-11-2078/1929.
- <sup>33</sup> Pukánszky, 1999. p. 219.
- <sup>34</sup> Szerédi Jusztinián bíboros, hercegprímás, esztergomi érsek levele Hóman Bálint Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi miniszternek. Esztergom, October 29, 1940. MOL K636-1937-41-5-3

# THE SOCIAL EMBEDDEDNESS OF THE TOPOLYAI SODA-WATER FACTORY IN KISKUNMAJSA<sup>1</sup>

ZOLTÁN OTTÓ FÜLÖP

*“The society in which we live limits  
the scope of roles a person might play.”*  
(Elemér Hankiss)<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*In the present work I intend to introduce the process of how the Topolyai soda-water factory (Image 1) became an official establishment with a special emphasis on its operational structure, its role and status in the local community. The fate of the Topolyai family (Image 2) provides an opportunity to research different behavioral patterns, social formations and mental representations at the same time, spanning multiple generations within a historical-social context the importance of which has already been pointed out by André Burguière. The life stories introduced in the present (as a means of uncovering the past) serve a double purpose: on the one hand they make descendants aware of their roots, on the other hand they help the process of making the past our own. The preservation of these experiences make it possible for them to be passed on and be protected from fading away, thus demonstrating their true value. While I think that the communal and social interactions of the culture in question should be introduced through their own norms, categories, cognitive structures, sets of tools and concepts, I deem it best to investigate the local world view of the individual through the persona*

*and life values of Ilona Topolyai. (Image 5) During the analysis I tried to utilise both micro and macro level approaches uniting the local reality with the global horizon. Using this method of research I focused on the institutional framework first (local and national artisan organisations) then I shifted my focus toward individual actions and behavioral forms, these being the main factors that determine the characteristics of the soda-water community. Also these are the most useful factors in analysing the unique characteristics of the community in an ever changing historical-social setting.*



*Image 1. The old soda-water factory, Kiskunmajsa, 2013.*



*Image 2. The Topolyai family at the end of the 1910s*

**THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SODA-WATER FACTORY**

I wish to start out by presenting the organisational structure of soda-water manufacturers in general, providing a broader context for the Topolyai soda-water factory. The first soda-water co-operative in Hungary was established in 1892 by manufacturers based in and around Budapest. They had their own letter of advice from 1895 that was published as a supplement of the *Magyar Vegyiparosok és Kereskedők Közlönye* (Bulletin of Hungarian chemical industrialists and merchants). An official newspaper (*Szikkvízgyárosok Lapja*) was launched on August 1, 1900. The yearly subscription fee for the paper was 12 Kronas which included a Krone 2,000 insurance for death, accidents or disability. The organisation also founded a public limited company. The Hungarian Territorial Soda-Water Association (Magyar Vidéki Szikkvíz Szövetség) founded in 1935 required training in order to give out operating licences. After the Second World War, soda-water manufacturers joined the KIOSZ (Kisiparosok Országos Szövetsége – the National Artisan Association) that helped to strengthen the social cohesion of artisans and had an overall integrative effect. Among the KIOSZ's members we already find Ilona Topolyai (*Images 3–4*). In 1990, KIOSZ was replaced by the National Soda-Water Manufacturer Artisan Body (Országos Szikkvízkészítő Ipartestület), which later joined the Mineral Water Product Board (Ásványvíz Terméktanács). The significance and relevance of the organisation is demonstrated by the International Convention of Soda-Water Manufacturers that was organised in both 2002 and 2005.<sup>6</sup>



*Image 3. An artisan meeting, Kiskunmajsa*



Image 4. A postcard showing images of the soda-water training, Bp., 1948.

The official body of soda-water making artisans (as an independent organisational manifestation of society) can be viewed – from a socioanthropological standpoint – as a kind of group form that “connects and typifies (...) the habituated actions of two or more individuals”.<sup>7</sup> The community is governed by inner rules and a kind of hierarchy that operates within the social web and the system of relationships. The artisan factory bears all the significant characteristics of a group organisation such as a unique goal and interest, a hierarchic structure, a strong feeling of community as well as symbolic language and behavior units.<sup>8</sup> The intersubjective interactions of soda-water makers (production, distribution, shipping, sales) strengthen these essential social patterns over and over again. On these occasions soda-water artisans take up certain microenvironmental positions (unique verbal forms of representation, the usage of specific tools related to soda-water culture, etc) that function as signs of belonging to the same community and as a tool for differentiating themselves from other groups.<sup>9</sup> Group cohesion and a strong web of social relationships (in other words the connections between different communities) are apparent features of the soda-water factory in Kiskunmajsa. Through Ilona Topolyai the family could integrate into the local artisan organisation and also into a bigger, national community in the form of the national artisan organisation. The shipping of soda-water also connected the family to a wide social web. The distribution of their product helped the company in building powerful connections and a wide social web that enabled the family’s social integration and the stabilisation and improving dynamism of the soda-water culture.<sup>10</sup>



Being a member of a given community offers a number of alternative identity and activity choices that I wish to examine from the point of view of social status and in the context of the individual's representation. According to Goffman's theory<sup>11</sup> it is important how an individual judges a given situation and his/her role in it, how he/she creates his/her place within society and how his/her social status influences his/her everyday attitude and interactions. Ilona Topolyai had a number of options concerning models for specific social roles from this point of view which are worth taking a closer look at. As the owner of a soda-water factory she represented and communicated her artisan world view to the outside world while also trying to strengthen the identity of her family. She also determined and defined the possibilities and boundaries of group activities. From this point of view Ilona Topolyai's status can be seen as an authoritative, dynamic role<sup>12</sup> that gave her certain rights but also responsibilities.<sup>13</sup> Her daily tasks and social status were connected to the running of the soda-water factory: she was responsible for taking on and laying off employees, she handled all money issues, paid the employees health and retirement insurance, and monitored daily income. She was also the one who dealt with carbon tanks (for making soda-water). She ordered new bottles and parts, consulted with auditors and made the company's tax declaration. Although members of the family did not receive any pay, all major expenses were covered by Ilona. She paid for standard two-week recreational vacations every year that were usually booked near thermal baths in Hévíz, Keszthely or Budapest. She also covered the renovation expenses for the house, and the living costs of the horse. She also purchased a car for the family. She even lended money for employees to buy houses.

Ilona Topolyai's behavior and her unique, individual attitude all show signs of an artisan's life. Her exceptional *self-representation*<sup>14</sup> only strengthens Goffman's theory, that the innermost frame is the reference to unique phenomena. The social status of a person does not, however, determine the whole field of activity, which means that the leader of the soda-water factory also existed in a number of sociocultural environments simultaneously. Ilona Topolyai's main interpersonal (family, relatives) and other relationships that were based on a collective identity (owner, leader, co-op membership) complimented each other well and also feeded on each other creating a solid foundation for social integration.

### THE SODA-WATER FACTORY AS A COMMUNITY

As the employers and employees of the soda-water factory in Kiskunmajsa existed as a unit in the organisation of both work related affairs and everyday life, it is worth taking a look at them as a community. Social anthropology often views the concept of community as a sort of web or texture. This concept later became replaced by the term *network*. According to Eric Wolf we should look at communities as self-shaping and integrating systems that operate according to their own sets of rules.

This school of thought understands a community to be a web of group relations.<sup>15</sup> In this case, using a biographical narrative as a general starting point for uncovering these relations seems useful mainly because it provides an opportunity to study the behavioral sets ordinary people apply in their everyday lives. When analysing the Topolyai family as a community in connection with the soda-water factory in Kiskunmajsa, it is thus reasonable to start out by looking at Ilona Topolyai herself and her network of relations. On the other hand we shall not forget that the individual only exists within his/her system of social relations.<sup>16</sup> Robert Redfield pointed out that no community can be treated as a completely independent island without any outward connection which only strengthens the hypothesis<sup>17</sup> that in order to truly make our cultural heritage our own we must accept that we are its heirs first.

If we start out by saying that the role of the individual within the social network is determined by his/her community relations the analysis of the special interactions governing the relationship between the individual and society as a whole become important. Let's take a look at what this all means in connection with our present topic. The older members of the family always aimed at preserving and passing on the family identity and behavior, the values connected to making soda-water. Passing on these values, however, became somewhat compromised as newer generations tried to adapt to new circumstances. The passed on pattern and the social framework provided by the micro-community made it possible for family members to appear in new social roles and they also created a method for family members to identify with the status and the identity of being a soda-water manufacturing artisan.<sup>18</sup> The creation and nurturing of a collective identity was a part of everyday interactions for the workers of the soda-water factory. Under the leadership of Ilona Topolyai every family member and employee had various statuses in the factory with community statuses being the focus during work. On the one hand they accepted the rules that consolidated through everyday interactions, on the other hand they expected the leader of the soda-water factory to manage and operate the factory in line with artisan values. The feeling of belonging to the community required clearly defined tasks that everyone was able to complete and rules that everyone felt obligated to keep.<sup>19</sup>

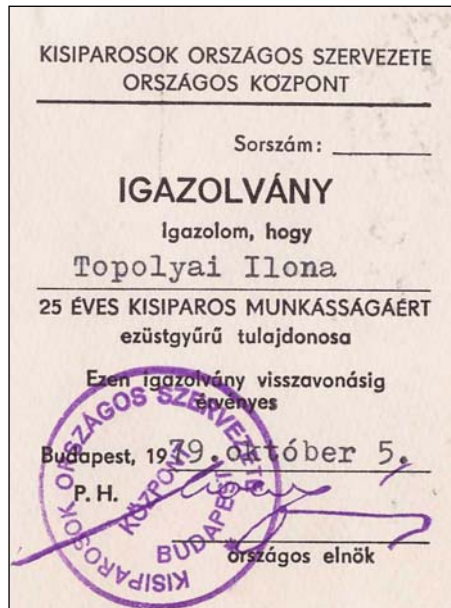
Employees employed by the family had significantly higher living standards than for example co-op soda-water employees as they usually owned a house, livestock and a small amount of land. They were paid rather modest salaries but they had their meals in the house and all of their bigger but reasonable expenses were paid by Ilona Topolyai. If a member of the Topolyai family died, every employee attended the funeral with their own families. This kind of compassion created a bond that went beyond the traditional employee–employer relationship and rather resembled some kind of matriarchal community.

**SYMBOLIC BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS IN THE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SODA-WATER FACTORY**

After the death of Ferenc Topolyai, Ilona Topolyai's father in 1951, Regina Lajos (Ilona's mother) became the owner and business manager of the soda-water factory. This transition marked the beginning of an overall change in the traditional gender hierarchy within the family. The family's male members either died, went missing, got captured or went into hiding during and after the Second World War, forcing the family's female members to take over their responsibility as breadwinners. Taking on this kind of responsibility prompted a change in their social status as well: they were suddenly required to fill in the male roles besides taking care of the family. This transition led to Ilona finally becoming the head of the family.



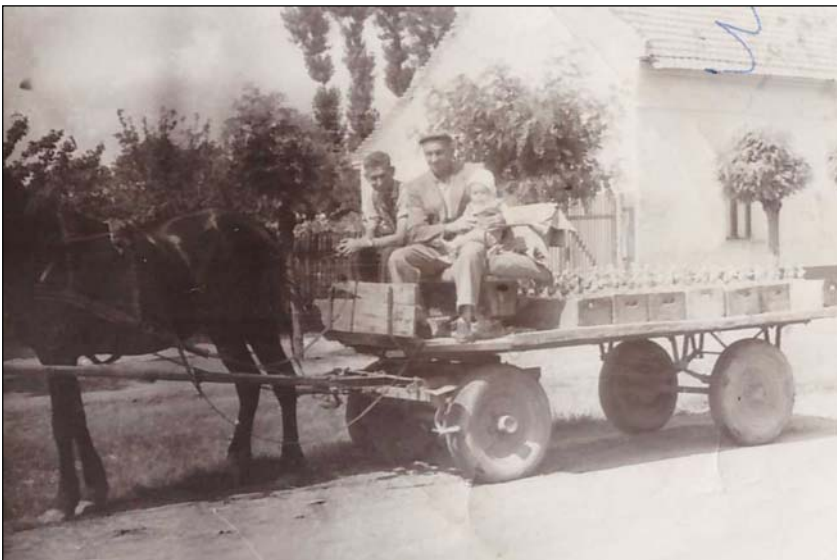
*Image 5. Ilona Topolyai  
(1916–1997)*



*Image 6. A 25 years  
an artisan certificate, 1979.*

Ilona Topolyai was a well-traveled and well-educated woman with excellent practical skills. She spent three years in Belgium in the 1930s as an educator for children where she learnt to speak fluently French. Her income greatly contributed to her finally paying back the debt accumulated during the Great Depression (1929–1933) and through the modernisation of the house and the soda-factory itself. She recognised early that running the soda-factory required further studies

so she completed the artisan training program (*Image 4.*). She dealt with many kinds of tasks connected to the small factory and she was also an important figure of the local artisans' guild. She participated actively in every meeting of the KIOSZ organisation in Kiskunmajsa. It is no coincidence that after her mother, Regina Lajos died in 1955 due to the many adversities she suffered throughout her life, Ilona inherited the soda-water factory and the farmland in Ötfa. The smaller part of the enormous house was left to Erzsébet Topolyai, Ilona's older sister who remained a femininem figure throughout her life: she helped with the housework, took care of the vegetable garden and the horse while also cooking for the family and employees alike. After the death of her mother, Ilona Topolyai's essential role in the soda-water factory became even more dominant: not only did she run and lead the factory putting her professional experience and knowledge to use but also she actively took up work in it, cleaning, repairing and filling bottles until she was 75 years old. Her situation was especially bad after the nationalisation of companies when the family was even banned from its own home and the factory was closed. She then rented a smaller building in a different part of town (*Alvég, Images 7–8.*) going in to work there every day of the year on her Puch bicycle. Due to the amount of physical work that would not have been easy to handle even for a man, her health degraded over the years but she continued to work even with a replaced hip until she could stand up. She was the first to arrive in the factory in the morning and the last to leave at the end of the day.



*Image 7. A shop in Alvég, 1960s*

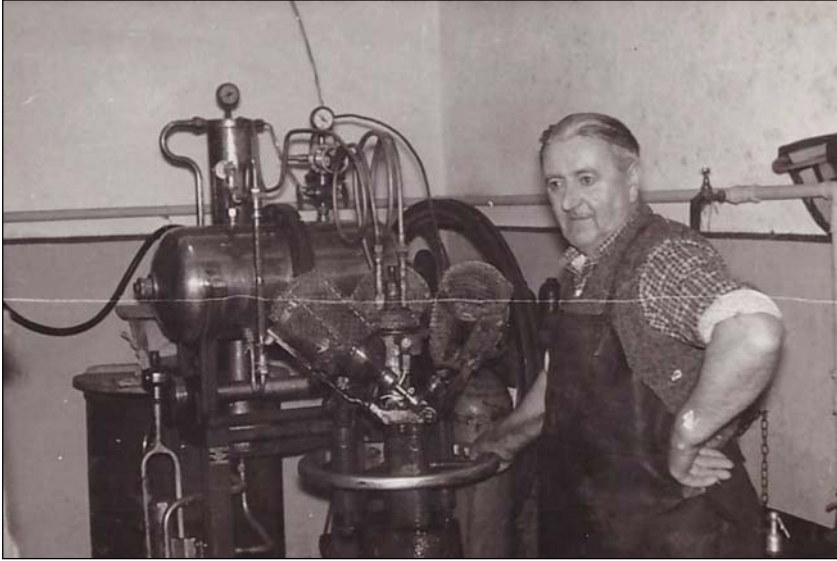


Image 8. Soda-water production in Alvég – Lajos Ferenc<sup>20</sup>

Ilona Topolyai was respected not only by her family but by the local society as a whole due to her undeniable professional know-how and the fact that she could find the right tone to speak with everyone. Her name became intertwined with the production of soda-water in Kiskunmajsa and people still keep her in good memory. People in the soda-water business always represented a unique color within the local community – it was their tireless work that made sure Kiskunmajsa never ran out of soda-water and “fröccs” (wine diluted with soda-water).

The social relationships and interactions of the factory’s owners and employees faithfully reflect the socio-cultural environment within which distribution and resale took place, while Goffman’s frame analysis makes it possible to analyse the very organisation of the factory, its inner structure and interactional behavior units within a more complex context. This brief presentation of the operation of the Topolyai soda-water factory has proven that the division of labor between men and women was not always subjected to the kind of gender discrimination usually associated with and widely practiced in the 20th century. Ilona Topolyai was a very self-conscious woman who practiced her craft professionally, nursed a good relationship with her employees, represented the lifestyle and values of a factory owner with grace and could adapt to the ever changing economic–political environment around her business. Her main aim as a small soda-water factory owner was to increase her family’s wealth and to maintain and pass on its good reputation.

## CONCLUSION

The goal of this research was to showcase the Topolyai soda factory emphasising its important heritage, and also to examine the material and immaterial values and the general activities of this family-owned plant from a multidisciplinary point of view. The central concept of this essay was that persons and groups interacting in a social system create, over time, concepts or mental representations of each other's actions, and that these concepts eventually become habituated into reciprocal roles played by the actors in relation to each other. My view is interpretive and experiential, seeing the community as a cultural field with a complexity of symbols the meanings of which vary among its members. I delineate a concept applicable to local communities through which people see themselves as belonging to society.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> "This research was realized in the frames of TÁMOP 4.2.4. A/2-11-1-2012-0001 »National Excellence Program – Elaborating and operating an inland student and researcher personal support system« The project was subsidized by the European Union and co-financed by the European Social Fund."
- <sup>2</sup> Cf. Hankiss, Elemér: *Az ezerarcú én. Emberlét a fogyasztói civilizációban*. Budapest, 2005. p. 230.
- <sup>3</sup> Abstrakt: "The fate of the Topolyai family (Image 2) provides an opportunity to research different behavioral patterns, social formations and mental representations at the same time, spanning multiple generations within a historical-social context the importance of which has already been pointed out by André Burguière." – Cf. Burguière, André: *A történeti antropológia*. (Historical Anthropology.) In: Sebők, Marcell (ed.): *Történeti antropológia*. (Historical Anthropology.) Módszertani írások és esettanulmányok. Budapest, 2000. p. 67. (Henceforth: Sebők, 2000.)
- <sup>4</sup> Abstrakt: "The preservation of these experiences make it possible for them to be passed on and be protected from fading away, thus demonstrating their true value." – Cf. Keszeg, Vilmos: *Alfabetizáció, írásszokások, populáris írásbeliség*. (Literacy, Writing Habits, Popular Literacy.) Egyetemi jegyzet. Kolozsvár, 2008. p. 304.
- <sup>5</sup> Abstrakt: "During the analysis I tried to utilise both micro and macro level approaches uniting the local reality with the global horizon." – Cf. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/aa.1967.69.6.02a00020/pdf>. (Last downloaded: 2015. 11. 25.)
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. Kiss, Imre: *Szódavíz, egy magyar kultuszital. Szikvíz ipartörténeti album*. (Sodawater, a cult drink in Hungary. A book of soda-industry history.) Budapest, 2008. pp. 42–58.
- <sup>7</sup> Cf. Berger, Peter Ludwig – Luckmann, Thomas: *A valóság társadalmi felépítése: tudásszociológiai értekezés*. (The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge.) Budapest, 1998. p. 84.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. Cohen, Eric: *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London, 1985. pp. 39–69.
- <sup>9</sup> Cf. Goffman, Erving: *Keretelemzés*. (Frame analysis.) In: Goffman, Erving: *A hétköznapi élet szociálpszichológiája*. (The Socialpsychology in Everyday Life.) László, János (ed.). Budapest, 1981. (Henceforth: Goffman, 1981.) pp. 547–549.
- <sup>10</sup> Cf. Scribner, Robert W.: *A kora újkori Európa történeti antropológiája*. (Historical Anthropology of the Early Modern Europe.) In: Sebők, 2000. p. 172.
- <sup>11</sup> From 1958 Goffman worked on theories concerning the normative regulations of everyday interactions and the formation of situational norms, in other words, the issues of frames of interpretation. He tried to establish the cross-referentiality of all communicative behavior, its scene and situation within the field of sociolinguistics for which he provided an integrational example in a study titled Frame analysis. (Cf. Goffman, 1981. pp. 769–779.)

His main focus is the proposition that human life is and always has been governed and determined by social and cultural rules and conventions. According to Goffman's theory the central concept of social functioning is the framework which basically is a frame of interpretation applied in social situations. (Cf. Goffman, 1981. pp. 620–627.) It can be viewed as a historically determined field of reality where sociocultural requirements serve as reference points. For people making soda-water, the all-time framework for interaction and interactional behavior units is society itself. There are some real life situations beyond the main framework that form the frames of interpretation. Goffman called this transformation *keying* and defined it as a transfer that makes certain real life scenes comprehensible that at first sight might be confusing embedded into the social structure of everyday life. (Cf. Goffman, 1981. pp. 627–648.)

- <sup>12</sup> The actual behavior of a person within the boundaries determined by status.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Eriksen, Thomas Hylland: *Kis helyek – nagy témák. Bevezetés a szociálanropológiába.* (Small places, large issues. An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology.) Budapest, 2006. (Henceforth: Eriksen, 2006.) pp. 70–71.
- <sup>14</sup> Frederik Barth applied the *self-representation* pattern during the social anthropological study of a Norwegian fishing boat's crew to illustrate the connections between human relationships and forms of situational behavior. According to this model different types of social interactions and activities require the participants to always choose the appropriate behavior in each situation. (Cf. Eriksen, 2006. pp. 73–76.; Cf. Barth, Thomas Fredrik Weybye: *Models of Social Organisation.* Occasional Papers, No. 23. London, 1966.)
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. [http://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/sai/SOSANT1600/v12/Wolf\\_Aspects\\_of\\_group\\_666294.pdf](http://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/sai/SOSANT1600/v12/Wolf_Aspects_of_group_666294.pdf). (Last downloaded: 2015. 11. 25.)
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. Tóth G., Péter: A „közösség”. *Egy fogalom megalkotása, kiterjedése, széthullása és felszámolása.* In: Pócs, Éva (ed.): *Közösség és identitás.* Budapest, 2002. (Henceforth: Tóth, 2002.) pp. 16–20.
- <sup>17</sup> Cf. Tóth, 2002. p. 14.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. Parsons, Talcott: *The Social System.* London, 1991. p. 98.
- <sup>19</sup> Cf. Eriksen, 2006. pp. 73–76.
- <sup>20</sup> The younger brother of Regina Lajos.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF PRINTED NEWS IN MAGYARKANIZSA

BÁLINT PETŐ

### ABSTRACT

*The appearance of the print press in Magyarkanizsa is closely related to the municipality's change in its administrative status, i.e. when it became a town in 1909. It was then that citizens could read their own newspaper, the Kanizsai Újság for the first time. The four-page paper was issued every Sunday and informed the citizens of Kanizsa mainly about local events, although national and foreign affairs were also discussed on its pages. Its publisher was the owner of the local printing press and merchant, Pál P. Bruck, who was motivated in this new enterprise by the prospect of a new, lucrative business venture. Most of the first year's articles dealt with the newly received status of the town as well as the plans of development in connection with it. A cultural milestone in the history of Magyarkanizsa, this weekly publication, which appeared until May 1915, played a great role in the process of urbanization and the furthering of embourgeoisement. It established a modern local press and popularized interest in public affairs among the town's population.*

With regards to modern and independent press, Hungary has had to make up for centuries of lost time compared with Western-European countries. While in London people were reading a daily paper in 1702 (*The Daily Courant*), in Hungary the first Hungarian-language, regularly printed weekly newspaper only appeared in the last quarter of that century (*Magyar Hírmondó* [Hungarian Herald], 1780). In today's



modern area of Vojvodina, the mentioned underdevelopment is even more pronounced than in the country as a whole: only in the middle of the 19th century did the first modern printing companies develop in the area, and the larger circulation of the local papers had to wait until the start of the 1900s. All of this naturally had not only economic but social and cultural reasons as well.<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of the print press in Kanizsa is closely connected with the change in the municipality's administrative classification: the Minister of the Interior's regulation 10 018 dated March 12, 1908 classified the municipality as a town with a regular council effective starting the following year, and the young new small town's residents could almost immediately get their hands on their own press product, the *Kanizsai Újság* (Kanizsa Newspaper).<sup>2</sup> (The paper first appeared at the end of 1908, which is referenced by the fact that in 1909 it was marked as being the second annual issue, as well as the Letter from the Editor that was printed in the first issue of 1909, with a certain lack of humility;<sup>3</sup> however, the first issue that is officially preserved is the issue published January 3, 1909, and so the first full year of the *Kanizsai Újság's* operation can be considered to be 1909.) The four-page long paper appeared every Sunday and primarily informed the citizens of Kanizsa about local events, although its columns regularly featured national news as well. (For half a year, from January to June of 1911, the paper appeared twice a week on Sunday and Thursday, after which they returned to one issue per week.)<sup>4</sup>

According to its masthead the publisher of the "*social and economic weekly paper*" was the local printing house owner and merchant Pál P. Bruck, who was no doubt motivated to start his new business primarily as a source of additional commercial profit, rather than by any sense of social responsibility.<sup>5</sup> Evidence for this can be seen in the fact that a large fraction of the advertising space in his papers – in many cases at least half of it – was devoted to promoting Bruck's ventures, and four years later he used his publishing house's activities to forge political capital.<sup>6</sup> The first editor of the *Kanizsai Újság* was Zoltán Tóth, who worked at the paper until the start of the following year (we last see his name in the January 9, 1910 issue, then Bruck carried out the editorial tasks in addition to other parts of the business); it is presumably from his pen or Pál P. Bruck's that the majority of front-page articles in the 1909 issues were written, although the author almost always maintained anonymity.

The editorials that appear on the front page faithfully reflect the municipality's political, economic and social conditions at the time. They show us those questions which were deemed most important to the 1909 residents of Kanizsa, whose population – according to data from the census conducted in following the year – was 17 018, for the most part Catholic Hungarians; the most significant national

1909	2. évfolyam, 38. szám.	szeptember 19.
<p><b>Előfizetési árak:</b>                  Helyben:                  Egész évre . . . 8 kor.                  Fél évre . . . 4 kor.                  Negyedévre . . . 2 kor.</p> <p>Vidéken:                  Egész évre . . . 9 kor.                  Fél évre . . . 4 kor. 50                  Negyedévre . . . 2 kor. 50</p>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">KANIZSAI ÚJSÁG</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">társadalmi és közgazdasági hetilap.</p>	<p>Apró hirdetések: ártól                  Egy sor a fél                  Vastagabb betűvel 6 fillér</p> <p>Hirdetések: közzé-                  kint a kocsona.                  A lap megjelenik minden                  vasnap.</p> <p>Egyes szám ára 6 fillér.</p>
Szerkesztőség és kiadóhivatal: <b>MAGYARKANIZSA.</b>	Felolvasó szerkesztő: <b>TÓTH ZOLTÁN</b>	Kiadótulajdonos: <b>BRUCK P. PÁL</b>
<p>Hirdetések a kiadóhivatal, közlemények                  a szerkesztőség címére küldendők</p>		
<p><b>Aktuális kérdések.</b></p> <p>Egy kereskedelmi szaktekin-                  től kaptuk az alábbi cikket, amely —                  ha nem is mindenben értünk vele                  egyet — érdekes világot vet a ke-                  rekedők felfogására a jelenlegi nehéz idő-                  ben. A cikk így szól:</p> <p>Két évvel ezelőtt kezdődött gaz-                  dasági depresszió még mindig nem                  szűnt meg. Belpolitikai viszonyaink                  még mindig a forrongás állapotában                  vannak, az anyyira óhajtott konszoli-                  dáció a maga kedvező hatásaival, a                  nyugodt egyenletesen haladó munkás-                  ságával, a lassú, de biztos garanciái-                  val még mindig nem akar beállani úgy,                  hogy sem közönségünk sem piacunk,                  sem a külföld nem tudja bizalmát és                  tevékenységét gazdaságilag annyira le-                  kötni, amennyire az a magunk jól fel-                  fogott érdekében kívánatos volna.</p> <p>Immár 1897 óta tart ez a belső                  közlelem, amely nem tud nyugvásra                  akadni. Nem csak sajátos politikai, ha-                  nem kiválsón gazdasági kérdések szol-                  gálnak itt ütköző pontokul, csak hogy                  a közlelem hevében megfélekednek                  arról, hogy a politika, főleg a pártpo-                  litika és a gazdasági érdek két egymás-</p>	<p>tól teljesen különböző valami és hogy                  az utóbbiakat sohasem szabad az előb-                  bieknek felidőzni. Az erkölcsi javak                  szaporítása, egy mint az egyesek csal-                  ládi életében is, kell, hogy párhuzam-                  sban történjen a létfenntartáshoz né-                  külszhetetlen anyagi javak megszerzé-                  sével. Mert valamit kétségtelen, hogy                  tökéletlen dolgok művel az a család-                  apá, aki hozzátartozóinak anyagi exis-                  tenciális feltételeit elhanyagolva, esz-                  pán a maga és ezáltal hozzátartozói                  tekintélyének és presztízisének fokoza-                  sáról gondoskodik, megélhetésüknek bizo-                  nosítását pedig nem mellátván kellő si-                  gyelemre, családjá tagjait ilyképpen ér-                  zékeny nélkülözéseknek teszi ki, úgy                  épp oly természetes, hogy csak a gaz-                  daságilag fejlődő államélet biztosítja                  a hazafias politika sikereit.</p> <p>Feleleges talán hangoztatnunk,                  hogy a magyar kereskedők tisztában van                  azzal, hogy hazájának az önálló mag-                  gyar jegybank felállítására fettelessen                  törvényes joga van és hogy mindany-                  nyiunk szigorú kötelessége annak mi-                  hamarabb való létesítését lehetővé ten-                  ni. A vitás kérdés tehát csak a körül                  foroghat, vajjon ez idő szerint mi ol-                  talmazza jobban ami különleges érde-                  keinket: az önálló magyar jegybank-</p>	<p>nak 1911-ben való felállítása, avagy                  az osztrák-magyar bankkal fenálló egyez-                  ményünknek még egy ízben meghosz-                  szabítása, hogy az egyezmény lejár-                  tóg cdtudatosan készítsük elő önálló                  bankunkat. Nagyrészt a politikai szem-                  pontoknak eddig is túllengése, tekint-                  hető annak egyik főokát, hogy a bank-                  kérdés a megvalósításra épp úgy mint pél-                  dával annak idején az önálló vámtel-                  rület felállításának kérdése is, teljesen                  készületlen találja közgazdasági életün-                  ket és ezért tartanunk kell attól, hogy                  az átmenetnek idejében való gondos                  és körültekintő elkerülésének hiánya                  a jövőben megint csak mindenkor a                  megoldás elhalasztásának kényszerítő-                  gát fogja maga után vonni.</p> <p>Nem kételkedünk abban, hogy lé-                  nyeges hátfias állózat árán nem ül-                  köznék nehézségek az önálló magyar                  jegybank felállítására. Ha nálunk sokkal                  kisebb és szegényebb államok kétsé-                  kes arra, a magyar állam bizonyára szin-                  tén nem lenne rék képtelen annál ke-                  vésebb, mert nem szűkölködik a szük-                  séges szakértelem nélkül sem. A kér-                  dés azonban úzetlenül szerint az vaj-                  jon, kívánatos és szükséges-e, hogy né-                  hány évi késés elkerülése végett, eset-                  leg rázkodtatásnak tegyük ki hazánk</p>
<p><b>A Kanizsai Újság tárcája</b></p>	<p>— Persze, hogy vérenek kell folyni.                  Egyedül az használni! Sokkal okosabb lenne,                  ha ti azzal a sok gazambertekkel sommásan                  bánatok el. Vagy talán az használna, ha tíz,                  husz évre becsuktak valakit kényelmes börtö-                  nbe, ahol pompás türdösztobák is vannak,                  meg ahol a gazemberek ebédhez almát is                  kapnak, hogy becses gyomrukot valahogy                  el ne rontsák! Akasztótát meg virgácsot                  nekik nem almat.</p> <p>— Jó, jó, lehet, hogy a gazemberek-                  kel szemben csakugyan túl humanussak va-                  gyunk, de hát a szegény munkásember csak                  más elbírálás alá esik?</p> <p>— Eh ez is gazember. Ha fel akarja                  lorgatni a meglévő, jó társadalmi rendet.</p> <p>— Csak hogy a megélhetéshez minden-                  kinek joga van, aki dolgozni tud és dolgoz-                  ni akar, és ebből kifolyólag ahhoz is joga                  van, hogy a társadalmi rendet úgy ügy-                  kezze megváltoztatni, hogy neki is jusson                  legalább minden nap százsz kenyérre valója.                  Ami pedig a „meglévő, jó” társadalmi ren-                  det illeti; hát ez nem jó, ha a munkatörő                  embernek nem képes a minimális megél-                  tétet sem biztosítani.</p>	
<p><b>Becsületés gazember.</b></p>	<p>— Sok az ember, már csak azért sem                  ártana alaposan elbírni vélelő.</p> <p>— Először is fel kellene öket világo-                  sítani, hogy nem a fizikai munkás a nyomor-                  rút, hanem mi, akik szellemi munkát vége-                  zünk, mi vagyunk a nyomorultak; a szelle-                  mi munkás az igaz proletár, ezt kellene a                  fejükbe verni, hogy minket ne irigyljenél,                  de legfeljebb sajnáljanak, mert az igazi nyo-                  morúságot valóban nem a hétk munkásrub-                  bony takarja hanem a föltes, fényes szalon-                  kabát.</p> <p>— Se fénygetés se atitás nem haszn-                  nál itt — mond a bíró — a munkásember                  nyomorúságán így nem lehet segíteni.                  Persze, hogy rosszul van a földön beosztva,                  hogy az egyik ember száz koronás vesző-                  rút egyéke a másiknak husz fillér se jusson                  veszőrura, de hát ez már így van ezen a                  bajon bajos segíteni akár fénygetéssel, akár                  tantással. Legfeljebb, hogy trigyelhetjük a                  gazdagokat és sajnálhatjuk a szegényeket.</p> <p>Igy történik azán, hogy mi akik tel-                  jesen át tudjuk érezni a szegény emberek                  nyomorát, miután sem felesleges pénzzel                  nem rendelkeztünk, amiből adhatnánk nekik,                  sem gyárakkal, ahol mindnek adhatnánk al-</p>	

Image 1. The first front page of the Kanizsai Újság

Elismert kitünő gyártmányú  
**karikahajós és Singer**  
 varrógépeket 3 évi jótállással részletfizetésre is  
 rendkívüli olcsó árak  
 mellett ajánlunk

Óriási pénz és idő megtakarítás  
**mosógépek**

használatát által három mosónő két napi munkája  
 a nálunk kapható mosógéppel egy asszony által egy fél nap alatt végezheti.  
 A ruhát habfeléire mossa és nem rongálja.  
 Érdeklődőknek szívesen mutatjuk be, vettékényszer nélkül.

**BRUCK és TÁRSA**  
 Magyarkanizsán.

**Hofherr és Schrantz**  
 budapesti gazdasági gépgyár bizományi raktárában  
 — MAGYARKANIZSÁN —  
 Bruck és Társánál, állandóan kaphatók

**Vetőgépek**  
 Szecskavágók  
 Járgányok  
 Kukoricamorzsolók  
 Szőlőruzdók  
 Szőlőprések  
 Ekék

Különleges patent kettős **HKHK** 3 LÓ UTÁN  
 több évi lefizetésre

továbbá karikahajós és Singer  
 Varrógépek és kellékek is.

**ELSŐRENDŰ POROSZ FŰTŐSZEN.**

**Bruck és Társa**  
 MAGYARKANIZSÁN.

A híressé HOFHERR és SCHRANTZ budapesti gazdasági gépgyár bizományi raktárában  
 Kedvező fizetési feltételek mellett olcsó árakon ajánlanak:

Vetőgépeket, szecskavágókat darálókat,  
 járgányokat, aratógépeket, ekéket, kukoricamorzsolókat, mázsákat, szénagyűjtőket, szőlőpréseket, esőpléköszieteket

több évi lefizetésre  
 továbbá karikahajós és Singer  
 VARRÓGÉPEKET és kellékeket is.

Előrendű porosz cséplőszén.

Különleges patent kettős **HKHK** 3 LÓ UTÁN

Bruck P. Pál Magyarkanizsán.

— MINDENFÉLE —  
 új és használt  
**Tankönyvek**  
 valamint  
 író és rajzszerke

olcsón kaphatók  
**BRUCK P. PÁL** könyvkereskedésében  
 Magyarkanizsán.

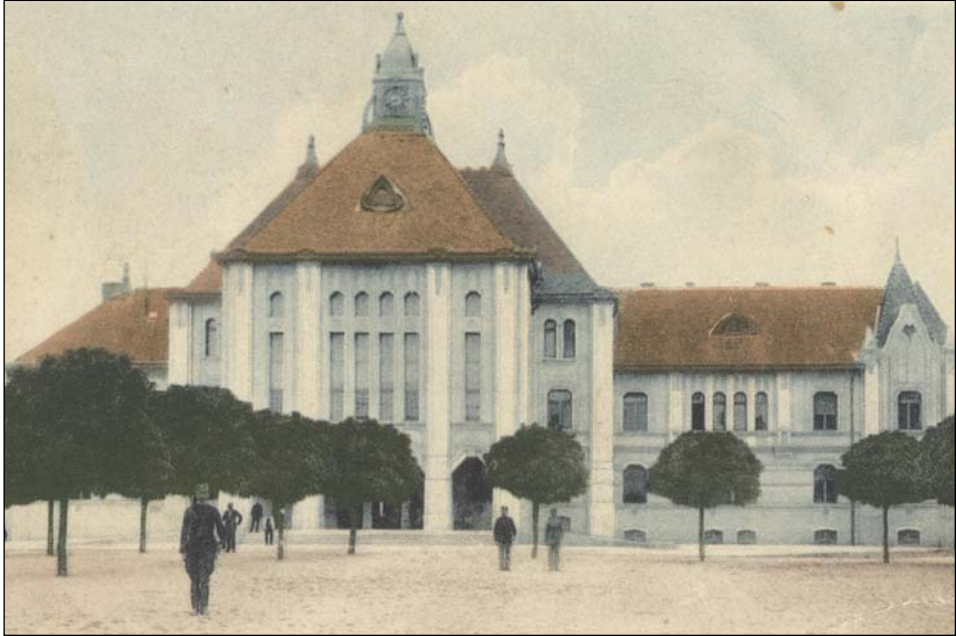
Image 2–5. Bruck's ventures in the advertising space

minority were the Serbs with 396 people. More than two thirds of the local residents were employed in agriculture, a large fraction of whom lived outside the small town, in remote rural areas. All of this played a defining role in determining Magyarkanizsa's social and cultural conditions: the settlement was a typical lowland agricultural small town at the beginning of the last century, which officially was now considered a town for administrative purposes, and in certain respects did meet this qualification, but its low level of infrastructural development, the lack of industry, the lifestyle of most of its residents, and their level of educational and mentality gave the municipality more of a village character.<sup>7</sup>

The leading articles in the 1909 issues mostly discuss these subjects: the first issue of the year greeted the residents of Kanizsa with the title *Magyarkanizsa is a town*, and in a grandiose style it welcomes Kanizsa's reclassification as a town, but also calls on residents of the municipality to do everything in the interest of development: *"The town council has been formed, it held its first election of officials, and with this, Magyarkanizsa has joined the towns with a regular council. Large, passionate struggles preceded the classification of the municipality as a town, just as they had the elections. (...) As we welcome the new officers, we also look forward with confidence to its operation, and, where we have some little power to act, we will never delay in supporting it. But we also don't delay in calling attention to that large work and responsibility which awaits each member of the town council. (...) We can carry out successful work shoulder to shoulder, supporting each other. Without this the work of the council and the operation of the representative body will be a waste. Perhaps individual vengeance might be satisfied, but only at the untold expense of the public good. This is why we expressed above our wish that passions should be abated, for differences to disappear and for every citizen of the town of Magyarkanizsa to be united under the flag of progress. Only then can we reach the goal which the classification of Magyarkanizsa as a town has promised us."*<sup>8</sup>



*Image 6. The new city hall*



*Image 7. The new city hall*

The reader's letter is also telling, which was published on the front page of the last issue of February: *"In my quiet town, where not so long ago the topic of the day was if Mr. Kántram's cow Bossy got ill, or if Szabó, Esq. bought brand new felt clothes, and where it was a veritable sensation if one or two noble carriages scooted along the dusty streets, – here there are now events that are worthy of being immortalized in the press? Well, in Magyarkanizsa do people now read not only tax summons, and prayer books? What a wonderful thing it is, sir! It is almost as remarkable as if the dead had sprung to live. (...) Of course, we have to make sacrifices if we want to put down the cornerstone to a flourishing, modern, large town. Magyarkanizsa still needs to create a great many institutions for its status of a town to go from paper to reality and for it to reach the standard that it would be a true crime against culture not to attain."*<sup>9</sup>

A recurring issue on the front page is the question of the bridgeover the River Tisza: there has long been felt a need to connect the two Kanizsas (Törökkanizsa, modern Novi Kneževac, and Magyarkanizsa or Kanizsa) with a modern bridge capable of supporting rail traffic, a problem that the residents of the city felt to be even more pressing since the municipality became a town, in order to speed up the process of urbanization. As the *Kanizsai Újság* writes in February: *"The pedestrian and coach*

traffic between the two Kanizsas takes place on imperfect, rickety structures of bygone centuries even today. From spring to autumn vehicles and people use the pontoon bridge, a junk from Szeged, and when the Tisza freezes over, well, one can get from one shore to the other on a ferry or boat riding the back of the ice. This is a medieval, intolerable state of affairs to the untold expense of the two Kanizsas... (...) A permanent bridge would make it possible to fulfil the now audacious-sounding plan to connect the two Kanizsas with a narrow-gauge passenger- and freight-railway. And this is the great perspective that the plan of a permanent bridge offers.”<sup>10</sup> Then, more than three months later the editors return to the subject with an article titled *Reflections on our town’s Tisza bridge*. The article makes concrete proposals for financing the costs of a permanent bridge: “We are all convinced that one of the best ways to ensure that our city flourishes is a permanent railway bridge. Faithful patriots of the city who hold its future close to their heart should not be afraid to make the greatest sacrifices necessary to create it. (...) We cannot borrow such a large sum of money, because the interest on it would be so great that it would exhaust our financial resources. Thus, it is impossible to build our permanent bridge in any other way than Zenta did it, that is, through an interest-free loan provided by the state. (...) A committee will likely be sent by the ministry this very month to determine the new toll rates for the bridge and ferry, which have expired. We ask the mayor to use this opportunity to raise the issue of the permanent bridge and to procure the necessary technical documentation.”<sup>11</sup>



Image 8. A recurring issue is the question of the Tisza bridge



*Image 9. A recurring issue is the question of the Tisza bridge*

The editorials also encourage other areas of modernization, ranging from modernizing the railways to developing industry,<sup>12</sup> to creating a park in the downtown area and to building a local thermal spa. In the autumn, the newspaper is happy to report some success in creating a few – though not high-profile, – yet visible and useful results in the process of urbanization: *“It’s now been three quarters of a year since we received the status of a town, however, we have not yet had an occasion to appraise the work of our council. We find that the reason for this is the secretive manner in which everything is done or carried out. We think that the council is working, – and especially the mayor performs work that is greatly deserving recognition around the development of the town, and we are all the more happy to observe this because up until now we have always criticized him for his interest in creating big things only. We are happy to see and are glad to record these merits because in addition to several required large plans he does not forget about smaller issues. There is a visible sign of his consistent and prudent work. Our main streets, although they were only rarely and insufficiently watered in the course of the summer, and swim in oceans of dust, have finally been cleaned up of the dirt that has built up for a long time. This in itself is a great achievement, because aside its the aesthetic benefit it forestalls the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases.”*<sup>13</sup> However, there were some downsides to the fact that the status

of a town had been attained, for example, the drastic rise in property prices, a fact to which the paper brought attention twice in the spring of 1909: *“But during the transformation to town, new families of officials came to the settlement, who needed an apartment. This fact contributed to enormously raising the previous rent prices. At present, the situation is that in Kanizsa a 2-room apartment costs four hundred koronas (crowns), just as in Budapest. And while in Budapest for this much money one gets a comfortably furnished modern apartment, in Kanizsa one cannot even find an apartment if one begs. (...) We must remedy this problem. God forbid we get a district court and tax office soon, because these officials and the lawyers who might come with them would have to be put into tent camps.”*<sup>14</sup>



*Image 10–11. The local thermal spa*



Besides the above, two other issues arose which kept the residents of the town greatly interested and thus became recurring topics of editorials: the first was the lack of a telephone network,<sup>15</sup> the other being a plan for a new town hall.<sup>16</sup> Besides this, the editors regularly criticized the municipal administration for all of their decisions – or failure to make decisions – which, according to the journalists, impeded the further development of the town. However, – albeit rarely – the editors offered a chance for alternative viewpoints to be voiced in the form of letters to the editor, and on the front page a writing by Mayor, Dr. Sándor Király himself was published, in which the town's leader hopes for the introduction of mandatory fire insurance in the municipality.<sup>17</sup> (The newspaper could do this from a position of editorial independence and comfortable external observer status, all the way up until 1913, when the owner, Pál P. Bruck, who at that time was also responsible for editorial tasks, became a member of the municipal council – as we have previously mentioned.)



*Image 12–13. The local thermal spa*

In addition to local issues, on more than one occasion the paper drew attention to national affairs in its editorials: for instance, in the September 5, 1909 issue it published an article with the title *Intellectual Proletariat*, in which the author criticizes Austria for purposefully keeping Hungary underdeveloped and not letting it break free from its agrarian country status. In addition, we found pointed social criticism on the paper's front page – for example, on the disadvantages of favoritism and its adverse effects (July 18 and 25 leading articles), on the weakness of the middle class of landowners (September 12), on the migration from rural areas to the capital (November 8), etc. We read an interesting story on a subject titled *National threat* on the front page of the December 19 issue, which scrutinizes the problem of gambling addiction: “*Our nation is one of the those with the most violent, most heated temperament. Hungarians come from the race of humans in whom hot blood has always played a large role. Even at times when common sense requires them to listen to the voice of reason telling them to stop. Ah, but how often their blood gets people to do reckless deeds! It's no use – we are an Eastern people! We are descended from the race of hot-blooded Orientals. The multitude of unfortunate victims of gambling addiction is one of the misbegotten offspring of our temperament. In this hardly noble competition of the races the Hungarian is there among the first, right beside the Italian and the Russian. The Hungarian plays with his money and often with his life at the card table, at the horse races, in the class lottery, everywhere where two people mix. The most dangerous of all the games is the one that is rightfully called the Devil's Bible or the thirty-two leaved, people killer, country-destroying card game.*”<sup>18</sup> In contrast with its earlier issues, a festive writing appeared as an editorial in the last issue of 1909 with the title *Christmas*, which concerned love and the support of those who have been left behind and the poor: “*We must do away with the traditional pride and not neglect the poor class – at least on this day!... The gratitude will not be lost, the children enjoying the warmth of our affection will forever bless their benefactors and this day will live as an indelible memory in their hearts.*”<sup>19</sup>

Several columns of the paper paint a nuanced image of the social and economic culture of the municipality that was recently made a town. The second and third pages of the paper regularly report on the various events of the large number of associations active in Kanizsa – the vibrant social life is definitely a sign of the beginning of civilization in the small lowland town. One of the most significant was MIKE, the Magyarkanizsai Ifjúsági Közművelődési Egyesület or Magyarkanizsa Youth Cultural Association, (which, from 1912 had its own independent newspaper when an other local paper that had started publication a year earlier, the *Kanizsai Ellenőr* (Kanizsa Inspector), became the association's mouthpiece).<sup>20</sup> But the town's fire brigade, the Jewish women's association, the Industrial Book Club, the Economic Young Men's Association,

the Red Cross Association, the Christian Social Workers' Association and last but not least, the Gentlemen's Casino – one of the main arenas of public debate –, were also actively rallying the well-to-do and influential members of the local population. The paper's inside (second and third) pages regularly report various tenders and auctions and various official notices (for example the mandatory animal testing, the worm extermination, vaccinations, tax notices, public notices; it reports on the appointment of new public officials (teachers, pastors, police officers, judges, doctors, etc.), the events of the various associations, births, deaths, marriages – and on more than one occasion engagements as well –, the date of fairs; it even considers newsworthy when a citizen of Kanizsa has finished serving a prison sentence and is freed.<sup>21</sup>

Deserving special mention in the local news are the various acts of violence, which occur in a large number in the life of the municipality, and which the *Kanizsai Újság* covers in a detailed “*tabloid fashion*” – sometimes humorously but sometimes in almost horrific detail.<sup>22</sup> All this is understandable, since despite the town status that had been granted there was a still largely rural, rather closed community, whose need for information had to be met. The “*gossip*” naturally spilled over into the printed press – and all this presumably contributed largely to the rise in the newspaper's circulation.<sup>23</sup> The news, which were not only about Kanizsa but a larger geographic area, contained a conspicuous number of stabbings, robberies, thefts, drunken acts of vandalism, fights, accidents, fires, murders, various family tragedies, and reports of suicides were also rather frequent.

In addition to politics, public life and local events we can also read about other subjects in the paper. The fiction column every week publishes poetry, short stories or excerpts from short stories, humorous pieces and other types of literature, and what's more, in a featured location: the fiction column starts on the front page and usually continues on the second page. Besides local authors, there are a few nationally famous writers, poets who appear in the newspaper: the *Kuruc nóta* by Gyula Juhász, or the writing titled *Intra dominium* by Kálmán Mikszáth. The business column contains expert analyses, which appeared fairly regularly at the beginning but later only sporadically. We can also find messages from the editor, in which the editors reply to pseudonymous messages and questions in one or two sentences. Another way of giving more information than providing local residents with general news is e.g. when the paper prints excerpts from the constitution and history of United States or you can read about Hungarian freemasons and the role Lajos Kossuth played in that organization; about the adventures of a young man from Szeged in the French foreign legion, or a travel report about Archduke Franz Ferdinand's trip to Sinaia. In the article *A pusztuló Bácska* (Bácska in decline) the author writes about the mass migration to America and about criminalizing the enticement of others to do this. As a clever trick by the editors – and in a rather manipulative way –

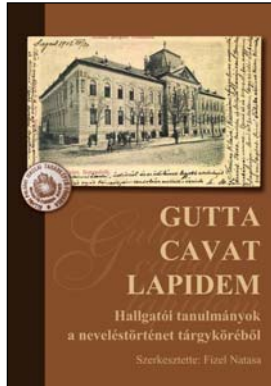
following the above article there is a report about a tragedy as a “detering example” with the title *The misfortunes of a boy from Zenta in America*. From the story we learn that Lajos Kocsis, a young man who had emigrated from Zenta was run over and killed by the “Chicago express train” and his dead body had to be picked up in pieces.<sup>24</sup>

In sum, we can say that the elevation of the municipality to a higher rank in 1909 gave this southern market town a new momentum for development, the first results of which were apparent within a few years: in 1912 a new town hall was inaugurated, a thermal spa opened, economic and cultural life were booming. The first locally printed weekly newspaper, the *Kanizsai Újság* played a substantial role in the process of urbanization and gentrification. Despite all of its shortcomings, it was a cultural milestone in the history of Magyarkanizsa: it created a modern local civic press which became a popular reading for the town’s residents.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> “The demand for a local paper developed gradually, in parallel with the development of the society of the municipality. A large role in this process is played by the population’s social and financial stratification but their mentality as well. By itself the fact that a wealthier class requires this form of information to rise above the majority does not create a need. This is because they must take action not only as a consumer but to a certain extent they also need communal self-awareness to recognize the role of the local press and to support its appearance.” (Pejin, Attila: *The historical bibliography of the Zenta newspapers [1875–1962]*. Zenta, 2004. p. 13.)
- <sup>2</sup> Baráth, Katalin: *Revolver és vasvilla – Kisvárosi médiai ritusok. (Magyarkanizsa, 1909–1914.)* [http://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2006\\_03\\_osz/03\\_kisvarosi\\_mediari\\_tusok](http://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2006_03_osz/03_kisvarosi_mediari_tusok). (Henceforth: Baráth)
- <sup>3</sup> “Whoever would like to buy or sell any kind of house, land, furniture, car, cattle, or any kind of equipment, or who is looking for an apartment, or would like to rent the same, should advertise in the *Kanizsai Újság*, which in its brief existence already has a wide circulation.” (*Kanizsai Újság*, January 3, 1909.)
- <sup>4</sup> Klamár, Zoltán: *1848 a század eleji kanizsai sajtóban*. Híd, Year LXII. (1998.), Issue 3. p. 290.
- <sup>5</sup> Simonyi, Mária: *A magyar politikai sajtó története 1918-ig a mai Vajdaság területén*. Budapest, 2003. (Henceforth: Simonyi) p. 328.
- <sup>6</sup> “Pál P. Bruck was not yet a member of the 164-member town council that debuted in 1909, »which is why he was able to maintain the appearance of the newspaper’s independence in the beginning«, however, from 1913 onward he was able to personally play a role in the bustling society of the city fathers, in order of his assets »as a newspaper owner with legally doubled income«, being the 45th property owner representative. »Eight out of the first ten, and so at the top of the list János Mátyás Dukai, based on the income from their land ownership, were admitted to the council, though at that time only into the council of a virtual town hall – temporarily into the Great Dining Hall.« *Half of the Kanizsai Újság’s back page, however, from the beginning showed their advertisements, from which it became evident that the honorable editor of the paper financed his everyday life less by serving the public through his noble work but rather from his income stemming from the commercial ventures operating under his name* »where anything could be procured from him, from a prayer book to a threshing-machine.«” (Baráth)
- <sup>7</sup> Baráth
- <sup>8</sup> *Kanizsai Újság*, January 3, 1909.
- <sup>9</sup> *Kanizsai Újság*, February 28, 1909.
- <sup>10</sup> *Kanizsai Újság*, February 21, 1909.
- <sup>11</sup> *Kanizsai Újság*, June 6, 1909.

- <sup>12</sup> “When you see the proud chimneys of the factory reaching toward the sky and when you hear the steam whistles indicating break time in work, you can’t help but think that in the wake of the machines rattling new shapes and new levels are taken on by life and near the sooty walls you meet all the blessings of culture. And experience proves that in the modern age there is only prosperity, the accumulation of wealth where industry begins to develop in the wake of which trade quickly burgeons.” (Kanizsai Újság, June 20, 1909.)
- <sup>13</sup> Kanizsai Újság, October 31, 1909.
- <sup>14</sup> Kanizsai Újság, March 14, 1909.
- <sup>15</sup> “... Our leaders are incapable of arranging for a telephone network... So let us we, residents turn to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and make them intervene for Kanizsa to join the network...” (Kanizsai Újság, October 3, 1909.)
- <sup>16</sup> “The plans for a new town hall are ready. Members of the municipal council also consider it urgent to go ahead with the construction. The old municipal building is useless. There are some reluctant people, however, who are worried that the 250 000 crowns necessary for the construction are not yet available...” (Kanizsai Újság, April 25, 1909.)
- <sup>17</sup> “Compulsory fire insurance should be introduced and managed by local municipalities. This would increase their income, which they could use partly for their own purposes while they could provide a better service against fire damages, better than the insurance companies...” (Kanizsai Újság, February 14, 1909.)
- <sup>18</sup> Kanizsai Újság, December 19, 1909.
- <sup>19</sup> Kanizsai Újság, December 26, 1909.
- <sup>20</sup> Simonyi. p. 328.
- <sup>21</sup> “Nagy, who was sentenced to two years in prison, has been given conditional furlough.” (Kanizsai Újság, April 18, 1909.); “A youth named Mihály Csikós, who stabbed a fellow lad one and a half year ago, has arrived home on conditional furlough...” (Kanizsai Újság, September 5, 1909.)
- <sup>22</sup> “Mladen Bakality, a barber’s apprentice, was courting Miss Jelena Kordován in the Serbian ball. While courting he stole a gold necklace from the girl... The thief was arrested and he gave the gold jewellery back. However, as the robber was being escorted by policemen he managed to escape and there is no trace of him...” (Kanizsai Újság, January 31, 1909.); “Mrs. Andorné Keszthelyi, a 76-year-old widow has filed a complaint at the gendarmerie of Baja against her son-in-law, Dávid Cseszler, who had beaten her. Earlier, Cseszler was looking for his wife and eventually found her with his mother-in-law shouting in a pub while drunk. Mr. Cseszler was so upset that he grabbed his merry mother-in-law by the hair kicking and beating her up...” (Kanizsai Újság, November 14, 1909.); “Mr. Bata denies the fact that he committed a premeditated murder and claims that while arguing with his wife she attacked him with a pair of scissors. At that point he picked up a knife lying on the table and stabbed her five or six times...” (Kanizsai Újság, May 16, 1909.)
- <sup>23</sup> For more on this topic, see Katalin Baráth’s analysis mentioned previously (the author’s note) .
- <sup>24</sup> Kanizsai Újság, September 26, 1909.



## **“Gutta cavat lapidem” – Dripping water hollows out stone**

**Natasa Fizel (editor):**

**Gutta cavat lapidem.**

(Student conducted studies on the history of education)

Délvidék (Southern Region) Research Centre. Szeged, 2016. 128 pp.

Education historian Natasa Fizel’s volume of University of Szeged students’ studies written on the history of education introduces the reader to the world of micro-research. The authors of most of the studies are students from the Department of Applied Pedagogy of the University of Szeged, Gyula Juhász Faculty of Education, and are members of the Áron Kiss History of Education Talent-workshop led by assistant lecturer Natasa Fizel, majoring in socio-education, including one who is a history major from the Faculty of Humanities. The young researchers, with the guidance of their instructor and mentor, set out with great faith and enthusiasm to analyse sources, search for the unique, present the generalizable conclusions, thus mastering the ins and outs of academic research and publication. The young authors’ work was also introduced at a reading held by the History of Education Workshop of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences’ Szeged Commission on March 24, 2016 with high attendance.

The talent fostering workshop, which expanded from the university courses and its first product, the publication of the students’ work symbolize the most noble of university education and research traditions, found supporters among the members of the historian and education history community in Szeged, who supported the young peoples’ work with reviews and opinions. Due to this and the professional editorial work, the students’ published studies are uncharacteristically mature in both content and form. This diligent (joint) effort is referenced by the very apt Latin title “*Gutta cavat lapidem*”, that is, dripping water hollows out stone.

The mosaic-like themes can be arranged onto a train of logic from regional research to comprehensive subject matters and to international perspectives.

**Nikolett Kiss** – socio-education major, presents Waldorf pedagogy and the Újszeged Kerti Iskola (Garden School) methods along the instructional and educational concepts and practices of Erzsébet Dolch, head of the Kerti Iskola, whose child-centric methods have had large impact on her little students and who represents one of the important values of Hungarian progressive education.

**Éva Dóra Szabó** – socio-education major, analyses the ideas of Dezső Hildebrand Várkonyi, a noted professor of the interwar period, published in the periodical “*Cselekvés iskolája*” (The School of Action) of the Primary School Teachers’ College of Szeged. The study gives a very valuable cross section of the pedagogical–psychological efforts of an interesting and dynamic era.

The subjects of the following studies go beyond the Délvidék (Southern Region):

**Ágnes Rák** – socio-education major, examines the curricula of provincial Hungarian universities in the 1930s. Namely, those of the Royal Hungarian Ferenc József (Francis Joseph) University of Szeged’s first semester of the 1936/37 academic year, the Royal Hungarian István Tisza University of Debrecen’s first semester of the 1936/37 academic year, and the Royal Hungarian Erzsébet University of Pécs’s first semester of the 1931/32 academic year. During the course of her research, she compared the three universities’ teaching processes, she reconstructed class schedules and drew conclusions about the operation of the universities.

**Ildikó Takács** – socio-education major, gives us insight into a small section of research on university history, the specifics of bilingual training operating within public education. In her paper she examines the general tendencies of bilingual education along with presenting a concrete example, the Gyöng township school’s bilingual educational program.

**János Farkas Vincze** – history major examines the 1918–19 Spanish flu epidemic’s effects on public education in Hungary at that time. The multi-perspective study based on the analysis of a wealth of sources also gives us insight into how the public administration and educational system of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County operated.

**Mariann Nagy and Enikő Pákozdi** – socio-education majors, present the educational practices of Islam as a complex system based on the analysis of secondary sources. The starting point for their work is orientalist but they move on to the aspects of Islam’s cultural and educational history.

Thus, one may conclude that the Délvidék (Southern Region) Research Centre has supported a noble cause by publishing the volume, recognizing the intellectual potential in these studies which can serve research in the future.

*András Döbör*

Délvidék Kutató Központ Foundation, Szeged  
Published by: President, Délvidék Kutató Központ Foundation  
Press: A-Színvonal 2000 Kft.  
<http://www.a-szinvonalt.hu>  
Copies: 500