

Tamás Nyári

Additions to the History of Hungarian Tourism. The Sikonda Spa in the Middle of the 20th Century

Abstract

After the communist takeover, by the end of the 1940s, the previously privately owned spas fell into state hands. This was also the fate of the Harkány and Sikonda spas in Baranya County. In 1928, the Salgótarján Coal Mine Company searched for coal in the forest of the Parish of the Cathedral in Pécs, when it found the thermal water source at a depth of 318 meters. The forest councillor of the Cathedral, Andor Kolossváry, recognising the potential of the spring, using the analysis of the chief chemist of the Danube Steamboat Shipping Company, opened a spa, in the first temporary pool of which 18,000 guests bathed in the first year. In the years that followed, its guests came in part from the ranks of the surrounding mining population, who largely treated their rheumatic ailments here. At the same time, the majority of the guests came from circles that were more able to afford higher prices. The years 1948-49 marked a turning point in the history of the spa, which gained the status of a healing spa from 1935. The nationalisation of the spa and the transformation of the hotel into a night sanatorium could be done during this period. From 1963, a mining sanatorium, which was definitely engaged in healing, also operated here. Sikonda's institution was not unique in the country, but it became one of the most significant, in many cases exemplary, mining medical centres.

Keywords: thermal water, spa, nationalisation, socialism, night sanatorium, miner sanatorium

Introduction

The topic of my study is the first thirty years of the history of the Sikonda spa. I am looking for the answer to the conditions under which the spa in Sikonda was established and nationalised, and what effect this had on the development of its future, how the operation of the spa changed at the end of the era, due to the devastating effects of war and its aftermath. I then talk about how conditions after 1945 were used as a reason for nationalisation and how the fate of the spa developed in the years after nationalisation. Finally, I will also examine how unique this process was, or whether a similar phenomenon may have occurred in other parts of the country.

The Sikonda Spa

Discovering the thermal water of Sikonda and the first opening of the spa

On March 13, 1829, the Erste Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft (First-Danube-Steamboat-Shipping Company) held its inaugural general meeting in Vienna,¹ which by the end of the century had become the world's largest inland waterway company. To meet their growing demand for coal, they bought a plot of land in 1852 and began his research in the Mecsek. Three years later, the András mine was already operating in Pécsbánya. By 1894, DGT had acquired most of the mines around Pécs, spending about 10 million Austrian Forints on purchases. In

¹ *Huszár, Zoltán*: Integrációs kísérlet a Duna-medencében a 19. század végétől a második világháború kezdetéig. PhD-Dissertation. Pécs. PTE BTK. 2007. 31.

addition, in 1868 they leased the Szabolcs and Somogy mines of the Pécs Cathedral Estate.² By the turn of the century, DGT had become a significant company with modern mining,³ but the process did not stop: even after the First World War, the mines of Pécs and Pécs research on coal was ongoing.

One of them, which was carried out by Salgótarján Coal Mine Co. in 1928 at the request of First-Danube-Steamboat-Shipping Company, discovered a thermal water source at a depth of 318 meters in the forest of Sikonda of the Pécs Cathedral Estate. The daily, which reported on the discovery, presented the event as a sensation to such an extent that it drew the image of a Hungarian Karlsbad as an opportunity: “*Between Magyarszék and Mánfa, a comparable. [...] The rich amount of healing substances and spring water detected by the analysis of water provides an opportunity for huge concepts, the planned realisation of which can take years. However, one can already predict that a large group of capital could create Hungarian Karlsbad in the forest-crowned Mecsek Mountains.*”⁴ The Danube Steam Shipping Company then made an offer to buy the area, but in the end the deal was not established. Thus, the utilisation of the thermal water source took place in the beginning by the ecclesiastical estate. The forest councillor of the manor, Andor Kolossváry, recognising the potential of the spring and using the analysis of the chief chemist of First-Danube-Steamboat-Shipping Company, opened a spa, the first temporary pool of which was visited by 18,000 guests in the first year.⁵

This first pool was a 13x20 metre small and shallow facility with a depth of 30-130 cm.⁶ The following year, the number of visitors already increased significantly. The opening of the spa, however, coincided with the unfolding of the Great Depression. The collapse of the New York Stock Exchange and the ensuing economic crisis did not spare Hungary either, and this also had an impact on investments in Sikonda. By 1931, the spa hotel had 35 rooms and a restaurant. The facility also had a reading and card room. So far, instead of the temporary pool, there were two baths and a bathhouse with 7 baths.⁷ The continuation of the investment was hampered by the credit crisis unfolding this year, and the crisis in the Central European banking system deepened this year.⁸ Several plans in Sikonda could also materialise. Despite the backward investment and difficult accessibility, a vibrant bathing life unfolded from the early 1930s. The press, which saw great opportunities in the spa, wrote at this time: “*Sikonda should be world famous if its source were found abroad ...-The traffic it handles is still significant. There are cottages hidden in a shady forest, which are never empty, the hotel rarely has empty rooms, yet the current situation is unsatisfactory. Due to some transport difficulties, Sikonda is still difficult to reach for large crowds, [...] a glassworks, but the plan fell asleep. There were other plans, especially those that wanted to cultivate winter sports here. The landscape is extremely suitable for this. The valley is a real Sanct Moritz here in Baranya and certainly deserves to be a venue for the implementation of large-scale plans, at least nationally. We wanted to build a straight, new country road through the southern hillsides to the Árpád roof. But the lack of money came...*”⁹

² Kaposi, Zoltán: Pécs gazdasági fejlődése 1867-2000. Pécs 2006. 51.

³ Huszár, Zoltán.: Integrációs kísérlet... 94-97.

⁴ Dunántúl, 22. 03. 1928.

⁵ Vitális, Sándor: Sikondafürdő és környékének hidrogeológiai viszonyai. Hidrológiai Közlöny 1933. 21-22.

⁶ Szászi, Tibor-Kovács, András: Sikonda. Komló 1976. 20. (Manuscript – PTE Tudásközpont. Helytörténeti gyűjtemény.)

⁷ Szászi, Tibor-Kovács, András: Sikonda. 22.

⁸ Kaposi, Zoltán: Die Entwicklung der Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Ungarn 1700-2000. Studia Hungarica. Passau, 2007. Schenk Verlag. 104.

⁹ Dunántúl, 14. 08. 1932.

Successful times and decline

From 1933, Sikonda already provided medical services.¹⁰ Its audience in the following years consisted of distinguished guests and only partially came out of the ranks of the surrounding mining population, who treated their rheumatic ailments primarily here. However, it was not only the locals who visited these spas. A few years later, the people of Pécs and those around Pécs also appeared, making Sikonda a popular place for excursions and spas all over the county. The excitement of the place is shown by the fact that at the end of the 1930s, the holiday villas of the rich citizens of Pécs were built opposite the spa hotel.¹¹ Mentioning some of them as examples, politicians of national significance, such as the Minister of the Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, the retired Prime Minister Károly Huszár, or György Pallavicini, the Member of Parliament. Among the local leaders, Deputy Mayor Béla Fischer and Mayor Andor Nendtvich were also guests. However, in addition to politicians, many other personalities, university professors, writers, painters and actors also visited Sikonda.¹²

Although Sikonda had been called a spa since 1933, it was not officially promoted to the rank of spa until 1935 by the Decision No. XIII of the Minister of the Interior. This decree authorised the use of the spa for public use, and since then its name has officially been "Sikonda Spa."¹³ In the same year, Andor Kolossváry¹⁴ retired and the spa was leased. Sikonda Gyógyfürdő és Szálloda Kft., Headquartered in Budapest, was established in 1935 with a share capital of 15,000 Pengő.¹⁵ The identity of the tenants changed once in the period. In 1939, Géza Breznay, an internal medicine rheumatologist, appeared among the managing directors of the company, who rented the facility with his wife from 1940.¹⁶

The seemingly promising development was interrupted by World War II. The institution suffered from the war, though not in the same sense as other areas. The spa, away from heavy traffic, was not directly damaged by the war, but in the turmoil it was completely looted by the locals. Movable objects were taken and non-movable objects were severely damaged.¹⁷

However, World War II did not only bring destruction to Sikonda, but to Hungary in general. At the end of the fighting, the country came under Soviet occupation. As the end of the war also meant the redistribution of spheres of interest, our country came under the influence of the Soviet Union. Under the leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP), the transformation of the country into a "satellite state" began, and the Sovietisation of the country, which was essential for this, began in the first moments. In economic terms, the process began with nationalisations, an important part of which was the nationalisation of the coal mines of Sikonda, which was voted on by the National Assembly at the end of 1945.¹⁸ Accordingly, First-

¹⁰ *Polics, József*: A 85 éves Sikonda története. In: *Múltunk a jelenben 2. A komlói településtörténeti konferenciák 2012-2013.* (Edited by Páll Lajos). Komló 2014. 140.

¹¹ *Szászi, Tibor – Kovács, András*: Sikonda. 23-24.

¹² *Vratarics, Györgyné*: Sikonda-fürdő története 1928-1978. Sikonda 1988. 25-26., *Dunántúl*, 12. 07. 1932.; *Dunántúl*, 22. 07. 1934.

¹³ *Dunántúl*, 24. 03. 1935.

¹⁴ *Dunántúl* 03. 07. 1935., *Magyarság*, 08. 08. 1935.

¹⁵ Nagy Magyar Compass 60/2.: Nagy „Magyar Compass” (Before that, Mihók’s) 1936-1937. Anniversary – 60th – year. part 2.: Iparvállalatok. Edited Heir of Nagy Galánthai Sándor. Budapest 1936. 501.

¹⁶ Nagy Magyar Compass 63/2.: Nagy „Magyar Compass” (Before that, Mihók’s) 1939-1940. 63rd year. part 2: Iparvállalatok. (Edited Heir of Nagy Galánthai Sándor). Budapest 1939. 519, Nagy Magyar Compass 64/2.: Nagy „Magyar Compass” (Before that, Mihók’s) 1940-1941. 64th year. part 2: Iparvállalatok. Edited Heir of Nagy Galánthai Sándor. Budapest 1940. 512.

¹⁷ *Soós, Józsefné – Tímár, Istvánné*: Sikonda-fürdő története (1927-2014). Komló 2015. 27.

¹⁸ *Domonkos, Endre*: Közép- és Kelet-Európa gazdaságtörténete 1945-1953 között. Budapest 2019. 81-82.; *Huszár, Zoltán*: Integrációs kísérlet... 352.

Danube-Steamboat-Shipping Company were liquidated¹⁹. However, as the German imperial property became Soviet property under the Potsdam Treaty, the mines owned by First-Danube-Steamboat-Shipping Company became Soviet state property, while the property leased from the church became Hungarian state property.²⁰ This explains why the Mecsek coal mines were a Soviet-Hungarian joint venture, the Hungarian-Soviet Shipping Company (MESZHART).²¹

In the case of Sikonda, the transition took longer. The spa, as we saw earlier, was rented by Géza Breznay from the cathedral estate, but he was no longer able to operate it properly from 1944 due to the looting during the war. The facility became essentially inoperable. The reopening of the spa – in parallel with the general resumption of the country's operation – became increasingly urgent. As a first step, the Pécs Cathedral Estate made a complaint in 1946 about the looting. In 1947, the investigation was closed, and the perpetrators and some of the hijacked equipment were bypassed.²² The other important step was the re-leasing of the spa. As a result of a government decree of 1945²³, the right to dispose of the 27-acre Sikonda forest fell into the hands of the Land Policy Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. Therefore, leasing became the task of the Pécs Forest Directorate, which was called for by the Minister of Agriculture. It is characteristic of the confusion of the ownership of the time that the new contract, dated April 13, 1946, was signed by the tenant Gábor Kovács and his colleagues, as well as by the headquarters of the landlord Pécs Forest Directorate. Moreover, the latter was conditional on the contract being reviewed after 10 years, and the tenant repairing the war damage, tidying up the spa, and opening it as soon as possible.²⁴

However, the operation of the spa on a lease basis could only take place in a significant political headwind, as it became clear in the first months. The miners' union set a goal to take over the spa for its own purposes as early as in 1946, and the Pécs City Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party was informed about it on 22 May.²⁵ Afterwards, the press also announced the plans: *“Also the implementation of a work plan point, the claim of Sikonda Spa for the purpose of a working holiday. Sikonda is located in a picturesque part of the Mecsek, a spa with warm healing water. In the past, this spa was rented by private contractors, who made quite a profit from the spa's turnover, but workers, especially miners in the area, did not have the opportunity to use the healing water to refresh their hard-working bodies because of the expensive spa prices. Now the union is demanding the spa, and if the spa becomes the property of the union, it means that all workers can enjoy the healing water that provides health in a cheap and homely environment.”*²⁶

The attacks from the trade union through the press continued in the following months. Új Dunántúl dealt with the issue of Sikonda in a voluminous article, the title of which was already telling: *“Sikonda goes to the dogs”* At the beginning of the article, the chair chapter was immediately attacked. According to this, they circumvented the land tenure ordinance in the lease contract because only the Ministry of Agriculture would have had the right to do so. The accusations went on to describe the operating conditions: *“However, with their contractual obligation to start repairing the war damage as a matter of urgency, these tenants did not comply at all, only to the extent that the spa was opened in the most impossible and anti-hygienic conditions. So it was opened, but how? Some rosy cabins were carved together with mining children in need of*

¹⁹ 1946. évi XIII. Act on the Nationalisation of Coal Mining. Announced: 26 June 1946

²⁰ Jóvátételi Hivatal 29063/1946. number regulation

²¹ Huszár, Zoltán: Integrációs kísérlet... 352.

²² Dunántúli Népszava, 22. 10. 1947.

²³ Magyar Közlöny, 18. 03. 1945.

²⁴ Új Dunántúl, 28. 08. 1946.

²⁵ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Baranya Megyei Levéltára (National Archives of Hungary, Baranya County Archives). X.17. Papers of the Pécs Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party, report of the management meeting et 22.5.1946.

²⁶ Új Dunántúl, 02. 06. 1946.

a holiday, the condition of which is below criticism, as closing the doors is not possible at all, they can only be supported. The water is constantly infected and smells of dirt. "In this respect, the surrounding forests are no exception, because the remains of animal carcasses left over from the war have not been removed to this day, and the masses of mounds of corpses that cover rotting corpses only increase the spread of various skin diseases."²⁷ A pile of rubble not at all suitable for bathing, which had to be reached through rotting animal carcasses. The union protesting against the conditions, of course, considered recruitment to be the right solution and kept protesting against the conditions. However, the article quoted earlier also contains other interesting points: "Bathers are there, of course, even in such circumstances, and this provides a very good livelihood for tenants, as their expenses would be kept to a minimum. And day by day, more and more values disappear from the building, so there is no restoration, but permanent destruction."²⁸ In other words, there still seem to be bathers, which is hard to imagine under the conditions described. Of course, it is conceivable that values disappeared from the buildings, but obviously a tenant has no interest in depreciating the leased property to such an extent as to jeopardise their income.

At the end of the 1940s, the spas of Baranya, Sikonda and Harkány were nationalised. That is why it is now difficult to find out how much propaganda and how much reality there is in these newspaper articles. In any case, it is a fact that they had to support the process of nationalisation to some degree with a social need. In this respect, the protest of the trade union certainly drove the water to the mill of nationalisation. In addition to the constant press attacks, the union submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Agriculture, using a contemporary phrase: with the aim of finally making the spa belong to the "working people".

Nationalisation and its consequences

The nationalisation took place in 1948. After the institution was taken over by the state, the Ministry of Welfare ordered the liquidation of the Sikonda spa. It entrusted the Financial Institutions Centre with the liquidation.²⁹ Earlier this year, the government established the Mecsekvidék Spas and Resorts Large Company, based in Pécs. Together with the Harkány Spa and the Pécs Mecsek Resort, the Sikonda Spa also became part of this company.³⁰ This company was liquidated in the early fifties and Sikonda was merged with the Harkány Spa Company. The spa hotel itself was managed by the National Council of Trade Unions. Until 1952, the building was used partly for trade union purposes and partly for children's recreation.

From the 1950s onwards, Hungary introduced a planned management system. The first five-year plan, starting in 1950, aimed to make Hungary a country of iron and steel. It is a fact that, based on the pace of post-war reconstruction, unrealistic goals were set from the outset, which, moreover, were set out.³¹ From the Hungarian point of view, it is especially important that after an agreement with the Soviet Union, the mines around Pécs became fully Hungarian property on 1 October, 1952, with the repurchase of Soviet shares in MESZHART, and continued to operate under the name of Pécs Coal Mines Company,³² and thanks to the huge investments, in addition to the coal mines in Pécs, the coal mining in Komló also developed at an accelerating pace. Komló itself developed into a socialist city; its population increased from 3,000 to 15,000 in ten years from 1951. The extracted coal reached and then exceeded the capacity of 1 million tons, and shipments to Sztálinváros also started.³³

²⁷ *Új Dunántúl*, 28. 08. 1946.

²⁸ *Új Dunántúl*, 28. 08. 1946.

²⁹ *Magyar Közlöny*, 04. 05. 1949.

³⁰ *Magyar Közlöny*, 06. 12. 1949.

³¹ *Kaposi, Zoltán: Magyarország gazdaságtörténete 1700-2000. Budapest-Pécs 2002. 350.*

³² *Huszár, Zoltán: Integrációs kísérlet... 352-353.*

³³ *Kaposi, Zoltán: Magyarország... 356.*

Sikondafürdő also became part of the infrastructure of coal mining in Komló. In early 1953, the spa hotel building was taken over by the Ministry of Coal Mining. In the previous year, the National Economic Council issued Resolution 332/26/1952. Resolution No. NT, in which the conversion of the spa resort of Sikonda, which had been used as a resort until then, into a so-called night spa resort was ordered. This nocturnal sanatorium opened on 8 March, 1953. Although the area was close to Komló (Sikonda was already part of Komló from 1958), not only the miners of Komló could use the institution, but also the miners of Pécs, partly from 1954.³⁴

Nursing homes were a special type of contemporary medical care. The model of the institution, of course, came from the Soviet Union. These spas were not primarily for medical purposes. Despite the fact that it was possible to get in with a referral and they were used under medical supervision, the primary function of these night sanatoriums was a kind of regeneration. It was thought that the transition between medical and occupational rehabilitation could be ensured with this institution. As a gradual and partial return to work was not considered feasible, the concept was that if the workload remained unchanged, the miner would be placed in a sanatorium for the night, eliminating the workload at home: *“The serene atmosphere of a well-run sanatorium spares the person in need of mercy from the day-to-day, often depressing problems of the home and frees them from the burdens and obligations that flow from it. It is relieved of the problems of feeding, the burden of tidying up the apartment, and this is especially significant for single people and women and mothers who bow under the burden of the “second shift”. The nursing home at night usually offers more favourable conditions for both night and day rest than was provided under the home conditions of the workers.”*³⁵ So the miners partly rested and partly strengthened. Part of this was that instead of less varied and less calorie-rich home meals, miners were given better quality food, in larger quantities, with more calories, under medical supervision. Thus, the operation of night sanatoriums was in fact necessary due to the low standard of living. This, of course, was never stated directly, but one of the works dealing with Sikonda described the situation with the following lines: *“In the early 1960s – with the rise in living standards and the improvement of supply conditions, it became increasingly clear that the miner no longer needed a spa almost exclusively to improve their physical fitness and condition, which was set in the early 50s. institution.”*³⁶

In the Kádár era, a new economic policy began in 1958. Compared to the Rákosi era, the development of new industries became important, but it was planned to complete the already started investments – thus the investments in Mecsek, including Pécs, Komló and Szászvár.³⁷ At the same time, other mining investments continued, as well.³⁸

From 1963 onwards, the night sanatoriums were also slowly transformed, adding another function to the existing one. The operation of the Sikonda Bath then shifted more strongly towards medicine.³⁹ In the following years and decades, not only miners who usually wanted to regenerate or relax visited the facility, but also those who wanted to recover from joint disease. At the same time, the nocturnal sanatorium function was also maintained. In the eighties, the institution, which could receive 100 patients at a time, received 1,600–1,700 miners a year, and then not only from Baranya, but also from e.g. the coal mines of Veszprém.⁴⁰ Thus, a mining health centre was established in Sikonda, which operated in this capacity in the following times.

³⁴ Szászi, Tibor – Kovács, András: Sikonda 31–33.

³⁵ Rózsahegy, István: Az éjjeli szanatóriumok szerepe a rehabilitációban. Orvosi Hetilap, 08.1963. 1565.

³⁶ Szászi, Tibor – Kovács, András: Sikonda. 34.

³⁷ Kaposi, Zoltán: Magyarország... 374–375.

³⁸ Kaposi, Zoltán: Magyarország... 379.

³⁹ Dunántúli Napló, 24. 10. 1963.

⁴⁰ Dunántúli Napló, 07. 12. 1983.

Sikonda, the sample

Night sanatoriums and industrial spas

In 1963, the *Dunántúli Napló* boasted that Sikonda was the only night sanatorium in the country open to miners.⁴¹ This was indeed true, the institution of night sanatoriums was a relatively rare phenomenon despite the Soviet pattern. At the same time, the institution itself existed, although undoubtedly a night sanatorium for miners was typical only in Sikonda. The presentation and propagation of the Soviet model can be traced continuously from the end of 1944. Hungarian doctors noticed the phenomenon very soon.⁴² Until the opening of the sanatoriums in Sikonda and then in other night sanatoriums, various professional newspapers and press outlets continuously reported on the operation, successes and advantages of Soviet facilities.⁴³

Although Sikonda was the first in time, in the 1950s, several similar institutions were established in other sectors in other parts of the country. In 1953, in Görömbölytapolca (today Miskolctapolca), Lenin Metallurgical Works established a night sanatorium for its metallurgists. Some recollections point to this as the invention of Márton Valkó, the then CEO, but apart from its exaggeration, he undoubtedly played a major role in the establishment of the institution.⁴⁴ Its operation was essentially the same as the Sikonda system. The workers did not go to their own homes after work, but to the sanatorium: *“Every morning, a bus takes the residents of the sanatorium to the factory from Görömbölytapolca and a separate bus also takes them back to the sanatorium after working hours. Here they have only one task; gain weight, relax, have fun. For all this, the factory provided plenty of conditions: they served 5,700 calories in front of them in the form of paprika chicken, or stew, pancakes, or cake – to mention lunch for just one day. Fattening takes place in a race: at the end of the three-week turn, the winner gets a cake.”*⁴⁵

Like the Görömbölytapolca, the two night sanatoriums in Budapest, established in the 1950s, were established similarly to the Sikonda institution, but in the Soviet model. The Royal Forest Night Sanatorium for the workers of Rákosi Mátyás Works in Csepel was inaugurated in 1955, where the rehabilitation of iron workers took place.⁴⁶ According to the plans, about 100 workers were to be rehabilitated in the first quarter.⁴⁷ In the other Budapest night sanatorium, similarly to the institution of the iron foundry in Csepel, the supply was planned for 100 people.⁴⁸

Until the end of the fifties, these four institutions functioned as night sanatoriums.⁴⁹ In the light of all this, we can state that the night sanatorium in Sikonda was not a unique phenomenon in the country. It also functioned as an example within a country, despite the fact that it basically followed only a pattern given by the Soviet Union. Thus, it was not a unique phenomenon that the factories and plants maintained an institution for their employees for the purpose of rehabilitation. It is important to state, however, that in the cases discussed so far, we have not primarily talked about therapeutic treatments. In connection with the already mentioned economic-supply situation, we can talk about a series of strengthening and condition-improving measures. This may also explain why such rehabilitative institutions were established in these

⁴¹ *Dunántúli Napló*, 24. 10. 1963.

⁴² *Orvosok Lapja*, 1946/13. 815.

⁴³ *Népszava*, 16. 05. 1948. and 19. 06. 1949.

⁴⁴ *Az Acélváros végnapjai: Az Acélváros végnapjai. Hogyan semmisült meg húszezer ember munkahelye a Lenin Kohászati Művekben.* (Edited Lőránt, Károly). Lakitelek 2017. 109.

⁴⁵ *Magyar Ifjúság*, 23. 04. 1960.

⁴⁶ *Magyar Nemzet*, 18. 01. 1955.

⁴⁷ *Szabad Nép*, 21. 12. 1954.

⁴⁸ *Szabad Nép*, 07. 10. 1954.

⁴⁹ *Népszabadság*, 06. 11. 1958.

cases. Coal mining was a key element of the socialist economy, as was iron and metallurgy. In these areas, ensuring production and achieving the planned targets was of key importance. Therefore, it may have been important to also address the fitness of those who work here.

Miner sanatoriums

As mentioned, after 1963, in addition to the reinforcing rehabilitation, a service for patients with a definite medical purpose, i.e. medicine, appeared in Sikonda. As a result of the change of attitude, the third Mining Health Days were held here on 22-25 September, 1965, the lectures and related discussions of which highlighted the health problems of miners and possible solutions.⁵⁰ The lectures revealed that the main problem is dust protection, and the ensuing silicosis, as well as various locomotor and joint disorders. The medical centre in Sikonda, as it was built on the thermal water source found there, was suitable for the treatment of the latter. At the same time, as it is located in a relatively closed and thus more inaccessible area, the Mecsek Mountains, the fresh and clean air there also has a beneficial effect on the lungs, despite the fact that it did not have a profile of pulmonary medicine.

Therefore, during the period of socialism, Sikonda was not the only miners' medical centre, and the Mecsek Coal Mining Trust was not the only company that took care of the health and rehabilitation of its workers, in this case its miners. In the following, we will look at which areas of the country had already established corporate mining sanatoriums.

As in the case of nocturnal sanatoriums, we examine an example from Borsod in the case of mining sanatoriums. The county's coal mines were managed by the Borsod Coal Mining Trust. While Sikonda healed miners suffering from rheumatic ailments, here there was an opportunity to remedy respiratory complaints. In 1966, a cave sanatorium was opened in the Béke Cave in Jósvafő for miners with asthma and chronic bronchitis.⁵¹ The dust-free air of the cave was very suitable for this purpose, which is why it was officially declared a health resort from 1969.⁵² In the years that followed, the cave was constantly visited, even by guests from abroad. Their success was also due to the fact that as a result of the cure, many people were able to stop taking their medications in part or in whole.⁵³ Later, the company maintained the facility, so we can essentially say that it took care of the rehabilitation of its employees.⁵⁴

The other place where miners' sanatoriums opened was the shore of Lake Balaton. In this case, it was obviously possible to combine the medical and rehabilitation phases, the rest with the healing. There were several coal mining companies north of Lake Balaton: in Dorog, in Transdanubia, in Oroszlány, in Tatabánya and in the castle palaces. Balatonfüred came close to them, where a miner's sanatorium was opened in the renovated Horváth House in 1960.⁵⁵ Despite the proximity of the coal mines, the sanatorium was operated not by them but by the Mecsek Ore Mining Company (MÉV), who renovated the building again in 1975.⁵⁶ A location provided an opportunity for healing and bathing at the same time. All this also shows that among the miners of Pécs, not only the coal miners but also the uranium miners had a plant sanatorium. Moreover, the latter may have regenerated in their institution a few years after the opening of the mine.

⁵⁰ Bányaegészségügy: A bányaegészségügy egyes kérdései II: A III. bányaegészségügyi napok előadásai és vitái. Sikonda, 1965. IX. 22-25. Sikonda 1966.

⁵¹ *Észak-Magyarország*, 28. 05. 1966.

⁵² *Észak-Magyarország*, 17. 12. 1969.

⁵³ *Magyar Nemzet*, 30. 06. 1971.

⁵⁴ 200 éves a borsodi szénbányászat: 200 éves a borsodi szénbányászat 1786-1986. (authors and edited Bertalanfy Béla et al.). [Miskolc] 1986. 186.

⁵⁵ *Középdunántúli Napló*, 09. 06. 1960., *Képes Magyarország*, 01. 08. 1960.

⁵⁶ *Napló [Veszprém]*, 24. 04. 1975.

A little later, the Siófok miners' sanatorium was also established on the shores of Lake Balaton. In 1983, at the initiative of the Ministry of Health and the National Council of Trade Unions, the mining resort of Siófok was transformed and developed into a dual-function institution at the end of the holiday season.⁵⁷ It operated as a mining sanatorium out of season and as a resort during the season. In fact, it was also effective against winter underutilisation. Those referred could spend two weeks here, which could be extended by one week. They dealt mainly with musculoskeletal, but partly with intestinal diseases.⁵⁸ This institution operated under the management of the National Council of Trade Unions, and healing could also be linked to rest.

So we can see that the institution of the miners' sanatorium itself is not unprecedented in the country. An institution similar to Sikonda can be observed in many parts of the country. Some of these can be linked directly to a mining company, others to the National Council of Trade Unions. The institutions directly belonging to the mine also operated mainly with the help of the local trade union.

Conclusions

Sikonda's thermal water has enormous potential in terms of both temperature and mineral content. These opportunities began to be exploited essentially immediately after its discovery. First, immediately after the retirement of the chair chapter and then of Andor Kolossváry, entrepreneurs and doctors from Budapest operated the spa. Prior to World War II, it gained national fame and became a popular resort, not just for the surrounding residents. The First-Danube-Steamboat-Shipping Company, which owned the Mecsek coal mines, supported from the outset the miners in handling their rheumatic complaints in the medicinal water of Sikonda. However, the spa hotel was difficult to reach for lower-income miners due to its relatively high prices. The devastation of World War II, followed by turmoil and favourable political conditions, allowed the hostel to be taken into state ownership at the request of the union and converted into a mining sanatorium.

The process was not unique: similar processes took place in many parts of the country. The nationalised hostels were also opened to the lower income groups, so Sikonda's attendance also became massive. During the period of socialism, companies, usually through trade unions, took care of the healing, rehabilitation, and regeneration of their workers in general. These goals were also served by factory trade unions, hospitals, sanatoriums and resorts. If possible, some natural endowment was used: caves in the case of respiratory diseases, and medical and thermal springs in the case of locomotor diseases, or they simply installed the institution next to Lake Balaton, combining healing with rest, even within the framework of a dual-function institution. The latter was characteristic not only of mining but of all segments of the economy.

However, Sikonda's story contains something unique. Although it operated on the basis of the Soviet model, it took over its system from there – this is especially true of the institution of the night sanatorium –, its activity in Hungary was definitely a novelty. The first nursing home was created here, and the experience gained here was used in other parts of the country as well. At the same time, although it was not the first miner sanatorium, on the one hand it is one of the most significant at the national level and on the other hand the only institution that has united the two forms of sanatorium and unites it to this day. The Mining Aftercare and Night Sanatorium is still in operation today, and in 2012 it was renovated with EU funds.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Somogyi Néplap*, 07. 08. 1983.

⁵⁸ *Somogyi Néplap*, 31. 12. 1983.

⁵⁹ *Világgazdaság*, 10. 08. 2012.