

**LÁSZLÓ BÓNA**

**Contributions to the Ethnic Changes of Késmárk in the 19th Century  
I.**

Pro&Contra 4

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## Abstract

The study examines the ethnic changes of Késmárk in the age of dualism. In the course of my research, I attempted to map the operation and contemporary situation of the city in a complex way. The extremely voluminous source material did not allow us to present Kežmarok in an arc of studies, so this study is only with the nationalization of the Dualism era, the local historical society, local schools, local newspapers and the state of community norms. The study also includes research on religious differences, as well as local Hungarian and Slovak national building efforts.

**Keywords:** Késmárk, Kežmarok, Dualism, National struggles, Ethnicity in Austria-Hungary

In the second half of the 19th century, the belief that all inhabitants of the Austrian Empire belonged to one of the ethnolinguistic nations had spread among the middle classes and was acknowledged by the state. Despite differences of opinion, the classification of languages and nations also stabilized. After the Compromise of 1867, the Austrian legal framework guaranteed equality to these nations, while in Hungary, which defined itself as a nation-state, laws protected the linguistic rights of non-Hungarian nationalities. In practice, however, Hungarian nationalists increasingly attempted to restrict minority rights languages, because they promoted a view of French nationality, the “hungarus consciousness” with its emphasis on the origins of a common, thousand year history, the ownership of the state by force and the supremacy of the Hungarian culture. There were many minorities within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, one of them being the Saxons-German mining settlers present in the area from the middle ages in northern part of the country. The first mention of the city is from the year 1251. This document mentions a settlement of “Saxonus” located near the village of Saint Michael, and which was transferred by IV. Béla to the property of Premontrei monastery in Znióvárálja.<sup>1</sup> The settlers appeared in the document as “...in Schypis villam Saxonum...”<sup>2</sup> The ethnic image of the population did not fundamentally change, so the German population retained its dominant role until the middle of the 20th century. In the 19th century, supporters of its Hungarian name tried

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<sup>1</sup>We are left with only a transcript from 1286, MOL Budapest, DL 346. “ecclesia sancti Michaelis” and “villa Saxonum apud ecclesiam sancte Elisabeth” the name of the temples where probably better known, hence the name. *Život v Kežmarku v 13. až 20. storočí*. eds. Baráthová a kol. eds, (Kežmarok: Jadro, 2014).

<sup>2</sup>Baráthová a kol. *Život v Kežmarku v 13. až 20. storočí*. 77. Quotes: Maršina Richard, Codex diplomaticus patrius IV. Budapest 1867. 370 sz., 258. 2014.

to have Kevesmark, or quadsmark, geyzmarkt (after Géza) accepted as well. However, we cannot derive a single explanation of any of these names from the Hungarian or Slavic language. The German “guests” formed a much stronger ethnic unit than the surrounding Slavic population and this fact persisted for almost 700 years. The city of the Szepesség is intended to be a hallmark of cities where, according to the census of 1880-1910, the number of Slovaks increased (on average + 12.55%), and the proportion of Hungarians increased (on average + 7.91%), and that of Germans significantly decreased (on average -18.10%). Here we can find 22 urban settlements, e.g.: Gölnicbánya, Vágújhely and the case study discussed below, Késmárk. The group, in accordance with the other four, can be called a “Slovakized” one due to the increasing importance of the Slovak and Hungarian ethnic groups.<sup>3</sup> I started my research by analysing the current Slovak and early 20th century Hungarian academic literature on its socio-economic development. The modern academic literature of the 19th and 20th centuries primarily consists of works of Hungarian and German historians and authors. Slovak authors did not deal with this topic as until the Second World War Késmárk was not considered a Slovak city, but rather a German or even a Hungarian one. On the other hand, today’s modern Hungarian academic literature is mostly concerned with the Szepesség and not with a specific city.<sup>4</sup> No one dealt with the ethnic history of Késmárk in the era of Dualism in any depth. My actual starting point was mapping the social, ethnic, economic and educational structure of the contemporary city utilising archival materials. The most important of these were the minutes of the general assemblies of the city. In addition to these, I also examined school supervisor reports, ministerial petitions and rescripts, mayor’s and county correspondence, medical reports, police reports, city ordinances, infringement procedures, association regulations, economic documents, the activities of the railway and the local Upper Hungarian (Felvidék) Cultural Association (FMKE). In my research, I primarily used the documents of the Poprád (Szepesszombat) archives and the documents of the National Széchenyi Library. The local press was extremely diverse; I particularly used the *Szepesi Lapok* from 1885 until 1904.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For more details on groups and case studies, see the manuscript of the PhD dissertation, László Bóna: „*A nemzetiségi viszonyok változásai a magyar-szlovák kontaktzóna kiválasztott városaiban a dualizmus idején. (Gazdasági, politikai, demográfiai, társadalomtörténeti elemzés)*”, [“*Changes in ethnic relations in selected cities of the Hungarian-Slovak contact zone during the era of Dualism. (An economic, political, demographic and social historical analysis)*”], Supervisor: József Pap, Eger, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Baráthová kol., *Život v Kežmarku v 13. a 20. storočí*, 159.

<sup>5</sup> The *Szepesi Lapok* openly supported the idea of the Hungarian nation-state and reported on all forms of nationality matters, which also affected the Szepesség, and thus Késmárk. They were published in Igló in 1885, and their publisher and owner was József Schmidt. The first editor-in-chief was also the president of the Hungarian self-education circle of Igló grammar school. The first editorial: “The Hungarian language has never gained so much prominence as it has in recent times. The reason for this lies in the spirit of our time.

### The Ethnic Changes in Késmárk in the Decades of Dualism

While the town had 4,475 inhabitants in 1880, by 1910 that number had grown to 6,307. The city, far north of the language border in the classical sense, the Slovak-Hungarian contact zone was a place where many ethnic and religious communities coexisted. According to the 1880 census, it was considered to be a German-majority settlement making up 72% of the inhabitants although the proportion of Slovaks was 16% and the proportion of those who declared themselves Hungarian was 8%. Thus, the multilingual city, like the other cities of the Szepesség was German-dominated, but it displayed a multi-ethnic character. According to the data of the 1910 census, the proportion of Slovaks in the German-majority city (51%) increased to 25%, while the proportion of the population declaring themselves to be Hungarian increased to 21%. In addition to census data, we also have annual city registers, the *popularis ignobils* available, which continued every year from 1810-1819 to the end of Dualism.<sup>6</sup>

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[...] Nationality as a dominant idea is the closest link between the individuals of the state [...]. There has never been a Hungarian newspaper in Szepes County so far..." Thus the editorial staff became a chronicler of this 'event', moreover, they also welcomed articles written in German, which they translated, and they expressed their hope that the Hungarian-minded population would help maintain the paper. Although it focused mainly on Lőcse and Igló, Késmárk also appears prominently in the columns of the newspaper. In the November 8, 1885 issue of the paper, we read that it "has more than 400 subscribers although "there are many who take German newspapers in the county and [...] they support [BL: our newspaper] feeling a liking for Hungarianization". From the 1890s onwards, in the lower-case letter "Social and Cultural Weekly", and then in upper case letters "Official Gazette of the Municipal Authorities of Szepes County", again in lower case letter "F.M.K.E. Gazette of the Szepes County Committee" at the same time. However, later it also occurred in the paper that the Saxons of Transylvania were scolded, being depicted as unfaithful to Hungary although they owed everything to it. In fact, this paper was not published in Késmárk, but until the end of Dualism, the *Karpaten Post* of Késmárk was predominantly written in German. As the *Szepesi Lapok* were more sensitive to the ethnic issues of the area, the choice fell on them. In Szepes County, several attempts were made to launch another, monolingual Hungarian newspaper, but with no lasting success. Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár, Mikrofilmár, [National Széchenyi Library, Microfilm Library], FM3/969 1, *Szepesi Lapok* [Szepes Papers] 1885-1919. By 1904, with the help of increasing state support, it had become a daily newspaper. Lőcse Archives. Spišská župa (Szepes county) 35 karton, 1903. 3041/ III, and 1904 4061/222.

<sup>6</sup>Štátny Archív v Prešove, pracovisko Archív Poprad. (ŠAPAP – Hereinafter Szepesszombat Archives) Magistrát Mesta Kežmarok (hereinafter Késmárk Magistrate) Ig-111, Ig 112, *Popularis Ignobilum* 1810-1918. Until the middle of the 19th century, it includes the house number, name, age in some places, and occupation, number of dogs and horses, and without exception, religion. Recorded in Hungarian from 1890, but we can find language proficiency data only from 1910.

Source	Year	Total population	Hungarian	Can speak Hungarian	Hungarian %	Slovak	%	German	%
Census Joseph II.	1784	4284 (4487)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Austrian Census	1869	3938	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hungarian Census	1880	4475	347	815	7.75	705	15.75	3222	72
Hungarian Census	1890	4897	574	1 582	11.72	1005	20.52	3225	65.86
Hungarian Census	1900	5606	952	2 380	16.98	1074	19.16	3408	60.79
Hungarian Census	1910	6317	1314	3 385	20.80	1606	25.42	3242	51.32
CzechSl. Census	1921	6466	280	-	4.33	2507	38.77	-	37,9%
CzechSl. Census	1930	7228	133	-	1.84	3025	41.85	-	35,7%

**Table 1. The ethnic composition of Késmárk according to the 1784-1930 censuses**

Year	Total population	Jewish	Roman catholic (Latin)	Augustan (Evangelical)	Reformed	Greek catholic
1869	3938	272	1684	1918	-	47
1880	4475	541	1949	1801	84	92
1890	4897	-	-	-	-	-
1900	5606	907	2829	1610	103	155
1910	6317	1050	3454	1543	95	138
1921	6466	1250	3590	1393	19	149
1930	7228	1166	4090	1533	44	227

**Table 2. The main denominational data of the population of Késmárk 1880-1930<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> In 1910 instead of the term Roman Catholic Latin was used while instead of the term Helvetic only Reformed, instead of the term Augustan Augustan Lutheran was used. <http://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/collection/>

As my research reveals, Késmárk cannot truly be examined without taking into consideration the strongly marked environment of Szepes County.<sup>8</sup> The city of Késmárk belonged to the group where the proportion of Hungarians increased, but clearly to the detriment of the German rather than the Slovak population. It is noteworthy that, apart from a few settlements, the largest increase in the Slovak population of the cities of the studied area<sup>9</sup> was due to the small towns of Szepes County. In the case of the villages of the Szepesség, the Slovak historian Michal Kaľavský wrote of the rise of Slovaks to the detriment of both the German and the Polish-Goral population in the 18th century. The same was also confirmed by several articles in the *Szepesi Lapok*. However, the city of Késmárk was defined by most sources as a pure German, Zipser or Saxon city. By the 19th century, however, the change in the ethnic composition of the region surrounding the city had become more strongly marked. According to Mišík Štefan from the Szepesség, Slovakia (who wrote his thought below in 1903): “Today we can say without any exaggeration that the days of the Germans in the Szepesség are numbered, they still hold their own for a while compared to the Slovaks and Poles...”<sup>10</sup> Frigyes Sváby, an archivist of Szepes County also wrote something similar in 1901: “In Késmárk we can witness a sad social phenomenon, native families and names that have survived for centuries die out because the poorer ones emigrate, those who got used to working in the field do not want to work in a factory. However, it is a fact that the owners of factories established there bring workers from the Czech Republic and Moravia, Silesia and Galicia...”<sup>11</sup>

After the Compromise, the city, which was economically stagnant for another decade, began to develop rapidly in the 1880s. Previously, in the city, which mostly struggled for the survival of guilds, offices, and the local military, the sewer network was built at this time, and then about half a dozen schools were opened.<sup>12</sup> In the first half of the 1890s, the stone sidewalks of the main streets were also laid. Until then, there was only

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ksh\_neda\_nepszamlalások/, [http://sodb.infostat.sk/SODB\\_19212001/slovak/1930/format.htm](http://sodb.infostat.sk/SODB_19212001/slovak/1930/format.htm), <http://telepulesek.adatbank.sk/>

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the administrative framework, the cohesion of the towns of Szepesség is also indicated by the Szepesség Public Hospital, the alms house, the Szepes County Historical Society, the county universality of the press, and many other associations.

<sup>9</sup> When designating the area, I considered the statistical districts of the era of Dualism, within which the counties on the left bank of the Danube and the right bank of the Tisza.

<sup>10</sup> Franková, Líbuša, “Národný vývin na Spiši v 19. storočí,” in *Spiš v kontinuite času - Zips in der kontinuierat der zeit*, ed. Peter Štvorc (Presov-Bratislava-Wien, Universum, 1995), 123.

<sup>11</sup> Frigyes Sváby, *A Szepesség lakosságának sociológiai viszonyai a XV. és XIX. században* (Lőcse, 1901), 68.

<sup>12</sup> For example, the competition between Szepesbéla and Késmárk for the location of the Royal District Court, which remained in Késmárk at the end of the battle. Or the issue of where to locate the office of the lord-lieutenant in Podolin and Ólubló in 1883.

mud or at best there were sandstone sidewalks in the city. In the mid-1890s, electric lighting, afforestation, and the “telephone” for a certain part of the city also arrived. At that time, tourist roads and tourist houses had been built in the nearby High Tatras for more than a decade, due to the department of the Hungarian Tatras Association. The Poprád-Késmárk railway line also boosted the industry, and the city spent 160,000 Forints in capital. By the turn of the 20th century, mainly due to the textile industry, there were about 1700–1800 permanent factory jobs in the city. At that time, the natural increase of the city’s population was around 50 people a year.<sup>13</sup> The prestige and attractiveness of the town did not decrease at all; the villages and small towns of the area consider only Késmárk to be a town, Stadt. “A person living in this region never says that he or she goes to Késmárk, he or she comes from Késmár, but: he or she leaves for the “city”, he or she returns from the “city”.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, by the end of the era, Késmárk drifted towards the brink of insolvency, and alcohol use caused the biggest social problem to the people of the city.<sup>15</sup>

### **A Society in the Spirit of Local Patriotism, Nationalization of Urban Space**

By the end of the era, the German elite of Késmárk had successfully linked its local history with the great national narrative. The people in Késmárk renamed a few streets in the early 1880s. The street names at that time did not yet reflect the Hungarian national identity; streets were renamed mostly for practical reasons. The square in front of the district court changed to Thököly Square, which is the only street name change in Késmárk in the 1880s that can be linked to local identity. After a comprehensive nationwide “national awakening” of the closing millennium of the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin around 894-896, it took a decade and a half for German or German-sounding streets to be renamed in the German-majority city. A total of 48 “street” names were changed or replaced by designated committee members, following a proposal advanced by the city council. This proposal was then accepted by the General Assembly with a slight modification. However, almost two-thirds of these were more of a spelling change *utcza-utca* (street), hyphen addition, the addition of “köz (alley)” or “tér (square)” to it, and the like. On the whole – including the previously named Kossuth, Thököly Square and Erzsébet Street, and Ilona Zrínyi Square and Thököly

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<sup>13</sup> Population data: there were had 198 births and 154 deaths in Késmárk. in: Szepesi Lapok January 17, 1897.

<sup>14</sup> Győző Bruckner and Károly Bruckner, *Késmárki Kalauz* (Késmárk, 1912), 12.

<sup>15</sup> See previous footnote.



Street named in 1909 – 16 new streets were created with Hungarian names. Of these 16, two can be connected mainly to local identity: Vértanúk útja (the Way of Martyrs) and Vérmező (Field of Blood) – to the uprisings of the Upper Nobility, and the other five were streets that can be connected to local identity (Kray, Hunfalvi, Késmárk, Lányi and Topperczer).<sup>16</sup> Two streets are the best examples of the successful integration of national identity (Kossuth and Erzsébet street), and another two are those of the integration of mixed, i.e. local identity (Thököly square and street, Ilona Zrínyi square). Thus, the balance is 14 Hungarianized streets, 5 new streets connected to national identity and 10 new ones connected to local identity.<sup>17</sup> However, almost all of these could be integrated organically into the narrative of Hungarian national history, and thus local patriotism in Késmárk was successfully integrated into the great national narrative.

The decades of the Dualistic era abounded in events that provided an opportunity to nationalize urban space and community. One of the most memorable national “experiences” of Késmárk in the age of Dualism rivalled the millennium celebrations that took place throughout the country. It was a commemoration, namely the death of the city’s honorary citizen, Lajos Kossuth.<sup>18</sup> In addition to the mayor’s extremely lengthy and ornate mourning speech, who called Kossuth “the greatest glorious son of our country”, the city council ordered that the funeral be attended. The portrait of Kossuth was placed in the city council hall, a worship service was ordered for all three denominations with the participation of the city council, and the three bridge streets were named Lajos Kossuth street. The city, which was always struggling with financial problems, voted to donate 200 Forints for the Kossuth statue, having all the shops and windows in the city closed for the time of the funeral. The respect of the hero of the War of Independence did not fade for the 100th anniversary of his birth either; more voluminous speeches were given at the General Assembly than for the Millennium. The peak around the Green Lake in the High Tatras on the outskirts of the city was also named after Lajos Kossuth.<sup>19</sup>

The millennium celebration took place in Késmárk at the suggestion of the mayor as follows:<sup>20</sup> All the representatives of the General Assembly gathered at the ceremonial

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<sup>16</sup> Szepesszombat Archives, City Assembly Inv. No. 21-50 fasc. 6-13 (1885-1919) (hereinafter referred to as the minutes of the General Assembly MGA) 1902. No. 204. During the Rákóczi II’s War of Independence, the historical society of Szepes County began to take an interest in the execution of the citizens defending the city in 1902, namely, in the “subject of the graves of national martyrs.” It then transpires that it is only the tomb of Sebestény Topperczer that needs to be searched as the other two have been restored. The graves are photographed and then sent to Kassa for the Rákóczi ceremony, in: MGA. 1909. No. 264.

<sup>17</sup> See previous footnote.

<sup>18</sup> MGA. 1894. No. 39.

<sup>19</sup> MGA. 1902. No.14. Although the number of Representatives present is only 27.

<sup>20</sup> MGA. 1896. No. 39/49/130.

assembly, the city prosecutor made a patriotic speech in German, then the passage of “unlimited attachment to the Hungarian homeland” was included in the minutes, signed by all city representatives on the page of the minutes of the general assembly in national colours. They also voted to set up a permanent children’s shelter and accepted the offer of a candidate, Dr. József Hajnóczy, the royal school inspector, to write a city monograph in German and Hungarian for 500 Forints. However, this work was never done. The ceremonial assembly then went to the main square, where a tree was inaugurated as a millennial tree, followed by worship services from all three denominations with representatives of the city-based authorities. After the service, the people of the city took part in a folk festival costing nearly 200 Forints, and the citizens were requested to illuminate their windows on May 9, “to express their patriotic feelings”.

What about Imre Thököly, who is known in the public consciousness as an anti-Habsburg rebel of Késmárk? Even though the return of his ashes dates back to the period under study, and the celebrations were also large-scale, they cannot hold a candle to the commemorations in honour of Kossuth or Queen Elizabeth. The circumstances of the return of Thököly’s ashes are a good indication of the city’s relationship with Thököly and the mentality of the urban elite. First in 1904, city representative Izidor Hartmann told the citizens that His Majesty József Ferencz had ordered that his ashes be brought home from Nicodemia. According to Hartmann, the “relic in the eyes of all Hungarian patriotic people” was in danger because according to one of the rural country newspapers, the ashes should be placed in Eperjes. He therefore asked the General Assembly to “exert their influence” to prevent this.<sup>21</sup> The General Assembly scheduled the discussion for the next meeting, at which not even a third of the representatives appeared. Késmárk had about 56 representatives at that time, and it rarely happened that more than half of them were missing.<sup>22</sup> Barely a third of the representatives present expressed their gratitude to the Prime Minister for this matter.<sup>23</sup> In my opinion, the explanation for this is very simple; the relationship of the city of Késmárk with Imre Thököly was extremely bad. The Thököly family brought the once free royal city under a “half” landlord yoke, which was difficult for it to throw off. Nora Baráthová called the rule of the Thököly family the darkest period of Késmárk. It did not forget the loss of previous

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<sup>21</sup> MGA. 1904. No. 130.

<sup>22</sup> Rarely, in about 15% of cases. At the beginning of the era, the city of Késmárk had about 45-47 representatives elected for 6 years and together with the virile representatives (three-six of whom attended the general assemblies) while by the end of the era it had grown to 61 in three stages, in proportion to population growth. In fact, throughout the era, most representatives appeared at the Millennium General Assembly and the Poprad-Késmárk railway negotiations.

<sup>23</sup> I recorded a similar rate of appearance less than half a dozen times in the era, and they also occurred rather in the 1880s. MGA. 1904. No. 138.

privileges, and the curtailment of the freedom of the German city of the Szepesség after two centuries, either. In 1905, the rescript arrived that the ashes would be placed in Késmárk, which was simply “taken notice of” by the General Assembly. This is very unusual, as at other similar events, I found speeches, ovations, gratitude notes, or at least the passage in the General Assembly books that the city’s people were happy to take the event described.<sup>24</sup> Of course, the situation changed when the citizens felt the national importance of the situation.<sup>25</sup> However, nothing shows their general attitude better than the fact that Aladár Gyurgyán, a parliamentary representative, appealing for the placement of Thököly’s ashes in Késmárk was subsequently elected honorary citizen on the urgent proposal of the city council and not on the proposal of an enthusiastic representative.<sup>26</sup> The mausoleum was built over the ashes of Imre Thököly between 1907 and 1909.<sup>27</sup>

I did not find other symbols of the nationalization of the space than e.g. the traces of the successful erection of statues in Késmárk. It was only in 1901 that the city voted a financial assistance of 20 crowns<sup>28</sup> for a statue of Mihály Vörösmarty, erected together with Szepes County.

In addition to the nationalization of the space, it is a local historical society that best shows that a need emerged for local identity construction within the local citizenship.

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<sup>24</sup> MGA. 1905. No. 206.

<sup>25</sup> At the large-scale ceremony, the citizens organized a guard of honour, who wore Thököly-era suits. The government’s ceremony of 20,000 crowns indeed suggests a day of national significance, which was attended by: 1. Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle, 2. Ferenc Kossuth, Minister of Trade, 3. Béla Roszinyi, royal councillor, 4. Baron Dezső Prónay member of the Upper House, 5. Kálmán Thaly, parl. Representative, 6. Burgán Aladár, Representative, 7. Lord-Lieutenant Géza Salamon, 8. vice Lord-Lieutenant Dr. Lajos Nosznóczy, 9. the headquarters of the 6th Corps, 10. the headquarters of the Kassa Gendarmerie District, 11. Directorate of the Kassa-Oderberg Railway, 12. Szepesbela City Council, 13. Leibitz city council, 14. The Augustan Lyceum Board, 15. State Civil Upper Commercial Directorate, 16. State Weaving School Board, 17. The Augustan civic school and elementary school board, 18. The board of the Rom. Cath. public elementary school, 19. the board of the Jewish public elementary school, 20. the directorate of the electrical works, 21. choral society Késmárk, 22. Leibitz choral society, 23. Szepesbela choral society, 24. the fire brigade of Késmárk. Then the fire brigades of Szepesbela and Forberg continue in the rank order, and then the list ends with the village fire brigades. It is remarkable what rank order the urban elite establish; on the one hand, we can see the rank order of local schools, the so-called level of prestige of associations and organizations. They thanked those up to number 6 in the rank order in a written note under the leadership of the mayor, they thanked those down from there personally, and they expressed their thanks to the inhabitants of the city collectively in the local paper.

<sup>26</sup> MGA. 1906 No. 100, 142.

<sup>27</sup> Szepesszombat Archives – unprocessed material. 1907 A statue to Imre Thököly! Notice. The chairs of the committee are: Dr. Lajos Neogrady, vice Lord-Lieutenant of Szepes County, Dr. Ottó Wrchovszky, Mayor, Dr. Gergely Tátray, Chief Physician and superintendent of the Augustan Church and Frigyes Dianiska evangelical pastor.

<sup>28</sup> The crown was introduced in 1892, by the 1892. year XVII. law, the forint was used until 1900. One forint was worth two crowns.

According to Bálint Varga, the museum, the monograph and the historical society were the most suitable and most frequently used means to place the counties in the discourse of national historical science.<sup>29</sup>

The *Szepes County Historical Society* was founded relatively early, in 1883. The city of Késmárk joined the association as a regular member for three years at the invitation of the society, and then it promised that it would circulate the invitation of membership from house to house.<sup>30</sup> The city then renewed its membership every six years, paying its annual contribution of 10 Forints to the operation of the society. In order to justify these renewals of membership, the city fulfilled [...] “fulfilling its patriotic duty and a noble goal [...]”.<sup>31</sup> Local patriotism can be seen in the same way in the 1883 request of the *Hungarian National Carpathian Association* for the construction of an alms house, which was also supported by the General Assembly from a patriotic duty. The historical society started with 4 founding and 95 regular members. In 1889, it had 9 founding members and 213 regular members, but there were problems in paying the membership fee: “unfortunately we experience that [...] each of the county historical societies in many parts of Hungary has 500–700 members while according to Kálmán Demkő that of Szepes County is just scraping along.”<sup>32</sup>

In spite of this, the society published 14 yearbooks, 11 proceedings, and 7 millennial proceedings during the era of Dualism.<sup>33</sup> Many public figures also took part in the activities of the association. The first president of the society, Count Albin Csáky, resigned from the presidency in 1889 for the position of Minister of Religion and Public Education. At that time, the bishop of the Szepesség, György Császka, became the president, who considered the principle of one nation – one homeland as the standard in his inaugural speech. Board meetings were held quarterly in cities in Szepes County where at least 20 members lived. The number of members then gradually increased, to 356 by 1895, to 500 by 1900, and then to 555, but in 1908 it decreased to 485.<sup>34</sup> By the second half of

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<sup>29</sup> Bálint Varga, “Vármegyék és történettudományi reprezentáció a dualizmus kori Magyarországon,” *Történelmi Szemle* 56, no. 2 (2014):179-202.

<sup>30</sup> MGA, No. 102. 1883.

<sup>31</sup> MGA, 1889. No. 124. and 1895. No. 74.

<sup>32</sup> Kálmán Demkő, *A Szepesmegyei történelmi társulat évkönyve, Volume V* (Lőcse, 1889), 179.

<sup>33</sup> In addition to meetings and other society activities, the yearbooks also published the studies of its members, and the vast majority of the studies of the yearbooks, which contain about half a dozen ones, contain local, medieval and early modern research. In addition, local geological, biological, and literature studies were also published in them.

<sup>34</sup> Kálmán Demkő, *Bevezetés A Szepesmegyei történelmi társulat 12 évi működésének ismertetése* (Lőcse, 1895), 280. (Demkő became headmaster of the secondary school for sciences and modern languages in Lőcse by that time) and Elek Kalmár, *Emlékkönyv. A szepesmegyei történelmi társulat fennállásának huszonötödik évéről 1883-1908* (Lőcse, 1909), 18-25.

the era, the association had its own collection of antiques, a library, and a large county monograph was planned for the millennium, which, however, fell through. Citing financial reasons, the society published five smaller monographs and a map instead.

The work of the society was truly diverse. In its decision of October 15, 1888, the association was also appealed to by the county municipal board “in the subject matter of the re-Hungarianization of the localities of Szepes County”.<sup>35</sup> The members of the society were willing to assist in determining the appropriateness of the place names. The society also assisted in the restoration of frescoes in local churches. In the yearbooks, the authors of the studies also wrote about the past of the Szepesség, the situation of the local archives and the bibliography of the Szepesség. The historical studies were of varying quality, but fully met the scientific requirements of the age. The studies deal mainly with early modern times and the Middle Ages. However, the period after Ferenc Rákóczi II’s war of independence was almost always a dividing line for the authors’ interest. It can be said that – at least according to the executive chairman – the members declared themselves Hungarians and local patriots as “every soil is part of the homeland” and that is why they dealt with Szepes County.<sup>36</sup> Reviewing the yearbooks, we can find only one or two studies of a national character among the more than a hundred pieces of writing: The argument for their Hungarianness is time, – he said –, which “[...] even to artificial excitements – had made all the inhabitants of Hungary a compassionate nation for centuries.”<sup>37</sup> As for their Hungarianness, the members of the association had the opportunity to prove it after the First World War, because in addition to remaining loyal to that “soil” of the Szepesség in the bond of the Czechoslovak state many of their members continued to function in the spirit of Hungarian self-consciousness.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Demkő, *A Szepesmegyei történelmi társulat évkönyve*, 175.

<sup>36</sup> Publications about the past of Szepes County. Journal. ed. Dr. Jenő Fröster County archivist, Vol. IV (Lőcse, 1912).

<sup>37</sup> Demkő, *A Szepesmegyei történelmi társulat évkönyve*, 13.

<sup>38</sup> After 1918, the association published studies mainly by German-Hungarian but also Slovak writers, and several complaints were also submitted to President Vidor Csáky and Vice-President Márton Pirhalla that they did not want to acknowledge the formation of Czechoslovakia because even in 1921 Hungarian publications were sent to their members. The new president, Elemér Kőszeghy (originally Winkler), working in this position between 1923 and 1935, was the editor-in-chief of *Szepesi Híradó* (Szepes News), and had to leave his homeland on charges of irredentism in 1937. See: Peter Zmátlo, *Kultúrny a spoločenský život na Spiši v medzivojnovom období* (Bratislava: Chronos, 2005), 316.

## The “loyalty to the state” of the Zipser German administration

The German ethnic population was known for its strong loyalty to the state, the best-known historical scenes of which included the attempt to establish the Szepes Republic in Késmárk<sup>39</sup> in 1918 or its active role in the War of Independence in 1848-49 (in the 19th Battalion, thousands of Szepes national guards fought).<sup>40</sup> Indeed, it can be seen that they accepted the increasingly deeper administrative role of the Hungarian language almost without resistance, and then, after a short period of resistance, the change of the language of instruction of local schools.<sup>41</sup> However, the picture formed is not so clear-cut. In fact, we have to talk more about German pragmatism, and it could have been more about the authoritarianism towards the administration and the state. Of course, the fact that in the early 19th century intellectual groups were able to separate the most relevant factor of nationality, the mother tongue also contributed to this.<sup>42</sup> By the end of the era, it can be said that the vast majority of the people of Késmárk taking part in the administration accepted the idea of a political nation as it was interpreted by the Hungarian state in the era of Dualism. Frigyes Sváby, who was well acquainted with the Szepesség, said: [...] although a Szepes nobleman who was more like Slovak or German in terms of his language with the lively consciousness of his “Hungarianness” all the more so because he owed all their precious prerogatives only to being a Hungarian nobleman [...], the inhabitants of the city were all mere Germans who, in the 18th century, held more cosmopolitan views...<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the city’s German administration wrote most documents where it could in German. The Késmárk Casino, founded in 1838, also operated almost as a closed association throughout the period, without spectacular participation in the Hungarian national ceremony.<sup>44</sup> The Lutheran church books and the baptismal register were also

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<sup>39</sup> See Rezső Förster: “A Szepesség politikai képe 1918-1934,” in *Különlenyomat a Városok Lapja* 6 (1934).

<sup>40</sup> See Kalmár, *Emlékkönyv*, 307.

<sup>41</sup> The mentality of the General Assembly and the citizens is well illustrated by the following examples: A ranger will be unfit for work, his wife asks for a donation, which will be voted for, but even at the general assembly a decision will be made that new rangers should insure themselves against diseases. The local traders request that vocational school classes be rescheduled from Wednesday afternoon to Sunday, and the answer from the city council reveals that there is no obstacle to this if they contribute 600 Forints to the salaries of teachers (the amount of the holiday allowance).

<sup>42</sup> For a description of the different German patterns, schemes and assimilation strategies in Hungary, see Béla Pukánszky, *Német polgárság magyar földön* (Budapest, 1940).

<sup>43</sup> Sváby, *A Szepesség lakosságának sociológiai viszonyai*, 20.

<sup>44</sup> By the end of the period, it had about 162 members, with an annual membership fee of 20 Forints, and its president was Tivadar Genersich, and it subscribed to 12 German, 6 Hungarian newspapers, 10 German and 4 Hungarian journals. Bruckner and Bruckner, *Késmárki Kalauz*, 70-76.

kept in German, and in 1917 there was only one Hungarian entry in it.<sup>45</sup> The Késmárk pastors sent the demographical data to the county in Hungarian from 1883, but only after the vice lord-lieutenant specifically requested it.<sup>46</sup> As far as the mandatory administration in the Hungarian language is concerned, the offices probably operated as was customary with the minutes of the general assembly. Official documents were kept mainly by officials who wrote well in Hungarian and mainly by translators. The strange word order in the city assembly books, mirror translations, and German expressions every now and then, as well as other sources, support the fact that administration was mainly in German, and it was only much later that the assembly became bilingual.<sup>47</sup> Some of the proposals submitted were also written in German and then a translation was sent to the ministry. Rescripts were translated into German: “After reading the vice lord-lieutenant’s [...] Circular [...] and translating it into German...”<sup>48</sup> The situation did not change much in the following decades either, as e.g. in the case of the draft pension regulations of 1897, the ordinance still had to be translated into German in order that the matter could be discussed in a meaningful way.<sup>49</sup> In 1902, there was also a justification for this fact that “the draft budget should be translated into German with regard to the mother tongue of the local population and with regard to the inexperience (crossed out) of the majority of the city council in Hungarian [...]”<sup>50</sup> Although the minutes written in Hungarian were read at every subsequent national assembly until 1904, this changed the fact very little that the majority wanted the most important documents to be read in German. At that time, due to increased administration and the habit of representatives being deliberately late for the beginning of the general assembly due to the reading, this procedure was abolished.<sup>51</sup> The fact that the discussion was carried out in German was also confirmed by the 1893 report of the *Szepesi Lapok*.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Moreover, until 1940 there was no Slovak Lutheran community in Késmárk.

<sup>46</sup> MGA 1883. No. 485.

<sup>47</sup> For example, hawthorn (weiszdow) Monday meat fair (volnicza), etc.

<sup>48</sup> For example, guild rules translated by the chief notary Imre Szontágh: MGA. 1884. No. 130.

<sup>49</sup> MGA. 1897. No. 181.

<sup>50</sup> MGA. 1902. No. 9. Corrected during re-reading – justification for correction No 30 in the margin: “to a lesser degree of inexperience of a part.”

<sup>51</sup> MGA. 1904. No. 110. A four-member committee of variable members is then responsible for the authenticity of the minutes.

<sup>52</sup> The article titled “The language of administration and negotiation in our cities”. In Szepes-Váralja, the new mayor introduced Hungarian as the language of negotiation. “As far as we know, of the cities of our county it is only in Lőcse, the seat of our county where the language of city administration and negotiation is Hungarian.” in *Szepesi Lapok*, 12 November 1893.

As for the city documents, no Slavic-Slovak texts were found in the 1880s.<sup>53</sup> About 15% are in German (these are mainly submissions of committees and various civil persons and accounts), and 85% are documents in Hungarian.<sup>54</sup> If the county records are removed from this, the proportion of records in Hungarian drops to about 75%. By the 1890s, this proportion had practically not changed; only Hungarian documents written in Slovak spelling had disappeared. By the 1900s, the proportion of documents written in German was around 5-10%, and after 1910 it fell to around 5%.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to corruption, Késmárk's leaders were at the forefront of supporting the government. The 1893 government bill on civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, free practice of religions, and reception of the Jewish religion was fully and unanimously endorsed and supported. Their submission assured the government of their support, but they also declared that they asked the government for a greater degree of autonomy although the General Assembly later "found that it should be abandoned" from the submission. Originally, they asked the government to give cities "a freer hand [...] to take care of their cultural and material interests [...] and also greater political autonomy [...] as only then would the cities fulfil the vital mission they are destined for in public life adequately."<sup>56</sup> The following year, when the public became aware that the king sanctified the government's proposal, they were the first to seek to welcome the decision, "... with sincere inner joy [...] as a sign of our unbroken loyalty to our glorious king and our serf reverence". When the Association of Hungarian Cities was formed under the leadership of Zalaegerszeg in 1904, in addition to the Hungarian national development, Késmárk also hoped that this association could easily strengthen the right of the cities' self-government.<sup>57</sup> There are several articles in the local press about strengthening the right of cities' self-government.<sup>58</sup> In their line of argument, they extolled the liberation and

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<sup>53</sup> However, it should be pointed out that the author of about half a dozen documents wrote in Hungarian with Slavic diacritics in the eighties (mainly Lutheran pastors and some external civil servants).

<sup>54</sup> Szepesszombat Archives, unprocessed material I-II-III-IV 1883.

<sup>55</sup> Szepesszombat Archives, unprocessed material I-II-III-IV 1894, 1907, 1911.

<sup>56</sup> MGA. 1893. No. 15. The *Szepesi Lapok* also write about it. March 5, 1893 "Two particularly important and fundamental factors have not been enforced yet, such as the nationalization of administration and the realization of the practice of true religious freedom."

<sup>57</sup> MGA. 1904. No. 87.

<sup>58</sup> In 1876, the towns of the Szepesség were merged into the jurisdiction of the county municipal authority without friction as it only simplified the local administration. Cities sought to keep their own municipal authority on an equal footing with counties and to treat it as equal. In 1869, jurisdiction and administration were separated, thus the powers of the cities were reduced, but the Public – Municipality Authorities Act of 1872 was the greatest grievance for the cities. This was because it introduced the supervision of lord-lieutenants, so the lord-lieutenant was above the mayor. Several cities asked for special regulations, there were also some which associated with the county out of necessity. The cities also spoke out against virilism, according to which



prosperity that they achieved after the 1848 era, and demanded strong self-government rights to be able to act in order to fulfil their “today” duties. One of these was assimilation, according to which “[...] it is only the city that can assimilate, retain and Hungarianize.”<sup>59</sup> In the same year, at an extraordinary general assembly, after a close vote, they welcomed and supported István Tisza’s strong action “against the terrorism of the minority” without any legal basis and risking local political strife. Although these small scenes do not call into question the city of the Szepesség’s loyalty to the government, they show that they were not satisfied with Budapest’s centralization policy. Outwardly, however, at least in terms of loyalty to the state, the city communicated well.<sup>60</sup>

In the era of Dualism, a change in the content of the keyword “patriotic” can also be observed. In the early period of Dualism, it occurs only about half a dozen times in the minutes of the general assembly, and was usually associated with some kind of title or award won. In the 1880s, it was also a patriotic act or duty to join a local fish farming or tourism association. Thus, the elite of Késmárk was known for its local patriotism, philanthropy, food and even school assistance patriotism. This local-social “patriotism” of the Szepesség became so differentiated in the 1890s. At that time, in similar cases it was already about noble philanthropic or noble public affairs. The patriotic adjective continued to be used, in addition to its widespread national meaning, in a local sense as well.

The local Hungarian-minded German elite in the early 1990s believed that the appearance of the third language, Hungarian, would further worsen the position of the patriotic German element, “... [...] since now it is only the historian who knows which village was once a German one, [...] our cities are also half Slovak...” It is Germanization that can successfully prevent the spread of Slavism because although Pan-Slavism is negligible in the county, Hungarianization at all costs is not only a futile endeavour, but also one of the surest ways for Slavism gaining ground.<sup>61</sup> The development of the manufacturing industry was also less welcome for the German element as it caused further Slavic immigration from the villages, and the habit of German craftsmen to “give their sons a genteel career” further aggravated the situation. “Time and the spirit of the age are moving forward hurriedly. In a century, the Szepesség will be either Hungarian or Slovak.”<sup>62</sup>

According to Jankovič, both the elite and the “majority of German writers” adapted to the prevailing Hungarian views. Although there was little trace in the documents and in

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it sinned against the free spirit of 1848. According to the government, those who pay the highest tax rates have the right to have a say in the life of the city, and the taxation of intellectuals was also double counted.

<sup>59</sup> *Szepesi Lapok* 16 June 1901. No. 25. Vol. XVII.

<sup>60</sup> MGA. 1904. No. 209. 24 representatives voted in favour of the proposal, 16 against (42 present).

<sup>61</sup> *Szepesi Lapok*, 29 January 1888 and 5 February. Editorials. (Signed them as Str. and responses received)

<sup>62</sup> *Szepesi Lapok*, 11 March 1888. Editorial.

the press, the local “German renegades” also made their voices heard. However, they turned mainly to literature and specific sciences. Aurél Münnich, a parliamentary representative for the Igló constituency, for example, received an anonymous German letter criticizing the mentioned representative for speaking in support for the draft Place Names Bill. The writer of the article of the *Szepesi Lapok* immediately condemned this saying that the critic tried to find such Saxons in the Szepesség as the ones who were in Transylvania in vain, the Germans in the Szepesség fully identified with the Hungarian nation, had a fondness for it, but in their family, they were Germans and did not break away from the German culture.<sup>63</sup>

The first Hungarian worship service in Késmárk was held by the decision of the General Assembly of the Lutheran Church in 1897.<sup>64</sup> At the end of the period, “we are pleased to mention [...] that both the Lutheran and the Catholic Church hold Hungarian worship services for the sake of the Hungarian-speaking students attending the institutions of Késmárk and the Hungarian citizens living here ...”<sup>65</sup>

## The Local Slovaks

Besides Lőcse, Késmárk became the cultural centre in the wider region. With its institutions, libraries and printing houses “in Késmárk, it was more difficult to lay the foundations for the spirituality of Štúr’s national concept due to the fact that part of the teaching staff became Hungarianized and the German magistrate also had an influence on school affairs.”<sup>66</sup> Nora Baráthová dates the strengthening of the Slavic vein to the 17th century, when religious persecutors from the Czech lands, Moravia and Silesia came to Hungary, several of whom worked in the school in Késmárk: Ján Metzelius Moravus, Václav Johannides, Slezania Valerian Berlinius, Daniel Fabry and others were preachers and deacons in the Slavic Lutheran congregation. Michal Kaľavský writes that in 1754 the Catholics of Késmárk had one priest and three cantors, two of whom were Slavic, from which he concluded that “the number of churchgoers was balanced...”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Szepesi Lapok*, 19 December 1889. Issue 51. „Szepesi német renegátok” [Szepes German Renegates].

<sup>64</sup> *Szepesi Lapok*, 21 March 1897: On March 14, the first Hungarian service was held in Hungarian in Késmárk. (At that time Hungarian services in Igló had been held four or five times a year for years).

<sup>65</sup> Sándor Belóczy, *A késmárki állami felső kereskedelmi iskola értesítője (1916/17-iki tanévéről)*, 7. After the turn, according to Győző Bruckner, *A Szepesség múltja és mai lakói*, the local Lutheran church maintained its linguistic monopoly until 1940, when the first Slovak-speaking Lutheran community was formed. in Baráthová kol., *Život v Kežmarku v 13. až 20. storočí*, 209.

<sup>66</sup> Franková, Libuša, *Národný vývin na Spiši v 19. storočí*, 118.

<sup>67</sup> Michal Kaľavský (65) refers to the research of Jozep Špirka, according to whom Thela founded the Slovak church in Padua in 1468.

Indeed, from the 17th century onwards, several sources in the town allude to the presence of the Slavic population as the area was already dominated by Slavic-majority villages. One of the most obvious pieces of evidence of the old Slavic community of Késmárk is that the city (formerly Pauline) church was called the “Slovak church” at the end of Dualism.<sup>68</sup> In 1823 the Slovak Society (Slovenská Spoločnosť) was founded for Slavic students by Slavic, mainly Czech teachers, who worked in the Lutheran Lyceum of Késmárk in the first half of the 19th century. This society later became a model for associations in Eperjes, Lőcse and Pozsony as well. In Késmárk, however, the Slavic society in the Lyceum fell into lethargy and scepticism after initial enthusiasm.<sup>69</sup> It should be mentioned that in 1821 Ján Chalupka established a similar society for German students while in 1824 a Slavic teacher Ondrej Kralovanský established a similar society for Hungarian students. The Slavic Society had about 40 members.<sup>70</sup> In the Slavic society students studied Czech grammar, wrote and performed prose and poetry. The Ústav reči a literatúry československej [Institute of Czechoslovak Speech and Literature] was founded in 1838, but J. Bendikti did not undertake to lead it claiming that he did not know the “Czechoslovak” language and that the Lutherans tended to use the biblical Czech language enriched with local flavours.<sup>71</sup> In 1845, the “Jednota mládeže slovenskej and the spolok miernosti a striezlivosti [Slovak Association of Youth and the Association of Sobriety and Temperance]” operated in the town with their own Slavic library. In Késmárk, Ján Chalupka,<sup>72</sup> junior and senior, Ján Benedikti Blahoslav, both fellow mates of Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Jena, represented the Slavic and Slovak spirit in the Késmárk Lyceum.

According to Čibor, the only documentable case of nationality took place between Hungarian and Serbian minority students in Késmárk in the first half of the 19th century.<sup>73</sup> During the 19th century, among others, P. J. Šafárik, Karol Kuzmány, Jonáš Záborský, August Horeslav Škultéty, Janko Kráľ and Pavol O. Hviezdoslav attended the city’s educational institutions. Towards the end of the era, Ladislav Nádaši-Jégé, Pavol Sochán and Janko Jesenský also graduated from here. Most of them became figures of national significance of the Slovak literature, many of whom are considered to be significant Slovak nation-builders in the academic literature. Slovak students were reactivated by the 1890s, when their nation-

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<sup>68</sup> Bruckner Győző – Bruckner Károly. *Késmárki Kalauz*, 33.

<sup>69</sup> Čibor, Tahy, *Národnobuditeľské tradície Kežmarku*, 15.

<sup>70</sup> Baráthová kol., *Život v Kežmarku v 13. až 20. storočí*, 40.

<sup>71</sup> See previous note.

<sup>72</sup> Although Ján Chalupka did not write his famous *Kocúrko* here, this work of his must have been inspired later by the ethnic and minority world of Késmárk and its surroundings. (Moreover, at that time he himself did not write in Slovak).

<sup>73</sup> Čibor, Tahy, *Národnobuditeľské tradície Kežmarku*, 59.

building efforts ended several times in exclusion. Thus, the students of the Lyceum were at the forefront of organizing the local Hungarian and Slovak national life.<sup>74</sup> In February 1894, the school board expelled four students from all schools in Hungary on charges of Pan-Slavism.<sup>75</sup> A further five people received the *consilium abeundi* (literally “advice to leave”) allowing them to stay until the end of the school year. The members of the “Pan-Slavic” group studied Slovak, read Slovak books, and published a newspaper in which they published poetry and prose. The group had been operating under the name Kytka since 1890, and their journal was called Lúč. According to a witness, the activities of the group were revealed that in the summer of 1893 one of them had spoken of “the operation of the association to some untrue Slovaks”, and then some students of Késmárk who had been trying to find information about them unnoticed since the autumn of 1893 heard about it.<sup>76</sup> Since the search was fruitless at the time, “then a ‘Slovak Ephialtes’ came to us, who palmed himself off as a Slovakian, gained our trust, found out everything and reported us.”<sup>77</sup> According to the witness, who was the brother of one of the Kytka’s students, the students, including a certain István Lénárd, entrusted the infiltrator (“Ephialtest”) with this task.<sup>78</sup> The headmaster

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<sup>74</sup>The lyceum was already the centre of the local Hungarian self-consciousness during the War of Independence. It was closed in 1851 under the pretext of the reorganization of the Austrian state, but the real reason was different. Some teachers fought in the war of independence, e.g. the Hunfalvy brothers and many students, and even the Lutheran pastor of Késmárk, who was sent to prison, also took part in it. The advanced German intelligentsia of Szepesség sided with the Hungarian War of Independence, and many even adopted Hungarian surnames or simply translated them into Hungarian (Hunsdorfer-Hunfalvy, Witchen-Wittényi, Schneider-Szelényi, Gooldberger-Bethlenfalvy, Steiner-Kövi). Otherwise, Hungarian was taught as a foreign language in the lyceum from 1835, and from 1839 it became more and more common. School registers and certificates were written in Hungarian from 1841. School reports, on the other hand, were written in German until 1855. At that time, Pál Hunfalvy himself taught law in Hungarian, though with a German accent. Petőfi also visited the Hungarian self-education circle in 1845, adding two copies of his poem called ‘A helység kalapácsa’ to the circle’s own library. In 1852, the Lyceum became an eight-grade grammar school. In the 1861-62 school year, its name was changed to Lutheran Lyceum again, and from then on, the language of education in the upper classes was Hungarian as well. In 1867, Frigyes Solcz, a Hungarian teacher also taught German and was also the president of the Hungarian self-education society. József Dihányi, who taught Slovak, also taught Hungarian. (Palcsó 1867) From 1881, the Hungarian language was also used in the lower classes. In 1884 the number of subjects taught in German increased while in 1902 all classes were taught in Hungarian, and German only functioned as an auxiliary language in the two lowest classes. The lyceum had many private and corporate supporters throughout the era. The list of supporters donating only money comprised multiple pages in this era.

<sup>75</sup>Szepesszombat Archives. The fonds of the Lutheran Lyceum of Késmárk, *Memorabilia Lycei Kesmarkiensis magistro discipulorumque dicta et facta, edit Carolus Bruckner rector emeritus Kesmarkini, Pauli Satuer, MCMXXXIII*. prof. Miloš Ruppeltdt. 101-103. This volume is in German, Slovak and Hungarian. The volume was published in 1933, on the 400th anniversary of the lyceum.

<sup>76</sup>See previous note. For example, a fake letter was written to the group encouraging Slavic cooperation.

<sup>77</sup>See previous note.

<sup>78</sup>See previous note.

of the Lyceum didn't make a fuss about it at first saying it was just a literary circle, and what is more if they only learned our language, it's even commendable. However, "most of the students were against us [...] and the pressure was growing."<sup>79</sup> According to the recollection, the fact that there were a few Romanian and even four Russian books among the Slovak volumes sealed their fate. There were traces of the same event in the lyceum bulletin and in the press. However, the two texts are the same word for word, so they do not contain any commentaries, their arguments have the following set of overtones: "the Slovak-speaking students at the Késmárk Lyceum founded a Slovak circle prohibited by school laws, incited anti-patriotic sentiments, they circulated a newspaper, in which they glorified Kollár, mourned for the discontinued Slovak lyceums, called upon their brothers to carry on a nationalist fight, called Hungarians their enemies and constantly glorified their enormous neighbour."<sup>80</sup> According to the disciplinary board, students who had hitherto been well-behaved and with outstanding ability, supported by tuition exemptions and scholarships, who were led astray by Pan-Slavism, committed the same crime as capital treason.<sup>81</sup> However, none of the eight students involved were from Késmárk, not even from the Szepesség but mainly from Liptó and Árva counties. Two students came from Szatmár and one from Gömör.<sup>82</sup> An eerily similar case took place in the early part of 1913, when the Slovak student association called *MOR HO!*, the publisher of the *Púčky* journal was excluded from all schools in Hungary.<sup>83</sup> The composition of the students was similar even then, including Ferdinand Čatlos, a former student of the state civil and upper commercial school, who later became the Minister of Defence of the later independent Slovak state.<sup>84</sup> It can be said, therefore, that the Slovak nation-building efforts did not affect the local Slovak student body. If Slovak nation-building was not successful, then what is the reason why the proportion of Slovaks still increased?

In the second half of the 19th century, Slovak worship services were abolished in the city due to increasing Hungarianization.<sup>85</sup> However, Franková also admits that after reviewing the reports of the vice-Lord-Lieutenant and police commissioner in Késmárk, the nationalist movement of local Slovaks did not develop.<sup>86</sup> According to Franková, there

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<sup>79</sup> See previous note. On the part of the fellow students, at school, in the dining room, and even on the street.

<sup>80</sup> Zvarínyni Sándor, *A Késmárki Ág. Hitv. Evang. Kerületi Lyceum Tanévi Értesítője*, 38.

<sup>81</sup> The article titled Exclusion of Pan-Slavic students in *Szepesi Lapok* 25 February 1894.

<sup>82</sup> The following work of fiction was also inspired by the case: Martin Rázus: *Maroško študuje*.

<sup>83</sup> Izál. Quoted by: Baráthová a kol. *Život v Kežmarku v 13. až 20. storočí*. 48.

<sup>84</sup> Hungarian and German self-education groups had also operated in the state commercial school since the turn of the century. There were also high school students in the secret society.

<sup>85</sup> Baráthová a kol. *Život v Kežmarku v 13. až 20. storočí*. 206.

<sup>86</sup> Franková 117. However, I strongly doubt that she examined 600-700 files per year at the beginning of the era, and by the end of the era, more than double the reports. It took a full day and a half to review only the police files of 1894 and 1907 (dates of nationality events) and I found nothing, either. However, this does not

could be several explanations for this, on the one hand, officials and police officers were either not informed about the movement or they only formally responded to the rescripts and did not want to harm those working for the Slovak national cause. But Franková also believes that it may also have been that they wanted to present their neighbourhood to their own superiors as immaculate in this respect. In my opinion, this explanation can only be accepted if we consider the possibility that there was indeed no organized ethnic movement operating other than the imported student movements. Neither in the city nor in the wider area was a Slovak national press, with the exception of *Kresťan*, *Krajan*, *Naša Zástava*, which were state-oriented, and the masses of the local Slovak population were still at an early level of ethnic identity. Both secret Késmárk student associations were “imported” and thus they were operated by Slovak-minded students from outside the area. The fact that no local Slovak students could be involved, either, is perhaps more than just a signal. Although Franková’s study,<sup>87</sup> contradicting herself, presented about a dozen nationally-minded priests or teachers who played an active role in terms of nationality in the Szepesség in the era of Dualism, they actually dealt with anti-alcoholism, farming and fruit-growing, and thus philanthropic and socially motivated topics. Barely half a dozen of them were born in the Szepesség and belonged to the Slovak self-conscious intellectuals. A similar path was taken by Chalupický,<sup>88</sup> who discusses the diverse Slovak nation-building intelligence and national resources of the Szepesség. However, Ctibor Tahy publishes downright misleading data.<sup>89</sup> He gives erroneous figures regarding the ethnic composition of the Lyceum, and several of his statements are not sufficiently substantiated by footnotes. These examples also show the forced effort that “would have liked” to put the German-style city on the map of the Slovak national awakening from the second half of the 20th century.

There are, without exception, negative answers to the Ministry’s and the Lord-Lieutenant’s questions in this case: For example, “no pan-Slavic agitation from America can be observed in the area of [...] my district.”<sup>90</sup> Moreover, according to another servant judge, there is no individual in the whole city to whom the patriotic paper *Naša*

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mean, of course, that the national movement operated within sight of the police. For example, in response to a ministerial decree, the mayor of Késmárk states that “according to the attached report of the Chief Medical Officer, there are no imbecile (idiotic) or stupid (cretinous) people in the area of our authority...” 2263/883, 7 November 1883. Dániel Herczogh’s letter to the vice lord-lieutenant.

<sup>87</sup> Franková, Libuša, *Národný vývin na Spiši v 19. storočí*, 118.

<sup>88</sup> See: Chalupický, Ivan, *Pramene k dejinám slovenského národného hnutia v r. 1860-1918 v archíve Spišskej župy*.

<sup>89</sup> Ctibor, Tahy, *Národnobuditeľské tradície Kežmarku*, 28.

<sup>90</sup> Lőcse Archives. Szepes County 35 loose card, No. 3012. 906. bis. Késmárk’s chief servant judge to the lord-lieutenant.

Zástava, published in Eperjes could (should) be sent free of charge.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, the list is completed, in which we can read the names of 62 Slovak individuals living in the Késmárk district, mainly farmers, and some teachers and pastors. Unfortunately, there is no information about the number of people reading the *Národné Noviny*, *Vlast' a Svet*, *Krestaň*, *Obzor* or *Královna Sv. Ruznica* in the district as police commissioner of Késmárk did not send it to the vice Lord-Lieutenant referring to the fact that the postal statement had not been completed. In the other districts of the Szepesség, however, we know of an average of half a dozen readers<sup>92</sup>. According to the Slovak historian Ladislav Tajták, the situation of the local Slovak in the Szepesség became a little better when the Slovaks who had emigrated to the USA returned and became actively involved in civic life.<sup>93</sup> Frigyes Sváby, the archivist of Szepes County, and several articles in the *Szepesi Lapok* also reported on the decline in the German population. Accordingly, it was mostly Slovakization that could be observed in the county, which “always begins here with the Catholics as also evidenced by the history of the Counter-Reformation of the 17th century.”<sup>94</sup> He brought forward the “proliferation” and tenacity of the Slovaks as well as the demographic habits and education of the Germans (internal migration). In his view, the increase in the number of Slovaks was limited only by emigration and high child mortality. Emigration, on the other hand, made it possible for Slovaks from villages, returning with smaller fortunes to buy small-town houses from Germans in a demographic recession, thus strengthening the Slavic base in the area. According to the *Szepesi Lapok*, the Germans of the Szepesség were continuously moving away from these settlements, and according to the editorial board, two – three Hungarian nursery school teachers would have been needed in the local nursery schools, and the problem would have been solved. According to the idealistic lines of the writer of the article, “our Slovaks do not oppose Hungarianization, they do not form pan-Slavic associations like in other counties.”<sup>95</sup> However, Slovak historians belonging to the newer generation already describe the counties of north-eastern Hungary with completely different adjectives: “... sleepy Szepes, stupidly silent Sáros and dark Zemplén.”<sup>96</sup> However, referring to electoral practices and the contemporary nationalist press, they continued to draw attention to certain facts, such as “In the 1910 elections, officials were able to change the election

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<sup>91</sup> Lócsce Archives. Szepes County 35 loose card, 4 November 1904. Késmárk.

<sup>92</sup> Either it was not sent or it did not survive.

<sup>93</sup> Nadežda, Jurčišinová, *Na Slovenskú ústrednú tlač o živote a dianí v šarišskej a spíšskej župe začiatkom 20. storočia*, 84.

<sup>94</sup> Sváby Frigyes, *Szepes megye*, 7.

<sup>95</sup> *Szepesi Lapok* 24 January 1886. „Eltótosodás” [“Slovakization”]

<sup>96</sup> Nadežda, Jurčišinová, *Na Slovenskú ústrednú tlač o živote a dianí v šarišskej a spíšskej župe začiatkom 20. storočia*, 84.

results of the Slovaks.<sup>97</sup> Despite all this, it can be stated with relative certainty that in the city of Késmárk, even the imported Slovak nationalism could not deliver results, either. The increase in the Slovak ratio was most likely due to the influx of Slovaks and the strong decline in the German population. The Slovak language itself, at least in administration, was completely marginalized. I did not find any applications of city civil servants for employment but it is clear from the documents and the minutes of the city assemblies and committees that excellent command of the Hungarian language was a necessity in certain positions. Namely, in order for the notaries to be able to translate and write the language of discussions in German immediately, the highest level of language proficiency was required. As for the city council subcommittees, the German-speaking administration remained until the end of Dualism, they wrote only their submissions to the city council in Hungarian. So, let us see what language was used by the Késmárk elite at the end of the 19th century:

Command of language	Yes	No				
Can you read and write in Hungarian?	226	0				
Of the languages used in the country	Hungarian-German-Slovak	German-Hungarian	Only Hungarian	Only German	Only Slovak	German-Slovak
which do you speak?	163	51	11	1	-	-
which do you use predominantly?		6	117	102	-	1
What is your native language?		-	82	136	8	-

**Table 3: Basic register of the free royal city of Késmárk (for men qualified for jury service in 1907).**

Based on the table, it can be seen that all the men qualified for jury service, i.e. 226 people could write Hungarian well, and as far as speech is concerned, only one person declared that he spoke only German. About 70% knew Slovak and more than 95% German. This means that it was almost only those who came to Késmárk in the last few years that did not speak German. The fact that more than two-thirds of people knew the Slovak language is also a good indication of the Slovak majority in the area and their presence in

<sup>97</sup> Stoličné voľby. Spiš. In: *Slovenský Týždenník*. 1910, 50 No. 2. Quoted by: Jurčišinová: 87.



the city. The neglect of the Slovak language in the administration is well illustrated by the language use, i.e. which language was used more often. The use of only the Hungarian language is not far ahead of that of German, and how German and Slovak were used is indicated by the Késmárk sawmill worker [even if he was the only one who confessed it]. Due to his work, he was able to come into contact with the Slovak and local German village craftsmen much more often. Let us see what results were delivered by the awakening of the Hungarian self-consciousness and the Hungarian nation building in the city based on the principle of a political nation.

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