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Political and Law Enforcement Transformations in Uzhhorod in 1916

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Abstract. *This study aims to provide a detailed overview of the process of electing a police chief in Uzhhorod in 1916, as this event brought about significant changes not only in local public life but also in administration. This period was particularly complex in the history of Uzhhorod, as amid political and social changes, the role of the police extended beyond maintaining public order. It was also closely tied to the exercise of power and the representation of the local community's interests.* **Objective.** *The year 1916 was a troubled time in the city's history due to the military situation of World War I and the resulting local political uncertainties. These uncertainties were triggered by the unexpected death of Mayor Mihály Finczicky, which disrupted the local elite's plan to install their own appointed candidate in the mayoral seat through a "peaceful transfer of power". The Kende, Török, and Sztáray families had chosen the then-current police chief, István Berzeviczy, for this role. Their choice was unsurprising, as Berzeviczy had repeatedly proven his loyalty to the local economic and political elite. However, a problem arose: if elected mayor, Berzeviczy could not hold both positions*

*simultaneously – he could not be both mayor and police chief. This led to the police chief election in Uzhhorod on November 5, 1916. The Uzhhorod City Council announced a national call for applications for the vacant position in March 1916, which was won by Dr. Pál Bóna. Born in the town of Makó, he completed his studies at the State Secondary Grammar School of Makó. He began his police career in his hometown, first as a patrol officer, and by 1910, he had already been serving as first deputy police chief. According to contemporary sources, he was a strict figure who demanded order and discipline from his subordinates. He held the position of police chief in Uzhhorod until February 24, 1919, and after the change of imperial authority, he continued his career in Budapest until his death. **Methods.** This study is based on the research and categorisation of contemporary archival sources, which together reveal a complex historical narrative for readers. **Results.** Drawing on archival sources, this study presents a multifaceted picture of the changes that occurred in 1916 and influenced the life of the city of Uzhhorod. **Conclusions.** István Berzeviczy's election as mayor marked a significant turning point in his life, prompting his resignation from the post of police chief. A national call for applications was issued for the vacant position, open only to citizens who met specific criteria. The selection process progressed slowly, and public opinion raised concerns that Berzeviczy intended to hold both the police chief and mayoral positions simultaneously. Ultimately, after evaluating the submitted applications, Dr. Pál Bóna – who had previously served in law enforcement in the city of Makó – was appointed police chief. He led Uzhhorod's police force until the end of World War I.*

Keywords: *police chief, police chief election, political loyalty, Dr. Pál Bóna, István Berzeviczy, political elite, Ung County, Uzhhorod.*

Політичні та правоохоронні трансформації в Ужгороді у 1916 році

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Анотація. Це дослідження має на меті надати детальний огляд процесу обрання начальника поліції в Ужгороді у 1916 році, оскільки ця подія зумовила значні зміни не лише в місцевому громадському житті, а й в адміністративній сфері. Цей період був особливо складним в історії Ужгорода, оскільки на тлі політичних і соціальних змін роль поліції виходила за межі забезпечення громадського порядку. Вона також була тісно пов'язана із здійсненням влади та представництвом інтересів місцевої громади. **Мета дослідження.** 1916 рік став складним періодом в історії міста через військову ситуацію в умовах Першої світової війни та пов'язані з цим політичні невизначеності на місцевому рівні. Ці труднощі були спричинені раптовою смертю бургомістра Міхая Фінціцького, що зірвало плани місцевої еліти здійснити «мирну передачу влади» шляхом призначення «свого» кандидата на посаду мера. Родини Кенде, Тьорьок і Старай вирішили висунути на цю посаду тодішнього начальника поліції Іштвана Берзевіці. Їхній вибір не був несподіваним, адже Берзевіці неодноразово демонстрував свою лояльність до місцевої економічної та політичної еліти. Проте виникла проблема: у разі обрання на посаду мера Берзевіці не міг одночасно залишатися начальником поліції. Це й призвело до проведення виборів нового начальника поліції в Ужгороді 5 листопада 1916 року. Ужгородська міська рада оголосила загальнонаціональний конкурс на заміщення вакантної посади ще в березні 1916 року, переможцем якого став доктор Пал Бона. Народившись у місті

Мако, він здобув освіту в державній гімназії свого рідного міста. Свою поліцейську кар'єру він також розпочав у Мако – спочатку як патрульний, а вже у 1910 році обіймав посаду першого заступника начальника поліції. За свідченнями сучасників, він був авторитарною фігурою, яка вимагала від підлеглих порядку та дисципліни. Він обіймав посаду начальника поліції в Ужгороді до 24 лютого 1919 року, а після зміни імперської влади продовжив кар'єру в Будапешті, де й помер. **Методи.** Це дослідження ґрунтується на аналізі та класифікації тогочасних архівних джерел, які разом дозволяють сформувати для читача цілісну історичну картину. **Результати.** Завдяки архівним матеріалам дослідження демонструє складну сукупність змін, що відбулися в Ужгороді у 1916 році та вплинули на життя міста. **Висновки.** Обрання Іштвана Берзевіці на посаду мера стало переломним моментом у його житті та зумовило його відставку з посади начальника поліції. Було оголошено загальнонаціональний конкурс на вакантну посаду, участь у якому могли брати лише кандидати, що відповідали певним вимогам. Процес відбору просувався повільно, а громадська думка висловлювала побоювання, що Берзевіці прагне обіймати обидві посади одночасно – мера і начальника поліції. Зрештою, після розгляду заяв кандидатів, на посаду начальника поліції було призначено доктора Пала Бону, який раніше працював у поліції міста Мако. Він очолював поліцію Ужгорода до завершення Першої світової війни.

Ключові слова: начальник поліції, вибори начальника поліції, політична лояльність, доктор Пал Бона, Іштван Берзевіці, політична еліта, комітет Унг, Ужгород.

Problem Statement. This study addresses a topic that has remained largely unexplored in historical research. Contemporary sources related to it, preserved in Transcarpathia, have so far escaped scholarly attention. Instead, researchers have tended to focus more heavily on sources concerning the economy, society, and

politics, along with the respective academic studies dealing with these areas. As a result, this research draws primarily on archival sources from the period under investigation.

The source exploration was conducted at the Berehove Branch of the State Archives of the Transcarpathian Region, using archival inventories such as the records of the Lord-Lieutenant and Vice-Lieutenant of Ung County, and the records of the Mayor of Uzhhorod. These inventories contain official correspondence (mainly directives from the county administration to the mayor), which sheds light on various aspects of the police chief election process.

In addition, the examination of the local contemporary press was also important, including weekly newspapers such as *Ung* and *Határszéli Újság*. At the time, the written press was the most significant form of mass communication, used to inform the public about political and administrative decisions. It also served as a platform for political propaganda aimed at shaping public opinion regarding appointments and administrative measures. A relevant example of this is the series of articles published about the new police chief, Dr. Pál Bóna.

As no biographical sources concerning Dr. Pál Bóna were found in the Berehove Archives – he was the winner of the 1916 police chief election and had ties to the town of Makó (present-day Hungary) – it became necessary to expand the research to foreign archives. I therefore contacted the Csongrád-Csanád County Archives of the National Archives of Hungary. Digitised documents concerning Dr. Bóna were provided by the staff, including his birth certificate, academic records, and documentation of his work in Makó. With access to these new sources, a more comprehensive portrait of the new police chief was created. This study is based on the collected and categorised materials. The present research is valuable both to scholars interested in the topic and to lay readers curious about the history of their homeland.

Identifying Previously Unresolved Aspects of the Broader Problem.

Despite Ung County's complex and eventful history, law enforcement has received surprisingly little scholarly attention, despite its central role in maintaining public order and the rule of law. This field remains largely unexplored, even though extensive archival materials are available. Through this research, I aim to highlight these neglected aspects of Transcarpathia's history and make them accessible through academic studies, presentations, and public engagement.

Most documents preserved in the Berehove Branch of the State Archives of the Transcarpathian Region are written in Hungarian, which poses a challenge for those unfamiliar with the language of the time. Accordingly, my publications aim to bridge this gap, making the uncovered knowledge accessible to a broader audience in multiple languages.

Objective of the Research. The aim of this research is to reconstruct the events surrounding the 1916 police chief election, with particular attention to the conflicts and disputes that arose between citizens and political actors. Furthermore, the study seeks to determine whether any abuse of power occurred during the process, as the transparency and integrity of the election were crucial for maintaining public trust. This research contributes to a microhistorical understanding of early 20th-century Transcarpathia during a particularly violent period – namely, the First World War.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Broader research has already been conducted on the history of Ung County. Among Ukrainian-language academic literature, the works of Dmytro Danyliuk[1], and Štefan Papp[2] are particularly noteworthy. These authors provide insights into the past of modern-day Transcarpathia across various periods. A notable contribution is Štefan Papp's multi-volume series, which chronicles the major historical events of the region from prehistory to the 20th century.

Since this study focuses on the election of the police chief in Uzhhorod, it is also relevant to discuss works related to the history of the city. With regard to the history of the city of Uzhhorod, foundational contributions have been made by Alena Panova[3] and Tetiana Literati[4]. In her work, Alena Panova produced a Ukrainian translation and expanded version of Károly Mészáros's monograph, thus providing readers with a new framework through which to understand Uzhhorod's past. She emphasises that to comprehend the city's history, one must first understand its origins and the key events it has undergone throughout time.

In contrast, Tetiana Literati takes her readers on a "journey" through the city of Uzhhorod. The aim of this journey is to familiarise readers with the city's notable buildings, streets, families, and more. While Panov's work approaches Uzhhorod's past from a scholarly perspective, Literati's publication can be regarded more as a popular history or educational work.

Hungarian-language contributions to the history of Transcarpathia include *Ungvár és Ung Vármegye* [*Uzhhorod and Ung County*] by Antal Csikvári[5] and *Ungvár története, a legrégebbi időktől máig* [*The History of Uzhhorod from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*] by Károly Mészáros[6]. These two works are among the earliest Hungarian-language sources focusing on the county and its centre. More recently, the monograph *Örökség és kihívások*[7] [*Heritage and Challenges*] was published under the auspices of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education. This publication examines the history of Ung County and Uzhhorod from social, economic, and political perspectives.

In a broader context, the foundation and development of the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie have been studied by Dr. József Parádi[8] and Dr. Csaba Csapó[9]. Both authors analysed the establishment and national expansion of the organisation, exploring its personnel, equipment, and legal framework from multiple angles. They also emphasised that the development of the municipal police followed a fundamentally different path from that of the gendarmerie. A good example of this

divergence is found in the command structure and the organisation's relationship with other branches of public administration. Nikoletta Petra Nándori's [10] work, *Egy városi rendőrkapitányság a dualizmus korában* [*A City Police Department in the Age of Dualism*], presents the development of the urban police authority and its unique features.

This study examines Ung County and the city of Uzhhorod from the perspective of law enforcement. As it was noted above, the history of law enforcement in present-day Transcarpathia is still a new research field, with only a few studies published on the subject so far. The works of Róbert Varga, based on extensive archival research, serve as a key starting point. He investigated the history of law enforcement in Ung County during the period between 1892 and 1918 [11]. In his studies, the author uses contemporary archival sources (primarily from the Berehove Branch of the State Archives of the Transcarpathian Region) to present the structural and organisational setup of the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie in the Ung region. The gendarmerie played an essential role in every county, as it was responsible for protecting citizens. However, it is important to note that the gendarmerie only had jurisdiction in rural areas. Citizens were required to turn to the gendarmerie for legal remedy in cases of violations such as robbery, murder, or physical assault. Varga's study *Ung vármegye csendőrsége 1881–1914 között* [*The Gendarmerie of Ung County between 1881 and 1914*] [12] focuses on this topic. Using maps and tables, the author reconstructed the organisational structure of the county's gendarmerie and included gendarmerie reports that document every key detail of specific investigations.

The situation was different in cities from a law enforcement perspective. Every city with municipal council status operated its own so-called city police force. In Uzhhorod as well, a well-functioning police department developed, thanks in part to charismatic leaders like István Berzeviczy. Varga provides an in-depth account of the police chief's career in his study *Berzeviczy István rendőrkapitányi pályafutása*

1895–1916 között [*Police Chief István Berzeviczy's Career between 1895 and 1916*] [13]. The researcher highlights Berzeviczy's leadership qualities and notes how the police chief eventually became one of the most prominent figures in Uzhhorod.

Varga's more recent study, *Adalékok Ungvár városának rendvédelmi történetéhez 1890–1914 között* [*Contributions to the Law Enforcement History of Uzhhorod between 1890 and 1914*] [14], also addresses the work of the city's police force. It details the duties of the police chiefs, the size of the force, the types of cases they handled, and the various conflicts they encountered. Notably, the study describes how the county elite were intertwined with the civil servant class.

Ung County was not spared the military events of the First World War. On several occasions, Tsarist troops invaded the county, engaging in looting and pillaging. In response, the Austro–Hungarian Military Command stationed a significant number of troops in the area. However, in some cases, these soldiers committed crimes against the local civilian population. Ádám Suslik's study (*„Katonáink polgári egyénnel együtt fosztogatnak” – Alispáni jelentés a népfelkelők által elkövetett bűncselekményekről és a sebesült katonák élelmezéséről* [“*Our Soldiers are Looting Together with Civilians*”: *Report of the Vice-Lord Lieutenant on Crimes Committed by Militias and the Provisioning of Wounded Soldiers*]) [15] sheds light on these negative events. Research conducted in the Hungarian National Archives reveals that both the Ung County Gendarmerie and the Uzhhorod City Police received numerous complaints about the soldiers' behaviour.

During the war, the state assigned more and more responsibilities to both the gendarmerie and the police. These new duties included organising and supervising the internment of civilians, managing war refugees, and deporting individuals considered dangerous to the Austro–Hungarian war effort. The legal framework and specific case studies surrounding these measures are analysed in László Somogyi's study *Az internálás és a rendőri felügyelet jogi háttere Magyarországon az I. világháború alatt* [*The Legal Background of Internment and Police Surveillance in*

Hungary during World War I] [16]. The chaotic nature of the 1914–1918 conflict also led to changes in the rules surrounding firearm use and the procedures followed by the police and gendarmerie. János Sallai addressed this issue in his study *Fegyverhasználat a rendészetben az első világháború kitörése időszakában* [*The Use of Firearms in Policing at the Outbreak of World War I*] [17].

By 1918, the law enforcement situation had become almost untenable. This is supported by Gyula Kosztyó's book *A Tanácsköztársaság Kárpátalján* [*The Hungarian Soviet Republic in Transcarpathia*] [18], in which he describes how, between 1918 and 1919, law enforcement essentially ceased to function – not only in Ung County but across the entire territory of present-day Transcarpathia. In Hungarian historiography, this period is often described as a time of collapse.

Formulation of the Article's Aims. This study aims to reconstruct the process of the 1916 police chief election in Uzhhorod, drawing on contemporary archival sources. It seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. Why was a new police chief needed in the city of Uzhhorod?
2. What interests did the political and economic elite of Ung County have in the police chief election?
3. How was the new police chief selected?
4. How many candidates applied, and who was ultimately appointed?

Presentation of the Main Research Material. After the outbreak of the war, the city of Uzhhorod faced numerous challenges. One such issue was the arrival of war refugees, whose settlement posed significant internal security risks. Additionally, crime driven by food shortages placed further pressure on the city's leadership and its law enforcement bodies. To manage the complications caused by the military conflict, Uzhhorod required a strong-willed mayor. Between 1914 and 1916, the city was led by Mihály Fincziczky, who, despite his advanced age of 74, enjoyed great respect and popularity among the citizens of Uzhhorod [19] His age was noteworthy, considering that in 1910 the average life expectancy for men was

only 39.07 years. However, due to his age and a persistent illness that had plagued him since 1915, he was uncertain whether he would run again in the mayoral election scheduled for 1916. The sources do not specify the nature of his illness, but the local press reported that between November and December 1915, the mayor spent little time in office, dealing only with urgent matters before stepping away. On January 7, 1916, he was expected at the mayor's office to sign and certify several documents. However, after hours of waiting, the news came from his family: Mihály Fincziczky had died.

The mayor's colleagues expressed their condolences to the family and discussed how and when to publish the mourning announcement in the press. Despite their grief, the Uzhhorod City Council was compelled to urgently find someone to fill the vacant post. In peacetime, a transitional period would have been possible to identify a suitable successor, but the wartime circumstances did not allow such a luxury [20, p. 2].

In the February 13, 1916 issue of the weekly newspaper *Ung*, the editorial board reported on the situation and the number of self-nominated candidates vying for the mayoral seat. According to columnist Béla Bánóczy, most of these individuals were mere opportunists seeking a secure livelihood through the mayor's office. However, the article made it clear that the city council, along with local secular and religious organisations, would most prefer to see István Berzeviczy as the head of Uzhhorod. Interestingly, by introducing Berzeviczy's name into public discourse as a potential candidate, Bánóczy's article effectively launched a campaign. For instance, he listed all of the police chief's character traits that would qualify him for the mayoral position [21, p. 13].

The praise published in the press had the desired effect, and the city council succeeded in convincing Police Chief István Berzeviczy to run for office. At an extraordinary general assembly, the delegates unanimously cast their votes in favour of the police chief. The results of the vote were reported in the local newspapers *Ung*

and *Ungvári Közlöny*. In addition to publishing the results and the percentage breakdown of votes, they also printed Berzeviczy's acceptance speech. In it, Berzeviczy emphasised the importance of cooperation for the successful functioning of the city and declared that everyone must share a common goal: the continued development of Uzhhorod. He argued that the city's progress could only be ensured if all levels of public administration were staffed by individuals connected to the locality. He concluded by stressing the need to set aside all political and religious divisions [21, p. 14].

The public responded positively to the new mayor, as everyone in Uzhhorod knew the police chief. He had safeguarded public order for over twenty years and had protected citizens from crime. During this time, he performed his duties with honour, firmness, and precision [22, p. 2]. In addition to his law enforcement work, István Berzeviczy also served as president of several local organisations, including the Uzhhorod–Mukachevo Theatre District and the Amateur Arts Association. He also held honorary presidencies in the Uzhhorod Hunting Society and the Uzhhorod Athletic Club [23, p. 18]. Alongside these activities, he played an active political role, notably as vice-president of the Independence and Forty-Eighters Party operating in Ung County. Berzeviczy – now mayor – had become an indispensable figure in the city. Thanks to his community engagement, he was respected by all age groups, though he also commanded a certain fear due to his authoritative background in law enforcement. Thus, the city council and the new mayor faced the pressing task of finding a suitable replacement for the police chief [24, p. 2].

The selection process was lengthy due to the need for thorough professional, personal, and character-reference checks for each applicant. Between February and November, following his election, István Berzeviczy temporarily held both offices simultaneously, retaining his role as police chief while performing his duties as mayor. This dual position led to rumours in the city that Berzeviczy was consolidating power and turning himself into a “one-man government” in Uzhhorod.

It was also rumoured that he intended to appoint his own allies to the most important city leadership posts. To quell such speculation, the mayor issued a public statement in the weekly *Ung*. He urged citizens not to believe malicious gossip and assured them that Uzhhorod would indeed have a new police chief. He stressed that only a candidate with the appropriate qualifications and experience would be appointed to lead the city's law enforcement. For this reason, he asked for the public's patience.

Berzeviczy kept his promise. As early as March 1916, job announcements were published in several national weekly newspapers. These provided detailed information for potential applicants regarding the annual compensation for the position. The advertised salary for the Uzhhorod police chief was 3,600 crowns, plus 910 crowns for housing allowance and 300 crowns for servant wages. The advertisement specified that all applications had to be submitted by October 23 [25, p. 29]. Application packages were required to include a birth certificate, proof of length and location of service, and a character reference issued by the local authorities of the applicant's hometown.

The job announcement had one unexpected negative consequence: the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Városok Lapja* sent an official telegram to István Berzeviczy, expressing dissatisfaction that his newspaper had not received the vacancy notice. He emphasised that his paper had been created specifically to report on city affairs, job openings, and other municipal matters across the country. The sources do not clarify whether the omission was a simple oversight or a deliberate act by the city leadership. Nevertheless, the editor's protest had an effect: the mayor issued a written apology and sent the job announcement regarding the vacant police chief post [26, p. 32]. Within eight months, a total of ten police officers submitted their applications by mail.

Table 1

List and data of the applicants for the position of Police Chief [27, p. 32].

№	Name	Qualification	Rank / Service duration	Recommended by
1.	István Benke Hudopkó	Law Academy, June 23, 1909	Police Chief of Košice, Rank II, since September 26, 1909	Police Chief of the city of Košice
2.	József Vozáb (35 years old)	Law Academy, Ludovica Military Academy, April 18, 1900	Police Chief of Revúca, since December 1, 1907	Mayor of the town of Revúca
3.	Albert Wollner (33 years old)	—	Șimleu Silvaniei	—
4.	Bertalan Puky (61 years old)	Primary School in Prešov, Law Academy, January 5, 1876	High Sheriff, March 30, 1916	—
5.	János Hamuth (33 years old)	Political Science, Certificate October 20, 1915	Police Officer in Uzhhorod, since October 1, 1905	Mayor of the city of Uzhhorod
6.	Sándor Markovszky (47 years old)	—	Deputy Police Chief of Uzhhorod, since September 13, 1893	City Council of Uzhhorod
7.	Andor Novák (37 years old)	Law Academy of Sighetu Marmăției, February 11, 1902	—	—
8.	József Révész (26 years old)	Eger Law Academy, April 30, 1915	Stipendiary Legal Officer, since February 16, 1911	Police Chief of Eger
9.	Dr. Alajos Falussy (30 years old)	Certificate in Political Science Teaching, March	Police Chief of Carei (January 22, 1911); Police Instructor in	—

		12, 1912	Sighetu Marmăției (March 12, 1912)	
10.	Dr. Pál Bóna	State Secondary Grammar School of Makó, Law Academy	First Deputy Police Chief of Makó	Mayor of the town of Makó

Archival records concerning the documents submitted by the applicants are incomplete; therefore, only partial information is available about those who competed for the position of police chief. In terms of age distribution, the overwhelming majority of applicants were in their thirties, with one exception – Bertalan Puky, who, at 61 years old, was the oldest candidate [27, p. 32]. More noteworthy, however, is the educational background of the applicants: of the ten candidates, only Albert Wollner and Sándor Markovszky did not hold a higher education diploma. According to the educational documents submitted by the remaining applicants, they had graduated from legal academies or universities. This gave them a distinct advantage, as city police chiefs were required by law to adjudicate various legal matters [28, p. 33].

From a professional standpoint, only three of the candidates were not already serving as police chiefs or working within the police force. For example, Bertalan Puky was a high sheriff in Prešov, while Albert Wollner did not specify his occupation, only listing his place of work as Șimleu Silvaniei. In his inaugural speech, Mayor István Berzeviczy emphasised his intention to fill key administrative and law enforcement positions with individuals who had strong local ties. From this perspective, it would have been logical to appoint one of the two candidates with local roots – Sándor Markovszky or János Hamuth – as the new police chief. However, the local-patriotic tone of the speech did not align with the final decision.

The weekly newspaper *Ung* reported in its November 5, 1916 issue that the Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, and the Mayor of the County had chosen Dr. Pál Bóna, first deputy police chief of Makó, as the new police chief. Citing sources from city hall, the article stated that Dr. Bóna was a man of strong character who upheld law and order in Makó with iron discipline. His effectiveness was attributed to both his legal education and his deep familiarity with laws and regulations [28, p. 33].

Dr. Pál Bóna was born on September 9, 1882. His father was János Bóna, and his mother was Rozália Ziszkober [29, p. 51]. He studied at the State Secondary Grammar School of Makó as a tuition-paying student. During the 1897–1898 school year, he failed and had to repeat the sixth grade [30, p. 72]. Interestingly, his father worked as a teacher at the same school [31]. Due to a lack of sources, the exact date of his election as police chief in Makó is unknown. However, newspaper articles from the time already refer to him as first deputy police chief as early as 1910 [32, pp. 2–4].



Picture 1. Seated row – second from the left: Dr. Pál Bóna
Christmas celebration of the police officers.

Magyar Rendőr. January 15, 1938, p. 3 [33, p. 3]

The image of Dr. Pál Bóna presented in the Uzhhorod press was somewhat idealised, especially considering that he had been involved in several controversial situations during his previous service. His most significant conflict was with the Republican Party, which was politically active in Makó [34]. The police chief received word that Dr. János Espesit, a lawyer in the city, had organised an unauthorised meeting at his home, attended by several prominent individuals from neighbouring towns. Due to the lack of a police permit, Dr. Bóna decided to disperse the meeting using law enforcement.

The operation involved twenty local police officers and twenty gendarmes from nearby towns. During the raid, law enforcement personnel entered Dr. Espesit's apartment and demanded identification from all those present. When the individuals refused to comply, the police chief ordered his men to escort them to the city jail. The following day, he imposed a fine of 200 crowns on each participant, with a five-day deadline for payment. After their release, an unexpected turn of events followed [35, p. 2].

Dr. Espesit lodged a formal complaint with the mayor and requested that the city council convene to investigate the matter. Possibly to avoid broader political repercussions, Makó's mayor, Dr. Ignác Galambos, agreed and scheduled the meeting for May 13, 1913. All city representatives attended, and the town hall was reportedly filled to capacity. Dr. Espesit, the central figure in the case, delivered a passionate speech, asserting that the gathering at his home had merely been a private social event – not a political meeting – and therefore, the police had committed an unlawful entry. He added that the officers had behaved aggressively and coercively toward those present [36, p. 3].

The speech had the intended effect. The mayor concluded that Dr. Bóna and Deputy Chief Gyula Rákos had exceeded their authority. As a result, he called for a secret ballot among the attendees to decide the fate of the officers. The outcome of the vote was 44 in favour and 40 against suspending the two. The seriousness of the

incident is underscored by the fact that newspapers across the country reported on the events in Makó. *Pesti Hírlap* also informed its readers about the alleged abuse of power by the police and the suspension of the leadership [37, p. 2].

It is possible that this suspension and its aftermath played a role in Dr. Bóna not being re-elected as police chief at the Makó General Assembly in September 1915, where Dr. Dezső Pulitzer was appointed instead. Due to a lack of records, it is unclear how long the new chief remained in office [38, p. 2], especially since the February 27, 1916 issue of *Az Est* once again listed Dr. Bóna as Makó's police chief [39, p. 4].

Dr. Pál Bóna finally assumed office in Uzhhorod on December 28, 1916. He was welcomed at city hall by his predecessor, István Berzeviczy, and together they proceeded to police headquarters. According to established protocol, the mayor introduced the new chief to the police staff. In his brief speech, he expressed hope that under Dr. Bóna's leadership, the department would continue to operate as effectively as it had under his own command [40, pp. 41–42].

According to *Határszéli Újság*, the new police chief quickly immersed himself in his duties. At the first city council meeting on January 25, 1917, Dr. Pál Bóna presented his observations regarding the infrastructure and staffing of the police force. He pointed out that of the 18,000 crowns in discretionary aid granted by the government in previous years, only 5% had been allocated to the police. This amount, he argued, was insufficient to meet even the most basic needs of the department, such as office improvements and uniforms [41, p. 2].

He emphasised the need for gradual and continuous development to ensure that the Uzhhorod police department could meet the challenges of the time. Among his priorities were reforms benefiting personnel. One modernisation proposal was to streamline the promotion process for police officers. In Uzhhorod, the existing system delayed advancement to such a degree that many street-level officers were not promoted until their fifties or sixties. This outdated structure discouraged both

professional development and legal education. Dr. Bóna stated that he wished to implement in Uzhhorod the same system that had already proven effective in Makó [42, p. 3].

Conclusions. The election of István Berzeviczy as mayor of Uzhhorod was a significant political event that required him to resign from his position as police chief. A national competition was announced to fill the vacancy, and although the selection process was not without tension, including public concerns about dual power, Berzeviczy eventually yielded to pressure and opened the position to outside applicants. Pál Bóna ultimately won the appointment and led the Uzhhorod City Police until the end of World War I. His appointment marked a new chapter in Uzhhorod's law enforcement and contributed to the stabilisation of local governance. These developments also allowed Berzeviczy to fully dedicate himself to his duties as mayor, while Dr. Bóna assumed responsibility for the city's policing.

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