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In the Service of the Local Elite: The Career of István Berzeviczy and His Attachment to Ung County

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Abstract. *This study aims to present the life and career of István Berzeviczy between 1893 and 1916. It describes his years as police chief, his political and cultural activities, and his social connections. Special attention is paid to the relationships he developed with the leading elite of the county, which influenced his career and public role. **Objective.** This study seeks to explore the career of police chief István Berzeviczy and his ties to Ung County between 1893 and 1916, with particular emphasis on his official duties and his social and political involvement. The primary goal of the research is to shed light on the local operations of the police force and Berzeviczy's role in the administration and cultural life of the city of Uzhhorod. **Methods.** The research is based on the processing of fonds stored in the Beregszász branch of the Carpathian State Archives. During my research, I explored sources in fonds 6 (the documents of the mayor's office of the statutory city of Uzhhorod) and fonds 7 (documents of the sub-prefect of Ung County). Among the*



contemporary documents, I found correspondence, instructions, and reports related to István Berzeviczy. The archival research was supplemented by a source-critical analysis of contemporary press publications – *Ung, Határszéli Újság, Az Újság, Görögkatolikus Szemle* – as well as oral history derived from family memories.

Results. Research on the subject has revealed that high-ranking patrons played an important role in István Berzeviczy's career advancement, but at the same time, according to contemporary opinions, he also needed to be capable of leading a well-functioning police force during his term of office. During his tenure as police chief, the Uzhhorod City Police operated within a structured framework, and besides maintaining public order, they were increasingly tasked with safeguarding political loyalty. István Berzeviczy gradually became involved in the social and cultural life of the county. Through his wide-ranging public activities, he contributed greatly to shaping the social and cultural life of the city of Uzhhorod. According to contemporary press reports, his reputation was somewhat mixed: on the one hand, his high level of administrative competence was recognized, but on the other hand, he was also seen as a powerful figure serving the interests of the local elite.

Conclusions. In this study, I present the life and career of István Berzeviczy, paying particular attention to his roles as police chief, politician, and cultural figure. My research shows that Berzeviczy successfully led the Uzhhorod City Police: under his leadership, public order and safety in the city became more stable. According to archival sources and contemporary press reports, he received significant support from influential local families—the *Török, Kende, and Sztáray* families—who played a crucial role in shaping his later political career. His loyalty to the Ung elite was particularly evident in his role in the coup against Chief Magistrate Zsigmond Bernáth. This commitment proved to be worthwhile: he became the leading candidate for the vacant position of mayor of Uzhhorod, and, having won the majority of votes, served as mayor of Uzhhorod from 1916 to 1919. In addition to his official duties, Berzeviczy was also actively involved in the social and cultural



life of the city: in 1910, he was elected president of the Uzhhorod Athletic Club, and from 1916, he served as president of the Uzhhorod Social Circle. In addition, in 1911, he presented his poetry collection at an event for amateur writers and readers in Gyöngyös.

Keywords: police, chief of police, elite, Uzhhorod, Uzh County, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, local administration, intertwining of power, loyalty

На службі місцевої еліти: кар'єра Берзевіці Іштвана та його зв'язки з Ужанським комітатом

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Анотація. Це дослідження має на меті представити життя та кар'єру Іштвана Берзевіці у 1893–1916 рр. У роботі описано його діяльність на посаді начальника поліції, його політичну та культурну активність, а також соціальні зв'язки. Особлива увага приділяється відносинам, які він розвивав із провідною елітою комітату, що суттєво впливали на його кар'єру та громадську роль. **Мета.** Це дослідження спрямоване на вивчення кар'єри начальника поліції Іштвана Берзевіці та його зв'язків з Ужанським комітатом у 1893–1916 рр., з особливим наголосом на його службових обов'язках, а також на його соціальній та політичній активності. Основна мета роботи – висвітлити місцеве функціонування поліційних сил та роль Берзевіці в адміністративному та культурному житті міста Ужгорода. **Методи.** Дослідження базується на опрацюванні фондів, що зберігаються у Берегівському відділі Державного архіву Закарпатської області. У процесі



роботи були використані джерела з фонду 6 (документи міської управи статутного міста Ужгорода) та фонду 7 (документи піджупана Ужанського комітату). Серед сучасних документів були виявлені листування, інструкції та звіти, пов'язані з діяльністю Іштвана Берзевіці. Архівні пошуки були доповнені джерелознавчим аналізом публікацій у тодішній пресі – Ung, Határszéli Újság, Az Újság, Görögkatolikus Szemle – а також усною історією, заснованою на родинних спогадах. **Результати.** Дослідження показало, що високопоставлені покровителі відігравали важливу роль у кар'єрному зростанні Іштвана Берзевіці, проте, за сучасними оцінками, він також повинен був бути здатним забезпечити ефективне керівництво добре функціонуючою поліцією. За його каденції Ужгородська міська поліція діяла в чітко структурованих рамках, і окрім підтримання громадського порядку, дедалі частіше виконувала завдання із забезпечення політичної лояльності. Іштван Берзевіці поступово включався в соціальне та культурне життя комітату. Завдяки його широкій громадській діяльності він значно сприяв формуванню соціального й культурного обличчя міста Ужгорода. За повідомленнями сучасної преси, його репутація була децю суперечливою: з одного боку, визнавалася його висока адміністративна компетентність, з іншого – його сприймали як впливову постать, що служить інтересам місцевої еліти. **Висновки.** У цій статті представлено життя та кар'єру Іштвана Берзевіці з особливим акцентом на його діяльність як начальника поліції, політичного діяча та культурного активіста. Мої дослідження свідчать, що Берзевіці успішно керував Ужгородською міською поліцією: під його керівництвом громадський порядок і безпека в місті стали стабільнішими. Згідно з архівними джерелами та повідомленнями сучасної преси, він отримував значну підтримку з боку впливових місцевих родин – Тьорьоків, Кенде та Стараїв, які відіграли вирішальну роль у формуванні його подальшої політичної кар'єри. Його лояльність до ужанської еліти особливо



проявилася під час заколоту проти головного жупана Жігмонда Берната. Ця відданість виявилася результативною: він став головним кандидатом на вакантну посаду мера Ужгорода і, здобувши більшість голосів, обіймав цю посаду в 1916–1919 рр. Поряд зі службовими обов'язками Берзевіці активно долучався до соціального та культурного життя міста: у 1910 р. його обрали головою Ужгородського атлетичного клубу, а з 1916 р. він був президентом Ужгородського громадського кола. Крім того, у 1911 р. він представив свою поетичну збірку на вечорі самодіяльних письменників і читачів у місті Гьонгьйош.

Ключові слова: поліція, начальник поліції, еліта, Ужгород, Ужанський комітет, Австро-Угорська монархія, місцева адміністрація, переплетення владних структур, лояльність.

Problem Statement. The central issue of this research is that István Berzeviczy's role as police chief and his social involvement remain largely unexplored to this day. Although numerous books and studies have been written about the administrative and social life of Ung County and the city of Uzhhorod, the workings of the police force and its leader have only been partially researched. Thus, an important aspect of the local history of the period remains unstudied. This gap is particularly striking given that the Beregszász branch of the Carpathian State Archives preserves fonds records that contain useful material on the subject. It is necessary to highlight fonds 6, which contains the documents of the mayor of the city of Uzhhorod, and fonds 7, which preserves the documents of the sub-prefect of Ung County, such as correspondence, instructions, reports – that can serve as primary sources for Berzeviczy's administrative and police activities and his role in the public life of Uzhhorod.

The source research is supplemented by an examination of the contemporary press. Ung, Határszéli Újság, and other local newspapers not only serve as



background material, but also reflect how the public viewed and evaluated István Berzeviczy's activities. The press analysis has a dual purpose, as it provides a fundamental source base not only for the police chief's official role, but also for his social reputation.

Identifying Previously Unresolved Aspects of the Broader Problem. One previously unexplored aspect of this topic is that the research focuses on a historical figure whose career and socio-political role were closely linked to the city of Uzhhorod. The aim of this study is to fill this gap: by systematically processing archival documents and press sources, it aims to offer a new perspective on the career of István Berzeviczy, his work as police chief, and his role in local society.

As a secondary aspect, it should be noted that most of the documents preserved in the Beregszász branch of the Carpathian State Archives are written in Hungarian, which may pose a challenge for those who are not familiar with the language/linguistics of the period. Accordingly, another goal of my publications is to bridge this gap and make the findings available to a wider audience in multiple languages.

Objective of the Research. This study seeks to examine the career of István Berzeviczy between 1893 and 1916. The sources discovered in the archives allowed me to formulate three objectives before writing the paper. The primary task of the research is to present Berzeviczy's activities as police chief, which provides an opportunity to analyze the organizational framework and operation of the Uzhhorod City Police, as well as the maintenance of public administration and public order. The research not only examines this period from an institutional historical perspective, but also seeks to answer the question of how István Berzeviczy was judged by the population of Uzhhorod and what kind of social response he elicited.

My secondary goal is to examine the role played by his high-ranking patrons in the development of his career, whether as police chief or politician, and how they contributed to his advancement. In this context, I examine Berzeviczy's relationship



with the local elite – the Török, Kende, and Sztáray families – and how his loyalty to these families manifested itself.

The third objective is to show how István Berzeviczy became involved in the public life of the city of Uzhhorod and what leadership roles he assumed.

The research aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the career of a historical figure whose career and social network contributed to a better understanding of the public life and administrative structure of Ung County.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. In recent years, the historiography of the First World War in the territory of present-day Transcarpathia has been enriched by several significant works that approach the subject from different perspectives. Олександр Гаврош's *Наша Перша світова (1914–1918). Антологія української художньої прози* [1] provides a broad framework for understanding the wartime processes in Ukraine and places the events of Transcarpathia into a wider national and international context. Юрія Фатула's *Неси мамі жалість мою... Закарпатці у Першій світовій війні* [2] focuses directly on local experiences, depicting the everyday life of families and communities, as well as the impact of mobilization and losses. In another volume, *Я ще гадав газдувати, але мушу воювати... Бойовий шлях 66-го Унгарського піхотного полка австро-угорської армії. 1914–1918* [3] the author provides a detailed reconstruction of the history of the 66th Ungvár Infantry Regiment and the soldiers' front-line experiences. Suslik Ádám's monograph *Az első világháború és vidékünk (1914–1918)* [4] emphasizes the social and cultural challenges of the war in the region. The military-historical dimension is further strengthened by Pap Krisztián's *Oroszlánok a Kárpátokban 1914–1915* [5] and vitéz uzsoki báró Szurmay Sándor's *A magyar katona a Kárpátokban* [6] the former analyzes the Carpathian military operations of 1914–1915, while the latter presents the experiences of Hungarian soldiers on the Carpathian front. Taken together, these works provide a nuanced



picture of the war experiences in the region, capturing both the history of the front lines and that of the home front.

More extensive research has already been conducted on the history of Ung County. Among the literature written in Ukrainian, the works of Dmytro Danylyuk[7] and Pap Stepan[8] are particularly noteworthy. The authors provide insight into the historical past of present-day Transcarpathia through various historical periods. It is important to note that Pap Stepan 's work is a multi-volume publication that covers the most important historical events in Transcarpathia from prehistory to the 20th century. Serhiy Fedak also wrote a work on the history of present-day Transcarpathia entitled Історія Закарпаття у датах і подіях [The History of Transcarpathia in Dates and Events].[9] In this publication, the author compiled important dates from the perspective of the Transcarpathian region, helping readers to understand the colorful and sometimes turbulent history of the area. Since the central figure of this study is István Berzeviczy, whose life is closely linked to the city of Uzhhorod, it is also necessary to describe the works that focus on the county seat of Uzhhorod. Two significant publications provide a foundation for understanding Uzhhorod during this period. One is a monograph written by Károly Mészáros, translated into Ukrainian and expanded by Alen Panov [10].

This publication provides readers with an opportunity to discover Uzhhorod 's past in a new interpretative context. In his introductory remarks, Alen Panov emphasizes that understanding the city's history is only possible if we explore the circumstances of its origins and learn about the historical processes and events that shaped its development. In contrast, Tetyana Literati's[11] work takes the form of a walk through the city's history, during which the reader can get to know Uzhhorod 's characteristic buildings, streets, families, and other elements of its cultural heritage. While Alen Panov 's volume examines the historical development of Uzhhorod primarily from an academic perspective, Tetyana Literati's work can be classified as popular science literature. Works on Uzhhorod County have also been



published in Hungarian, focusing on economic, social, and political aspects. As a result of new research, a monograph entitled *Heritage and Challenges* was published by the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education. [12] In the monograph, the authors describe the history of Ung County and the city of Uzhhorod based on the above-mentioned aspects. Since István Berzeviczy held an important position as police chief in the city of Uzhhorod, it is also necessary to understand how the institutional structure of the state police was established in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and what powers the state granted it. Miksa Tisza wrote about this topic in his book titled *The History of the Police in Hungary*. [13] This work provides the most important information about the police, guiding the reader through the organizational structure, ranks, and legislation of the force. Since research on the police in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is limited, it is necessary to place greater emphasis on the scientific articles that have been published on the subject. János Sallai wrote about police training at the time in his study entitled *Police Officer Training Courses and Officer Training Textbooks*. [14] In his work, the author compiled and presented to his readers the training procedures of the time. Gábor Androvicz's study entitled *The Development of Hungarian Police Training during the Dualist Period* also fills a gap in the literature on the same subject. [15]

Iván Halász provides insight into the daily work of the municipal police station in his study entitled *The Municipal Police of Léva during the Dual Monarchy*. [16] The work is useful in several respects, as it provides readers with a general overview of the history of the police organization and shows how the police operated in the city of Léva and what issues they had to deal with during the dualism period. Nikolett Petra Nádori also approaches the functioning of the city police from a similar perspective in her paper entitled *A City Police Station in the Era of Dualism*, using the example of the city of Nitra. [17]

In addition to law enforcement, the study also has a socio-political dimension. Thus, the works of authors who examine the society of the period are



indispensable. One of the most important works is the book by Gábor Gyáni and György Kövér entitled *The Social History of Hungary from the Reform Era to World War II*. [18] In this book, the authors examine the changes in the social structure of Hungary in different periods. In addition to social changes, a new pressing issue emerged at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. This was none other than the demographic crisis in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Miklós Konrád writes about this in his book *Demographic Changes*. [19] The author seeks to answer the important question of what caused the mass emigration from the Northeastern Carpathians. This is an exciting question from the perspective of the present study because the emigration data for Ung County between 1890 and 1914 showed a rather negative trend.

In the abstract of my thesis, I indicated that my research focused on István Berzeviczy's relationships with the leading elite of the county, which influenced his career and public role. For this reason, it was important to identify which families exerted the greatest influence on Ung County. András Cieger's publication *Érdekek és stratégiák* (Interests and Strategies) helped me in this regard. [20] In this work, the author examines the most influential families living in Ung County and how they were able to use their various abilities to assert their interests in both the political and economic spheres. In another work, András Cieger specifically examines the political connections of the power elite in Ung County during the dualist period. In another work, András Cieger – *The Political Leadership of Ung County during the Dualist Period* – specifically examines the political interconnections of the power elite in Ung. [21]

In addition to all this, the backbone of the study is provided by contemporary archival sources that have not been researched until now. These contemporary documents make up the career of István Berzeviczy between 1893 and 1916.

Formulation of the article's objectives (setting the task). In my study, I aim to present the career of István Berzeviczy between 1893 and 1916.



In my work, I seek answers to the following questions, among others:

1. What connections did István Berzeviczy have to Ung County, and how did these influence the development of his career?
2. How did the Uzhhorod city police operate under the leadership of Police Chief Berzeviczy, and what challenges did he face?
3. What was the social perception of István Berzeviczy among the population of Uzhhorod, and how was this reflected in the press of the time?
4. What other public and social roles did he take on in the city of Uzhhorod beyond his official duties?
5. Can Berzeviczy's commitment to the local elite be demonstrated, and if so, in what actions, decisions, or public statements was this reflected?

The aim of my methodological approach is to present István Berzeviczy's career between 1893 and 1916 in a comprehensive and well-founded manner in my study. To this end, I use historical and source-critical methods that enable the thorough exploration and interpretation of data and documents relevant to the period. As a first step, I conduct a thorough literature review, presenting contemporary literature, newspaper articles, official documents, and personal documents, thus laying the foundation for the credibility and versatility of my research. I will then conduct a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the available press and archival sources to explore István Berzeviczy's connections with Ung County and his relationship with the local community. I place particular emphasis on the analysis of so-called social networks, which allows me to highlight his commitment to the local elite and the social perception of him. This includes a content analysis of newspaper articles, autobiographical texts, and official reports, which can shed light on aspects of his personal and public roles.

Presentation of the Main Research Material. The future police chief and mayor was born on August 5, 1859, to Árpád Berzeviczy and Gizella Tobai. The



family was practicing Roman Catholic. The Berzeviczy family was primarily engaged in agriculture and owned large estates in Bajaháza [22] and its surrounding area. According to sources, István Berzeviczy attended school in Nagyvárád and Vienna, but did not complete his studies in Vienna due to a tragedy that befell his family. After his father's death, he returned to Bajaháza and took over the management of the estate. [23] From 1893, he also played a role in the political life of Ung County, being elected to the county assembly. He became politically active that same year, taking an active part in the local Liberal Party, and on November 25, 1908, he was elected vice president of the Independence and Forty-Eight Party of Ung County. [24, p. 3] Thus, it can be said that, in addition to his duties as police chief, he played an increasingly important role in local political life. He was assisted in all this by his paternal uncle, Jenő Tabógy, who was friends with Péter Kende [25, p. 308], the sub-prefect. [26, p. 3] After establishing contact with the county's power elite, his name may have come up in connection with filling the position of police chief. In fact, at the city council meeting held in December 1895, Mayor Mihály Fincziczky nominated István Berzeviczy to replace the temporarily elected Captain Béla Lehoczky in his speech. In his speech to the participants, the first man of Uzhhorod emphasized that he knew his candidate well and that there was no doubt about his competence. This public statement suggests that the two most influential families in the county, the Török and Sztáray families, also supported the new chief. This is confirmed by the fact that Count József Török, the chief magistrate, assured István Berzeviczy of his support in a letter. Thus, on December 20, 1895, with the support of Count József Török, István Berzeviczy was appointed the new police chief of the city of Uzhhorod. Section 80 of Act XXI of 1886 on the appointment of civil servants stated that the chief magistrate had the right to appoint civil servants in the county. XXI. tc. 80.§ of 1886 on the appointment of civil servants stated that the chief magistrate had the right to appoint state employees in the county. [27, p. 5]

The national and local press reported on the inauguration and appointment of the new police chief. [28, p. 4]



Picture 1. István Berzeviczy, Chief of Police

István Berzeviczy <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/115520452/istvan-berzeviczy>
(Accessed: 02.08.2025), [29]

For the purposes of this presentation, it is useful to divide István Berzeviczy's career as police chief into two parts, as he led his office during peacetime between 1895 and 1914, and during wartime between 1914 and 1916. It is therefore worth examining what issues the Uzhhorod police dealt with during the happy times of peace [30, pp. 11–12] and to what extent this changed with the outbreak of military conflict. During the period before the Great War, the captain's reign was primarily concerned with maintaining public safety and dealing with illegal emigration. With the outbreak of war and the proximity of the front, his tasks multiplied. The organization he led had to deal with loan sharks, price gougers, war refugees, and spies. Thus, we can say that the Uzhhorod police had much more diverse tasks between 1914 and 1918. [31, pp. 12–14]



Picture 2.

Uzhhorod City Police Department [32]

Source: Ferenc Újlaki, István Berzeviczy great-grandchild.

Not everyone was permanently satisfied with the new police chief and the organization he led. It happened that Miklós Mocsáry, a law student from Uzhhorod, declared in front of a large group of people that he had witnessed a police action that exceeded all legal and ethical limits. News of this quickly reached the Uzhhorod police, and Captain Berzeviczy took it as a personal insult. To get his revenge, the head of the police challenged his critic to a duel, even though armed duels were against the law at the time. According to Section 293 of the Csemegi Code [33, pp. 43–44], challenging someone to a duel and accepting a duel was punishable by six months' imprisonment, regardless of rank or age. For this reason, Clair Vilmos's Code of Duelling was created and distributed nationwide in order to resolve conflicts peacefully. [34. pp. 7–3] Presumably aware of this, Miklós Mocsáry refused to engage in a sword duel. He justified his decision by saying that he had not insulted the police chief personally, but had spoken out against those police officers who did not know the law. This explanation did not calm tempers, as Captain Berzeviczy, through police officers Tilzer and Bochkor, called his opponent a scoundrel and a coward. [35, p. 3] Following the mutual insults, the two men agreed to fight a sword duel in the gym of the Uzhhorod High School at 5 p.m. According to the accepted rules, the fight was to continue until the first blood was drawn, and the seconds were



responsible for providing the weapons. The fight ended with the victory of the police chief, who wounded his opponent on the right shoulder. After the duel, the opponents shook hands and agreed to consider their differences null and void. Miklós Mocsáry was taken to the local hospital to have his wound treated, while István Berzeviczy took two weeks' leave and left the city of Uzhhorod. An interesting fact about the duel is that I could not find any documents related to the case in the records of the city council or the chief magistrate and deputy magistrate. Only a few press publications reported on the bloody conflict between the two men. This leads to the conclusion that they wanted to cover up the case, as the chief had broken the law by participating in the duel. [36, p. 5]

It can be said that István Berzeviczy was very loyal to the local political elite, as they not only helped him get elected as chief of police, but also covered up the unpleasantness caused by the duel. It was only a matter of time before Captain Berzeviczy would have to repay them for all this. Finally, on December 30, 1905, he had to repay his "debt" by participating in a political and social resistance movement against the new chief magistrate, Zsigmond Bernáth, in Uzhhorod. [37, p. 51]

Between June 18, 1905, and April 8, 1906, Hungary struggled with a serious domestic political crisis, which also affected regional political power relations. The Liberal Party lost the 1905 elections, and the "united opposition" won a decisive majority of seats in parliament. [38, pp. 151–152] Since the backbone of this political formation of the opposition was made up of the 48ers, the ruling Franz Joseph refused to recognize the election results and temporarily appointed Géza Fejérváry as head of government. [39, pp. 56–57] The new government's position was made more difficult by the fact that its members were not party members and did not have the parliamentary majority necessary for lawmaking. In addition, voices were increasingly being heard in the country that the Fejérváry government was unconstitutional and illegal. This opinion was also expressed by Count József Török,



the chief magistrate of Ung County. In an article published in 1905, the county's leader expressed his dissatisfaction with the political events in Budapest. He expressed his opinion that the provisional government was unconstitutional and that István Tisza would be the most suitable candidate for the post of prime minister. [40, p. 52] Following the publication of the article, Fejérváry's cabinet put strong political pressure on the chief magistrate, as a result of which he resigned from his position in the administration. [41, p. 2] The weekly newspaper Ung also reported on his unexpected departure to its readers. According to the article, Jenő Lőrinczy informed the representatives at an extraordinary county assembly that the chief magistrate had resigned from his position—having become a victim of political persecution—and that the government planned to appoint Zsigmond Bernáth. [42, p. 2] Deputy Governor Jenő Lőrinczy called on those present to boycott the inauguration of the new governor as a patriotic duty. [43, p. 53] The new chief magistrate caused great outrage among those present. Some representatives proposed that the board should draw up a multi-point boycott plan against him. Finally, they agreed to draw up a four-point plan. First, they would not recognize Zsigmond Bernáth as governor. Second, no representative of the council would attend the new county leader's inauguration ceremony. Third, they would lock the county hall and the governor's residence with chains and padlocks. Fourth, local individuals who cooperate with and assist the unconstitutional chief magistrate are unpatriotic and have no place in a patriotic community. [44, p. 3]

Unaware of the resistance in the county, Zsigmond Bernáth arrived at the county seat on December 30, 1905. [45, p. 4] A huge crowd was waiting for him at Uzhhorod railway station, but not to welcome him. After he got out of his carriage, the angry people showered him with various insults. In order to prevent a lynch mob from forming, Antal Rónai suggested to Zsigmond Bernáth that they wait in the station waiting room until the gendarmes dispersed the crowd. It took several hours for the ten gendarmes called in to maintain public order to somewhat quell the



protest. [46 p. 4] An interesting detail of this episode is that members of the local police were not present during the atrocity. This suggests that István Berzeviczy also joined the political boycott. The events then took a dramatic turn. Bernáth managed to reach the county hall with great difficulty and the help of the gendarmes, but he was confronted with the fact that the building was locked. However, he was even more shocked when he saw a funeral procession approaching him. At the head of the procession, Roma musicians played the imperial anthem *Gott erhalte* [47, pp. 22–24], followed by a cart carrying a coffin with the inscription: "Here lies Bernáth Zsigmond, traitor and bastard." Bernáth, who was in a state of shock, ordered the gendarmerie to immediately remove the lock from the door so that he could take his oath of office. The gendarmerie complied with the order, but due to the resistance, no one appeared at the inauguration ceremony. We know from the newspaper *Újság* that only Representative Bertalan Jörger intended to attend, but the women protesting in front of the county hall did not allow him to enter the building. [48, p. 4] More and more residents of Uzhhorod gathered in the square in front of the county governor's office and began chanting loudly, "Zsiga, come out! Zsiga, come out!" Zsigmond Bernáth considered that his life was in danger, so he decided to leave through the back exit and left the city of Uzhhorod at 3:30 p.m. that same day. [49, p. 45]

The events in Uzhhorod caused a great stir, as national weekly newspapers also reported on the case. To avoid further humiliation, the Ministry of the Interior decided that the "rebels" should be punished. The punishment for the resisters was a one-month salary deduction and the dismissal of police chief István Berzeviczy. [50, p. 2] According to the Ministry of the Interior, he had failed in his duty because, as the head of the city's law enforcement unit, it was his responsibility to ensure public safety. In order to investigate the events of December 30, 1905, the government sent Károly Buth to Uzhhorod, who, upon his arrival, temporarily relieved Berzeviczy of his duties as police chief. During the investigation, the police chief was not arrested,



but he was forbidden from leaving the city. Several interrogations were conducted in connection with the case, but none of the persons summoned was able to provide useful information. [51, p. 3] Károly Buth, who led the investigation, noted that his inquiries were unsuccessful, as the identity of the instigators remained unclear. From the point of view of the investigation, it was important to find out why the city police units had not been sent to the railway station. We know from István Berzeviczy's testimony that the chief had not received any orders in this regard and was not aware of when and how the new chief magistrate would arrive in Uzhhorod. On the day in question, he had dispatched the police to the outskirts of the city because they wanted to catch a gang of thieves. They returned to the city in the late afternoon and were then informed of the atrocities committed against Zsigmond Bernáth. In my opinion, the police chief's testimony was flawed in several respects, as Berzeviczy could not have ordered all police officers out of the city, since his organization was the only law enforcement unit in the city. Secondly, it is highly unlikely that a gang of thieves would carry out their activities during the day, when the risk of being caught is greatest. [52, p. 3] Based on sources related to the case, it is much more likely that the police chief acted deliberately on orders from above. István Berzeviczy weighed up his options in relation to the case: if he joined the boycott led by Deputy Governor Lőrinczy, he would retain his position as police chief and continue to enjoy the trust of the county's political and economic powers, but if he sided with Zsigmond Bernáth, he would risk his position and future prospects in Ung County. Following this line of thinking, the chief's decision can be considered rational from a career perspective, but not from a law enforcement perspective. Károly Buth, who was leading the investigation, did not have any irrefutable witness testimony with which he could prove István Berzeviczy's complicity. During the investigation, all members of the Uzhhorod City Police were questioned. [53, p. 4] From the officers to the patrolmen, they all testified in unison with their superior. Due to the investigation reaching a dead end, Governor Buth forwarded the case and the



investigation materials to the Hungarian Royal Court of Beregszász. At the same time, the investigating authority ordered that István Berzeviczy remain suspended – without pay – until the investigation against him was concluded. During this time, Deputy Police Chief Sándor Markovszky supervised the Uzhhorod police under the supervision of István Bónis. [54, p. 2] In addition to the screening of law enforcement agencies, a thorough investigation of the public administration was also conducted, again led by Károly Buth. However, the expected results were not achieved here either, as no documents were found that could have compromised the leadership of Ung County. Thus, Károly Buth and István Bónis were forced to return to Budapest on February 5, 1906. [55, p. 2] They were ordered to accept Zsigmond Bernáth as chief magistrate before the end of February. [56, p. 10]

Zsigmond Bernáth returned to the county seat on February 20. He encountered no incidents on his way from the train station to his apartment. However, he had to face the fact that the local population essentially ignored him. This passive resistance, which he experienced firsthand, forced him to ask the government to dismiss him from his position as chief magistrate. He officially requested his dismissal from the Ung County on February 27. Local newspapers, such as the Ung weekly, reported in their county affairs section that the position of chief magistrate had become vacant again. The consolidation of local political life finally took place on April 29, when the local press announced that Count Gábor Sztáray [57, p. 7] had been elected chief magistrate of Ung County. His official inauguration took place on May 15. At the same time, events related to the case of István Berzeviczy also accelerated. The Beregszász court ruled that, due to lack of evidence, all charges against the police chief had been dropped and he could return to his position as head of the Uzhhorod police. A new political party, the Independence and Forty-Eight Party, was formed in Ung County, led by Mihály Finciczky and István Berzeviczy. [58, p. 2]



As a result of his loyalty to the local elite, the influential families of the county also supported István Berzeviczy's efforts to become mayor, which came to fruition sooner than expected. According to the plan, the elderly (73-year-old) Mihály Fincziczky [59, pp. 345–47] would have announced his retirement from political life at the end of his term of office. At the same time, the local press and prominent families in Uzhhorod actively campaigned for the police chief. However, fate rewrote the plan when Mihály Fincziczky died unexpectedly on January 7, 1916. The mayor's colleagues expressed their condolences to the family of the deceased and agreed on when and how to inform the city's residents of the sad news in the press. However, the Uzhhorod City Council, shaken by grief and pain, had to find someone to fill the vacant position urgently. In its February 13, 1916 issue, the weekly newspaper *Ung* reported on the situation and how many self-nominated candidates wanted to win the mayor's seat. According to publicist Béla Bánóczy, most of these people were merely adventurers who expected a secure livelihood from the mayor's office. However, the article made it clear that the city council and local secular and church organizations would prefer to see István Berzeviczy at the helm of Uzhhorod. What is interesting about Bánóczy's article is that by putting Berzeviczy's name forward as a possible candidate, he started a kind of campaign. A good example of this is that he described all the characteristics of the police chief that made him suitable for the position. [60, p. 13] The praise in the press had the desired effect, and the city council convinced Captain István Berzeviczy to run for the post. At an extraordinary general meeting, the delegates unanimously voted for the police chief of Uzhhorod. The local press publications *Ung* and *Ungvári Közlöny* also informed the public about the results of the vote. In addition to the election mechanism and the percentage of votes, István Berzeviczy's acceptance speech was also made public. In his speech, Berzeviczy emphasized that joint work is essential for the successful functioning of the city and that everyone should have a common goal, which is the continuous development of Uzhhorod. In his opinion, the



Uzhhorod project can only be successful if all levels of public administration are filled with people with local ties. At the end of his speech, he also emphasized that all political and religious differences must be set aside. [61, p. 3]

In addition to law enforcement and politics, István Berzeviczy was also actively involved in local cultural and sporting life. Thanks to István Berzeviczy's intervention, a charity auction of paintings by Gyula Ijjász, a painter from Uzhhorod, was organized. The main purpose of the auction was to support the young painter's studies in Budapest by purchasing paintings from the local community. In September 1909, the chief became a member of the ten-member committee that organized and coordinated the statue unveiling ceremony in honor of Gábor Dayka [62, p. 4]. The police chief was no stranger to literature, having written several poems and short stories himself. On January 28, 1911, for example, he was invited to an evening for amateur writers and readers held in the town of Gyöngyös. Some of his works were presented at the event. He read his poem *Kétszer is nyílt az akácfa* (The Acacia Tree Opened Twice) to the audience. In addition, his independent publications appeared in 1918 under the title *Tanulmányok és karcolatok* (Studies and Sketches). [63] Press reports revealed that several "professional" literary figures in attendance praised Berzeviczy's poem. [64p. 7] In addition to his role in the cultural sphere, the captain also took on a role in organizing sports life in Uzhhorod. In addition to participating in sports himself on a weekly basis, he was elected president of the Uzhhorod Athletic Club on June 30, 1910. [65, p. 3]

Conclusions. The study presents the life and career of István Berzeviczy, highlighting his work as a chief of police, his political involvement, and his cultural activities. As police chief, he successfully managed the Uzhhorod City Police, contributing to the stability of public order and safety. The support of the local elite—the Török, Kende, and Sztáray families—greatly contributed to his career development. His strong loyalty to the Uzhhorod elite became most evident during the political coup against Chief Magistrate Zsigmond Bernáth. His commitment thus



created the opportunity for him to be elected mayor of Uzhhorod between 1916 and 1919. In addition to his duties as mayor and police chief, he was actively involved in the social and cultural life of the city. In 1910, he was elected president of the Uzhhorod Athletic Club, later becoming head of the Uzhhorod Social Circle, and he also headed the Uzhhorod Tennis Club. He was a member of the Gyöngyös Literary Society, where he debuted his own collection of poems in 1911. He also played a role as a local philanthropist. He played a significant role as an organizer of charitable events. His activities also included supporting talented individuals with ties to Uzhhorod, further strengthening his social embeddedness and public role.

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