

Theses of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation

**Law enforcement agencies in Ung County
between 1890 and 1918**

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I. The aim of the research

Interest in historical research on law enforcement began to gain more and more ground after the end of the communist regime in Hungary. Several volumes and independent publications were published in connection with the topic, but the majority of the works aimed at the examination of the organizational structure and human resources of law enforcement. As a result, micro-historical research studies, which would provide information about the special law enforcement situation of a particular region, were pushed into the background.

When choosing the topic of my dissertation, I took into account the aspects described above, which is why I chose to examine Ung County from the point of view of law enforcement. The law enforcement history of the geographical region in question is considered a blind spot, since no research work of a similar nature was carried out before. In addition to the choice of topic, it was also important to define the chronological boundaries. I chose the period between 1890 and 1918 because I was able to examine how the Hungarian law enforcement agencies functioned both in peacetime and wartime. The chronological boundaries of the examined period were defined by the establishment of the Third Flank Command in Uzhhorod (1890) and the end of the First World War (1918). In my dissertation, I examine the operation of law enforcement agencies in Ung County mainly from the perspective of archival sources. Thus, I primarily use terms and concepts used in the documents of law enforcement agencies during the investigation of a case.

During the dissertation, I formulated the following research questions:

1. What law enforcement agencies operated in the territory of Ung County in peacetime and during the years of war? Expanding this question in more detail, the following sub-questions were answered:
 - In this remote county of the Kingdom of Hungary, what organizations maintained order and legislation during peacetime?
 - How many law enforcement organizations operated in the area?
 - What was their structural setup?
 - What legal options did they have to stop crime?
 - What number of the bodies of the organizations were present in the county?
 - Was there any organization established to help law enforcement in Ung County during the war?

2. Based on law enforcement aspects, what tasks did they carry out in peacetime?
3. What tasks did the local law enforcement agencies perform in wartime conditions? At this stage of the research, I was curious about the areas in which the work of local law enforcement agencies has changed, and whether they have received new tasks from the state or local administration?
 - Was there a war refugee crisis? If yes, how did the police deal with it?
 - Was their number sufficient to fully maintain order between 1914 and 1918?
 - What new, previously unexperienced tasks did they have to perform?
4. What difficulties did the gendarmerie and the city police have to face in the period between 1914 and 1918?

II. Used sources and working methods

In relation to my topic, the Berehove Department of the State Archives of the Transcarpathian Region has the largest number of sources, where researchers have access to materials essential to the law enforcement history of Ung County. As a result, I considered it expedient to do a source discovery work in accordance with the theme of the dissertation, within the framework of which I systematically analysed the administrative documents of the lord-lieutenant, the deputy-lieutenant, the city of Uzhhorod with an organized council, and the administrative documents of Ung County.

During the research, many contemporary documents were found that form important parts of the dissertation. Regarding the gendarmerie, the primary source base was provided by the fonds of the lord-lieutenant (4th fond 1877–1919) and the deputy-lieutenant (7th fond 1900–1919). Here primary sources can be found through which one could gain insight into the work of the Ung gendarmerie in peacetime and wartime conditions. Thematically, it can be broken down into the following parts: organizational questions, requests for staff expansion, gendarmerie records, investigations and public complaints. As the military conflict unfolded, the topics listed above were expanded, primarily with complaints from the public that reported on the abuses of the army. In addition to the contents of the two fonds, the documents that were related to the gendarmerie also served as an important addition, which can be found in the Register of Fonds of the Ung County Administrative Committee (5th fond 1873–1919).

During archival work, the sources relating to the Uzhhorod City Police were also examined in the Berehove archives. Contemporary documents related to the history and work of the organization can be found among the documents of the mayor's office of the city of Uzhhorod with an organized council (6th fond 1868–1919). The fond contains key topics related to the police, such as the election of the commissioner of police, the question of the board's financing, difficulties affecting personnel, and various public complaints and reports. In the period between 1914 and 1918, the number of police cases increased, the primary reason for which was the everyday life during the war and the increasingly felt economic difficulties in Uzhhorod.

During one period of source collection, it became necessary to carry out research work in the Makó Archives of the Csongrád-Csanád County Archives of the National Archives of Hungary. Among the walls of the archives are the documents that report on the birth and school years of dr. Pál Bóna, the commissioner of police of Uzhhorod, who was elected in 1916. The

mentioned documents were found among the records of the Fond VIII. 51. of Makó State High School Registry Office and Fond 72. of Makó City Council.

In my dissertation, various contemporary press releases can be found, primarily those published in Ung County. Press research and investigation was important because it was considered as the most effective means of mass communication in the era. The weekly newspapers of the county are also kept in the Berehove Department of the State Archives of the Transcarpathian Region, and they are the following:

- Ung
- Ungvári Közlöny („The Uzhhorod Gazette”)
- Határszéli Újság („Peripheral Newspaper”)

In addition to the listed press products, several regional and local weekly papers were examined that dealt with the county, possibly with Uzhhorod, in their articles. These were the following:

- Az Új Újság („The New Paper”)
- Budapesti Hírlap („Budapest News-sheet”)
- Szeged és vidéke („Szeged and Its Region”)
- Pesti Napló („Pest Diary”)
- Városok lapja („The Paper of Cities”)

During the research, those professional books and other publications were very useful which thematically dealt with the Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie and the history of the city police.

After digitizing the archival sources, they were systematically categorized into such a system that could later be incorporated into individual chapters or subsections.

III. Results of the dissertation

Between 1890 and 1918, two law enforcement bodies operated in the county: the Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie and the Uzhhorod City Police. The sources examined about the gendarmerie operating in Ung County were from the 1890s, so I thought it appropriate to consider this date as the beginning of the gendarmerie research. According to contemporary documents, we cannot speak of an independent gendarmerie in the county between 1890 and 1898. During this time, the work of the provincial board was carried out by the Sixth Flank Command with Berehove as the command centre. We can talk about real police autonomy only from 1899, when the Fourth Košice District Command created the Seventh Uzhhorod Flank Command with Uzhhorod as the headquarter. This way, they created a new structural unit that completely covered the County of Ung in terms of law enforcement aspects. This system operated in the area until the collapse of 1918.

Fourth gendarmerie district Division: Košice											
Sixth Berehove Flank Command											
Third platoon: Uzhhorod											
Gendarmerie district		Number of gendarmerie personnel									
		1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	
1.	Sobrance	6	6	-	6	6	6	-	6	6	
2.	Uzhhorod	8	8	-	8	8	8	-	7	7	
3.	Chop	6	6	-	6	6	6	-	6	6	
4.	Veľké Kapušany	6	6	-	6	6	6	-	6	6	
5.	Velykyi Bereznyi	6	6	-	6	6	6	-	6	6	
6.	Turi Remety	6	6	-	6	6	6	-	6	6	
7.	Serednie	6	6	-	6	6	6	-	6	-	
8.	Vinné	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	
9.	Perechyn	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	
10.	Turi Remety	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	
11.	Stavne	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	
12.	Liuta	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	

The gendarmerie stations of Ung County belonging to the Sixth Berehove Flank Command

Fourth gendarmerie district Division: Košice																	
Seventh Uzhhorod Flank Command																	
First platoon: Uzhhorod																	
Gendarmerie district		1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	Altogether
1.	Uzhhorod	8	10	10	10	10	8	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	125
2.	Serednie	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	81
3.	Chop	6	6	6	7	7	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	88
4.	Veľké Kapušany	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	6	6	84
5.	Pavlovce nad Uhom	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	75
6.	Sobrance	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	5	5	5	6	5	5	78
7.	Verkhni Remety	6	6	6	6	6	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	35
8.	Vinné	6	6	6	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
9.	Velyki Heivtsi	-	-	-	5	5	5	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	55
10.	Verkhni Remetské Hámre	-	-	-	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	61
11.	Malčice	-	-	-	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
12.	Trebišov	-	-	-	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
13.	Lúčky	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	-	-	35
14.	Tarnivci	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40
15.	Umberz	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40
16.	Velyki Lazy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	30
17.	Rebrin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5	5	5	20
18.	Veľké Slemence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	10
19.	Nagyzalacska	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	10

The gendarmerie stations belonging to the First Uzhhorod Flank Command between 1899 and 1914

Continuous improvements were made to the gendarmerie centrally, so guard stations and so-called rest areas were created in all priority settlements. In most cases, the state undertook to finance the infrastructure of the gendarmerie, but there were also cases when they tried to involve the local public administration and/or companies in the creation of a gendarmerie station. In general, it can be said that in the peacetime, the tasks of the Ung gendarmerie included counter-espionage, curbing illegal emigration, and performing various public health and cleaning tasks. At the same time, there were cases when some members of the law enforcement agency abused their power, and the local population was the victim.

Compared to the gendarmerie, the Uzhhorod City Police operated in a completely different form of management and structure. The board's law enforcement activities were limited to the city of Uzhhorod, and the framework for its financing had to be solved by the management of the city with an organized council.

Period of service	Captain	Deputy
1890-1892	Ferenc Fazekas	Antal Handova
1893	–	Béla Lehoczky
1894	Ferenc Fazekas	–
1895-1916	István Berzeviczy	Sándor Markovszky
1916-1918	Pál Bóna	–

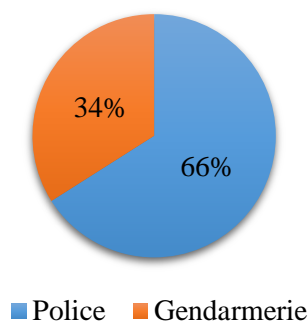
Captain leaders of the Uzhhorod City Police between 1890 and 1911

The sources revealed that the Uzhhorod police station had financial problems, which hindered its development. István Berzeviczy, a former landowner and politician, was a key figure in the police department of the county centre. His appointment as the first man of the police force was also due to his close ties to local political and economic forces. All of this is supported by the events that took place at the end of 1906 and the beginning of 1907 in Uzhhorod. The work of the city police was more varied than the tasks of their colleagues in the countryside, as they had to act effectively against the strike movement, and they fought a continuous “battle” with the opening hours of the city pubs. In addition, they had to pay due attention to the enforcement of city regulations related to public cleanliness, public health, and prostitution.

The period of the Great War was a defining period in the life of the county's law enforcement agencies, as the military conflict presented them with new, previously unseen difficulties. Between 1914 and 1918, the Uzhhorod City Police and the local gendarmerie followed a completely different path in terms of policing duties. In the initial period of the war, the provincial body had to deal with the refugee issue and the investigation of the confrontation between the army and the population. The latter was considered the most difficult challenge, since according to the records, in most cases, the farmers complained that their livestock was confiscated without any official documents. In such cases, the hands of the gendarmerie were tied for several reasons. In many cases, the farmers who made the accusation could not say what regiment the perpetrators belonged, what their name was, etc. The biggest problem, however, was that if the identity of the perpetrators was successfully revealed, their powers did not extend to arrest them. The only possible solution was to hand over the investigative material to the

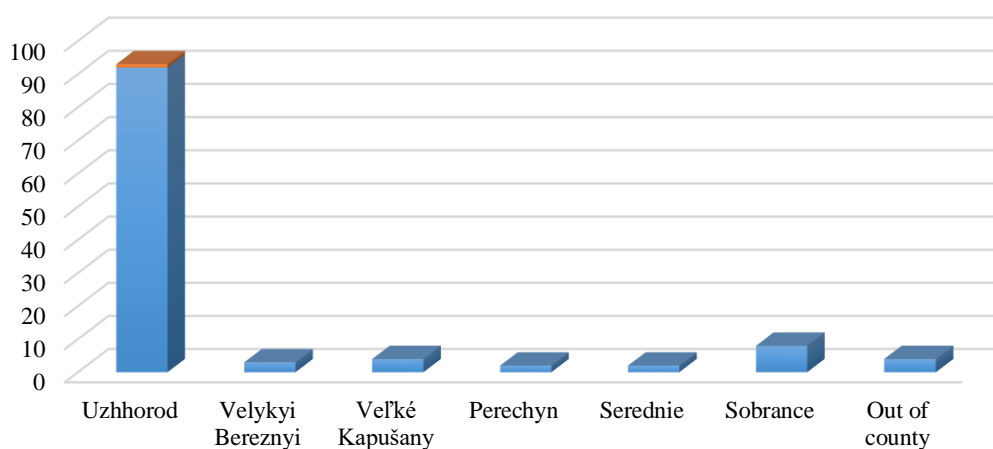
command of the relevant unit and wait for the officers' decision. It happened that the offending soldiers were punished and the farmers were compensated.

Towards the end of the war, they had to keep an eye on the soldiers who were on leave, on behalf of the military. Research on the gendarmerie between 1916 and 1918 was hampered by the organization's limited resource base.



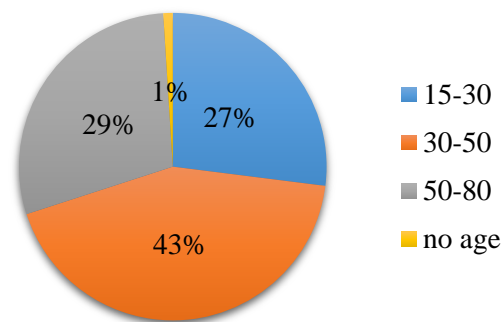
Employment of the Uzhhorod City Police and Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie between 1916 and 1918

The city police had a much wider source material during the war. Contemporary documents revealed that the law enforcement unit operating in the county centre had to deal with war refugees and various people involved in usury. This was also the reason why the city council decided to establish the Uzhhorod City Militia to facilitate the work of the police. The new law enforcement unit operated under the auspices of the organization managed by István Berzeviczy. Official records are considered the most important sources in relation to crime. The data of the arrested citizens were recorded in these documents (name, address, age, religious affiliation, etc.). Using contemporary documents and statistical methods, we can gain an insight into the world of local criminals. When preparing the data series, six aspects were taken into account: distribution between genders, address, age, religion and imposed punishments.



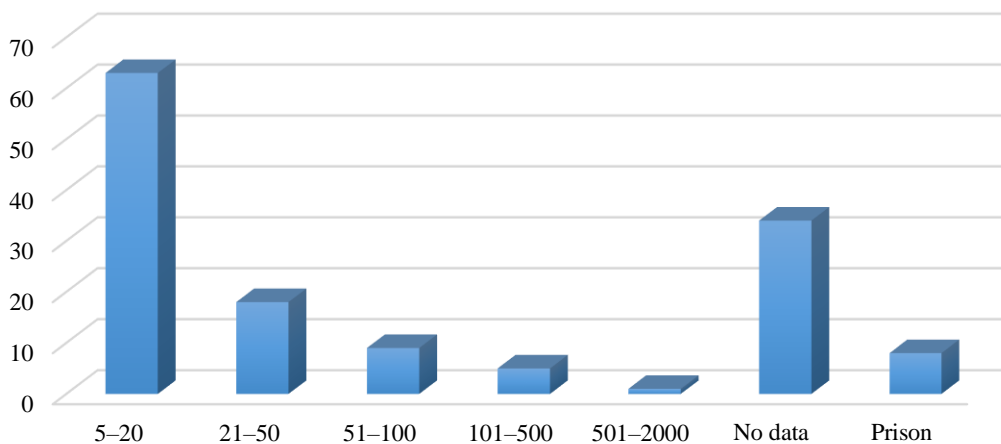
Territorial distribution of crime in Ung County, divided into districts

The crime rate was extremely high in the city of Uzhhorod and in the area of the district. There were two main reasons behind this tendency. First of all, the settlement of a part of the war refugees in the mentioned administrative area. In the absence of financial resources, these people made money by crime. Secondly, in the city of Uzhhorod, some traders and local residents dealt with usury, illegal purchases and price increases. Based on the obtained results, it was found that women dominated among criminals, thanks to the fact that they took over the role of family breadwinner from men. On the basis of police and gendarmerie records, the cases in which criminal proceedings were initiated against people between the ages of 30 and 50 dominated.



Age distribution of criminals

The majority of those under official proceedings claimed to be of the Israelite religion, even though it was not the largest denomination in the county. At the end of the procedures, the people who committed the violation were given a fine or a prison sentence. In the latter case, the imposition of fines between 5 and 20 crowns was considerably high.



Fines imposed by the police in crowns

As the war progressed, the city police also had to deal with economic abuses. On numerous occasions, the city traders tried to circumvent the law and sell basic foodstuffs well above the official price. The pub owners did not make the work of the county centre police any easier either. The board headed by István Berzeviczy conducted several investigations against them in cases of opening hours and price increases. The deteriorating economic situation also caused the moral deterioration of the local community. On some occasions, women in difficult financial situations were even forced into prostitution. Thus, a kind of “manhunt” was launched against them in the city of Uzhhorod, just as against beggars and runaway servants. Beside the deterioration of economic and social morality during the Great War, the Uzhhorod City Police continued to place great emphasis on public cleanliness and public health. The reports made in these cases revealed that the police imposed severe punishment on all violators. The reprimand could be a warning, a fine, or in more drastic cases, several days of imprisonment. An unexpected turn occurred in the management of the board, as István Berzeviczy was elected mayor of the city of Uzhhorod in March 1916. A tender was announced for the vacant post of commissioner of police, the winner of which was dr. Pál Bóna, who had previously served in the city of Makó. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Uzhhorod City Police until 1918. As a result of the unfavourable military-political events, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was forced to initiate peace negotiations with the Triple Entente powers. Simultaneously, Czechoslovak military units appeared in the county, and as representatives of the new power, they took control of Ung County and its administrative centre, Uzhhorod. As a result, those law enforcement units whose members did not swear an oath to the power in Prague were limited and/or liquidated in the occupied area.

In general, it can be said that between 1890 and 1918, the gendarmerie and the city police had to perform many tasks, primarily in relation to solving the refugee issue and investigating various economic abuses. Completing these duties tested both the gendarmerie and the police. The heads of both organizations wrote letters of complaint to their superiors, the main theme of which was the lack of personnel. In the case of the gendarmerie, several active duty patrolmen and officers were enrolled into the army for military service. Their colleagues in the city had already faced the low capacity of their staff in the first months of the war, so police commissioner István Berzeviczy requested the establishment of the Uzhhorod City Militia. Based on the examined contemporary documents, it can be said that the two law enforcement agencies of the area – the Uzhhorod City Police and the Seventh Flank Command of the Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie – tried to do their work as efficiently as possible in peacetime as well as during the war years.



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List of publications related to the dissertation

Hungarian scientific articles in Hungarian journals (1)

1. **Varga, R.:** Illegális kivándorlás Ung vármegyében a 19-20. század fordulóján.
Hallg. Műhtanulm. 5 (1), 93-112, 2021. ISSN: 2063-6024.

Hungarian scientific articles in international journals (3)

2. **Varga, R.:** Adalékok Ungvár városának rendvédelmi történetéhez 1890-1914 között.
Limes. 8, 113-125, 2021. ISSN: 2411-4081.
3. **Varga, R.:** A hadsereg szerveződése 1890-1914 között Ung és Bereg vármegye példáján.
NORTIA (Ungvár) 1, 31-52, 2020.
4. **Varga, R.:** Ung vármegye csendőrsége 1881-1914 között.
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