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**PRO-HUNGARIAN MANIFESTATION IN SPIŠ
(SZEPEŠ) REGION IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF
THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC**

With the end of the First World War also almost ended one thousand years existence of the Kingdom of Hungary, which was divided into several successional states of the Habsburg Monarchy. This situation meant for the residents of the Kingdom of Hungary immense turning point and a lot of them refused to acquiesce with this fact. Besides other territories, the Kingdom of Hungary lost also territory of Slovakia, which became a part of the newly created First Czechoslovak Republic. The most residents of Hungarian nationality, which made an effort to keep the integrity of Hungary, were situated at the southern Slovakia. Some minor part of Hungarian and pro-Hungarian thinking population resided also other parts of Slovakia. These were particularly members of nobility, intelligentsia and state officials.

The region with major concentration of the hungarophile population, except of southern Slovakia, was Spiš (Szepes) County. From time immemorial, Spiš was one of the most ethnical intermingled Counties at the area of Slovakia. In the times of establishment of the Czechoslovakia, there lived, in addition Slovaks also Germans, Hungarians, Jews, Romanies, Ruthenians and as a result of constitutional changes also Czechs.

Spiš was pro-Hungarian oriented; therefore almost one third of Spiš population comprised of of Germans. Especially Germans were the greatest supporters of preservation of Hungary. Their pro-Hungarian orientation was caused by the fact, that during the existence of Hungary, right after the Jews, Germans succumbed of the magyarization process. This fact resulted from the specific situation of this minority caused by economical reasons and ambivalence of German population in the question of maternity language.

Operations of Spiš abidance in Hungary began even before declaring of the Czechoslovak Republic on 23. October 1918 in Kežmarok (Késmárk), where the city Council protested against planned integration of Spiš County to Czechoslovakia. Later attached to this protest also other Spiš villages and towns.¹

Kežmarok became the centre of Spiš-German activists. On 18 November 1918 there took place gathering of German minority representatives from whole Spiš. The gathering settled on the establishment of "Upperhungarian National Council of Hungarian Germans." In the case of the isolation of Spiš from Hungary, the gathering declared the decision to create the independent "Spiš Republic". This new republic would connect to economical and cultural development of Spiš, which was according to the Germans their merit. It should be something like „Switzerland above High Tatras". On 9 December 1918 in Kežmarok "Spiš Republic" was really declared by German activists². However Spiš Germans were ideologically divided. In the half of December part of German National Council sent envoys from Kežmarok to Liptovský Mikuláš (Liptószentmiklós) with the declaration of joining to the Slovak National Council. They announced that they will receive the Czechoslovak army at Spiš friendly. This was the end of Spiš Republic.³

Next pro-Hungarian attempt at the eastern Slovakia in this time was Slovak People's Republic established in Košice (Kassa) on 11 December 1918. This republic was proclaimed by East-Slovak Council with the lead of Viktor Dvorcsák. The East-Slovak Council representatives claimed that east and west Slovaks are two different nations. East-Slovak Council struggled for attraction of population in Spiš County. Therefore the Spiš-East-Slovak Council arose in Spišská Nová Ves (Igló).⁴ Exponents of Spiš-East-Slovak Council claimed to the integrity of Hungary, but later proclaimed mentioned Slovak Popular Republic, which would be also under Hungarian influence. Hungarian government hesitated with the support, therefore after entry of Czechoslovak army, the action of east-Slovak Hungarophiles ended with fiasco⁵.

The important support in the attempt of Hungarian integrity abidance provided to the Hungarian government in Slovakia also the Upperhungarian Social Demo-

¹ CHALUPECKÝ, I.: *Dejiny Krompách*. Košice : Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1982, p. 146.

² OLEJNÍK, M.: Postoj spišských Nemcov k rozpadu Rakúsko-Uhorska a vzniku ČSR. In: *Stredoeurópske národy na križovatkách novodobých dejín 1848 – 1918. Zborník venovaný prof. PhDr. Michalovi Danilákovi k jeho 65 narodeninám*. Prešov : Universum, p. 312.

³ SULAČEK, J.: *Spoločenské a politické pomery na Spiši v rokoch 1918 – 1938*. Prešov : Metodické centrum, 1992, p. 24.

⁴ TAJTÁK, L.: Spiš a vznik Československa. In: *Spiš v kontinuite času/Zips in der Kontinuität der Zeit*. Prešov–Bratislava–Wien : Universum, 1995, p. 149.

⁵ HRONSKÝ, M.: *Boj o Slovensko a Trianon 1918 – 1920*. Bratislava : NLC – Dom slovenskej literatúry, 1998, p. 107.

cratic Party in Košice. The newspapers Kassai Munkás on 7 December 1918 wrote about workmen who proclaimed at the meeting in Spišská Nová Ves that they do not want to belong neither to Czechs nor to Hungarians. This was said in the spirit of East-Slovak Council which was preparing to declare the Slovak People's Republic.⁶

Spiš Republic and Slovak People's Republic had no hope for success failed very fast and historically became hilarious episodes.⁷ In spite of that, founding of these republics indicates that some part of east-Slovak population did not allow the end of Hungary.

The opponent of the effort of Hungarian integrity preservation was Pro-Czechoslovak population. Although Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed on 28 October 1918, it took longer time until the words of proclamation became reality and Slovakia became part of this new state. Hungary did not intend to give up their territories and therefore the Czechoslovak representatives were forced to overrun Slovakia with military action. West part of Slovakia was in couple of weeks in the hands of Czechoslovak army. East Slovakia still stayed in the force of Hungarian army and officials. Although Hungary state apparatus was disrupted by unrestrained action and pillaging lower social classes but Hungarian representatives succeeded to hold this territory under their control with the help of army and new created Hungarian national Councils. With the arrival of Czechoslovak army and pro-Czechoslovak manifestation of Slovak population, Hungarian influence at this territory weakened. Czechoslovak army arrived to the Spiš in the first half of December 1918. Two weeks later whole Spiš was in their hands and in the end of January 1919, Czechoslovak army overrun also rest of Slovakia.

Together with military activities worked feverish also Hungarian diplomacy. On 31 October 1918 Sándor Wekerle was replaced in his seat of prime minister of Hungary by Mihály Károlyi. Following the example of Germany and Austria, Hungary transformed into the Hungarian Republic and its first president was Károlyi.⁸ Representatives of newly created republic were aware, that even if Slovakia will remain the part of Hungary, it will not be the possibly form of traditional and state administrative organization as prior to 1918. Therefore Hungarians discouraged Slovaks from integration with Czechs and offered them autonomy.⁹ They claimed

⁶ TAJTÁK, L.: Úsilie maďarských vládncích tried o udržanie Slovenska v rámci Maďarska v roku 1918. In: *Historický časopis*, 1966, year 14, No. 4, p. 566.

⁷ In addition to these two „republics,” in this period was declared for a similar purpose also almost unknown Orava Republic. HRONSKÝ, M.: *Trianon. Vznik hraníc Slovenska a problem jeho bezpečnosti (1918 – 1920)*. Bratislava : VEDA – Vydavateľstvo slovenskej akadémie vied, 2011, p. 48.

⁸ KONTLER, L.: *Dějiny Maďarska*. Praha : Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001, p. 304.

⁹ More on the topic of autonomy offered by Hungary, see: KRAJČOVIČOVÁ, N.: Koncepcia au-

that Czechs are religiously intolerant, want to “make Czechs” from the Slovaks, oppress them and make workmen from them. Even in November Karoly’s government intended to organize an election at the whole territory of Hungary in order to demonstrate its decision, not to give up the integrity of this State. The elections finally were not held because of arrival of Czechoslovak army to Slovakia. Instead of the election there was the petition against Czech effort. In January 1919 was collected 250 000 signatures from the Slovak area, largely from Hungarian and German population.¹⁰ Slovak politics did not admit offered vision of autonomy within Hungary and stayed on the principle of Czechoslovak state idea.

Hope for Hungarian efforts was “Belgrade truce”, which was concluded between east Entente army commander, French general d’Esperey and Hungarian prime minister Károlyi on 13. November 1918. The most important was the 17th article of agreement referring that Entente will not intrude into domestic affairs of Hungary.¹¹ Hungarian politics understood this article in the sense that Hungarian integrity will be guaranteed until the Peace Conference. Czechoslovak leaders had to put in great diplomatic efforts in order to Entente invited Hungary to empty Slovakia. Gradually, the phantasm of maintaining the integrity of Hungary increasingly melted.

With the arrival of Czechoslovak army was changed also the state apparatus. The main representative of Spiš County was County governor. On 17 December 1918, next day after Levoča (Lőcse) was occupied by Czechoslovak army, Ján Rumann¹² became the new County governor replacing Tibor Mariássy. He arrived to Levoča on 7 January 1919 welcomed by crowd with Slovak flags singing Slovak songs. Next day Rumann signed trilingual takeover ordinance of Spiš County territory and its administration. He also dismissed county representation, communal boards and

tonómie Slovenska v maďarskej politike v rokoch 1918–1920. In: *Slovensko a Maďarsko v rokoch 1918 – 1920*. Michalovce : Matica slovenská, 1995, pp. 46–53.

¹⁰ TAJTÁK, L.: Úsilie maďarských vládnucich tried o udržanie Slovenska v rámci Maďarska v roku 1918. In: *Historický časopis*, 1966, year 14, No.4, p. 562.

¹¹ HRONSKÝ, M.: Hlavné politicko-diplomatické a vojenské dispozície pri utváraní hraníc Slovenska v rokoch 1918 – 1919 (prvá časť). In: *Vojenská história*, 1998, year 2, No. 3, p. 33.

¹² Ján Rumann (*18 October 1876 in Pribylina – † 2 August 1925 in Košice) graduated at the Faculty of Law of the University in Budapest, where he obtained Law degree (Judr.). During the World War I. he worked in Košice, Poprad and as head of the military sanatorium in Nový Smokovec (Újtátrafűred). In years 1919–1922 was head of Spiš County, in 1920–1925 was deputy of head of Šariš (Sáros) County, 1921–1922 was head of Abaúj-Torna County and in 1922–1925 head of Kassa County. He was a prominent figure of Slovak national life in the early 20th century in juristic, state-political and ecclesiastical spheres. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia he was one of the founders of Czechoslovak government in Eastern Slovakia. In the office of regional governor was responsible for the political consolidation, national revival and economic recovery in Eastern Slovakia. MAŤOVČÍK, A. a kol.: *Slovenský biografický slovník (od roku 833 do roku 1990)*. V. zväzok R – Š. Martin: Matica slovenská, 1992, p. 142.

promised appointment of new self-governance authorities. Slovak language was determinate as official language, but in the communities with non-Slovak minorities could use their national language. In the Slovakia, Czechoslovak republic admitted system of political and public administration from the times of former Hungary. The county establishment with County governor and County office were retained, also in Spiš County. County governor had extensive competence, also in personal issues of all officials in political administration.¹³ Hungarian officials were replaced by Czechs or Slovaks, but very slowly because of difficulties with searching for new loyal ones. New officials and employees were requested to take an oath of allegiance. Many of them refused to swear, what caused much unrest. Therefore some officials left Czechoslovak state services.

Four months after establishment of Czechoslovak Republic and two months after Czechoslovak army occupation of Spiš, seemed that Spiš will be everlasting part of Czechoslovak Republic. However circumstances appeared very unstable and social atmosphere was tense because some part of population could not accept that Spiš is not part of Hungary.

In the spring months of 1919 some employees of state administration (especially Hungarians and hungarophiles) refused to take an oath of allegiance to Czechoslovak Republic e.g. processus official from Spišská Sobota (Szepesszombat) Aristid Várady Szakmáry, processus official, baron Albín Wieland, processus official from Kežmarok (Késmárk) Gejza Medgyesi¹⁴ and also clerks of tobacco factory in Spišská Belá (Szepesbela). For this reason they were laid off.¹⁵ Employee,s who refused to take an oath of allegiance to Czechoslovak Republic were replaced by loyal Czechs. Although the Slovak intelligentsia was still inconsiderable, Slovaks got into appointment, as was the case of Ľudovít Medzihradský, who replaced unreliable processus official of Spišská Nová Ves (Igló), Anton Tasnády.¹⁶ Sometimes, due to lack of reliable human resources, had to stay in the office also person who refused to take an oath of allegiance e.g. the case of Baltazar Mattysovský, processus official of Spišská Stará Ves (Szepesófalu)¹⁷.

With the resistance of pro-Hungarian oriented citizens encountered the assumption of schools by Czechoslovak authorities and their subsequent slovakization. Until Czechoslovak army occupied Spiš (end of 1918),in the schools was taught in Hungarian language without any obstacles. Change arose after occupation by Czechoslovak army. Slovak language became teaching language in schools. Also

¹³ SULAČEK, J.: *Ján Rumann. Ľudomil v politike*. Liptovský Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 2005, p. 22.

¹⁴ *Spišsko-staroveský hlavný slúžny*. In: *Slovák*, 22. 3. 1919, year 1., No. 7, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Spišsko-belanskú cigarovňu*. In: *Tatry*, 12. 4. 1919, year 1., No. 10, p. 6.

¹⁶ *Vymenovanie*. In: *Slovák*, 19. 4. 1919, year 1., No. 14, p. 5.

¹⁷ *Spišsko-staroveský hlavný slúžny*. In: *Slovák*, 22. 3. 1919, year 1., No. 7, p. 4.

from the teachers was requested an oath of allegiance to Czechoslovak Republic. Some, who rejected it, went to Hungary. In spite of resistance of pro-Hungarian orientated teachers and parents in the span of few months were schools transformed from Hungarian to Czechoslovak.

Besides of education were Slovak language entrenched into all domains of life. It began to be used in public life and at the offices. Names of village and towns were changed from Hungarian to Slovak. However the adherents of disappeared Kingdom of Hungary could not agree with that, not only for ideological reasons, but also because they did not command Slovak language.

Dissatisfaction with the establishment of new republic and new authority on Spiš region was expressed by Hungarians and pro-Hungarian thinking population in manifesto activities. On 11 March 1919 young people during the pro-Hungarian demonstration on the square in Spišské Vlachy (Szepesolaszi) sang Hungarian national anthem¹⁸. Other manifestation took place on 12 March 1919 in the building of railway station in Krompachy (Korompa), where four workers cut Czechoslovak flag¹⁹. On 24 April 1919 at 1:30 p.m. was sent scaremongering telegram which should disunite Czechs and Slovaks. It claimed, that in Spišská Nová Ves Czechs are shooting to Slovaks, there is many dead people and that Slovaks are disarming Czechs.²⁰ These anti-Czechoslovak protagonist were persecuted in different ways – reprehension, cash amercements or few weeks imprisonment.

Leaflets were the most wide spread form of pro-Hungarian propaganda. *“In the last days Hungarians scatter on railways and villages leaflets in which rebel against our republic. They have written to Slovaks: “Hungarian People’s Republic abolished the obligation of military service. There is no levy. There is no requisition! People are free. Separation of land in free Hungary strongly persists. Each of us will get a work and heap of food.”*²¹ Anti-Czechoslovak leaflets were spread on 20 April 1919 in Spišská Sobota (Szepesszombat) and Spišska Nová Ves (Igló)²². Common punishment for sedition against Czechoslovak Republic, pro-Hungarian agitation and another manifestation of political unreliability was an internment to

¹⁸ Štátny archív Levoča, Štátne zastupiteľstvo v Levoči – Period 1900–1920, box 10, inv. No. 13, doc. No. 81/1919.

¹⁹ Štátny archív Levoča, Krajský súd v Levoči – B. Vlastná súdna agenda – Trestná agenda, box 457, doc. No. B103/1919.

²⁰ Štátny archív Levoča, Krajský súd v Levoči – B. Vlastná súdna agenda – Trestná agenda, box 458, inv. No. 875, doc. No. B1005/1919.

²¹ *Maďarská agitácia na východe*. (adopted from *Slovenský Východ*) In: Národné noviny, 28. 3. 1919, year 50., No. 72, p. 2.

²² Štátny archív Levoča, Štátne zastupiteľstvo v Levoči (Robotnícke hnutie a dejiny KSČ) – Period 1900–1920, box 11, inv. No. 13, doc. No. 272/1919.

other parts of Slovakia e.g. Žilina (Zsolna) but especially to Terezín (Theresienstadt) in Bohemia. In the spring months 1919 were to Terezín interned 62 persons from Spiš County, who were registered as enemies of republic by state authorities²³.

In Slovak press was published many articles against Hungarian agitation, e.g. article with the title *Dear brothers and sisters Slovaks* in the *Tatry* newspaper, where author under pseudonym²⁴ S. F. Hraško writes: “*Therefore, beware of that villains of human society, such that dare to tease and rebel against the Czechoslovak Republic, and whoever it is, notify immediately the political or military authority.*”²⁵ *Tatry* newspapers were important stimulus of national consciousness of local Slovaks and fight against efforts to return to Hungary. As an illustration we mention two of many pro-Czechoslovak propaganda manifestations published in this newspaper. Writer under pseudonym Pokorný (Humble) in the articles “*There was a lightning over the Tatras*” writes: “*We need not be surprised that in our country, since the beginning, roasted pigeons do not fly into our mouth. But let us be lenient. When we endured the most difficult years, now we also endure, and I think God let suffer, but never perish Slovak family. Let us work and God bless our work.*”²⁶ Unauthorized article *Concord – brotherhood* discusses that Hungarians denationalized and disunited fraternal nations and still are doing that. Author expresses the hope of the spirit of peace will reign and talks about the need to cultivate brotherhood of all nations. He underlines Spiš County, which would be model for whole Republic, because is inhabited not only by Slovaks but also Germans, Poles and Ruthenians.²⁷

Pro-Czechoslovak propaganda in Slovak newspapers was distinguished by common features – presented itself defensively against Hungarian and communists, had anti-Semitic elements, advocated for peaceful coexistence of nations and last but not least emphasized unity of Czechs and Slovaks. Hungarians, Communists or Jews were perceived in this propaganda as permanent enemies, what should unify Slovaks as a nation and Slovaks with Czechs as brother nations. There were de-

²³ CHALUPECKÝ, I. – SULAČEK, J.: *Dejiny Levoče 2*. Košice: Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1975, p. 247.

²⁴ Pseudonyms were in the *Tatry*, the only Slovak newspapers in Spiš region, used by many contributors. It was because of fear in the post-revolutionary period when local Slovaks were often afraid to admit to Slovak nationality and to fight for the rights of local Slovaks. They were still scared of former „lords”, even though they openly criticized the speech of hungarophiles; they dreaded to sign themselves by their own names, so using pseudonyms. ZMÁTLO, P.: *Slovenská regionálna tlač na Spiši v období prvej Československej republiky z pohľadu historika*. In: *Z minulosti Spiša XV*. Levoča: Spišský dejepisný spolok, 2007, p. 123.

²⁵ HRAŠKO, S. F.: *Drahí bratia Slováci a sestry Slovensky*. In: *Tatry*, 12. 4. 1919, year 1., No. 10, p. 1.

²⁶ *Nad Tatrou sa blýskalo*. In: *Tatry*, 24. 5. 1919, year 1., No. 16, p. 3.

²⁷ *Svornosť – bratstvo*. *Tatry*, 31. 5. 1919, year 1., No. 17, p. 1.

veloped stereotypes from the past and made new, which became settled a part of Slovak national awareness in next period.

Misgiving from further development had not only the citizens of Hungarian nationality, but also the Slovaks, who were afraid of Hungary resumption. For instance traders had shop boards glued up with paper, because they had fear to use Slovak titles. They thought that "*Hungarians will come to reign again.*"²⁸ In same villages was still sung Hungarian national anthem in the church during mass and therefore believers requested Slovak church services²⁹. On the official document had to be used Slovak language as the first one, but instead of that there was sometimes still used Hungarian as the first one³⁰.

Unlike the Hungarians, Spiš Germans compared to the previous period appeased their passions and chose the waiting tactics, as referred to *the 15-day reporting the news and promotional departments at the top military headquarters about the situation and mentality of the population in eastern and south-western Slovakia* from 22 March 1919. The reporting further says that in Spiš County has not yet started the appointment of Slovak officials and mayors. According to its opinion, Slovak population is on the Czechoslovakia side; is very indigent; complain about the illegal trade of Jews from Poland, problems with the payment of financial aid and inferior supplying. However, good impact onto the Slovak population had letters from its relatives from Italy who wrote, that they serve in the Czechoslovak army. In the report is further mentioned that the toughest Hungarians are particularly hungarized Jews and centre of anti-Czech sedition is Poprad (Poprád) grammar school. The report also criticizes the fact that Hungarian officials works in offices according to the instructions of Pest, in Hungarian language³¹. As was already mentioned, Czechoslovak authority attempted about remedy but, due to a deficiency of suitable candidates it was done very slowly.

An important factor that markedly influenced events in Spiš and Slovakia in the spring and summer of 1919 was a declaration of Hungarian Soviet Republic (further HSR) on 21 March 1919. The Minister Šrobár responded to this fact with declaration of martial law. HSR gained sympathy in parts of the working class and pro-Hungarian oriented population in Slovakia and in Spiš almost immediately. Both groups identified with HSR for various reasons and very often, even in Spiš, nationalist and class perspective coincided. Pro-Hungarian agitation from recent months has been completed by Bolshevik agitation. On the example of disseminat-

²⁸ *Dopisy. Spišská Nová Ves*. In: Robotnícké noviny, 10. 4. 1919, year 16., No. 29, p. 3.

²⁹ *Dopis z Hrušova, dňa 18-teho kvetňa 1919*. In: Tatry, 31. 5. 1919, year 1., No. 17, p. 5.

³⁰ *Z Margecian*. In: Tatry, 31. 5. 1919, year 1., No. 17, p. 6.

³¹ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 454/1919.

ing of anti-Czechoslovak leaflets by Andor Kantor and Adolf Roth in early April 1919 in Krompachy, which were also anti-Bolshevik; we can see how hungarophilia and Bolshevism often coincided³². Purely Bolshevik agitation occurred as well, but we cannot say with certainty whether or not the disseminators had also hungarophilic objectives.

Pro-Hungarian manifestation from last months in Spiš region continued also in June 1919. Unlike the previous period, they were gaining the intensity and were directly related to the campaign of Hungarian army in Slovakia in late May 1919. Residents of Spiš supporting this offensive, perceived it primarily as a renewal of Hungary and secondary as the fact, that they are Bolsheviks. In order to gain a picture of the mood of the population; we look at some specific examples of pro-Hungarian expressions.

On 4 June 1919 in Levoča (Lőcse) Ľudovít Plachý disseminated scaremongering message, that *“today at 6 o'clock will arrive Hungarians and kick Czechs and Slovaks ass!”*³³ False rumors were spread also in Stillbach (Tichá Voda, today part of Henclová – Henclófalva), at the time of withdrawal of Czechoslovak army, on 20 June 1919. Gyula Schmatzer said that the railway nearby Vrútky (Ruttka) and Kežmarok (Késmárk) was ruptured by Hungarians³⁴. In Spišské Podhradie (Szepesváralfa), on 7 June 1919 certain Szališ asserted to disarm local gendarmes and when will Hungarians come, shall be accompanied by 6,000 local residents³⁵. Roth, a police captain in Ľubica (Leibic), negligently performed his obligations, moreover, was suspected of assisting a conspiracy directed against the military state power, therefore, was interned in Žilina (Zsolna). Into this location were interned persons, who tore Czechoslovak flag from the town house in Ľubica (Leibic)³⁶. On the range in Levoča (Lőcse) was exhibited anti-Czech leaflet printed even in November 1918³⁷. Margita Buzásová, official typist in Spišské Podhradie, on 27 June 1919 said to gendarme Slabihondek: *“It hurts me as a Hungarian so much that when the Hungarians were so close, they had to go back again. I was delighted that they arrive here*

³² Štátny archív Levoča, Štátne zastupiteľstvo v Levoči – Period 1900–1920., box 10, inv. No. 13, doc. No. 145/1919.

³³ Štátny archív Levoča, Štátne zastupiteľstvo v Levoči – Period 1900–1920, box 11, inv. No. 13, doc. No. 371/1919.

³⁴ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 652/1919.

³⁵ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 619/1919.

³⁶ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 533/1919.

³⁷ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 621/1919.

and now Béla Kun betrayed the whole Hungarian nation.” She was as politically unreliable dismissed from the service.³⁸ Julius Kern, canon in Spiš Chapter House (Spišská Kapitula – Szepeshely), said on 21 June 1919 to Andrew Klučiar from Lieskovany (Leszkovány): “Your son joined to the Czechs and you keep also with the Czechs. When Hungarians will come, we will hang you and your brother.”³⁹ On 22 June 1919 the priest Henrich Göbl in Vondrišiel (today Nálepkovo – Merény) at the occasion of the end of the school year announced to students that it should be taught in Hungarian and not Slovak language, because in Vondrišiel are only Hungarians and claimed that there is no Czechoslovak Republic.⁴⁰

Anti-Czech expression had also Juraj Hric from Nižné Repaše (Alsórépás): “I wish God damned the Czechs – now you see, you wanted the Czechs and get nothing from them, because they have nothing, only the factories, from the Hungarians we have had enough flour, meat, bacon, wine and just everything.” When Hungarians invaded into Spiš County, his wife Mária rejoiced as follows: “Here they are our Hungarians, already there are our brothers!” The situation in Nižné Repaše (Alsórépás), as well as in other municipalities in Spiš region, was this time very chaotic: “In Nižné Repaše prevailed among the inhabitants a huge mess and uncertainty; soldiers bound to active service were leaving their homes and hiding in the forests and all of the regulations and invitations remained without result. ... The headquarters of the local station were forced to request the garrison headquarters in Levoča (Lőcse) for the reinforcements to maintain an order and the soldier Bocko from Nižné Repaše was designed for that function. Immediately when Mária found out that Jozef Bocko helps the gendarmerie to catch the deserters, incited the others against him again, that he still helps the gendarmerie to catch the deserters.”⁴¹

The population in Spiš region had not only pro-Hungarian, but also pro-Bolshevik mood as evidenced by the case of the Tatranská Lomnica (Tátralomnic). When Aranka Neuherz, manager of cuisine in a local hotel, heard about the progress of the Hungarian Red Army, ordered two persons to bring a Czechoslovak flag, which she tore up. She would make a cockade from the red part of the flag and welcome the Red Army with it.⁴²

³⁸ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 632/1919.

³⁹ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 647/1919.

⁴⁰ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 651/1919.

⁴¹ Štátny archív Levoča, Štátne zastupiteľstvo v Levoči – Period 1900–1920, box 13, inv. No. 13, doc. No. 610/1919.

⁴² Štátny archív Levoča, Štátne zastupiteľstvo v Levoči (Robotnícke hnutie a dejiny KSČ) – Period 1900–1920, box 11, inv. No. 13, doc. No. 439/1919.

The population was succumbed to the above stated influences that disturbed peace and order in the county. Due to the discombobulating rumors, anti-Czechoslovak statements and actions, Spiš society was deeply confusing and accumulated by the fear of an uncertain future.

Czechoslovak power was conscious of the acute danger regarding to successful progress of Hungarian troops. To eliminate the enemy forces inside the Republic was declared military dictatorship. In eastern Slovakia became applicable by order of General Hennocque. According to his regulation, there were not allowed to do any gatherings. If someone had been found with gun or carried out sabotage actions, should have been immediately shot. All military organizations should be dissolved immediately. One who extended the scaremongering, printed matters against Czechoslovak government, or disturbed public order, would be punished by imprisonment from 15 days to 20 years and by fine from 100 to 10,000 crowns⁴³. In spite of proclaimed harsh penalties against the defendants of Czechoslovakia, the execution was performed milder.

Military operations in nexus with the Hungarian Red Army campaign also affected the Spiš County area. Fighting took place in Gelnica (Gölnic). The district of Gelnica (Gölnic) fell into the hands of the Hungarian army during the 20 – 23 June 1919 and automatically became a part of the Slovak Soviet Republic, which was a state directly under the influence of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. This occurrence was welcomed particularly by the local working class expecting especially an improvement of their financial situation and by the part of the Hungarian and German population⁴⁴. Almost immediately, the sympathizers of the Hungarian army took leading positions in Gelnica (Gölnic) and in other villages in the district. The pro-Czechoslovak tuned population admitted the arrival of the Hungarian Army reluctantly and tactically waited how the situation will develop.

However the arrival of the Hungarian Red Army brought to Spiš region improving of the supply by utilizing the manorial granaries, but the Red Army troops left behind a lot more damage than usefulness. Soldiers paid for everything high amounts of money with valueless banknotes so called “white money”⁴⁵. When they were leaving, they took along a number of chattels, especially food and money in cash. They also caused some damages to buildings in which they were staying. Compared to the rest of the territory of the Slovak Soviet Republic, property damages were not large and there was no one killed by members of the Hungarian Red Army, mainly due to brief time they spent there. They were staying in the district

⁴³ *Rozkaz generála Hennocqua. Z Košíc 6. júna.* In: Slovenský denník, 7. 6. 1919, year 2., No. 119, p. 2.

⁴⁴ PÁSZTOR, P.: *Gelnica. História a súčasnosť.* Košice : Harlequin, 2012, p. 51.

⁴⁵ *Prakovce. Svedectvo času.* Košice : Harlequin, 2010, p. 36.

of Gelnica only one week. In spite of that, this incident deeply affected the life of the local population. During the sojourn of the Hungarian Red Army was the local population, in particular, the one who disagreed with the arrival of the Hungarians, constantly was afraid of their lives and property. After the departure of the Red Army they had fear of its return or a long time. On the other side the population sympathizing with the Red Army was feared about a persecution by the Czechoslovak state. The brief activity of the Slovak Soviet Republic in Spiš region represented the atmosphere of fear, univocally more appreciable as in the rest of the county at that time.

After the intervention of the Entente powers, Hungarian Soviet Republic was finally forced to withdraw its troops from the territory of Slovakia. Hungarian Red Army left the district of Gelnica (Gölnic) on the 28 June 1919. Gelnica with its surrounding was the first place where Slovak Soviet Republic disappeared. Many of its exponents and supporters, for fear of persecution by the Czechoslovak authorities went along with Hungarian army.⁴⁶

Departure of the Hungarian Red Army was conducted relatively peacefully but not entirely without problems. Its soldiers retreated with crude insults and threats such as „*Wait stinking Slovak, you will still hang!*”⁴⁷. Slovak population often made fun from retreating Hungarian troops. They terrified the Hungarians that the Czechoslovak army is approaching, what accelerated their retreat. During the leaving of some troops of the Red Army from the district of Gelnica, as revenge they shot to people working on the field. It is not known that someone was injured or killed.⁴⁸

The primary task of the renewed Czechoslovak administration after the retreat of the Hungarian Red Army was punishing exponents and supporters Slovak Soviet Republic. It was mainly about to show the general public, how will end up the Czechoslovakia opponents who undermine the very idea of its statehood. The exponents of the Slovak Soviet Republic in the district of Gelnica were imprisoned in remand centre only for weeks or months and were released to freedom over the years 1919 and 1920. After such a long interval after these events is now difficult to find out, how true are statements of defendants and witnesses in their favor or against them. It cannot be determined with certainty, to what extent the Slovak Soviet Republic exponents were active on their own initiative and how they were forced to their deeds by the Hungarian army. Of course, it is not excluded any personal hostility of witnesses, testified against them. The situation was in many aspects very crowded. However one thing is certain, the Czechoslovak authorities were against

⁴⁶ PÁSZTOR, P.: *Gelnica. História a súčasnosť*. Košice : Harlequin, 2012, p. 52.

⁴⁷ ZIMÁK, J. (ed.): *Vpád maďarských bolševikov na Slovensko*. Bratislava : Slovenský chýrnik, 1936, p. 277.

⁴⁸ ZIMÁK, *Vpád maďarských ...*, p. 277.

these “traitors” extremely benevolent. To compare, the situation in Hungary was worse, where was treated with the Bolsheviks incomparably harder and the death penalty were not uncommon.

Almost immediately after leaving the Hungarian troops was in the south Spiš, as well as in whole Slovakia reestablished the Czechoslovak power. There is not known any case of strong resistance from the side of hungarophilic minded people by the reestablishment of the Czechoslovak administration. The assumption of the territory of the former Slovak Soviet Republic by Czechoslovak authorities conducted peacefully, as well as removal of the Hungarian Red Army.

The biggest change that occurred after the departure of Hungarian troops was mitigation of pro-Hungarian passions. The Spiš hungarophiles understood, that after failed attempt to maintain Slovakia in Hungary, Slovakia, and with it also Spiš region, still remains in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, they were afraid of being persecuted for pro-Hungarian expressions. However, it cannot be said, that the pro-Hungarian expressions disappeared completely. According to the statement of typists Emma Papp of Spišská Nová Ves (Igló) on 16 July 1919, who said that the General Staff will return in the city, Czechs should stay home „*not coming here to eat us up*“. She said that the national frontiers are not certain and even the landscape does not belong to Czechoslovakia and office section where Papp worked did not take the oath. Due to these sayings was Papp interned because of political unreliability⁴⁹. On 18 July 1919 brothers Jozef and Ján Skokan from Spišský Štvrtok, (Csütörtökhegy) at occasion of cattle requisition,⁵⁰ criticized fellow-citizens, that Slovakia was sold out to Czechs. According to witness statements, they relentlessly incited against Czechoslovakia.⁵¹ However such reactions occurred only rarely and in much lesser extent than in the previous period.

Henceforth, the problem was the rejection of taking the oath to Czechoslovakia by Hungarian officials and their office work in Hungarian language. „*Our Czechoslovak authorities corresponded among themselves still Hungarian, even among them are also higher authorities, those superintendents cannot speak Hungarian and sign that acts. Hungarian documents were also received from rural villages! In*

⁴⁹ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 331/1919.

⁵⁰ To improve the supply of industrial centers, particularly in the Czech Republic, the state requisitioned farmer’s grain and livestock. Due to the fact, that the Slovak counties were agricultural the poorest, the requisition was more often in richer, ethnically mixed counties, such as the Spiš county. This situation more intensified the resistance against Czechoslovak state power. HRONSKÝ, M.: *Trianon. Vznik hraníc Slovenska a problémy jeho bezpečnosti (1918 – 1920)*. Bratislava : VEDA – Vydavateľstvo slovenskej akadémie vied, 2011, p. 195.

⁵¹ Štátny archív Levoča, Župa Spišská 1860–1922 – Županský úrad – Prezidiálne písomnosti, box 2808, doc. No. 614/1919.

the tenth month of independence, it is nevertheless too many“.⁵² Reestablishment of the Czechoslovak administration was therefore mainly associated with more consistent requiring of a loyalty oath from public servants. Some employees refused it and were replaced by Czech officials, teachers, railway workers, policemen and others. By the enforcement of Czechoslovak power was the important factor also Czech soldiers.⁵³

After months of ethnic attacks, passions slowly reassured. But in August 1919 there happened an incident from the Czechoslovak side, which disturbed relatively quiet minds and resonated not only in Spiš region, but in whole Slovakia.⁵⁴

Already in the spring 1919, members of the Sokol union tried to remove the statue of Honvéd located, on the main square Levoča, which stayed there as a memory of fighting under Branisko mountain range in revolution 1848–1849. The attempt to throw it down failed, therefore was overlaid by boards to be not seen. After performances of physical training and folk festivity at night on 10 August 1919 statue was already demolished by a group of falcons (sokols).⁵⁵ The event caused a stir. Around the city began spreading rumors, that this is the beginning of pogroms against the Hungarians and Germans. On 12 August 1919 morning met by the broken monument many people. They put wreaths on it and sang the Hungarian anthem. Gendarmes tried to disperse the crowd, shot and one person was seriously injured. Following three days the population declared a general boycott. Stores were closed, most officials did not come to work and the anti-Czech agitation and hatred spread up. Action of falcons (sokols) was condemned by head of county Ján Rumann and by the military dictator, general Hennocque. Ján Rumann termed it as serious disruption of the consolidation process. General Hennocque assembled on 8 September 1919 officials of Levoča and publicly condemned the removal of the monument. He promised to bring the perpetrators to court-martial, expressed the satisfaction with behavior of city residents and promised immediate help, if people request for protection.⁵⁶

Cases in Levoča and similar incidents that have taken place elsewhere focused the attention to the difficult situation in the Spiš region. Some soldiers and officials coming from the Czech lands were quite difficult psychologically and nationally adapted to the local context. They precipitated unnecessary conflicts with their

⁵² *Za očistou.* (adopted from Slovenský Východ) In: Slovenský denník, 30. 7. 1919, year 2. No. 162, p. 3.

⁵³ SULAČEK, J.: *Ján Rumann. Ludomil v politike.* Liptovský Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 2005, p. 26.

⁵⁴ *Výtržnosti pre pomník.* In: Slovenský denník, 20. 8. 1919, year 2. No. 179, p. 4.

⁵⁵ SULAČEK, J.: *Posledný spišský župan Ján Rumann (1876–1925).* In: *Z minulosti Spiša XII.* Levoča: Spišský dejepisný spolok, 2004, p. 123.

⁵⁶ CHALUPECKÝ, I. – SULAČEK, J: *Dejiny Levoče 2...*, p. 252.

radicalism that does not have only the immediate consequences, but some political parties later also misappropriated them.⁵⁷

It is obvious, that a large part of the population of Spiš County was unable to identify with the Czechoslovak Republic. It was not only the Hungarians, but also hungarized Germans, Jews, and last but not least the Slovaks. Decades of purposeful assimilation resulted that these non-Hungarian nationalities identified themselves with the Hungarian nation and the Hungarian Kingdom as a Hungarian nation state. Therefore, they logically rejected its collapse and formation of state, which was completely strange to them. Equally foreign to them were the Czechs, perceived by them as occupiers. Besides the hungarophilian population Spiš region was inhabited by population accessible to the idea of the Czechoslovak Republic. It was the Slovaks and Ruthenians, who did not succumb to assimilation. Third, probably the largest group was the population quite indifferent to which the state formation will belong. Priority for these people, coming mainly from lower social classes, was to improve their social situation that was after devastating war very bad.

The Czechoslovak governing authorities successively contrived to enforce the idea of Czechoslovak state among the broad masses of population. They succeed particularly with unprecedented development of Slovak culture and education as well as the gradual economic recovery. Many Slovaks, who were previously pro-Hungarian oriented, under these influences increasingly professed to the Slovak nationality and Czechoslovak state. For subscribing to state-forming nations (Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenians) stood in many cases an effort to gain material and social benefits. Population, which remained pro-Hungarian oriented gradually, especially after began to realize, the failed campaign of the Hungarian Red Army, that the boundaries will not change and the existence of Czechoslovakia is a permanent and inescapable fact. They outwardly reconciled with it, but inwardly still more or less nurtured hope for the change. Pro-Hungarian manifestations did not disappear, but during the whole interwar period they did not acquire serious dimensions as it was in the early months of the Czechoslovak Republic. The change occurred in the nexus of international tension and the rise of power of Germany and Hungary at the end of the thirties of 20th century, when began to re-activate the pro-Hungarian oriented population.

⁵⁷ CHALUPECKÝ, I. – SULAČEK, J.: *Dejiny Levoče 2*. Košice : Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1975, p. 253.