

UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED
FACULTY OF ARTS
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HISTORY

Anett Kovács

PUBLIC PHILANTHROPY IN BÉKÉS COUNTY DURING THE ERA OF THE DUALISM

Theses of the Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

Supervisor:

Dr. habil. László Marjanucz

Head of Department, Associate Professor

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I. The aims and the methods of the research

My research field covers the forms, the appearance, and the role of public philanthropy in the society of the nineteenth century, till the beginning of the twentieth century. The research covers philanthropic organizations and also persons doing outstanding activities in this field. I have also examined the fields and the forms of public philanthropy in Békés county, primarily from the second half of the nineteenth century till the beginning of the twentieth century. I consider this topic to be especially important because in the period in question, the state had not yet provided for various social security services. Therefore, such individual and social initiatives and activities became very important and acknowledged as they not only served individual prosperity and helped others, but also fostered the prosperity and welfare of the community.

The most important aspects of the research were how individuals and larger communities, that is social forces, could establish and maintain non-profit, social-problem solving organizations with philanthropic goals that required substantial financial and energy investment.

Outlining the social problems and defining the areas of philanthropy have been done on the basis of the resources used, and on the work of the philanthropic persons and organizations. In connection with this, I have examined the life and activity of the outstanding persons of Békés county in the field of public philanthropy: The life of Fejérváry Celestina, the work of the “bread politician” Benedek Göndöcs, the child protection activities of Krisztina Wenckheim, and the philanthropic acts of Dénesné Almásy. All of them worked mainly in Békés county, but the effects of their activities were not restricted and adapted to geographical boundaries, since they also participated in the work of national philanthropic organizations. In recognition of their work, the women above were given the Elizabeth Order from the monarch, for their merit in the field of public philanthropy.

Among the national philanthropic organizations, I have examined the White Cross National Orphanage Association, which dealt with the protection of children; the Stefania Association, which promoted women protection; the Red Cross Society for the rescue of war casualties, and the work of the Békés county organizations of companies with national scope. I have also examined the institutions established due to social initiatives and movements: the Békés County Hospital, the Pulmonary Hospital, and the Tulipánkert Movement aiming to create jobs and industrial development.

For a more complex representation of the local processes in a broader spectrum, I have also attempted to present the national trends related to the subject with an outlook for European tendencies as well. I have tried to put the philanthropic activities of philanthropic organizations and individuals into the social and economic context of the era; in this way, the cause-and-effect relationships are more obvious.

During the research, it was important to approach the topic from the aspect of value history. Writing my dissertation, I also paid attention, in processing the past events, to try to reveal and convey such facts as could be valuable and instructive at present. I intended to show events, processes, and characters that played the catalyst in the development of a particular society - in this case, in Békés county. There were such kind of individual and social initiatives that remained at a rudimentary level and did not have a significant impact; but there were also some whose results are still integral parts of our society. The methods used are in line with the source base. Besides narrative historiography based on source criticism, I have also used the methods of analyzing and problem-solving historiography.

II. The structure of the dissertation

These individual and social initiatives are the foundation of the dissertation which I have tried to put into thematic units, such as child protection, health protection, support for the poor and the elderly, job creation, emergencies, and education development. Determining the time limits was not easy since there were social processes that lasted for decades and went beyond the classical time frames. Initially, I only examined philanthropic activities during the era of the dualism, but the social movement for the construction of the Békés County Hospital started much earlier; and since I thought it was relevant for my topic, the time interval had to be extended. The starting date is also the beginning of the social unification for the establishment of the Békés County Hospital. The Red Cross movement is one of the greatest philanthropic movement in the era, a part of its activity and the formation of its organization is connected to the Great War. This historical moment set the final date.

III. Sources and historiographical overview

Comprehensive literature on the topic has not been drawn up yet, therefore, I have done my research according to thematic units. Among the literature on child protection, I would like to emphasize the work of Gábor Gyáni and György Kövér on the social history of Hungary, the analyses of Gyáni on social policy and on the genealogy of social provision, the works of Ferenc Gergely on the history of child protection in Hungary, the works of dr. József Veczkó, the works of Katalin Hanák on society and child protection, and the publications of Marianne Kaszás, Mária Menyhárt, and Eleonóra Géra. Moreover, I have analyzed archival documents such as the writings of the White Cross National Orphanage Association, the sources in connection with the philanthropic activities of Krisztina Wenckheim and Dénesné Almásy, and contemporary newspapers: *Békés*, *Békés County Gazette*, *Sunday Gazette*, Protestant church and school papers.

For the purpose of exploring the philanthropic activities of Krisztina Wenckheim in the field of child protection, I have used the documents related to the orphanage founded by her, in the Békés County Archives in Gyula of the Hungarian National Archives. The memorial album made for the silver wedding of Krisztina and Frigyes Wenckheim has provided for additional data. The memoir written by Gyulafi has also helped to get absorbed in the subject. The monograph on the history of the town of Gyula by Dr. Ferenc Scherer and the relevant sections in the newspaper *Békés* have also been processed.

A summary and analytical work on the philanthropic activities of Dénesné Almásy has not been produced yet; to explore her work, I use several archival sources and documents. The records and the yearbooks of the White Cross Association, the relevant sections of the *Békés County Gazette*, the documents of the Red Cross, and Protestant church and school papers constitute the source base. The monograph of Dr. Ferenc Scherer and family history documents are used to study her wider scope.

Documents can be found on the White Cross National Orphanage Association, especially among the lord lieutenant's documents in the Békés County Archives in Gyula of the Hungarian National Archives. The yearbooks of the Békés county White Cross Association, which contain statistical records, reports, and minutes of the General Assembly, can be found in the Békés County Library. These documents give insight into the work of the association. The calendars of the White Cross National Orphanage Association have been published by the association and inform us about the achievements, operation, and goals of the organization. Dr. József Benke's *History of Medicine* and György Högya's work on the

history of hospitals served as a starting point to explore the public health situation. For the analysis of philanthropic activities in the field of health, I have used Dr. György Berkes's *The History of Békés County Hospital and the Annual Report on Its Operation in 1902*, Endre Vincze's *The Establishment and Historical Antecedents of the Békés County Hospital*, archive resources, documents and records of the hospital committees of Békés county, and the documents of the chief medical officer of Békés-Csanád county.

During the presentation of the social movement against tuberculosis, it was important to present European, Hungarian and Békés county events in their contexts, because the disease caused serious public health problems, not only in Hungary but in several European countries, too. To research the problem, I have looked at the relevant statistical data that highlighted the severity of the situation. During the analysis of the data, I examined how this serious, critical situation was attempted to be solved. I used *The History of Medicine, The Great Steps in Medicine* by Győző Birtalan, the works of Dr. Ferenc Tauszk and Dr. Mihály Fóti. *Pulmonology* by Gusztáv Miskovits and *Application of the Healing Laser Beam* by Károly Kapronczay provided new information in the efforts to resolve the situation. Frigyes Korányi was one of the chief figures of the movement against this disease in Hungary. To study his work, I have used *Korányi Frigyes* by Dr. István Máté and Dr. Endre Réti, and *Medical Dynasties I.* by Dr. Károly Kapronczay. In Békés county, György Lukács was one of the chief organizers of the fight against tuberculosis. *György Lukács – Biography of an Outstanding Politician* by Dr. Ádám Erdész, archival resources, documents of the lord lieutenant in Békés county, the memoir *My Life and Contemporary* by György Lukács, and Dr. László Elek's study helped to illustrate his philanthropic acts. The newspaper *Békés* and the *Parliament Journal* contributed with additions to the careful description of the situation. The establishment of the Pulmonary Hospital was not a simple task in Gyula; I have examined the documents of the Sanatorium Society, the documents of the lord lieutenant in Békés county, and the archival resources of the Joseph Sanatorium. *History of the Establishment and Construction of the Joseph Sanatorium* by Pál Aradszky and Gyula Kász helped me to be immersed in the details.

The Stefania Association was set up to curb infant mortality and protect women. I researched the circumstances, goals, plans, and activities of the organization. I used the *Reports on the Field of Child Protection and Child Hygiene* by Dr. Ernő Deutsch, *The 15 Years of the National Stefania Association* by Lajos Keller, reports edited by Lajos Keller from the operation of The National Stefania Association, and the program of the association. Examining the organization's national and Békés county expansion, documents concerning

the Stefania Association found in the Békés County Archives in Gyula of the Hungarian National Archives helped my work.

During my research, I also tried to answer the question of what the effects of the operation of the Békés county branch offices had had on infant mortality; how efficiently these institutions had functioned. To answer this question, I used the report on the association's 15-year-long operation.

I also investigated individual and social initiatives in connection with the support of the poor. I have analyzed the work of philanthropic organizations and the life and philanthropic actions of Fejérváry Celesztina, who fought against poverty. To find philanthropic circles in Békés county, I have used documents, articles, and annuals of association, the documents of the lord lieutenant of Békés county found in the Békés County Archives in Gyula of the Hungarian National Archives. Contemporary newspapers *Békés* and *Békés County Gazette* provided more information on the topic. I have also read the writings of Dávid Kóhn, one of the journalists of the era, and I have studied József Implom's work concerning the history of the Women's Circle in Gyula. I have also looked into the literature concerning the national situation. The studies of Dr. Tivadar Forbáth, Dr. Kálmán Pálos, and Kálmán Csorna are especially important because they lived in the investigated period. Among the 20th-century research workers, the works of Zsuzsa Ferge, the poverty analyses of Gábor Gyáni, the works of Gábor Pajkossy, Árpád Tóth, and Éva Kuti also helped me to be immersed in the subject. I have also tried to follow the latest research. Tamás Fülöp wrote a study on the state and county frameworks of poor-relief. To reveal the tendencies connected to the legal background and the life of the associations, I examined the relevant laws of the era besides the statistical data.

In order to explore Celesztina Fejérváry's philanthropic activities, I have applied several research methods. During the archival research, I found documents containing biographical data. I have also used the method of oral history. Celesztina spent most of her life in Mezőberény, therefore, I made interviews with people who knew her or knew such information about her as was not necessarily recorded in historical sources and studies. During a conversation, it turned out that a diary exists that was written by an employee of Celesztina. I read the diary and I have used the most important details. Emerging memories during the interview and the diary are subjective recollections, still, they modify the image and the surrounding *milieu* of Celesztina. During the fieldwork, I also found material remains that had belonged to Celestine: postcards, travel guides, and personal items related to her religious life. These have been photographed, digitized, and stored on a suitable data carrier.

The handwritten yearbook in the local Catholic rectory also provided further information in connection with her.

Job creation was one of the most important tasks of the era. To outline the problem of unemployment, I have used *The Problematics of Unemployment* by Dr. Lóránt Rudolf and *Fight against Unemployment* by Mór Gelléri. A consequence of unemployment was the emergence of a new concept called Socialism. Selected works by Robert Owen and Claude-Henri de Saint Simon, *The Life and Ideas of Charles Fourier* by August Babel, *Revolutionaries and Rebels* by George Rudé, furthermore, *Karl Marx* by Francis Wheen, and *The Capital* by Karl Marx served as a starting point to examine the historical roots of socialism and the emergence of this new concept. The new political concept manifested itself primarily in the form of agrarian socialist movements in Békés county; to describe it, I have used the works of Gábor Gyáni, Ferenc Virágh, and Gergely Mengyán.

In the field of social initiatives, the Hungarian Tulipánkert Movement is worth mentioning. To outline the patriotic, industry-supporting, job-creating movement, I have used *Tulip Garden* by Zalán Endrei, Dr. Ferenc Scherer's monograph on the history of the town of Gyula, and the articles of the *Great Hungarian Plain Independence*.

There were also individual initiatives in the field of job creation. I have studied the work of Benedek Göndöcs in this field. All this was helped by documents related to the abbot Benedek Göndöcs found in the Békés County Archives of the Hungarian National Archives, the collection of documents pertaining to the priest's work edited by József Jároli, the published parliamentary speeches of Benedek Göndöcs edited by Ferenc Bauer, the memoirs of Endre Gyulafi, and the recollections of Lajos Székely and Dávid Kóhn. *Useful Knowledge, How to Breed Silkworms?* and *Popular Conversations about the Reasonable Treatment of Tobacco* by Benedek Göndöcs have further modified his image.

I have studied the circumstances of establishment and activities of the Red Cross in a triple thematic unit. Following the exploration of the European situation, those of the Hungarian and Békés county situations followed.

To study the establishment of the Red Cross, I used *The Reminiscence of Solferino* by Jean Henry Dunant and *One Hundred Years of the Hungarian Red Cross* by János Hantos. The works of Géza Mester, Mária Puskely, and Kristin E. White helped me to be immersed in the details. I have also researched the Geneva Conventions and Principles underlying the organization, for this, I looked through Red Cross documents. To describe the Hungarian Red Cross, I have used the publication *One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of the Hungarian Red Cross, History of the Hungarian Red Cross: 1879-1904*, and *The Red Cross Society of the*

Countries of the Hungarian Sacred Crown: 1879-1904, which provided additional information about the organization. In addition to the literature above, archival sources, the documents of the Békés County Committee of the National Red Cross Society, the documents of the lord lieutenant of Békés county, and the contemporary articles of *Békés* have helped to track the formation of the county red cross associations.

In the study of the public philanthropy of outstanding individuals, it seemed that education was that particular area where again they proved to be philanthropic. That is why I started to research this topic as well. I was researching what philanthropic manifestations were seen in this area, and in what organizational forms this all was accomplished. To explore this area, I have used *A History of Education* by Béla Pukánszky and András Németh, and *A History of Public Education in Békés County* by Tivadar Szentkereszty. I looked into *The Development of Public Education in the Countries of the Hungarian Sacred Crown*. I have also used the most important regulations of the period to examine the framework of education. The monograph of Dr. Ferenc Scherer also provided further additions to the subject. Archival resources and the contemporary popular newspaper *Békés* also helped me to be absorbed in the subject.

IV. The results of the research

The results of the research can help us to understand how philanthropic organizations and people tried to treat social problems and how they contributed to public welfare in areas where the state involvement was not significant or it was absent. These individual and social initiatives and commitments can be regarded as modern social policies and antecedents of social work. The results of the research can also contribute to revealing the less studied and known parts of the discipline from a sociohistorical approach. It can deepen our knowledge of such social practices and attempts as were to solve social problems in a period when the state transferred the forms of social care to philanthropic organizations, individuals involved, or the Church.

V. Publications of the author on the topic

“Episodes from the life of Celesztina Fejérváry.” Heritage of Mezőberény I.; With the Support of the Natural Cultural Fund of Hungary.

“Public Philanthropy in Békés County during the Era of the Dualism.” In: Közép-Európai Monográfiák 13. Szeged, 2014. András, Döbör, Zeman Ferenc (eds.). *Studies from Hungarian History from the Early Modern Age to the Postmodern Age*. Society for the Research of Central Europe 2014.

“The Activities of Krisztina Wenckheim in the Field of Childcare.” In: *Honismeret*. 2015/1.

“Establishment of the Békés County ‘Charitable Public Institute’.” In: *KALEIDOSCOPE: Journal of the History of Culture, Science and Medicine*. 2015 (May).

“Breadpolitics.” In: *Kritische Zeiten*. 2015/1-2.

“From Civil Initiative to State Provision.” In: András, Döbör, Zeman Ferenc (eds.). *Studies from Hungarian History from the Early Modern Age to the Postmodern Age*. 2015.

“Noblesse Oblige.” In: *Honismeret*. 2016/3.

“Social Efforts against Tuberculosis in Hungary.” In: *KALEIDOSCOPE: Journal of the History of Culture, Science and Medicine*. 2017 (May).

V. The author’s lectures on the topic

“Public Philanthropy in Békés County during the Era of the Dualism.” 25 April 2014. Szeged, I. National Conference of PhD Students *Studies from Hungarian History from the Early Modern Age to the Postmodern Age*. Scientific Conference for PhD Students and Pre-Doctors University of Szeged, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Modern Hungarian History.

“Noblesse Oblige.” 10-12 April 2015, Eger, Spring Wind 2015. Scientific Conference
Eszterházy Károly College.

“From Civil Initiative to State Provision.” 8 May 2014. Szeged, II. National Conference of
PhD Students *Hungarian History from the Early Modern Age to the Postmodern Age*.
Scientific Conference for PhD Students and Pre-Doctors University of Szeged, Faculty of
Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Modern Hungarian History.