

## **Confesionalism – School – Interculturalism**

### *Resume*

The thesis demonstrates how the Slovaks who migrated from Upper Northern Hungary (Felvidék) to Mezőberény in several waves in 1723 organised their lives, founded schools and church. Further on, the thesis explains what changes ensued in the organisation of the mother tongue, culture and community. It is an important question to investigate why and how the Slovakian community – which amounted to 40% of the total of inhabitants and which had had independent, well organized schools – had continuously lost the use of their mother tongue by 1880.

In Mezőberény there lived several nationalities together, though, in ethnical separation. However, in spite of the differences in mother tongues at church schools the investigations have detected such spiritual and cultural connections, which reflect the multi-colouredness of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its cultural history very well.

At the time of the settlement Mezőberény consisted, in the first place, of Slovakian, German and Hungarian nationalities. The census in 1850 mentioned also Rumanian, Serbian and Gipsy citizens, as well as a growing Jewish community. As for denominations, besides Lutherans and Calvinists there were Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Unitarians, and Israelites. Teachers from Upper Northern Hungary (from the counties of Zólyom, Hont-Kishont, and Túróc) worked at Slovakian elementary schools. They attended the secondary grammar schools there, they spoke Slovakian, German and Latin very well and they transmitted the educational culture of that place. The pastors at the two Lutheran churches in Mezőberény were mostly of Slovakian origin. However, also the Reformed Hungarian teachers had connections with the Slovakian teachers because of the place they came from.

German elementary schools, as well, as Hungarian and Latin at Reformed Hungarian elementary schools. The languages of teaching were Latin, Hungarian and ethnic languages as auxiliary languages. Also Old Greek and Hebrew were taught at secondary grammar schools. The Slovakian students were familiar also with the Biblical Czech from 1863 the use of the Hungarian language was getting steadily conspicuous at secondary grammar schools, overshadowing the original intention, i.e., multilingualism.

The Slovaks in Mezőberény – thus also the students of the Slovakian schools – have a heterogeneous foreign-language education. It is important to emphasize that at elementary schools the language of teaching has always been the mother tongue of the given nationality from the very beginning. In Mezőberény teaching has become bilingual at Slovakian elementary school since 1825. In the beginning the use of Biblical Czech language was characteristic. The use of the low Slovakian literary language was introduced by coursebooks from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Students and teach-

ers spoke the Slovakian dialect in Békés and the Hungarian dialect in their everyday social context. The knowledge of the foreign language was a basic requirement for teachers to be employed. From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also the knowledge of the Hungarian language was a condition of employment. The Magyarization of the schools may be located at this time and the process got stronger after the years 1836, 1842 and 1870. Besides the elementary education, the use of the Hungarian language at secondary grammar schools, offices, in the everyday connections between nationalities, and also colloquial Hungarian strengthened. The process of the Hungarian language to become conspicuous. In addition, the number of mixed marriages increased where the Hungarian language always became the mutual language of communication.

In respect of elementary education it can be stated the use of language was determined by statute laws. In the literal sense we can speak about vernacular schools only until 1820. After this time there is only bilingual education, in the course of which also the mother tongue is used. Some subjects and groups of subjects are used to mould the consciousness of belonging to the majority nation, which affects so the language as the identity. Creating Slovakian culture was not characterized by takeover, handover, adaptation, which would indirectly have built into the historical process of education as spiritual background. However, the use of the Hungarian language elicited the discontinuance of a series of culture making elements. Degradation of school culture, cessation of social, folk, and religious customs elicited the development of such cultural elements, whose main cohesive attraction was the language. Through the collapse of unifying elements a dual, bilingual, double cultural model developed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which characterized the cultural region of the Slovaks in Békés uniformly.