

EFFORTS TO QUESTION THE TERRITORIAL OUTCOMES OF THE TREATY OF TRIANON IN THE REGION OF SOUTHEASTERN SLOVAKIA AND THE TOOLS OF LEGAL PROTECTION OF THE INTERWAR CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC¹

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Abstract

The presented paper deals with the research of activities directed against the territorial arrangement based on the Treaty of Trianon in the region of southeastern Slovakia. The article presents the results of archival research and organizes the findings according to their nature. The aim of the paper was also to describe the nature Czechoslovak criminal law in the period after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, focusing on the instruments of protection of the newly established Czechoslovak Republic.

Key Words

Treaty of Trianon, Southeastern Slovakia, Revisionism, Criminal law

1. Introduction

The integration of the territory of today's Slovakia into the Czechoslovak Republic after the end of the First World War, definitively confirmed by the Treaty of Trianon, undoubtedly represented a substantial change in the national-legal development of the region and in the life of the population divided by the new state borders. The emergence and effects of various elements aimed at questioning the new territorial arrangement could be naturally expected. The subject of the present article is to analyze the proceedings or incidents aimed at questioning the Trianon borders in the re-

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gion of southeastern Slovakia during the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, as well as the presentation of the Czechoslovak legal order and legislation aimed at protecting the newly created state and the territory of Slovakia as an integral part of it.

2. Southeastern Slovakia and activities aimed at border revision

The subject of this chapter will be the presentation of the archival research results² motivated by the effort to verify the hypothesis predicting the existence of activities potentially threatening the “Trianon Peace” in the area of southeastern Slovakia during the interwar period. The structure of the present chapter will correspond to our grouping of the facts into: concerns about the invasion of Hungarian troops into Slovakia, activities consisting in dissemination of inappropriate publications and other materials, and protest rallies. In addition to the facts mentioned above, the relevant activities concerned may also be segmented or perceived from the territorial point of view, i.e. according to the fact whether said activity was carried out directly on the territory of Slovakia, or it was an activity carried out on the territory of Post-Trianon Hungary, which was, however, subject to monitoring by Czechoslovak state authorities.

2.1. *Concerns about the invasion of Hungarian troops into Slovakia*

The imperilment of territorial integrity of Slovakia as part of the Czechoslovak Republic, or more precisely, its reintegration into Hungary was the subject of legitimate concerns by the Czechoslovak authorities as soon as 4 years after signing of the Treaty of Trianon. This follows from the report of the County Prefect of the Košice County of 30 June 1924³ addressed to all district offices and the Police Commissariat in Prešov, according to which the Ministry of Slovak Affairs was informed from a confidential source that the Hungarian government was preparing an armed uprising against Slovakia, in which several irregular military units were to participate. The report states that “At the meeting of all the combat units in Budapest held on 30 April that year in the headquarters of the ‘Hungarian Territorial Integrity League’ (Területvédeő Liga), a consent was given for uniform acting against

2 ² State Archive of Košice – Branch Archive Trebišov.

3 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Sečovce, Box 2, file number 620/1924 prez.

Slovakia". The document further describes the method of distribution of agitation leaflets in Slovakia with an exact designation of the persons entrusted with this activity and their addresses. The content of the disputed leaflets describes their copy as an annex to this document as follows: "Our long-suffering Hungarian brethren! If you want to free yourself from your fate of miserable oppression today, you must renounce fraternal hostility and unite yourselves to rebuild the blessed and glorious former Hungary. Be alert, the crucial moment is approaching when we are going to regain our old empire without bloodshed. It will be all the easier because the army of the repressive government is unreliable. With patriotic greetings from 'Nem nem soha liga' (No No Never League). Arise Hungarians, your homeland is calling you." The report finally strengthens the credibility of the trustworthy information with further details on the suspicion of delivering arms for the uprising, as the 'confident agent' observed. On 5 May at around twelve o'clock at night, the agent noticed as two wagons of rifles and machine guns were unloaded by workers at the border railway station in Salgótarján, attracting his attention with the workers' civilian clothes and with their fine, white hands, which is not usual for ordinary workmen.

The report of the Provincial Office Presidium in Bratislava dated almost 5 years later, on April 23, 1929⁴ shows that information of a similar nature about the invasion of Slovakia allegedly planned, but finally never carried out appeared every year. From the aforementioned document it is evident that their purpose was perceived by the Czechoslovak authorities retrospectively as an effort "to keep the border population in turmoil and in the hope of annexing that part of Slovakia to Hungary". The report cited from 1929 draws attention again to information about the planned invasion of Slovakia, which was to take place in direction of Košice in the period after May 1 or around May 15, and although earlier concerns had not been fulfilled, its sender urged district chiefs to pay special attention to this fact.

Information on spreading messages aimed at questioning the Trianon Peace Treaty is also proved true in the following year, as the report of the Presidium of the Provincial Office (Prezídium krajinského úradu) in Bratislava addressed to the Slovak District Chiefs of 12 July 1930⁵ shows that in the border area east of Slovenské Ďarmoty, Czechoslovakia, information is being spread, that Czechoslovakia is to transfer a border zone about 30 km

4 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Trebišov, Box 3, file number 392/1929 prez.

5 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Trebišov, Box 6, file number 685/1930 prez.

wide to Hungary based on the outcomes of the conference in The Hague. These messages were to be disseminated by the travellers from Hungary, and the Hungarian border authorities were to refer to them as facts. The information on spreading misleading messages at the border-area was subsequently confirmed by the District Gendarmerie Headquarters in Trebišov (Okresné četnícke veliteľstvo) on 5 August 1930 in its report addressed to the District Office in Trebišov, in which it states that according to the report from the Gendarmerie in Čerhov it is true that these messages are coming from Hungary and they are disseminated by the Hungarian border authorities, which are in contact with the local population. However, the local people do not respond to these messages and behave calmly.

2.2. Dissemination of printed materials and other objects

The second group of identified adverse activities in the interwar period directed against the existence of the Czechoslovak Republic was the spread of inappropriate printed materials and other objects.

Chronologically, the earliest procedure identified in our research was the extension of the call for petition, which was captured within the documents of the District Notary's Office in Leles.⁶ The call is dated of November 20, 1918, comes from Kremnica and is signed by the Hungarian National Council. It follows from the text that the call was a propaganda instrument against the Czech activity directed against the territorial integrity of the Hungarian homeland. "We know that most of the Slovaks do not want to join the Czech state, and it applies even more so to the Hungarians and Germans". Its aim was to collect one million signatures against the new territorial arrangement and the integration of Slovakia into the Czechoslovak state. The authors called for the collection of signatures not to be done publicly but rather through some trustworthy individuals. At the same time, they were to teach the potential signatories, what economic losses would mean for them the 'exploiting, capitalist Czech domination', and how their language would suffer, and finally, a much better fate would await them in the new free Hungary. The signatures collected were to be sent to the Paris Peace Conference as an argument in favor of the Hungarian demands presented at the peace negotiations.

6 State Archive of Košice, Fond Obvodný notársky úrad Leles, file number 1869/1918 admin.

The study of the available documents has also shown us that the Czechoslovak public authorities paid considerable attention to the elimination of the inappropriate book- and periodical publications in Slovakia. The circular letter of the County Prefect (Župan) of Košice County of 4 January 1924⁷ addressed to all district offices and the Police Commissariat in Prešov reveals that in schools with Hungarian as the language of tuition, pupils were to be given books at the end of the school year which “are dangerous from the state’s point of view and in relation to which their colportage was, in general, or individually prohibited and their postal communication permit was withdrawn.” It follows from the document that the book titled “Nagy magyarok élete” (The Life of Great Hungarians), which was sold in the station bookstore in Nové Zámky, could have been considered a such publication. The district authorities were instructed to check who brought the books to Slovakia and released them to the book market, and they were asked to carry out a review of the Hungarian books in bookstores. Moreover, it was ordered to “encroach with an exemplary rigour against the authorities who allowed the import of the printed materials concerned the postal communication and colportage of which were prohibited”. A similar procedure follows from the report of the County Prefect of Košice County dated of November 4 1924⁸ according to which the Ministry for Slovak Affairs withdrew the postal transport and throughout Slovakia banned the colportage of the Hungarian school textbook “Bartha-Prónay: Rhetoric”, as in its 1922 edition there was the Hungarian anthem, and the following edition of 1924 contained the Hungarian anthem and the irredentist poem by Sándor Sajó: Magyar ének 1919-ben (Hungarian Song in 1919). The active monitoring of the potentially risky foreign press was also evidenced by the call of the Prefect of Košice County on 14 April 1924⁹ addressed to all district offices and the Police Directorate in Košice and the Police Commissariat in Prešov to raise awareness in relation to the Hungarian magazine Napkelet (Sunrise), which was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Slovak Affairs due to its irredentist nature.

Studying the documents in question we can also find that the efforts of the Czechoslovak state authorities were not limited to suppressing the reproduction of undesirable books and periodicals, but they were also focused

7 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Sečovce, Box 2, file number 41/1924 prez.

8 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Sečovce, Box 2, file number 956/1924 prez.

9 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Sečovce, Box 2, file number 415/1924 prez.

on other printed materials, especially on irredentist posters as well as other objects. Such an object was the children's puzzle game "Trianon Térképjáték" (Map game Trianon) published by the irredentist association Duna Szövetség (Danube Society), which, according to the report of the Presidium of the Bratislava Provincial Office of 12 April 1929¹⁰, was supposed to be smuggled to Slovakia and to serve as a new means of propaganda against the Trianon Peace Treaty. This board game consisted of a wooden board in a box, in which a map of Hungary was carved, made up of former Hungarian counties which were carved and had to be placed back in the right place on the map. The game was intended only for 'reliable Hungarian families' as an 'eternal reminder of Trianon'. Regarding the suppression of the reproduction of the irredentist leaflets already mentioned, we would like to point to the discovered decree of the Presidium of the Provincial Office in Bratislava of March 20, 1929¹¹, which points out that irredentist leaflets were intended to be distributed in Slovakia and in Carpathian Ruthenia by members of the association "Tesz", Smrecsány and Gömbös, who were allegedly travelling to Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia, while Gömbös was supposed to use fake travel documents. On the front side of these posters the Leventist emblem was depicted, and below it a picture showing a thoughtful Leventist (in Hungarian: *Levente organizations* or simply *levente* — were paramilitary youth organizations in Hungary during the interwar period and the Second World War) sitting by a bonfire and looking at the sun rising from the clouds, with the inscription below the image: "May it not be only a dream, but an instant truth – all the plots and iniquities shall pass, and let our former old Hungary rise again".

Finally, the distribution of undesirable publications includes also the dissemination of calls for material assistance to members of the former ruling dynasty addressed to aristocratic families in Slovakia, as pointed out by the Prefect of Košice County in the document addressed to the District Offices and the Prešov Police Commissariat on April 7, 1924¹². He described the case when the border check officers stopped Count Fridrich Wilczek travelling to visit his brother Vilém in Horné Semerovce, Krupina district, and he was found in a possession of a letter addressed to his brother Vilém, urging him to provide material support to the former royal family. The copy of this letter revealed that its sender was a certain Ivan Hekonics, representa-

10 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Trebišov, Box 3, file number 350/1929 prez.

11 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Trebišov, Box 2, file number 259/1929 prez.

12 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Sečovce, Box 2, file number 407/1924 prez.

tive of the 'Supreme Council' – the association founded in the post-Trianon Hungary for supporting the ruling dynasty. In the letter he states that “even Czech aristocratic families have committed themselves, /provisionally for 10 years/, to contribute 3,000 pesetas per month to secure the domestic everyday expenses for the ruling dynasty. Austrian nobility also provides similar permanent support. [...] It is only in our country – with the exception of some personalities – where nothing has been done for the sake of the cause yet. This cause is also believed to be an honor for Hungary, and therefore it must not be the case that the old generations closest to the dynasty and enjoying all the privileges, are to watch the plight of the royal family today [...]” The Prefect states that similar letters were apparently sent to all aristocratic families residing in the successor states, so he asked the addressees for submission to further investigate into this matter.

2.3. Protest rallies

The last category of the identified activities directed against the territorial integrity of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic were protest rallies held on the territory of the post-Trianon Hungary, which were the subject of observation by the Czechoslovak public authorities.

The forthcoming assemblies in November 1928 attracted the attention of the Czechoslovak authorities in particular. The Passport Control Commander of the Border Passport Control Station of Slovenské Nové Mesto drew the attention of the District Chief of the District Office in Trebišov on 5 November 1928¹³ to the content of an article published on 3 November 1928 in the periodical *Magyar Jövő (Hungarian Future)*. The article declared 18 November 1928 the National Day of Revision, as in the whole territory of the 'Truncated Hungary' (in Hungarian Csonkamagyarország) revisionist assemblies will be held, which will adopt resolutions on the need of revision of the borders, which will be subsequently sent to the Hungarian Royal Government in one copy and another copy written in French will be sent to the League of Nations. The article stated that “The unified position of the Hungarian nation on the need for revision must draw the world’s attention to the fact that the Hungarian nation will never reconcile with the Trianon Treaty and that it considers its revision to be its most important aim in life. It is important to take this position also because Czechoslovakia is cel-

13 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Trebišov, Box 1, file number 1318/1928 prez.

ebating the 10th anniversary of its existence. The Hungarian people must therefore also make the world aware that Trianon did not stabilize Eastern Europe, and that the peaceful development of Eastern Europe, and even of the whole of Europe, can only take place if the injustices perpetrated on the Hungarian people are repaired.”

The monitoring of the mentioned protest rallies in the border town of Sátoraljaújhely was evidenced by the report of the border checkpoint in Slovenské Nové Mesto dated 19 November 1928¹⁴ addressed to the District Chief of the District Office in Trebišov. According to the report, about 900 participants in the lantern procession gathered in front of the tobacco factory on November 17 at 7 pm, including students from the business school, Levente and Fekete Sas associations, accompanied by Leventist music, shouting anti-Trianon slogans for about an hour on the city’s major streets. The day of November 18, started with an hour-long wake-up call by playing Leventist music, and subsequently, from 11 am, a rally of about 2,000 participants, including members of irredentist associations, firefighters, government and city employees was held in front of the Lajos Kossuth Monument. Four speakers were speaking in front of the assembly, including the city’s General Notary, who read a memorandum drawn up for the League of Nations and the Hungarian government, as well as a letter addressed to Lord Rothermere¹⁵ asking him to urge a revision of the Treaty of Trianon. The Commander of the border checkpoint informed the District Chief in Trebišov that after the meeting there was a procession through the city, after which the participants parted, while apart from displaying a poster in Hungarian national colors on the common bridge in Sátoraljaújhely – Slovenské Nové Mesto – there were no other provocations at the border.

By means of archival research, the results of which we have presented in this chapter, we confirmed the hypothesis outlined in the introduction about the existence of proceedings and incidents against the Peace of Trianon in the region of south-eastern Slovakia during the interwar period.

In accordance with the goal set out in the introduction, the subject matter of the following chapter is to present the legal order of the newly formed Czechoslovak Republic as well as its tools of punishment for some of the acts described in this chapter.

14 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Trebišov, Box 1, file number 1354/1928 prez.

15 This is apparently Harold Sidney Harmswoth, 1st Viscount of Rothermere, the supporter of the Hungarian revisionism.

3. The Czechoslovak legal order and the instruments of criminal law protection of the state

The natural consequence of the creation of a new state was the creation of its special legal order. Given the dynamism of the revolutionary process leading to the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, the creation of a completely new legal order neglecting the previous historical development of law in the affected area was out of question. The basis of its existence and functioning therefore became the reception of the former law by Act No. 11/1918 Coll. and Act on the Establishment of the Independent Czechoslovak State, also referred to as the reception norm¹⁶, since in accordance with its Art. 2 – “all existing provincial and imperial laws and regulations remain in force for the time being.”¹⁷ The practical consequence of this provision was the emergence of legal dualism, which despite of some partial unifications¹⁸, in principle lasted throughout the interwar period and consisted of the adoption of the Austrian law in the Czech lands and Hungarian law in Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia.

The basic pillar of the substantive criminal law in Slovakia remained the Csemeği Code, Act No. V/1878, i.e. the Criminal Code on crimes and misdemeanours, as well as Act No. XL/1879 Criminal Code on delicts, while the procedural starting point continued to be the Criminal Procedure Code, i.e. Act No. XXXIII/1896. From the above it follows that, in the first years after the conclusion of the Treaty of Trianon, the Hungarian Act No. V/1878 and the provisions for crimes contained therein, in particular the crime of high treason (in Hungarian *felségsértés*) paradoxically remained the instrument of criminal law for protection of the newly formed state. However, the dualism of the legal regulation of the protection of the unitary state, which the interwar republic was, as well as the need to reflect the republican state establishment, already in 1923, led the Czechoslovak legislators to adopt a new law No. 50/1923 Coll. for the protection of the republic, which newly and comprehensively regulated the criminal law instruments for the protection of the newly created state and the integrity of its territory.

16 More details on the reception norm see e.g. VOJÁČEK, Ladislav: *První československý zákon. Pokus o opožděný komentár*. Praha, Wolters Kluwer, 2018. 379.

17 GRONSKÝ, Ján–HŘEBEJK, Jiří: *Dokumenty k ústavnímu vývoji Československa I. (1918-1945)*. Praha, Karolinum, 2004, 27.

18 For unification of the substantive criminal law see FICO, Miroslav: *Základy trestnej zodpovednosti v procese unifikácie trestného práva medzivojnovej Československej republiky*. Košice, ŠafárikPress, 2020. 192.

3.1. *Act on the Protection of the Republic*

In terms of its structure, the Act on the Protection of the Republic consisted of four chapters, namely: I. Plots against the Republic, II. Damaging the Republic and attacks on constitutional officials, III. Threatening the peace in the Republic and its military security and IV. Final Provisions. According to the Explanatory Memorandum¹⁹, Chapter I defined the concept of plots/conspiracy against the Republic directed against the existence of the Republic and its internal as well as external security. Chapter II was to protect the Republic against any harm to its most important interests and against attacks on its constitutional dignitaries as the ‘living, driving force of the Republic’. Chapter III was to prosecute acts, although directed not directly against the Republic itself, endangering its armed forces or the general peace within it. According to Malý et al., the provisions of Chapter III of the Act were the most frequently applied in practice.²⁰ The Final Provisions, as the last part, i.e. Chapter IV of the law dealt mainly with the principles of imposing individual sentences as well as the extinction of punishability.

The law stipulated the political offenses to a decisive extent.²¹ It is considered one of the most important criminal law norms in the interwar Czechoslovakia.²² However, Kazda²³ points out that this law is considered controversial by many, as it was supposed to protect the Republic from both the Germans and the Hungarians, as well as from the Communist coup d'état.

Following the results of archival research, we will further describe some provisions for the crimes enshrined in this Act, which could be theoretically fulfilled by the incidents discovered by the archival research.

As the first one we will show the crime of spreading false news, which consisted of two bodies. It was committed by a person (any criminally liable person) who 1.) publicly reported or otherwise disseminated false news for which he did not have sufficient reasons for believing them to be true,

19 LEPŠÍK, Josef: *Zákon na ochranu republiky s důvodovou zprávou*. Praha, Fr. Borový, 1923, 8-9.

20 MALÝ, Karel et al.: *Dějiny českého a československého práva do roku 1945*. Praha, Leges, 2010, 400.

21 MOSNÝ, Peter–HUBENÁK, Ladislav: *Dejiny štátu a práva na Slovensku*. Košice, Aprilla, 2008, 243.

22 It is stated so by MALÝ op. cit. 400.

23 KAZDA, Jan: *Právní ochrana proti kontrarevoluci za první Československé republiky*. In: *Dny práva 2012 (Revoluce a právo, Část III.)*. Brno, Masarykova Univerzita, 2013, 614.

although he knew that through his act he will seriously disturb the population of a region or place or a part of that population; further on, a person who 2.) publicly reported or otherwise disseminated false news, even though knowing that it is damaging the security of the state, the public security or order, or that it causing a rise in the prices of consumer goods, hasty and mass purchase or sale, or hasty and mass withdrawal of deposits. In alternative 1, this act represented an infraction punishable by a pecuniary punishment of 50 to 10 000 CZK or by a term of imprisonment of three days to three months; in Slovakia up to two months in a form of arrest (in Hungarian *imprisonment*) or over two months in a form of imprisonment/jail (in Hungarian *fogház*). The Alternative 2 described a misdemeanour punishable by imprisonment from eight days to three months. However, if the perpetrator had known that the message he was spreading was untrue, in both alternatives it was considered a misdemeanour punishable by imprisonment from eight days to six months. According to the interwar case-law, it was objectively necessary that the message be capable of causing consequences provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2, and subjectively for the offender to be aware that the dissemination of the message could have such consequences.²⁴ The criminal offence was accomplished by spreading false news, regardless of whether there were any consequences in the law.²⁵ The untruthfulness of the message was assessed objectively regardless of the fact whether the perpetrator, when disseminating the report, had supposed it was true or he himself had doubts about it, and he also informed the addressee about his doubts in this regard when disseminating the information. Thus, the perpetrator was not required to know that the report he disseminated was untrue, his carelessness in this regard was sufficient.²⁶ In our opinion, the acts described in subchapter 1.1 could theoretically accomplish the elements of the above offence.

Another relevant criminal offense defined by Act No. 50/1923 Coll. was the Violation of General Peace, affecting a relatively wide range of acts contained in several provisions for this crime. In connection with the dissemination of leaflets or the holding of protest rallies, we will describe in more details the first one, which consisted of the actions of a general subject, who publicly or in front of several people, or addressing several people incited

24 Decision of the Supreme Court of the Czechoslovak Republic, Zm II. 284/24. In: ČERNÝ, Jan: *Zákon na ochranu republiky*. Pardubice, Soudcovské listy, 1926, 107.

25 Uo.

26 MILOTA, Albert: *Zákon na ochranu republiky*. Kroměříž, J. Gusek, 1930, 111-112.

revolt against the state for its creation, independence, constitutional unity or Democratic-Republican form. The element of the publicity of this act was particularly important, and was defined by the Act for the protection of the Republic itself differently from the general legislation. Accordingly, if the act was committed in the press, through a disseminated file, in an assembly or in front of a crowd, it was performed publicly. In our view, the dissemination of leaflets (the revolt against the State carried out by them) could have fulfilled the concept of a disseminated file, which was, according to Milota, “a file whose content is accessible to a larger number of persons, whether designed for individuals or not. This file may be reproduced (mechanically or manually), but a single copy of it which is made known to several people is sufficient (e.g. by putting it up in a public place, on a notice board intended for several persons, etc.).”²⁷ The conduct of the protest assembly (inciting against the state), of course, fulfilled the character of the publicity under the term ‘assembly’, which was a deliberate grouping of people and thus differed from the random nature of the ‘crowd’. It was a misdemeanour, punishable by one month up to two years’ imprisonment in Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia.

The Act on Protection of the Republic finally provided protection against disseminating undesired printed materials through the institution of stopping the publication of periodicals if by their content, offences – exhaustively defined and regulated by the Act on the protection of the Republic – were repeatedly committed. Interpreting the relevant normative texts, we can arrive at conclusions that the preconditions of the application of this tool were the following:

- A court decision in criminal proceedings about the fact that by the content of the respective periodical a exhaustively defined criminal offence regulated by the Act on the protection of the Republic was committed,
- Existence of previous, earlier (i.e. minimally two) decisions of the same subject-matter, on committing the offence through the respective periodical, in a relatively short time (“brevity of period” was defined by the court, depending on the frequency of publication²⁸), and finally
- Existence of reasonable concern that these offences will be committed continually through the respective periodicals.

27 Ibid. 168.

28 Ibid. 154.

If the following conditions are met, the court is empowered to promulgate a halt to publishing the respective periodical. After the entry into force of the court decision, the political office of the second bench has become entitled to order by its decision to halt the publication of the respective periodical. In the case of printed materials issued at least 5-times weekly, the halt could be valid maximally for the period of one month; in the case of printed materials issued at least 3-times weekly, – halt can be ordered maximally for two months, and in the case of any other printed materials, the period of halt cannot be longer than six months. Further publication of periodicals “officially halted” was considered a misdemeanour.

3.2. *Some criminal law effects of the Press law*

The protection tools of the state applied against improper printed products were contained also in norms of administrative law nature involved in the originally Hungarian Act No. XIV/1914 on press. Pursuant to Section 3 Sub-section 10 of this law: “The Ministry is empowered to forbid the dissemination of printed products issued or reproduced outside the territory of the countries of the Holy Crown of Hungary for reasons of general interest.” The Ministry responsible for administration of Slovakia acted under this standard within the matter of foreign printed products in the case of withdrawal of postal communication and prohibition of colportage described in subchapter 1.2. The Ministry acted by means of a Decree, what we can learn from the circular letter of the County Prefect (Župan) of the Košice County (Košická župa) addressed to all the district offices and the Police Commissariat in the City of Prešov (Policajný komisariát v Prešove) issued on 1st April 1924.²⁹ The Ministry of Slovak Affairs by its Decree issued on 16th March 1924, No. 5373/24 informs on the withdrawal of postal communication and prohibition of colportage of the Polish newspaper *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* because of the unacceptable style of writing against the Republic and the President of the Czechoslovak Republic. The cited norm, although primarily having administrative law character, also had criminal law— effects, as under Sect. 3, § 24 of Act on Press the violation of such a ban on dissemination of printed materials was considered a misdemeanour (in Hungarian: *vétség*), which was punishable by imprisonment.

29 State Archive of Košice, Fond Okresný úrad Sečovce, Box 2, file number 372/1924 prez.

4. Conclusion

The aim of this article was to verify the hypothesis presuming the existence of incidents or activities directed against the Czechoslovak Republic, more precisely, against the integration of the territory of the present-day Slovakia into the Czechoslovak Republic, based on the Peace-Treaty of Trianon. The study focused on the incidents occurring during the interwar period on the territory of the South-East Slovakia. The results of our archive-research have confirmed the above hypothesis and in the present article the facts ascertained have been shown in their structured form, categorized according to their essence. Following this, the presented article has outlined some tools through which the Czechoslovak state could protect itself in the face of such acts. This was achieved by analyses of relevant provisions of the interwar legal regulation.