

Theses of PhD dissertation

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Revolution and War of Independence in Northeastern Hungary in 1848–1849

(Events in the area of Ung, Bereg, Máramaros and Ugocsa counties)

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Budapest, 2009

I. The importance and the historiographic antecedents of the issue

The history of the Revolution and War of Independence in 1848–1849 — apart from the results of the historical research which have been in progress for more than one and half centuries now — reserves a lot of work for historians. Comprehensive monographies on the events have already been prepared, however research of particular sections is in its initial phase. In the last decades elaborations which try to reveal the sources of a part of the history made their way. They try to process the results of the research monographically, and besides that, they make an attempt to publish the revealed sources even within the frames of a work. These researches usually elaborate the path of life of a significant historical person, politician or commander, perhaps a military officer and publish their writings, but research has also begun to treat the history of the formation of certain 'honved' corps. A significant amount of professional literature on the history of particular areas has come to light, too. The standards of these works often leave much to be desired, as it is not rare when enthusiastic local amateur historians publish their works, what is more, republishings of earlier works that were published a hundred years ago have also happened, needless to say, ignoring the requirements for publishing the resources.

Within the framework of my dissertation I try to reveal an aspect of the events in 1848–49 which may enrich the literature of this important period with new results. This thesis is supposed to contain information on the history of the area, the economy, the society, the fortresses and troops of the age and try to show this well-defined region in the storm of the revolution and war of independence. My investigation expands to four former counties, which are situated in four different countries today, but in the time of the revolution they formed one region from many points of view. These former counties — Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros — are mainly the part of the Ukraine and Romania, however some parts of them belong to Hungary and Slovakia. A question arises: why do I call this territory Northeastern Hungary, or rather, why do I see these four counties as one region?

Since the terms Transcarpathia (Kárpátalja) and Carpatho-Ukraine (Kárpát-Ukrajna) we use to today to refer to this area were unknown in the middle of the nineteenth century, I had to find a name which fits better to the relations of that age. As in that time Northern- or Upper Hungary meant the northern part of Hungary from the west border (Pozsony county) as far as Máramaros county that is the border of North-Transsylvania, therefore — as we are speaking about the Easternmost parts — the Northeastern expression seems to be the most obvious choice. In this way, I believe, I can unambiguously define the geographical situation of

this territory.

The character of the four counties as a region in the time of the revolution and war of independence during my research became obvious to me. Although in the beginning stage of the revolution there were overlaps over the supervised parts of the country, we can say that the appointed commissioners and commanders of this territory were supposed to cooperate from the beginning. They had to harmonize their activities with each other and they also had to act together against the Galician imperial–royal military forces to protect the border efficiently. Later commissioners could order more counties, and military commanders get their authority downright for the whole region. This became unambiguous when a detached division under Lajos Kazinczy's leadership started its activity on the territory of the four counties.

My thesis undertakes to summarize the changes in the public administration, the organization of the national guard, the subsequent army, the efforts of production of war equipment and the history of the troops stationed in this area during the war of independence. Besides these, my aim is to take into account and to introduce the corps which were native, but were put into action on another theatre of war. I bestow separate chapters for the history of the only fortress in Eastern–Hungary, the fortress of Munkács, as well as for the history of the biggest military force stationed here, the so-called Kazinczy–division. Naturally, the collisions which took place on the borderland and the battle of Podhering will be introduced as well. It is not my aim to expound all the events — which are not commensurable with events of national importance — of the four counties in detail. This thesis doesn't concentrate on local events, rather than the local relations to the national events and the contributions to the results. Its goal is to summarize the local connections to 1848–49 and to enrich the accumulated knowledge about the revolution and war of independence. In my dissertation, the period of the revolution, or rather the revolutionary changes mean the local events in summer and autumn of 1848. As for the war of independence, the dissertation includes the period after the break with the imperial court, mainly from the general attack in December 1848 until the end of August 1849, as the Croatian intervention in 1848 had a limited territorial effect, and it did not reach the counties of Northeastern Hungary.

Since my aim was to summarize the local events, I made an effort to mention each important field which with its own activity could have contributed to the hoped victory of the self-defence war. At the same time, I would like to prove the importance of the activities mentioned above, namely, that this extensive territory insisted on supporting the revolution till the beating of the war of independence, and meant a strong hinterland for the government

which was temporarily forced to work in Debrecen. The fact that there were not great battles between huge armies on this territory doesn't mean that the protection of the border against the Galician imperial army would not have been successful and effective.

Right after the beating of the war of independence there was an enormous interest in the events of 1848–49. The remembrances, the memories of the former participants were published one after the other — first abroad, then after the compromise at home — even in daily newspapers. The authors were either the participants of the events or contemporaries, therefore, naturally, they created their opinion from their own point of view, and they could not have known about the documents of the Austrian military archive office, which was inaccessible for a long time.

The military and political documents of the war of independence of 1848–49 were stored in Vienna, and only after the foundation of the Hungarian War History Archives in 1918, as well as the Agreement of Baden in 1926 made it possible for researchers the study and working up the documents belonging to the period of the war of independence in Hungary. After having the possibility to study the content of remembrances, memoirs, there was a chance to compare them to the original documents, and to discover new facts, and to publish more exact historical works. The new generations of researchers already tried to leave the subjectiveness of the contemporaries, on the other hand they could be influenced by the actual political expectations. As a matter of fact, there was not any regime in the twentieth century which would not have liked to see or let others see the former events according to its own ideology and historical attitude. In the 1980s the political taboos collapsed, and today it is possible to introduce the events of the revolution and the war of independence more objectively. Especially in the 1980s, and in the 1990s, as well as after the millennium a great number of valuable monographies and publication of sources were published about this period. It is a great step that the publications usually work up the events of the revolution from the point of view of the Austrian, too. Besides the Austrian Archives, the sources of the Russian Archives wait for its working up mainly because of the lack of possibilities.

There is a significant amount of historical works, we can say that they have a library's size. There are several summarising works, but number the monographies and the interpretations of a particular part of the events exceeds them in number. Besides the last ones, studies which were published in periodical reviews or in other publications are very important, and we must not forget about the publications of sources either. Nevertheless, there are unrevealed events, sources to be published, and primarily we have to think of the military events, and not for the political ones. The military historiography is in debt with

monographies of a great number of commanders, the history of certain corps or working up the local events in detail.

As my work is about the events related to the local relations, it is not my aim to give a historical survey of the whole specialist literature of 1848–49. All the more, I would like to introduce those little works which concentrate on the role of Northeastern Hungary.

First two contemporaries, actually participants took pen in hand to raise a monument to the memory of local events of war of independence. One of them is Gábor Várady (1820–1906), a noble from Máramaros who was an official in the county in 1848. At the time of war of independence, first he was an officer of the national guard, then became the commander of a voluntary battalion, later a battalion in the Hungarian Army. At the time of dualism he became well-known as a politician, as a county official and as a writer. He published his remembrances in many contemporary newspapers. These publications and his book the *Falling Leaves* are important sources of the history of local events in 1848–49. In the book mentioned above he wrote about the notable and characteristic parts of the events in chronological order in the form of short letters.

The other important contemporary historian was Tivadar Lehoczky (1830–1915), lawyer, polymath, who was a witness of the events, although he participated as a simple artilleryman not a staff officer in the war of independence. He was born in Fiume, he studied philosophy in Rozsnyó and law in Kassa, but he interrupted his studies and became a honved artilleryman. He took part in several battles, and after disbanding of the his corps he returned home and continued his studies. He graduated in law in 1851, between 1865 and 1896 he worked as the attorney general in the Schönborn–domains in Munkács and Beregszentmiklós. Besides his work, he continued active scientific activity. He wrote his books and articles on history, ethnography, linguistics and knowledge of his country. His main work is *Monography of Bereg county I–III*. In contrast to Várady he got personal experience on the theatre of war. From the point of view of our topic, among his diverse activities the most important is his book entitled "County of Bereg and the fortress of Munkács in 1848–49", which is the most detailed summary of the history of the fortress and county during the war of independence. As it was written 110 years ago, the value of the source is limited. Lehoczky could not have such a wide range of sources at all as the researchers have nowadays. It is enough to think the documents originated from the Austrian Archives, which were taken home from that time. In spite of this fact, he collected the available documents and he published them including documents which we know only from this source. Although there was a „modern” edition in 2000 based on Lehoczky’s book, the editor of the volume did not

contribute with anything to the volume, what is more, he took from it because he ignored the requirements of the publication and republication of sources, and he changed the original text, therefore the text does not reflect the terminology of Lehoczky. (Tivadar Lehoczky: County of Bereg and the fortress of Munkács in 1848–49. Budapest–Beregszász, 2000.)

Based mainly on the work mentioned above, Mihály Fakász and János Fakász published their book "Northeastern Hungary in the storm of the war of independence" in 2002 in Transcarpathia, which would count as a book filling the gap if it met the written and non-written requirements of the historiography. Unfortunately, it is not more than a work of an enthusiastic local historian. The same is true in the case of another study entitled "Drafts to the role of the fortress of Munkács" written by Mihály Fakász (co-author is Balázs Bagu). The contingency of the references and foot-notes made difficult to use the works, and on many occasions it was obvious enough that the authors used the work of Tivadar Lehoczky as a guideline. On the other hand, it is an undisputable fact that these two works should be greeted because the local events are not worked up.

We should mention the names of Balázs Bagu, Mihály Szakáll, and György Csatóry, who published their books as the expert worker of local historiography in the 1990s serving the national historical science by publishing the sources or by introducing the fonds originated in 1848 of the Archives in Beregszász.

In that way we reached the Hungarian specialist literature which up until now did not publish any comprehensive work about the history of this region in 1848–49. Besides the short summaries of the history of the war of independence, we can only rely on the study entitled The fortress of Munkács in 1848–49 by a student, Tamás Nyéki, and on my own publications of sources and studies, which were published in the Annual of the War History Archives and last time in the Centuries (Századok). The advantages of the works mentioned last are that they were prepared according to the requirements of the profession, and they can be used in the future in case of further research.

We must not forget about the literature on colonel Lajos Kazinczy, since his personality is directly connected to the history of the summer events in 1849. The only monographical work — about the life and the role of Kazinczy in 1848 — entitled "The fifteenth martyr in Arad" by Emil Pásztor was published in 1979. Besides this, the study of János Pribelszki is worth mentioning, which was issued in the Quarterly of Military History (Hadtörténelmi Közlemények), with the title "Lajos Kazinczy in the war of independence".

On the basis of all these I feel important to expound my chosen topic, because I have undertaken something which have not done by anybody else before, since modern

historiographical summary of the history of that region in 1848–49 has not been prepared till now.

II. The sources of the topic and the method of their elaboration

I started to research this less studied field of the revolution and war of independence in 1848–49 when I was writing my previous theses (my BA thesis dealt with the history of the fortress of Munkács, my Master's thesis was on the four counties of Northeastern Hungary during the revolution). These two works could only be a short summary of the — till now less known — events which happened in this part of Hungary in 1848–49. Because of the limited time and size I had to be satisfied with a summary which concentrated above all on the military history of the time of real selfprotecting battles, then the war of independence (September 1848 – August 1849). As I have chosen a less researched subject, I had to do mainly basic researches in archive offices, which naturally could not have been finished. So I decided to continue researching to use the results to write my PhD dissertation.

The sources related to the history of the four counties, as well as the documents of authorities of the government of that age and almost the whole of military documents are stored by the Hungarian National Archives and War History Archives. From them I paid attention to the documents of the Prime Minister's office, the National Military Committee, the Governing Presidency and the general documents of Ministry of War and also the sources of the Hungarian National Archives. Furthermore, I dealt with the documents of the National Home Guard Council of War. In addition, I searched some smaller fonds, as well as the Máramaros county's remained documents, the files of different commissioners, the papers of the Recruiting Department of the Ministry of War, and Artúr Görgei's and Henryk Dembiński's documents. I completed these sources with reviewing the collection of 1848–49 in the War History Archives, and with studying the documents of the imperial–royal military tribunal. Contemporary documents of the other three counties can be found in the territory of the Ukraine, where researches are not regulated, and due to other circumstances I could not search among those documents. The register of fonds by György Csatóry helped me recognize that the documents of Bereg, Ung, Ugocsa counties found in Beregszász are probably very similar to the documents of Máramaros stored in the Hungarian National Archives. After reviewing those documents I came to the conclusion that they contain little relevant information. I had luck in that the Hungarian National Archives have a copy of a microfilm about the very important 19th division whose documents are in Beregszász as well. Although

we have to admit that this microfilm has a mixed collection, some documents could not be inserted into our topic.

In order to get acquainted with the Austrian documents, it was essential to study the documents stored in the Austrian National Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv) in Vienna besides the Hungarian archives. My aim was to search documents which show the viewpoint of the other party. To this research I utilized the scholarship of the Hungarian Institute in Vienna, the Collegium Hungaricum. In the War History Archives (Kriegsarchiv) I searched mainly the fonds of Ministry of War (Hofkriegsrat/Ministerium des Kriegswesens), and the Old Military Documents (Alte Feldakten), but I could find many valuable information during searching among the honouring documents (Alte Belohnungs-Akten) and the personal documents (Personal-Akten).

The remembrances took up a significant part of the documents which were written and published mainly in the third part of the 19th century by the witnesses of the events. Some of them appeared in independent volumes, others in periodical reviews, or they are still in manuscript nowadays in care of public collections. At the same time several publications of sources were published about the documents of 1848–49 stored in different archives, which all were well-utilizable. It is important to mention the contemporary daily or other newspapers, mainly the copies of „Közlöny” whose news I could use during my work.

During my work I prefer the thematic systematization to the chronologic. After the Introduction I examine the situation of the public administration, as well as the social, the economical, and the infrastructural situation in 1848 in a separate chapter, then the changes (new county public administration, organization of the home guard, and of the honved army) happened after the revolution and the proclamation of the April Laws. In the next chapter, after the introduction of the system of commissioners, and the activities of the commissioners, I show the local relations of the war industry, and organization of the army, then I consider the disposed and operated troops stationed here as well as the history of the battles. The only fortification of this territory is the fortress of Munkács, and the most significant corps are the Kazinczy-division whose history I acquaint in separate chapters. I try to reveal — referring to the Kazinczy-division — the local relations of the summer military campaign. Finally, in the conclusion I give answers to the questions asked at the beginning of the thesis, and I outline the fate of local people involved in retaliation after the war of the independence, as well as the memory of the war of independence in this region today.

III. The findings of this research

Besides intending to be a revealing and gap-filling work, the inspiring motives of my research were certain questions related to the events. From the beginning, I was interested in finding out more in terms of three questions. Firstly, what is the reason for disregarding this territory (minor theatre) in the specialist literature of 1848–49? Is the activity of troops stationing here really non-significant compared to those on the main theater? This thought is followed by another: why was the Hungarian army weaker in Upper Hungary, mainly in the eastern part of Hungary, and what was the reason for the fact that the imperial-royal army did not make use of this possibility? What kind of forces were based on the other side of the border? Was it only some subversive activities that the forces led by General Barco could do?

Secondly, Colonel Kazinczy, who proved his efficiency already on the main theatre — it is true that he led only smaller forces —, did not he utilize the collected forces to raid. Why? Was it the quick end of the war of independence, or were there any other interferences that prevented him from doing so?

At last but not least, what was the attitude of the nationalities living here to the Hungarian revolution and war of independence? There were not any serious activities by the ethnic groups. What was the explanation of it? Was it due to the forceful action of the local government or to the loyalty of the nationalities?

The war of independence in 1848–49 was defeated by the united Russian and Austrian armies. But the combat was not useless. The achievements of the civil transformation could not be demolished. The multinationality population living in Ung, Bereg Maramaros and Ugocsa counties took their own part in the revolution just like as the population of other parts of the country, even though this territory was pushed into the background, counted as a minor theatre, missed big battles and was not occupied. There were many native people from this part of Hungary — not less on the main theatre — who as members of the home guard, as honveds fought in the war of independence or tried to contribute to the success of the good deal with their donation and with their work with hands. The surrounding ironworks became armaments factories at once, they casted guns, bullets, in other factories rifle cartridges were manufactured, powder mills operated.

The army stationed here with its little strength did its best to fulfil its task: to protect the Galician border. They had a very important role in abtising the passes of the Carpathians, monitoring the imperial–royal army based on the other side of the border, as well as holding

up the advance of the enemy. As far as I am concerned, they solved their task with success, and in the critical moments when Barco-brigade attacked, there were some calm commanders, who managed to stop and force the enemy to retreat.

In that time the fortress of Munkács no longer counted as a serious fortification, though it was a proper base for the border protecting forces based here, as well as for the Kazinczy-division. The fortress could not be compared to the fortifications in Komárom or to the fortification in Pétervárad which were among the greatest fortresses of Europe. Although it was essential who had it, because forces passing by — having crossed the Tisza — would easily reach the Great Hungarian Plain, and could threaten Debrecen. There is no need to emphasize the significance of Debrecen and its surroundings, because the territory east of the Tisza was the supply base of the honved army from January 1849, and Debrecen was the capital of the country, the residence of the Government and Parliament till May 1849.

By all means it should be emphasized that on this multinationally populated territory the commissioners, the authorities of the county could block a possible attack of the multinational population because of supposed or proved injustice so that they could avoid to threaten the war of industry and the salt mills. Even if desertations were frequent at the troops recruited here, the non-native Hungarian took their own part from the battles.

To sum up we can conclude that the four counties were a very calm background for the army fighting on the main theatres, and practically they had not to count with enemy assault from here. Naturally, it was due to the fact that the imperial-royal troops based on the other side of the border were not so strong. The units stationed here secured the rear, and they contributed with this activity to the unsurpassed achievements of 1848–49.

In my dissertation I try to reveal the events happened in Northeastern Hungary in 1848–49, and the activity of the population living in the territory of the four counties, and how they contributed to the yield of the country. The questions asked in the introduction of the dissertation proved to be sufficient — according to my opinion — to summarize the significance of my work.

I partly responded to the first question. The fact that research treated this minor theatre in Northeastern Hungary casually is not surprising. The significant events of the campaigns, the decisive battles of the revolution and the war of independence did not happen here. It is understandable why historians did not pay enough attention to this territory. In my opinion, it is high time to examine the local events of 1848, to reveal how the public administration, the organization of the army, the manufacturing of military equipment worked. We have to learn more about the history of each unit and each fortress in order to share more and newer facts

about the war of independence of the country. The question should not be asked as: why was the Northeastern Hungarian army weaker, but as: how did it protect the borders?

We have a clear picture about the strenght of the imperial–royal army based in Galicia and Bukovina from the Austrian archives offices. According to these documents it is obvious that they could not do more on this territory than to protect the border and control the nationalities, mainly the Polish. It is not by chance that they utilized the conflict between the Ruthenian and the Polish, and try to get allies, as they did it in the case of Hungarian nationalities. Forming the units of the Simunich and Schlick corps and two smaller detachments — who arrived in Hungary in December 1848 — was due to the head commissariat in Lemberg. Therefore only border protecting forces were based at the borderland of Ung Bereg, Máramaros till the spring of 1849. It is undisputable that the only attack supported by serious forces lead by General Barco was unsuccessful, but in my opinion a more talented commander would have reached more result with this brigade of 3600 persons. All in all the passivity of the Austrian party on the territory on these three counties is not surprising.

The second question is how Colonel Kazinczy could do more than he had already reached? To this question we can answer with the very own words of the division commander who presented his hopeless situation to Görgei in this way: „As how I can meet the expectations of this important task now, Minister, you can find it out if I tell You that my force is a bad-armed, unorganized mass of people. What I can do with energy and human resources I will do. But you, Minister and my country should not blame me if during a strong attack I will be forced to give up this important position and its treasure.” Consequently when Kazinczy arrived at Munkács, his forces were not prepared at all. Battalions recruited mainly in Northeastern-Hungary, or the voluntary military forces did not have relevant military experience. Their equipment was insufficient, in certain cases, some of their companies were not equipped with even bayonets. Their job was guarding service and to survive some little collisions, and they were not suitable for serious attacks. Kazinczy recognized this, and he did not want to raise vain hopes in his superiors. The most that he could do — and he almost succeeded — to arm the troops and to organize them into divisions/corps and to lead them to the main theatre or to Transsylvania in order to help the troops fighting there. The fate of the war will not be sealed here, and Kazinczy knew it well. But if he had managed to unite his forces with a bigger army, possibly he could have helped to reach his operational aims.

The leading layers of the northeastern countries, where the nationalities are in majority, the little Romanian, but already Hungarianized county clerk, the Ruthenian clergy

supported the civil transformation from the beginning and later they stood by the war of independence. Due to this fact the unlearned ethnic groups did not turn to face to the Hungarian government. Smaller rebellions, fightings occurred only there where the local inhabitants could be misled by the spies, and saboteurs, who infiltrated from the other side of the border, or from the territory of the 17. (2. Romanian) frontier guard till the turn of 1848/49 or where simply they could not understand the proclaimed regulations by the Hungarian clerks and they had fears from the future. Against to the revolts risen at the borderland the commissioners, the commanders of the Hungarian army, county clerks did not let the events deteriorate in every case, therefore the government did not have to be afraid of ethnic conflicts. By all means we should mention the great number of recruited Romanian, Ruthenian and Slovakian inhabitants who took their own part in the war. There were problems only with troops organized and stationed at the same place – at home. It often occurred that soldiers were bored and simply went home, or because summer jobs „forced” them to leave the duty station. To sum up, we can claim that the calm of the four ethnic groups was due to the strong activity of the local public administration and the peaceful behaviour of the people.

If I were to answer the following question: 'What did the four counties contribute to the war of independence of the country with?', the answer could be summarized in one sentence. Protection of the fortress of Munkács, protection of the borders, maintaining the internal peace and manufacturing of war equipment were the four factors which granted most help from the territory of Ung, Bered, Máramaros and Ugocsa to the country. To this success there was a need for people who grew up to their task and „they did, what the home required”. Such people were Tamás Eötvös, Gábor Mihályi or Pál Mezősy.

IV. Publications on this subject:

- *A podheringi ütközet. 1849. április 22.* In: Ad acta. A Hadtörténelmi Levéltár Évkönyve 2001. Edited by Lenkefi Ferenc. Budapest, 2002. 44–48. p.
- *Adalékok Máramaros vármegye 1848–49-es történetéhez.* In: Ad acta. A Hadtörténelmi Levéltár Évkönyve 2002. Edited by Lenkefi Ferenc. Budapest, 2003. 62–66. p.
- *Zrínyi Ilona örökében. A munkácsi vár parancsnokai 1848–49-ben I. (Franz Laube)* In: Ad acta. A Hadtörténelmi Levéltár Évkönyve 2003. Edited by Lenkefi Ferenc. Budapest, 2004. 68–78. p.
- *Zrínyi Ilona örökében. A munkácsi vár parancsnokai 1848–49-ben II. (Eötvös Tamás)* In: Ad acta. A Hadtörténelmi Levéltár Évkönyve 2004. Edited by Lenkefi Ferenc. Budapest, 2005. 83–93. p.
- *Zrínyi Ilona örökében. A munkácsi vár parancsnokai 1848–49-ben III. (Mezősy Pál)* In: Ad acta. A Hadtörténelmi Levéltár Évkönyve 2005. Edited by Lenkefi Ferenc. Budapest, 2006. 69–78. p.
- *Forradalmi átalakulás Északkelet–Magyarországon 1848-ban (Ung, Bereg, Máramaros és Ugocsa vármegyék 1848 tavaszán és nyarán).* In: Századok (143.) 2009/1. 83–115. p.