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# Political trends and groups in Csanád county in the 1840s



## ABSTRACT

In the context of the study of political trends and groups in the Hungarian reform era, it is necessary examining the political life in the counties. In the 1840s, the nobility in Csanád county became increasingly divided into parties. In my study, I will examine conflicts between the nobles of Csanád and how the formation of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party affected the political situation in Csanád county. In the context of the Diets, the election of deputies and the drafting of instructions also caused exciting clashes between the nobles, which greatly shades the picture of political trends.

## KEYWORDS

Csanád county, Diet, instructions, Conservative Party, Liberal Party

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## NEWSPAPER REPORTS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CSANÁD COUNTY IN THE 1840S

In addition to the history of political movements in Hungary, the study of a small geographical or political unit can be very important to show the image of a particular era, and how political ideas penetrated the minds of the people of the time. Now we take the example of Csanád county in the south-east of Hungary.

Csanád county was located between Arad, Békés, Csongrád and Torontál counties, and was one of the smallest county in the Kingdom of Hungary. The size of the county was only 1715 km<sup>2</sup>. In the first half of the 19th century the county had three districts: Makó, Battonya and Nagylak. The chief town of county was Makó since 1720. The population of Csanád county in the 1840s was about 70-75.000. In 1845 *Elek Fényes* put the total number of nobility at 2416. The proportion of nobility in Csanád county in relation to the total population was about 3.2% according to *Fényes*. Most of the territory of the county was owned by the royal chamber and the bishopric of Csanád. According to *Elek Fényes*, the *Bittó*, *Edelspacher*, *Kállay*, *Marczibányi*, *Návay*, *Szalbeck*, *Tököly*, *Vásárhelyi* families owned major demesne in Csanád county.<sup>1</sup>

The political situation in Csanád county in the 1840s can be mainly described by newspaper reports. In the 28 April 1842 issue of the *Pesti Hirlap*, the mouthpiece of the liberal reform movement, edited by *Lajos Kossuth*, a person reporting under the pseudonym „Csanád” wrote that from the 1836 election of the county officials, the majority of the county nobility had begun to reclaim their right to take part in decision-making. and demanded that the practice of the decisions made by only few people should be replaced by the slogan „let us go forward” instead of „let us remain in our position”. According to the correspondent at the moment, the followers of progress were in the majority: „...without any exaggeration, there is one retrograde for every 50 progressives...”<sup>2</sup> In response, in the June 6, 1842 issue of the conservative *Világ*, local correspondents wrote that since 1836 the progressives had been able to maintain their popularity in Csanád only by „advocating the nobility yes, but fearing of raising a cuck-uo, the few men of learning who do not pretend barely, - and the Court Chamber not at all.” During the election, „...money is given to the crowd, - and especially a fanatic individual, holding a wine bottle in his hand, shout after the nobility, cursing the dissenters; they eat, drink, dance, hug and kiss together, even in the streets.”<sup>3</sup> In the 16 September 1843 issue of the *Világ* the following lines can be read about Csanád county: „There was a time when our bosoms were heated with a sense of holiness in our [county] assembly halls and we deliberated earnestly on matters for the good of the country. Now all is different; the angel of peace has departed from Csanád; passion now rages everywhere; our assembly hall has become the scene of the most vile personal quarrels.”<sup>4</sup> The January 6, 1844 issue of the newspaper then states, „The sky of Csanád has long been gloomy...”, referring to the conflicts among the different groups of the county nobility.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FÉNYES 1847. I. 352–354.

<sup>2</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 28. April 1842., No. 138.: 295. „Megyei dolgok” (County affairs).

<sup>3</sup> *Világ* 4. June 1842., No. 45.: 366–367. „Tudósítások” (Reports).

<sup>4</sup> *Világ* 16. September 1843., No. 74.: 613. „Tudósítások” (Reports).

<sup>5</sup> *Világ* 6. January 1844., No. 2.: 12. „Tudósítások” (Reports).

After the closure of the Diet in 1843/44, there was a certain turnaround in the balance of power, which was partly due to the appointment of a new lord-lieutenants, *Antal Aczél*,<sup>6</sup> in 1845, and the government's expansion of the system of the surrogate lord-lieutenants<sup>7</sup> in the country. The latter were state officials, as opposed to lord-lieutenants who were mostly local rich landlords. In many counties surrogate lord-lieutenants were sent by the government in order to take over the control of the county administration from the lord-lieutenants and to change local power relations in favour of the Viennese government. The government led by the leader of the Hungarian Court Chancellery, Count *György Apponyi*<sup>8</sup> supported moderate social reforms, but aimed at weakening the position of liberal opposition in the counties. In 1846 autumn the Conservative Party was established as the political organization of the supporters of the government.

A correspondent of the *Pesti Hirlap* wrote in the issue of 14 September 1845 that the „party conflict” had already been running high in Csanád county for several years. Instead of reason, emotions took precedence in the assemblies.<sup>9</sup> Also in the *Pesti Hirlap* of 9 April 1846, it was reported that the assembly hall had become the scene of personal quarrels, and there could be no question of reconciliation. Parties formed for personal interest were always dangerous, the correspondent wrote. Two clubs were formed in Makó, the centre of the county at the time: the Makó Association and the Makó National Association, and their connexion was full of tension. The aim of the National Association was „to spread nationality among the non-nobility through conversation, recitation, reading, singing, drama and balls”.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, in the conservative *Budapesti Híradó* of 14 January 1847, the opposition was accused of having gathered on 6 December 1846 and collected more than four thousand forints for electioneering. In the meantime, the Conservative Party also held a meeting in Makó, where they formulated the following principle: „we will support the government as long as it will proceed in the spirit of our homeland, nationality and the law”.<sup>11</sup>

In the spring of 1847, *Jelenkor* newspaper, which followed the line of Count *István Széchenyi*, who was trying to balance between the two major political camps, reported under the pseudonym „Többen” (Several People) that the opposition had been in the majority in Csanád

<sup>6</sup> PÁL MÁNY 2011. I. 180–181. *Antal Aczél* (or *Atzél*) (1789–1868) was the deputy of Arad county at the 1832/36 Diet. He was the lord-lieutenants in Torna county between 1842–1845, then he was the lord-lieutenants in Csanád county between 1845–1848. *Aczél* was member of the Upper House of Diet at 1843/44, as the chief lord-lieutenants of Torna county. Then he was member of the Upper House of Diet at 1847/48, as the chief lord-lieutenants of Csanád county.

<sup>7</sup> CSIZMADIA 1974.; CZINEGE 2013. 85–86. *Szilvia Czinege* points out that in the literature the term „administrator system” (system of the surrogate lord-lieutenants) is used, in the period it was referred to as „neue Maßregel”, that is „new rules of order”, in some cases as „administratorische Maßregel”. The opposition called it the „Kreishauptmann-System”, drawing on the analogy of the provincial officials in Austria. *Czinege* also points out that the system of the surrogate lord-lieutenants did not handle with structural issues affecting the counties, the main task was to appoint loyal and efficient persons who were paid a high salary.

<sup>8</sup> CZINEGE 2013. *Szilvia Czinege*'s PhD thesis examines the political career of György Apponyi.

<sup>9</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 14. September 1845., No. 538.: 178. „Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs).

<sup>10</sup> *Budapesti Híradó* 9. April 1846., No. 367.: 236. „Megyék” (Counties); *PESTI HIRLAP* 11. March 1847., No. 844.: 165. „Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs). In 1845 the Makó Association was formed, of which only those who had the support of all the existing members could be members, and if there was one dissenting vote, they were not admitted. The members of the „Liberals” disagreed with this rule, resigned and formed a new society called the Makó National Association (I have no information about when this new club was established.) The basic requirement for membership of the new association was that the person must be honest. Unfortunately, no further information is available about these associations.

<sup>11</sup> *Budapesti Híradó* 14. January 1847., No. 524.: 30. „Megyék” (Counties).

county until the introduction of the new system (probably they meant the system of surrogate lord-lieutenants). The opposition that had saved the constitution in 1825, that eased the situation of the tax-paying people in 1836 and fought for Hungarian to become the state language in 1840 and 1844. However, the opposition camp had split because of impatience, suspicion and attacks on each other. Those who separated, believed that progress along the constitutional path, improvements in accordance with the law and for the welfare of the country, from wherever they came, should be supported. Only those efforts that threaten constitutional rights, independence and prosperity of the country should be prevented. According to the article these are the principles of the progressive party. The reporter distinguishes, however, between the progressive and opposition parties. He explains that there is a big difference between them: those who are always and against everything (as has been the case in Csanád recently), those who oppose every initiative from the government (saying that they endanger the Hungarian noble constitution), those who do not want to move forward, those who are stagnate. In Csanád county, the opposition has not gone along on this route, yet. On many issues we would be more ahead if we did not abuse our rights clumsily, if the „*leaders had a little more wit, more skillful tactics and a more moderate oratory*” – said the correspondent. Conservatives are also allowed to claim to be progressives, he continues. The term „conservative” implies principles that „*exclude the mere notion of vehemence, impatience, even tangible demonstrations*”. In Csanád county, however, this principle is not represented, and the conservatives themselves are currently the „champions of excess”, as the county assemblies prove. Every party wants to win a majority with promises, fine words, money and hope for a better future. The correspondent expressed his grief to see this moral descent. Opposition members invite their friends to county meetings by circular letter, professing the inviolability of one’s convictions and not coax and recruitment. The conservatives, on the other hand, are already recruiting followers in all settlements on the days before the county assemblies.<sup>12</sup>

The conservative *Nemzeti Ujság* and *Budapesti Híradó* reported that in 1847 the Conservatives had already won a majority in Csanád county. Before the county assembly, which began on 24 March 1847, eighty opposition members and over four hundred Conservatives gathered. At the beginning of the assembly, the oppositionist *Bertalan Blaskovics* was impeached, who in a circular letter to his friends had described the Conservative Party as dangerous and the Csanád officials as tyrannical and dishonest. This circular, however, became public knowledge, probably that was the reason why so many people gathered for the assembly.<sup>13</sup> First *Tamás Návay*<sup>14</sup> reacted to the accusations, who saw no harm in *Blaskovics*’s letter. *Návay* then also criticised the Conservative Party, condemning their activities as damaging. In response to these accusations, *József Lukács*, the county leader of the Csanád conservatives (referred to in the *Budapesti Híradó* as „the president of the Csanád Conservative Party”), asserted that the government was

<sup>12</sup> *Jelenkor* 22. April 1847., No. 32.: 189. „Törvényhatóságok” (Counties).

<sup>13</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó, IV. A. 3. a. 79. 193–194/1847.: In a petition, the officials of the Csanád stated their grief in the face of such slanders as *Blaskovics* had made. The action against *Blaskovics* has also been lodged with the Hungarian Royal Chancellery. However, the Chancellery acquitted *Blaskovics* of the criminal charges. This report was read out at a general assembly held in Makó on 6 September 1847. BUDAPESTI HÍRADÓ 22. Október 1847., No. 683.: 278–279. „Megyék” (Counties).

<sup>14</sup> PÁLMÁNY 2011. I. 1046–1047. *Tamás Návay* (1815–1879) was deputy of Csanád county at the Diet of 1839/40. He was lord-lieutenants of Csanád county between 1848–1849, then 1867–1879.

doing many useful things in the interests of Hungarians. *Lukács* highlighted the merits of the Conservative Party for the country and condemned the activities of the opposition. By this time, there were more and more rumours about the political principles of the first deputy-lieutenant *Albert Bánhid*y,<sup>15</sup> saying that it was not known which party he actually supported.<sup>16</sup> As a result, *Bánhid*y declared at the assembly that he was not a Conservative, he had no connection with this party, but he was and had been a liberal, a man of liberal progress.<sup>17</sup> According to *Buda-pesti Híradó*, *Bánhid*y also stated that no one had the right to vilipend a legally elected official. He added that he did not know any party that was working to detriment the country, which the official corps agreed with. „...at the moment, the government wants to move forward, when others under the guise of patriotism are opposing what is good, and actually the opposition is the only party that supports stagnation...” – stated the first deputy-lieutenant. The emergence of a party that supports a progressive government in the spirit of the homeland, nationality and law is something that all patriots should support. Finally, *Bánhid*y added that he would support the government as long as it took a progressive position. Then *József Lukács* had a speech, in which he stated that he was a member of the Conservative Party in Pest, and he did not mind being called a „pecsovcics” (it was the nickname of the Conservatives), as he considered this insult from the part of the opposition to be a badge of honour. He then added that while the opposition was merely speaking, the government moved forward. *Mihály Urbanics*, a local doctor, criticised the opposition with the following words: „In a constitutional country, where there are laws, superiors and a king, there can be no independent man; therefore in a constitutional country he who says he is independent is a traitor (the opposition here impatiently roars), yes, he is a traitor; for the independent believes himself to be outside the power of laws, judges and king: and such a man is a traitor.” *Urbanics* said, the opposition in Csanád county was actually largely dependent on private interests. It was always the oppressor of the lesser nobility and the peasants. He accused *László Návay*<sup>18</sup> of having accepted the principle of the taxation of the noble at the Diet of 1832/36 against his mandatory instructions determined by the county assembly. *Urbanics* added, however, that he was not the enemy of noble taxation, because those who benefited from the state’s goods should share its burden. He saw a problem in the fact that those poor nobles were taxed, who cultivated a peasant plot while others did not take on the burden of taxation. In a later issue of the *Buda-pesti Híradó*, the correspondent expressed hope that thanks

<sup>15</sup> PÁLMÁNY 2011. I. 807–808. *Albert Bánhid*y (1807–1890) was chief bailiff of Csanád county between 1836–1840. *Bánhid*y was the second deputy-lieutenant between 1840–1842, then he was the first deputy-lieutenant in Csanád county between 1842–1848. *Bánhid*y was deputy of Csanád county at the Diet of 1843/44. He was the lord-lieutenant of Csanád county between 1865–1867.

<sup>16</sup> *Pesti Hírlap* 4. Juli 1848., No. 98.: 617. „Hazai mozgalmak” (Country movements). *József Dedinszky*, one of the noblemen of Csanád county, wrote in the *Pesti Hírlap* in summer of 1848 that *Bánhid*y was a liberal until it was the only possibility to go forward. „He changed under Apponyi; in a year he became a perfect conservative (pecsovcics), ripe for being a surrogate lord-lieutenant. He maintained his power with the help of the bishop [of Csanád] and the Chamber.” *Dedinszky* also noted that the events of March 1848 had upset *Bánhid*y’s calculations, *Bánhid*y had always wanted to maintain the privileges of the nobility.

<sup>17</sup> *Nemzeti ujság* 15. April 1847., No. 470.: 236. „Törvényhatósági tudósítások” (County reports); *Buda-pesti Híradó* 13. April 1847., No. 574.: 246. „Megyék” (Counties). This report reveals that the leader and president of the Conservative Party in Csanád county had used the initials ‘L. J.’ He was probably the royal councillor *József Lukács*. *Pesti Hírlap* 15. April 1847., No. 863.: 244–245. „Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs).

<sup>18</sup> PÁLMÁNY 2011. I. 1045–1046. *László Návay* (1797–1879) deputy of Csanád county at the Diet of 1832/36. He was chief bailiff of Csanád between 1840–1842.

to the Conservative Party, peace and justice could return to Csanád county, the main problems of which were caused by the personal attacks of the Liberal Party.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, in the 2 July 1847 issue of the *Pesti Hirlap*, the correspondent „Csanád” wrote that the Conservatives were talking about reconciliation, but there was no chance of it. The opposition cannot reconcile with the principles of the Conservatives. „*Heaven and earth are between our principles.*”<sup>20</sup> In the summer of 1847, a correspondent reported that there were currently three parties in Csanád county: opposition, liberal and conservative. The member of the opposition guard the constitution, they want to reform our country according to the needs of the times. For a long time they themselves had been thinking that to be liberal and the member of the opposition were one and the same, but they are not. In Csanád county liberals are the supporters of the liberal principles, but not the supporters of the opposition. The liberals saw no harm in the electoral disorderliness in Croatia,<sup>21</sup> thanked the government on the plans concerning tobacco monopoly, and did not support the Zala county circular letter.<sup>22</sup> The liberals separate themselves from the opposition, by claiming that the opposition definitely opposes everything the government does. However, the government needs to get on the path of real constitutional progress, and if it does, the opposition will help it with „shoulder to shoulder”. Liberals in Csanád don’t even want to pay taxes at the moment. They, seeing through the situation, have started to say that it was the opposition who did not want to tax did not want to move forward. However, according to the correspondent the opposition did not need to refute such accusations, since their actions had already proved that they want to move forward. The Liberals must admit that they do not want to join the party of progress, and admit that they are conservatives. „*You vote together with these gentlemen, you eat together, you drink together, you electioneering together, some with wine, some with brandy, some with coach [forspont, the serfs’ transport obligation] what is there to give material for a ruminating to determine what a liberal conservative is?*” The majority in Csanád county is currently held by the „liberal-conservative lords”, who have considerable financial support. The opposition is fighting for its principles, but it has no financial backing, while many enlightened people are standing up for them.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify exactly who actually belonged to these parties. What is certain is that *Tamás*

<sup>19</sup> *Budapesti Híradó* 22. April 1847., No. 579.: 268. „Megyék” (Counties). *Budapesti Híradó* 2. Juli 1847., No. 619.: 6–7. „Megyék” (Counties).

<sup>20</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 2. Juli 1847., No. 907.: 5–6. „Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs).

<sup>21</sup> HORVÁTH 1886. III. 299. The Croatian grievance consisted of two main elements. The government stipulated that only nobles who received an invitation from the Croatian Ban could attend the Croatian provincial diet. In addition, the right of the nobility of the District of Túrmező to vote was restricted. MISKOLCZY 1927. *Gyula Miskolczy* in his book examines the Croatian question in detail.

<sup>22</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. b. 223. 1544/1846. Zala county summarised the most important constitutional grievances at the general assembly held on 2 March 1846 and the following days, and sent it to the other counties. The Estates of Zala were on the opinion that the government should protect the constitutional freedom and not suppress it. They found, however that the government was not on this path, did not support development, and its recent actions woker concerns. The Estates of Zala also highlighted examples: the government did not carry out the reannexation of Partium counties according to the act 1836:21. In Croatia, the political struggle was growing and the government was not doing anything against it. In addition, at the last provincial assembly in Croatia, the Ban was given an instruction to consider only the votes of those invited by him. Freedom of the press should be guaranteed. The fact that counties were not allowed to send delegations to the king was considered also as a grievance. Problems around the system of the surrogate lord-lieutenants also needed to be addressed.

<sup>23</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 29. June 1847., No. 905.: 422. „Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs). The correspondent initialled as J. J.

*Návay* was one of the leaders of the opposition in Csanád, and *József Lukács*, a royal councillor, was one of the leaders of the conservative governing party. First deputy-lieutenant *Bánhid*y seems to belong to the liberal-governing party. *Bánhid*y, like *Széchenyi*, could think centrism.

## THE OPINION OF THE CSANÁD COUNTY ESTATES ON THE REFORMS AT THE DIETS OF 1843/44 AND 1847/48

In addition to newspaper reports, the political role of the counties can also be examined on the basis of the positions expressed at county assemblies and the Diets. Without describing the course of the parliamentary deliberations of 1843/44 and 1847/48, I will focus on the election of deputies and the drafting of instructions, which provide a picture of the political positions of Csanád county on reform issues.

At the Diet of 1843/44, Csanád county was represented by *Albert Bánhid*y, first deputy-lieutenant and *Ödön Kállay*,<sup>24</sup> chief bailiff, who were elected at the general assembly held on 27 April 1843.<sup>25</sup> The election of the deputies took place in an orderly manner, but *László Návay*, a former chief bailiff of Csanád, remonstrated against *Bánhid*y's election, claiming that in 1840 *Bánhid*y as a chief bailiff had committed document forgery. He also accused him of mismanaging the military recruits money at that time and of winning the election by bribing and alcoholizing. *Bertalan Blaskovich*, county assessor, also had a speech, who declared *Bánhid*y unfit for the deputy role, both intellectually and morally. Despite this, the overwhelming majority of the assembly supported *Bánhid*y, as the charges had been not thoroughly proven.<sup>26</sup> *Bánhid*y later responded to the accusations by saying that „*if even half of what he [Návay] said were true, I would be a monster who should be exterminated not only from the ranks of officials but also from the society.*”<sup>27</sup> There was no objection against *Ödön Kállay*.

In the year or two before the opening of the Diet of 1843/44, took place already a cooperation between the counties in order to coordinate the preparation of the instructions. The most important action was the circular sent by Szatmár county to the counties in 1841 in order to drive them to support of the „twelve points” it had drawn up.<sup>28</sup> The Estates of Csanád county

<sup>24</sup> PÁLMÁNY 2011. I. 974–975. *Ödön Kállay* (1815–1879) was bailiff between 1840–1842, then he was the chief bailiff in Csanád county between 1842–1844. *Kállay* was deputy of Csanád county at the Diet of 1843/44. *Kállay* was again present at the national assembly of 1861 as a representative of the district of Nádudvar. In 1869 he was elected as a representative of the constituency of Szeged's lower town, and again in 1872, 1875 and 1878.

<sup>25</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. a. 59. 1006/1843.; PESTI HIRLAP 14. May 1843., No. 247.: 319. „Megyei dolgok” (County affairs); JELENKOR 25. May 1843., No. 41.: 204. „Országgyűlési közlemény” (Diet reports)

<sup>26</sup> *Nemzeti Ujság* 9. May 1843., No. 39.: 291. „Vidéki levelezések” (County correspondence). 20. June 1843., No. 63.: 388–389. „Vidéki levelezések” (County correspondence) The *Nemzeti Ujság* stated of *Bánhid*y: „...he was declared under the burden of responsibility a dishonest man, tainted with vile vices, of filthy morals, a bad man in private life, and a negligent, disloyal, perjuring official ...”

<sup>27</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. b. 217. 2009/1845.; GILICZE 2006. 93–96.

<sup>28</sup> VARGA 1980–1981. I. 206–211. The „twelve points” of Szatmár advocated the most important reforms. In December 1841, at Szatmár county assembly, *Bálint Úray* rallied the small nobles of Tyukod, Csenger and Matészalka, and incited them to protest because of violating their tax exemption by the „twelve points”. The crowd turned up at the assmble hall with sticks and shouted loudly „we do not tax”, prompting the opposition to withdraw the points in dismay.

supported Szatmár county suggestions: the abolition of the *aviticitas* (legal restrictions of the ownership of noble landed property), the establishment of a credit institute, compulsory abolition of serfdom, the right of non-nobles to hold landed property and public office, the contribution of the nobility to country and municipal taxes, abolition of monopolies, development of elementary education, freedom of the press, the regulation of the free royal town administration, the separation of administrative and judicial affairs, the introduction of juries, equality before the law, a representative parliament.<sup>29</sup> It can be said that there was no reform proposal that was not supported by Csanád county assembly. The advocacy of these proposals meant a radical change, since at the previous Diets (1825/27, 1830, 1832/36, 1839/40) the Estates of Csanád county had fought for the maintenance of the noble privileges and the ancient Hungarian noble constitution, at most advocating slow, gradual reforms. They also supported a number of reform proposals at this time, such as the free-will emancipation of serfdom.<sup>30</sup>

The instruction of 1843 was presented at the general assembly held on 28 April 1843, it had been elaborated under the leadership of *Albert Bánhidý* and summarized in 72 points.<sup>31</sup> The deputies were required to support the abolition of the *aviticitas* and the entail; to found a national treasury controlled by the diet; to pass a law on compulsory abolition of serfdom. Non-nobles should also be allowed to own landed property and hold public office. The nobility should also participate in paying the the country tax and the municipal tax. The Estates of Csanád supported the abolition of guilds and monopolies, which hindered the freedom of trade. They pushed for construction of highways, where both nobles and non-nobles would have to pay duty. Both nobles and non-nobles must contribute to the construction of byways. More attention needs to be paid to elementary education, and schools need to be set up. There is need to ensure freedom of the press and to abolish preliminary censorship. They wished to regulate the administration of the free royal cities, to set up a system of juries, separating administrative and jurisdictional issues. They supported the implementation of a representative parliament. According to them the Penal Code, drafted after the previous Diet, was to be enacted. In this context, they demanded equality before the law and the responsibility of judges, and to abolish manor court system replaced by the district courts. They demanded the return of Galicia, Lodomeria, Dalmatia, the counties of Partium and Transylvania to the administration of Kingdom of Hungary. They were also in favour of declare Hungarian language to be the state language and redressing religious grievances. Instructions were given to the deputies to improve manorial laws: the landlords' monopoly to maintain butchery in the villages should be abolished, serfs should be allowed to burn bricks and tiles for their own benefit, and where it was possible, they were to receive their plot in one part, instead of in separate small sites. They supported the abolition of the church tax (tithe). National costs should not be offered as a free recommendation at the Diets but as a standing tax.

<sup>29</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. a. 52. 1148/1841., 2314/1841., 2320/1841.

<sup>30</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. a. 35. 920/1825., 41. 1070/1830., 43. 1890/1832., 50. 904–906/1839.

<sup>31</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. a. 56. k. 2891/1842., 59. 1008/1843. In addition to *Albert Bánhidý*, *Antal Nyéky*, the chief notary, *József Bánfy*, the deputy notary and *István Cseresnyés*, the prosecutor general, participated in drafting of the basic instruction. MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. b. 202. 1964/1843. The supplementary instructions were drafted under the leadership of the second deputy-lieutenant, *Tamás Návay*, and he also participated in the work together with *Antal Nyéky*, *Ferenc Posonyi* chief bailiff, *István Cseresnyés*, *Antal Beliczay* assessor, *Ferdinánd Dobsa* assessor.



In connection with the preparation of the Diet of 1847/48 and the election of the deputies, the Estates of Csanád county had already started to organize political fight months earlier. *József Lonovics*,<sup>32</sup> Bishop of Csanád, in a letter to Count *György Apponyi*, chancellor, on 5 March 1847, noted that the position of the government in Csanád county was not certain yet. After a long struggle, the Conservatives managed to „quiet down” the opposition somewhat, but they could not defeat them. The majority was with the governing party at the moment, but the „emotional and financial strength” was on the side of the opposition. *Lonovics* saw the disadvantage of the Conservative Party in the fact that the Royal Treasury, which owned four-fifths of the territory of Csanád county, did not even employ an own lawyer there, its local chief official being a steward. The Royal Treasury, despite the size of its holdings, thus lacked local political influence, which should have been amended.<sup>33</sup> *József Lukács*, as we have seen, the local leader of the Conservatives, also reported to *Apponyi* in his letter of 7 March 1847 that the majority of the Estates of Csanád county had joined the Conservative Party together with the county officials and were ready to fight against the opposition.<sup>34</sup> As we saw, there was a truly spectacular clash between party supporters at the county assembly at the end of the month.

Before the opening of the Diet of 1847/48, *Lajos Kossuth* made a note in which he classified the counties according to their political status. He concluded that from the point of view of the opposition, there were 18 „good” counties, 15 „winnable” counties, 3 „undecided” counties and 14 „conservative” (Pecsovics) counties. He put Csanád county in the „winnable” category.<sup>35</sup> This assessment was surely correct, as the newspaper articles and correspondence referred to above demonstrate that there was a strong split between the Opposition Party and the Conservative Party in the county. The Minister of Police, *Joseph Sedlnitzky*, also made a census of the counties before the Diet, based on their party affiliation: according to him 21 counties were completely reliable for the government („Ganz verlässliche”), 8 counties according to their instructions or their decent deputies were more inclined to support the government party („die vermöge ihrer Instruktion oder gutgesinnten Deputirten sich zur Regierungspartei herüber neigen”), 7 counties were doubtful („Zweifelhafte”) and 14 counties belonged to the opposition („Oppositions”). *Sedlnitzky* listed Csanád county in the second category, indicating that the county was not entirely loyal to the government, but tended to be so, as its instructions and chosen deputies demonstrated it.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> BÁRÁNY 2017. *Zsófia Bárány*’s PhD thesis examines the ecclesiastical activities of *József Lonovics*. PÁLMÁNY 2011. I. 96. *József Lonovics* (1793–1867) was the deputy of the Eger cathedral chapter at the Diet of 1830. He was Bishop of Csanád between 1834–1848. *Lonovics* was member of the Upper House of Diet in 1839/40 and 1843/44. In 1848 the King appointed him Archbishop of Eger, but he did not take office. At the end of 1866, he was appointed Archbishop of Kalocsa, but due to illness he did not take up his post.

<sup>33</sup> KOSSUTH 1951. XI. 106–107.

<sup>34</sup> ANDICS 1981. I. 262–264.

<sup>35</sup> KOSSUTH 1951. XI. 203. „Good” counties: Arad, Békés, Bihar, Borsod, Gömör, Heves, Komárom, Liptó, Máramaros, Nógrád, Nyitra, Pest, Pozsony, Somogy, Szabolcs, Trencsén, Zala, Zólyom. „Winnable” counties: Baranya, Bereg, Csanád, Fejér, Győr, Hont, Sopron, Torna, Torontál, Turóc, Ugocea, Ung, Vas, Veszprém, Zemplén. „Undecided” counties: Abaúj, Bars, Verőce. „Conservative” counties: Árva, Bács, Csongrád, Esztergom, Krassó, Moson, Pozsega, Sáros, Szatmár, Szepes, Szerém, Temes, Tolna and Croatia.

<sup>36</sup> KOSSUTH 1951. XI. 230. Reliable counties: Árva, Baranya, Bars, Bács, Csongrád, Esztergom, Győr, Hont, Krassó, Moson, Pozsega, Sáros, Sopron, Szatmár, Szepes, Szerém, Temes, Tolna, Torontál, Verőce and Croatia. More inclined to support the government: Bereg, Csanád, Liptó, Ugocea, Trencsén, Turóc, Vas, Veszprém. Doubtful: Bihar, Fejér, Máramaros, Nógrád, Nyitra, Ung, Zólyom. Opposition: Abaúj, Arad, Békés, Borsod, Gömör, Heves, Komárom, Pest, Pozsony, Somogy, Szabolcs, Torna, Zala, Zemplén.

The *Pesti Hirlap* and the *Budapesti Híradó* also reported that the Estates of Csanád county had elected *János Rónay*,<sup>37</sup> assessor, and *Ferenc Posonyi*,<sup>38</sup> chief bailiff, as deputies by acclamation at the general assembly held on 19 October 1847 under the chairmanship of *Antal Aczél*, the lord-lieutenants.<sup>39</sup> *József Kovács*, royal chamber prosecutor, announced their election in a letter to chancellor *György Apponyi* dated 22 October 1847. According to *Kovács*, *Rónay*'s election as deputy was due to the „*Albert Bánhidy's cunning and perfidy of his poetic, disguised speech, and promises and even calculated artifice*”. *Bánhidy* made bishop *József Lonovics* believe that *Rónay* was a conservative, who was in fact a member of the *Pesti Kör* (a club of the liberals in Pest) and a correspondent of the liberal leader, *Lajos Batthyány*. *Rónay* only became an deputy, because *Lonovics* and *Antal Aczél* did not take timely action against him and *Bánhidy*. *Kovács* summarized the election of the deputies thus: „...*the Conservatives and the Opposition, appeared neutral, but their faces showed their disagreement, both parties, the majority of the officials and electioneering nobility elected the deputies.*” *Kovács* expressed the hope that both deputies would ultimately take a conservative attitude.<sup>40</sup>

In the columns of the *Pesti Hirlap*, an interesting addendum can be found about the election of *Rónay*, which states that he did not initially want to be an deputy. The 18 July 1847 issue of the newspaper published a letter from *Rónay*, which contained the following: he has no merits in *Torontál* or in *Csanád* county. He has never „chased” office or honours, he has always striven for independence and autonomy, he would not swap places with any official. He declared that he had never been the member of any opposition that „*used personal slander and mud-slinger to achieve its goals*”. „*He belongs to an opposition which, regardless of the individuals, is dedicated to the progress and happiness of his country.*” However, the person who hid himself under the pseudonym „*Csanád*” mentioned that *Rónay* had sent a whole steer to regale the nobility of *Csanád*.<sup>41</sup> *Rónay* responded that he had given a luncheon at the last election in 1845, but only because he had not been elected to either office.<sup>42</sup> *Rónay* then declared that he had no prospect of becoming an deputy, as it was against his principles to buy public trust and votes on „*steer*”. He concluded his statement with the following words: „*This was my first and last appearance in this field, because I am accountable only to my conscience, and this will always be reassured by the fact that I can appear before the whole world with my head held high, without blinking.*”<sup>43</sup> (Unfortunately, I have no further information about the motives and methods of his election.) According to the *Budapesti Híradó*, *Rónay*

<sup>37</sup> PÁLMÁNY 2011. I. 1127. *János Rónay* (1809–1867) was the deputy *Csanád* county at the Diet of 1847/1848. *Rónay* was a representative of the district of *Nagyszentmiklós* at the national assembly of 1861 and 1865/68.

<sup>38</sup> PÁLMÁNY 2011. I. 1101–1102. *Ferenc Posonyi* (1815–1894) was the chief bailiff of *Csanád* county between 1842–1848. He was the deputy *Csanád* county at the Diet of 1847/1848. Between 1876 and 1886 he was mayor of *Makó*.

<sup>39</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 24. October 1847., No. 972.: 267. „Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs); *Budapesti Híradó* 9. November 1847., No. 693.: 320. „Megyék” (Counties); ANDICS 1981. I. 290–291. In a letter dated October 3, 1847, *György Apponyi* sent *József Lonovics* three thousand forints in order to support conservative candidates during the election.

<sup>40</sup> MNL OL A 45: 966/1847. Letter from *József Kovács* to *György Apponyi*. Pécska, 22 October 1847.

<sup>41</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 2. Juli 1847., No. 907.: 5–6. „Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs).

<sup>42</sup> *Budapesti Híradó* 25. November 1845. No. 291.: 343. „Megyék” (Counties). BUDAPESTI HÍRADÓ 19. December 1847., No. 716.: 438. „Megyék” (Counties). *János Rónay* was originally nominated as second deputy-lieutenant at the election of 1845, but he withdrew.

<sup>43</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 18. Juli 1847., No. 916.: 42. Törvényhatósági dolgok” (County affairs).

declared himself to be a „liberal follower of the government party” both before his election and after taking the oath of deputy.<sup>44</sup>

*József Kovács*, the royal chamber prosecutor regarding the drafting of the 1847/48 instructions stated in his letter of 20 June 1847 to the Chancellery that the committee drafting the instructions was dominated by Conservatives as opposed to „exaggerators”. *Antal Aczél*, also in a letter to the Chancellery dated 22 June 1847, confirmed that the persons in charge of drafting the instructions were generally moderate in principle, so that the instructions would be in accordance with the government’s wishes.<sup>45</sup> The basic instructions were drawn up again under the leadership of *Albert Bánhid*y,<sup>46</sup> and were summarised in 42 points, and accepted by the Estates.<sup>47</sup>

The Estates of Csanád county decided that the nobility should also participate in the payment of the county and the country tax, and that land registration should be introduced. In addition, a national treasury was to be set up to cover public needs, for which four million forints were suggested to offer. The need to set up a credit bank was also mentioned. They still wanted the abolition of *aviticitas*. They support the abolition of the serfdom. The deputies were instructed to provide for the improvement of elementary education. The Estates wanted to adopt a well-drafted penal code and a mining code. They called for a declaration of judicial responsibility. The peasants should be allowed to burn bricks and tiles for their own benefit. Every inhabitant who enjoys and uses the benefits of a town or a municipality should contribute to the police costs, without distinction of rank. Religious grievances should be redressed, and the organization of the free royal cities be regulated. The administration of Hungary and Transylvania should be united. Freedom of the press was only partially supported (preliminary investigation, responsibility of the censors). They advocated the separation of administrative and judicial issues. They also supported the establishment of permanent, not chosen courts. It was decided that Diet expenses should be paid by the nobility. They supported holding a Diet every year.

It can be said that Csanád county was one of the most progressive counties, despite the fact that the Opposition Party and the Conservative Party were so hostile in the county. There were perhaps a few issues on which the Estates of Csanád did not take a completely oppositional position (as opposed to the previous Diet), such as the full implementation of freedom of the press, the introduction of a representative Diet and that of the jury system in political and press proceedings, equality before the law (as formulated in the previous Diet’s basic instruction). The instructions did not contain any specific mention of the grievances of the system of surrogate lord-lieutenants. Perhaps one could also include the regulation of the Diet and the audience, the operation of the associations authorised by the Government or the establishment of permanent courts. (For example, Pest county supported these programmes. Except for the implementation

<sup>44</sup> *Budapesti Híradó* 19. December 1847., No. 716.: 438. „Megyék” (Counties).

<sup>45</sup> MNL OL A 45: 548/1847., 550/1847.

<sup>46</sup> MNL CSCSVL Makó IV. A. 3. a. 73. jkv. 3343/1845., 80. jkv. 1491/1847.: In addition to *Albert Bánhid*y, *Antal Nyéky*, *László Nyéky* assessor, *Imre Makra* subdeacon, *János Major* subdeacon, *József Lukács* royal councillor, *Antal Markovics*, *János Rónay* assessor, *Lázár Nagy* assessor, *József Kovács* assessor, *Tamás Návay*, *István Cseresnyés* chief prosecutor, *Ferenc Posonyi* chief bailiff and *László Lonovics* notary of the delegation, participated in drafting the instructions. Compared to the previous Diet, there was a certain overlap in the composition of the committee drafting the instructions: *Albert Bánhid*y, *István Cseresnyés*, *Tamás Návay*, *Antal Nyéky* and *Ferenc Posonyi* were also involved in the work.

<sup>47</sup> *Budapesti Híradó* 9. November 1847., No. 693.: 320. „Megyék” (Counties). MNL OL N 119 16., 17. fasc.: The instructions of Csanád county were erroneously classified under Arad county in fasciculus 16 and 17.

of a representative Diet that is missing from the Pest instruction as well.)<sup>48</sup> The aforementioned *József Dedinszky* later claimed in the *Pesti Hirlap* that it was *Albert Bánhidy* who did not support the implementation of the representative Diet and the free press. In fact, *Bánhidy* allegedly declared that as long as he was first deputy-lieutenant, he would maintain the privileges of the nobility.<sup>49</sup>

It is worth mentioning a report of the secret police of February 7, 1848, according to which as far its instructions concern Csanád county should be one of the conservative counties.<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to reflect on the question how the secret police came to this conclusion, since the Estates of the Csanád county supported fast all the major reform proposals. The most important for the government was the fact that the Estates of the county did not take a stand against the grievances of the surrogate lord-lieutenants in the instructions, nor did they criticise the government. As even the Viennese government had already accepted that certain reforms needed to be implemented, so it was probably not the support or rejection of these reforms that determined whether a county was considered as belonging to the conservative or opposition side.

## SUMMARY

The political situation in Csanád county underwent great changes in the 1840s. While in the 1820s and early 1830s the Estates were mostly engaged in an old style noble political trends mostly emphasizing the constitutional grievances (their primary goal was to maintain the privileges of the nobility and the ancient Hungarian noble constitution), in the 1830s they favoured slow, gradual reforms. By the early 1840s, there were already strongest calls for reforms aimed at securing civic rights, public taxing and abolishment of the serfdom. Csanád county was not spared from political struggles, but there were no bloody esclandres there. *Károly Kecskeméti* in his book describes Csanád county as liberal at the Diets of 1832/36, 1839/40 and 1843/44. In *Kecskeméti's* opinion, Csanád county was placed in the centrism at the 1847/48 Diet.<sup>51</sup> The formation of the Conservative Party in Autumn 1846, and that of the Opposition Party in Spring 1847 further deepened the conflicts between the nobles of Csanád county. The efforts of the conservatives led by chancellor *György Apponyi* to divide the liberal opposition camp with his moderate reformist policy and to challenge the basic idea that to be liberal equal with to be the member of the opposition were apparently successful here. After the events of March 1848, the Estates of Csanád county finally committed themselves to the fundamental social and political transformation and supported all important reforms, even those not included in the 1847 diet instructions.

<sup>48</sup> KOSSUTH 1951. XI. 168–196.

<sup>49</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* 4. Juli 1848., No. 98.: 617. „Hazai mozgalmak” (Country movements)

<sup>50</sup> KOSSUTH 1951. XI. 521–523.

<sup>51</sup> KECSKEMÉTI 2008. 322–374.

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