

THE 1868 CROATIAN-HUNGARIAN SETTLEMENT:  
ORIGIN AND REALITY

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# The 1868 Croatian-Hungarian Settlement: Origin and Reality

Edited by

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**H R V A T S K I**  
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## FOREWORD

Relations between the Croats and the Hungarians have a long history. Most notably, the state-union between the Hungarian and the Croatian kingdoms within the Kingdom of the Crown of Saint Stephen lasted more than 800 years. It is natural for relations between nations and peoples to have their ups and downs during such a long history. The long-lasting relationship began during the last decade of the eleventh and the first decades of the twelfth century. The model of rule over Croatian historical lands under the Árpád dynasty was not ideal or constant, as power shifted frequently within the Árpád family and dynasty. Even the period under the Angevin dynasty – when the royal power was significantly restored – did not ensure a clear, unified and long-lasting ruling system among the holders of political power in the associated lands. Things did not substantially change under the rule of the Habsburg dynasty. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, the pan-European development of the modern state with its strong bureaucratic influence and the rise of national movements brought all particularities and problems of ruling a multi-national kingdom and empire into focus. If the relationship had been entirely bad, however, it would not have lasted so long. In this brief foreword we will try to outline some of the processes and events that resulted in the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement of 1868, the 150th anniversary of which was the motive for the publication of this volume.

Many times during the 800 years of the common state and personal union, some member of the Hungarian noble and political elites questioned and challenged the position of Croatian historical lands within the ruling model of the Kingdom of the Crown of Saint Stephen. Even after the ruling dynasty ceased to be of “Hungarian blood” in the sixteenth century, Hungarian lands continued to represent an important and even essential part of the Monarchy. Therefore, Hungarian political elites demanded proportional political influence and power at the court in Vienna.

The decades of cohabitation were politically formative for the two nations and had far-reaching consequences for the economy, society and culture. As Croatia lost more and more of its territory to Ottoman conquest in the sixteenth century, Slavonia, centred in Zagreb, took over political and cultural control in Croatian-speaking lands. So much so, that Slavonia was thenceforth increasingly referred to as “Croatia”. At the same time, the area known as “Slavonia” gradually shifted eastwards, and in the seventeenth century, the term started to be used for the area of the former Hungarian counties between the

Drava and the Sava. Ottoman advance caused large numbers of Croats to settle in Transdanubia and South Hungary. Commonality of experience, joint struggle against the Ottomans and the mixing of peoples caused by migration forged ever closer links between the two nations, and interactions became closer in many areas. The Hungarian and Croatian nobility intermingled, politically as well as through family bonds. In these centuries, the Drava was what connected, rather than separated, the two countries. Nonetheless, a Croatian national consciousness defined in opposition to the Hungarian political elite showed its first signs, mostly among the Zagreb clergy, during that same early modern period.

The European national movements that followed the French Revolution in the last decade of the eighteenth century, together with the ensuing French expansion and emergence of civil rights, threatened the former *Ancien Régime* and the balance of power among European monarchies. The 1815 Congress of Vienna managed to prolong the *Ancien Régime*, but not for long. The revolutionary year 1848 signalled that the European “spring of nations” could seriously harm old monarchies – especially multinational ones, like the Habsburg Monarchy.

The repressive attempt by the multinational Habsburg Monarchy to restore absolutism suppressed national aspirations and prevented the wheel of history from turning, but only for a decade. The 1860s saw the introduction of parliamentarism in the Habsburg Monarchy with the ultimate goal of preserving the Monarchy. National political elites in Hungary, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and other parts of the Habsburg realm wanted to exploit this imperial grant of parliamentarism for their own (national) aspirations. On the other hand, the court in Vienna – aware of the discrepancies and disparities of these national aspirations – wanted to use them for the creation of a new political framework that would prolong the life of the Habsburg Monarchy.

In the event, this situation only revived old animosities between the Croatian and the Hungarian political elites from 1848, which were barely suppressed by neo-absolutism. Interpretation of the political structure of the personal union and the position of Croatian historical lands within the union again became central issues in Croatian (and Hungarian) political discourse. At the same time, Hungarian political elites pursued their ambition for the court in Vienna to recognize Hungary’s utmost importance within the Habsburg Monarchy. The situation finally resulted in the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Settlement, which completely recognized Hungary’s importance.

On the other hand, this solution of Austro-Hungarian disputes put the Croatian political elites in an unfavourable position. They were “forced” to find solutions acceptable to both sides through negotiations in which the Hungarian side was undoubtedly in a better position. The result was a settlement presented to Emperor Franz Joseph in July 1868. This settlement – although subsequently partly amended and supplemented – was of crucial importance, since its provisions regulated and prescribed relations between the Hungarian and the Croatian parts of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until its end in 1918.



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It is therefore no surprise that the Croatian Institute of History together with the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and in cooperation with the Hungarian Parliament and the Hungarian Institute in Zagreb, decided to organize two conferences on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of this important settlement. This volume contains research papers delivered at the conference “Croatian-Hungarian Settlement: Origin, Implementation, Consequences” held in November 2018 in the Croatian Institute of History in Zagreb and at the symposium “Reconciliation and Development – Conference of Hungarian and Croatian Historians on the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement” held in the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest in December 2018. There are eight papers by six Croatian historians and seven papers by seven Hungarian historians. The authors are the foremost experts on the nineteenth-century common history of our two countries, and their investigations concerning the road to 1868 and the consequences of the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement have taken them beyond their own national viewpoints as they attempt to understand our common history from the combined perspectives of Budapest, Zagreb and Vienna.

The aforementioned fifteen papers are grouped into four thematic units. In the first one, the authors cover various aspects of the political path resulting in the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement. Željko Holjevac describes home and foreign policy circumstances that were instrumental in establishing the dualist order in the Habsburg Monarchy, and the subsequent agreement between the Hungarians and Croats, as well as the reactions of their contemporaries to these developments. Róbert Hermann analyses the complex political circumstances in Croatia and Hungary after the revolutionary wave swept across Europe in the spring of 1848. Political developments in the two States separated by the Drava River took different directions. Political objectives of the two sides proved to be an insurmountable obstacle giving rise to the single armed conflict in the joint eight hundred year history of the Hungarian and Croatian peoples, which became the first stage in the conflict between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Austrian Empire. Arijana Kolak Bošnjak describes the development of unionist policy in Croatia from the 1840s to the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement. The author analyses different social-political circumstances under which two pro-Hungarian political parties in Croatia functioned, including their political standpoints and objectives. She helps illuminate the (dis)continuity of pro-Hungarian policies in 19<sup>th</sup> century Croatia. The following two papers offer an insight into the background political scenes immediately preceding the Settlement. Ádám Schwarzwölder examines various forms of support the Hungarian Government offered to the pro-Hungarian Ban of Croatia Levin Rauch, which included an allocation of substantial financial resources for various political actions that would create a political climate in Croatia conducive to an agreement with the Hungarians. Vlasta Švoger analyses how unionist policy in Croatia was pursued from the mid-1860s onwards from the perspective of an important protagonist, Croatian politician Ignjat Brlić. Through his correspondence with prominent Hungarian politicians, Brlić strove to acquaint the Hungarian side with the objectives of Croatian policy and contribute to an agreement

that would satisfy both sides. However, dissatisfied with its final version, Brlić became a harsh critic of the Settlement.

The papers in the second unit cover various political and symbolic aspects of the Settlement. Imre Röss examines how German and English historiographic studies, written on the occasion of the centenary of the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement, interpreted the Settlement provision on the appointment of the Croatian Ban – he was appointed by the King on the proposal and with the countersignature of the Prime Minister of Hungary. The author concludes that foreign historians, literally interpreting this provision, came to a simplified conclusion that the Hungarian Prime Minister had had the decisive role in the appointment of the Ban of Croatia, which resulted in an additional restriction of Croatia's autonomy. Based on the minutes of the joint Ministerial Council and other documents, the author concludes that some informal factors played an important role in the appointment of two Croatian Bans, whereas the King's personal trust in the persons appointed to the office was decisive. In the second part of his work, the author refutes an established interpretation in historiography whereby Article 42 of the 1861 Croatian Parliament indeed received the King's formal sanction. Ladislav (László) Heka analyses the role of the Croatian-Slavonian Minister without portfolio in the Hungarian Government, an institution introduced by the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement, in the complex triangle of interrelations between the Hungarian Government, the Hungarian Parliament and the Croatian Government. Ándras Cieger analyses how the state union of the Hungarians and Croats was symbolically represented after the Settlement. The object of his analysis is the use of the Hungarian and Croatian coats-of-arms, the flag and the effigy of the joint ruler in various institutions, on various occasions and products. The author concludes that the Hungarian symbols were used to develop the national identity and loyalty to the State of Hungary, whereas their perception in the public was dependent on the current political situation.

Papers in the third unit of the book present the reactions of individuals and political groupings to the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement. Stjepan Matković analyses the reactions of Croatian political parties to the Settlement from the 1860s to the period between the two world wars. The objects of his analysis are the political programmes of Croatian parties, and the parties' positions in the context of the dualist system are also examined. Jasna Turkalj presents the exceptionally critical attitude of the Opposition Croatian Party of Right towards Croatia's political reality following the Settlement. The party was the first in Croatia to understand the great potential of humour and satirical magazines for the political mobilisation of broader social classes, which other European States had recognised much earlier. The author analyses the sharp criticism of the Settlement and its implementation in Croatia illustrated in the cartoons of the satirical magazine *Bič* [Whip] of the Party of Right (1883-1885). Dénes Sokcsevits discusses the political and journalistic activity of a sharp critic of the Settlement, Frigyes Pesty, a historian and Member of the Hungarian Parliament. In his works, Pesty strongly condemned the Settlement as an exceedingly major concession to Croatia. The author concludes that

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in this way, Pesty laid the groundwork for a revision of the Settlement and probably also for the future partition of Bosnia, which did not materialise due to the opposition of major political factors in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. On the basis of speeches delivered in the Croatian Parliament, newspaper articles and brochures, Branko Ostajmer researches the role of the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement in the ideology of the ruling National Party under Ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry. As a point of interest, he emphasises that the Party did not possess a formal programme at the time but frequently invoked the Settlement during its political activities.

Three papers that make up the fourth and final part of the book discuss the political, economic and educational aspects of the reality established by the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement. Jasna Turkalj analyses the Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament after 1861, especially those adopted in the 1880s and 1890s, during the rule of Ban Khuen-Héderváry, when very harsh measures were applied to Opposition MPs, aimed at limiting the freedom of expression of Opposition MPs, especially those from the Party of Right who were the harshest critics of the system established by the Settlement. Mariann Nagy looks into Croatia's economic development in the 1868-1914 period in the context of the economic development of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Her research is a follow-up to the conflicting results of the research done by Hungarian and Croatian authors. She uses data on tax payments and the use of steam engines as the chief elements underlying her assessments of the development of industry and trade. She finds that during the 1850s and 1860s Croatia made significant economic progress. In the final paper of the book, Vlasta Švoger states that the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement created a stable political framework and prerequisites for the modernisation of primary schooling in Croatia, since schooling became part of Croatia's autonomous affairs. She compares the Primary Schools Acts adopted by the Croatian Parliament in 1874 and 1888 with their Hungarian and Austrian counterparts, adopted immediately after the establishment of dualism. The author concludes that the aforementioned Croatian acts were influenced by the liberal Hungarian and Austrian acts, adapted to circumstances in Croatia but also introduced some new, more liberal ideas and considerably contributed to reducing illiteracy in Croatia.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that the cooperation between Croatian and Hungarian historians in organizing the conferences and publishing this book is not an isolated case. Cooperation between our two Institutes has a quite long history, just like Croatian and Hungarian cohabitation. Our Institutes have been cooperating and our researchers have been discussing our common history for more than twenty years. Essential to this cooperation is the realization by many historians in both countries that they can only understand their own history if they investigate it together with the history of the other country. A whole generation of historians have grown up for whom regularly following, reading and being familiar with the work of historians in the other country is a natural practice. This has been the basis for meetings at which historians researching the past of the two countries regularly present and discuss their findings. It is thus a very

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important task for the historical institutes of both countries to encourage this mutual attention, which involves facilitating the mobility of researchers and arranging regular meetings. Let us mention some events organized thus far: the international conference “Croatian-Hungarian Relations 1102-1918” and the publication of its proceedings in 2004; many individual meetings and exchanges of ideas and literature resulting in an agreement on academic cooperation between our two Institutes; and joint organization of the 2014 conference “Turning Points in the Cohabitation of Croats and Hungarians. Institutions, Society, Economy and Culture”. This conference, like the two held in 2018, was followed by the publication of a book of proceedings (2015). This volume is in a way a natural follow-up to the lasting cooperation between the two Institutes.

We are confident that this volume is merely one of the many results of our successful cooperation in a common scholarly effort to expand our knowledge about the many still unexplored issues from our common history.

July 2021

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