



CONFLICT & COOPERATION

**150 YEARS
OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN
SETTLEMENT**

ABSTRACTS

Session 1: INTERPRETATIONS

Pieter M. Judson: The 1867 *“Ausgleich”*: A Reappraisal after 150 Years

In recent decades historians have fruitfully reconsidered many of the older truisms that used to dominate studies of the Habsburg Monarchy. This development is a consequence partly of new forms of international research cooperation, partly thanks to the application of new historical approaches in social, economic, and cultural history to the field, and it is also partly a result of the interest and excitement this transnational field generates globally these days, not simply in Central Europe. One of the most distinctive elements of this history, about which too little has been written, is the remarkable Settlement of 1867 that created a new kind of state (or states). At the time, the creators of the Settlement made a many-sided political compromise to resolve political problems particular to the mid-nineteenth century, problems that had repeatedly bedeviled attempts to create a stable and constitutional regime in Habsburg Central Europe. Although the Settlement was meant to solve problems of the historical moment, it nevertheless ended up giving political and legal shape to a structurally unique and utterly distinctive state (or states) for the next half century. Once judged negatively by many historians, and considered a prime reason for the alleged weakness of Habsburg society, it is useful to reconsider under new conditions exactly how the Settlement functioned in difficult times, what kinds of state(s) it created, and through what kind of practices it remained alive and responsive to the challenges of later ages.

Géza Pálffy: Habsburg–Hungarian Compromises in the Early Modern Period

The early modern age, extending in Hungary from the Battle of Mohács in 1526 until end of the 18th century (1790/92), occupies a special place within the common history of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Central European Habsburg Monarchy. Its interpretation, especially the explanation of the 17th century, has traditionally been determined by the ‘independentist’ approach of Hungarian Romantic nationalistic historiography, which was born in the second half of the 19th century. As late as the 1950s and 1970s the 17th century was still regarded as the most decisive period of the Hungarian struggles for independence. By the 1980s and 1990s, the alleged attempts launched from the Principality of Transylvania to unify Hungary had come to be seen as the century’s most salient feature. On the basis of most recent scholarship and following in the footsteps of such historians as Robert Evans from Oxford, Thomas Winkelbauer from Vienna and Jean Bérenger from Paris, this paper rather examines the history of the Kingdom of Hungary in the early modern period as part of a relationship between the Monarchy and the Kingdom, the Habsburg court of Vienna and the Hungarian political elite. Within this framework, the early modern Hungarian history (especially between 1606 and 1711) can be regarded as the age of compromises. The 17th and 18th centuries were determined by six important compromise-systems (1608: Pozsony/Pressburg, 1622: Sopron/Ödenburg, 1647: Pozsony, 1681: Sopron, 1711/12: Szatmár/Pozsony and 1790: Pozsony), practically all of which were elaborated at the Hungarian Diet, and were accompanied by ruler coronations (1608: King Matthias II, 1622: Queen Eleonora Gonzaga, 1647: King Ferdinand IV, 1681: Queen Eleonora Magdalena Theresia of Pfalz-Neuburg, 1712: King Charles III, 1790: King Leopold II). Each of these compromises guaranteed the privileges of the estates and the liberties of the nobility and secured for the Hungarian political elite a decisive role in shaping domestic politics, local administration and judicial system of the country. As a result, among all the constituents of the Habsburg Monarchy in the early modern age, Hungary was one of the strongest in terms of sovereignty and estate state formation, and absolutism could not be introduced east of the Leitha River. In the light of recent research the topos which regards the Hungarians as “perennial rebels” should also be nuanced. With regard to the 17th and 18th centuries, the term of “perennial compromise-seekers” could be applied to them as well. But after the 1848–49 War of Independence, despite and/or account of the Settlement of 1867 in the concept of the Hungarian Romantic nationalistic historiography the early modern compromises were neglected and the ‘independentist’ narrative of the anti-Habsburg movements was the mainstream for a very long period.

György Kövér: Long Swings in the Historiography of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

The historical works of the generation which personally experienced the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire had been indelibly imprinted by this shock. Autobiographies, diaries as well as 'autobiographic pacts' (Philipp Lejeune) hidden in the historical monographs attest to this fact. Perhaps Hungarian historian Gyula Szekfű expounded the distressing trauma most perceptively in the preface of his historical essay *Három Nemzedék* ('Three Generations'). However, important differences must be pointed out concerning the space of time, in which historians strove to find the roots of the collapse. Viktor Bibl, professor of the University of Vienna traced the genesis of the 'tragic destiny of November 1918' to 1526, while Szekfű derived the fall from the period of 1867 that he considered as the zenith of Hungarian history. For Bibl, in contrast, the Compromise of 1867 constituted the moment in which the Habsburg Empire had been taken to his coffin. Different standpoints, of course, had been strongly influenced by conservative, liberal or democratic political principles professed by the historians, nonetheless, the asymmetry between the 'two halves' of the Monarchy regarding the historical evaluation of the dualist system seemed to be immutable. While the dissolution of the Monarchy had been formerly considered as the collapse of the last buttress of the old Europe, the Monarchy became seen as the forerunner of the idea of a new Europe (including Central Europe) in the 1960s. By presenting two basic problems, economic integration ("common market") and ethno-linguistic conflicts ("nationality question"), I strive for pointing out long swings in the historiography of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In the recent two decades a new turn seems to take place. New research into informal institutional processes, microhistory and biographical approaches have been more and more acknowledged. The changes of scale toward global or regional history contribute to overstep national restrictedness. Will the future history of the Monarchy no more discuss ruling and oppressed nations, historicising recollections of victorious and defeated successor states, but rather histories of individuals, families and socio-cultural groups of generations having lived in the Monarchy?

Session 2: POLITICS

György Miru: The Political Talks Preceding the Settlement

For a very long time, the interpretations of the Settlement/Compromise were defined by the political debates that had been bequeathed by the epoch in question itself. In recent decades, historians have managed to leave these discourses behind, and in many areas and issues, they have succeeded in offering more accurate and objective analyses in relation to the events of that times concerned. For this reason, nowadays we have clear and fact-supported knowledge even of the antecedents of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the competing political alternatives, programs, the elaboration and shaping of the conditions of the negotiations, as well as the ever-changing political force field, including the role of public opinion. It is now evident that the representatives of the Hungarian political elite did not negotiate with their Austrian counterparts, only with the emperor, his appointees and the members of his government. It is now apparent that by building his scheme on legal continuity and finding its origins in the common law constitution, Deák *a priori* designated the parties to the negotiations and the framework of the arrangement. While the original concept was altered, sometimes from substantial aspects, still it was his credit that determined whether public opinion (the Parliament and the broadening public) could accept the pact. Today's interpreters do not have much more to do than rearranging the picture by highlighting details that have attracted little attention so far. Another approach they can take is to make use of their own concepts and perspectives and try to find associations that were not necessarily relevant for those living in that age. Still, there is an option to listen more closely to the voice of the past, pay more attention to the contexts that underlie the specific decisions and intentions. My presentation is intended to analyse the debates at the Hungarian Parliament in relation to the potential designs of the Compromise. Although that phase did not witness major changes, I am principally interested in the arguments and types of argumentation that were worded in the public space, as well as the kind of conceptual and linguistic contexts that laid down the declarable messages, substances: what the meaning and significance of that debate were.

Tibor Frank: Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Settlement

The second half of the 1860s was a time of major changes in European history. The most important of these was the unification of Germany and Italy, but the Austro-Hungarian Compromise was of equal importance. The Compromise became a model for several European countries. It divided the sovereignty of the Habsburg Empire into two equal legal entities in an effort to substitute unity with dual local autonomies and a personal union under the Emperor-King Francis Joseph I. Unfortunately, this solution was not extended to ethnic groups other than the Austro-German and the Hungarian and did not bring about trialism or a federal structure. This was one of the reasons that led to the failure of the Monarchy right after World War I. However, the model of double autonomies substituting an indivisible sovereignty seemed to be attractive for Great Britain trying to achieve Home Rule with Ireland and also for Sweden and Norway as well as for Spain and Catalonia. In all these cases the Austro-Hungarian Compromise provided a model to be seriously studied and eventually used. The Compromise could have provided a complete or partial parallel to achieve lasting peace for some of the major powers of Europe and even perhaps for the continent as a whole.

Judit Pál: Transylvania and the Austro-Hungarian Settlement

My paper will discuss the connection between the Austro-Hungarian Compromise/Settlement of 1867 and the reunification of Hungary and Transylvania. It will also investigate the expectations of the political elites of Hungary, in particular, the Hungarian, Romanian and Saxon elites in Transylvania, their reception of the Compromise, and how they tried to further their interests.

The Compromise of 1867 brought about the end of Transylvania's more than three-century-long separate status and development. However, this was only the first step, because the complex integration process still lay ahead. The union was enacted despite strong opposition from the Romanian and Saxon elites, which left an indelible mark not only on the ensuing government measures but also on the entire political life. In April 1867 a Royal Commissar was appointed with the task of supervising the liquidation of the province's distinct status. The initial idea was that the integration process had to be carried out tactfully, by taking into account the various sensibilities, especially the national ones, as well as regional particularities. However, this initial approach steadily changed, and the handling of the issue became an extension of political struggles and potential arrangements. The centralizing endeavors of the state clashed with the local autonomies.

Judit Klement: The Economic System of Dualism: Hungarian Self-determination in an Economic Community

After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise/Settlement, Hungary remained part of the Austro-Hungarian economic community, but now as an equal partner. The customs unity, the system of indirect taxes, the common currency system and the common central bank rooted in the previous decades and in the half century of dual statehood determined fundamentally the operational frameworks of the emerging Hungarian capitalism. The Hungarian capitalization process started in the 1840s. The main economic circumstances did not change dramatically after the Compromise either, except the fact that after 1867 Hungary became an equal partner to Austria, which gave some opportunities for a national economic policy, as the terms of the economic cooperation were to be re-negotiated in every ten years. In my paper, I will present this old and newly formed economic systems, and the steps of the Hungarian self-determination in the economic policy. Besides the nationalization of the railways and the new rail tariff system, the support of specific industrial branches by the state had particular importance from this point of view. The contemporary and historical interpretation about the latter legal and political steps is similar to the opinion about Austria-Hungary itself.

Laurence Cole: The Settlement and the Politics of Military Affairs

The paper will consider the political repercussions of the Compromise/Settlement for the military organization of the Habsburg Monarchy. Many histories of the Habsburg state long assumed that the army functioned as a 'bulwark' of the dynasty in the latter part of the nineteenth century. More recent research suggests that the picture was more complex. While the introduction of universal military conscription had certain integrating effects, the army also became an increasingly political issue in the decades after 1867. The paper will thus provide an overview of the political implications of the army's changing role in Austro-Hungarian society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Session 3: NATIONALISM

László Szarka: The Consequences of the Settlement on the Policy of Nationalism

The Hungarian political elite, based on experiences from ethnic conflicts of 1848-1849, clearly saw the need to resolve the nationality issue. The paper examines the factors that had to be taken into account when establishing the legal framework for the nationality issue. What were the principles and political visions concerning the reconciliation of the demands of national movements and the re-acquired territorial-political integrity of the Hungarian state? Why did the majority of Romanian, Slovakian and Serbian political leaders insist on territorial autonomies as their only viable options? This problem indicates the cause of the difference between József Eötvös' and Ferenc Deák's ideas. The analysis of these aspects may help to understand why not the system of cultural and religious autonomy was not established. The construction of the *Hungarian political nation* strengthened the integration and assimilation tendencies of governmental nationality policy after the Settlement.

Dalibor Čepulo: Croatian–Hungarian Compromise between Cooperation and Conflict

In 1867 the Croatian-Slavonian Diet refused to accept that the status of Croatia and Slavonia in Hungary, silently implied in the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, could have been decided without its prior consent, which made the King to dissolve it. The new Diet elected on compromised elections soon accepted the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise (1868) after negotiations on an equal basis with Hungarian Diet. The Compromise granted Croatia autonomy but it also introduced a number of control instruments operated by the government in Budapest. The document was neither fully consistent nor completed which made its execution in practice highly dependent upon actual political interests. In that way, the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise provided a framework for intensive modernization during the administration of Ban Ivan Mažuranić (1873–1880) as well as for its obstruction during the rule of Ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry (1883–1903). Pragmatic and incomplete character ("neither-nor") made the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise acceptable but an unstable provisional compromise that only partly neutralized the tensions appearing in practice. The inconsistency of the Compromise provoked systematic tensions preventing a clear form of regulation ("either-or"). The inconsistent character of the Compromise also opened possibilities for various theoretical interpretations of Croatian autonomy ranging from autonomous province to statehood.

László L. Lajtai: Nation(s) and/or nationalities? Rival Concepts of Nation in Hungary around the Austro-Hungarian Settlement

The paper focuses on the modernization of the concept of political and cultural communities in Hungary around the Austro-Hungarian Compromise/Settlement of 1867. Starting with the relevant findings of theories of nationalism, it will demonstrate how the concept of political and cultural community, i. e. that of the 'nation' in modern sense, had underwent several reinterpretations before the definition by law of the semantic dualism of 'one nation in political respect' and 'nationalities' in plural (Act LIV of 1868 – On the equality of rights of the nationalities). Prior to this evolution, the Hungarian political-legal-cultural discursive space during the long 19th century had experienced the successions of asymmetries of political *natio* and the rest of the population (before the end of 18th century) or reinvigorating nation(s) and nationality (first half of 19th century). Those who were basically discontent with the legal outcome of defining the modern nation in Hungary solicited alternative understandings of it with respect to the variegated circumstances of the ethno-cultural (or ethno-religious) communities they identified themselves with.

Roman Holec: The Austro-Hungarian Settlement and the Slovaks

The paper will first discuss the Slovak experiences from the revolution of 1848/49, the period of Neo-Absolutism and the almost 20 years of oscillation between Vienna and Pest. It will argue that the Slovaks did not have enough political strength to become a real factor in the struggle between the two centers/dominant nations. This will be followed by the examination of the Slovak opinion on the Compromise/Settlement and on the Nationality Act. The last part of the paper will discuss the first persecutions, trials and prison sentences, the dissolution of Matica Slovenská and Slovak schools, the gradual suppression of the use of the Slovak language, the restriction of church activities and other illiberal measures. The period of Dualism will be presented as a Hungarian-Slovak struggle from the point of view of political polemics and different visual interpretations from both sides, referring to the different Slovak and Hungarian experiences, heritage and political instrumentalization of the period of Dualism.

Session 4: REPRESENTATION AND MEMORY

András Cieger: The Representation of the Settlement in Hungary: A History of Failed Attempts

The political turn in 1867 was obvious: the absolutistic governing introduced after 1849 was replaced by bourgeois parliamentarism, repression, and autocracy by the rule of law. However, at the same time, the transformation of the regime was not all-around, but that was a direct consequence of a long process of political haggling and bargaining which had preceded the changes. In exchange for internal autonomy, the most important elements of which were annual parliament, responsible government, free elections and civil administration, for legal certainty, undoubted economic development and a measure of regional power status, the Hungarians reluctantly accepted to uphold, on occasion even to widen, a few absolutist privileges of Franz Joseph. They also agreed to share some of the financial burdens of the indebted Austrian Empire and abandoned the idea of complete independence for Hungary. There is no doubt that by the coronation of Franz Joseph, the Hungarian liberal politicians acknowledged a kind of continuity with the former absolutistic government. The new regime carried these two kinds of legacies, the spirit of 1848 and the remains of absolutism, at the same time. Attempts were made to resolve this conflict, but no satisfactory solution was ever found. Indeed, there was no possibility for that during the long reign of Franz Joseph. It followed from all that that the symbolic legitimation of the regime of the settlement remained weak until the end, although every power needs symbols to explain and justify political decisions and actions. In the modern era, sacral legitimation has been replaced by metapolitical consensus embodied in integrative symbols and rituals (holidays, ceremonies and heroes), but this process did not take place during the fifty years of the Austro-Hungarian Mon-

archy. Of course, in 1918 the Monarchy did not fall because of its legitimation deficit; after all, it survived for five decades and could contribute to the development of the East-Central European region. Nevertheless, the legitimation problems of the Dualist system can obviously explain the dubious judgment on the Settlement of 1867 in later times. Sociological research shows that the compromise did not become part of the Hungarian national memory until nowadays.

Ágnes Deák: The Faces of Ferenc Deák

Ferenc Deák as the ‘founder’ of the political Settlement of the Hungarian liberal elite and Francis Joseph was considered both in Hungary and abroad as the symbol of the new government established in spring 1867 whose legitimacy rested to an enormous degree on his personal authority and respect in public opinion. That is why the cult of Deák was reinforced by government politicians and publicists on every possible occasion. The opposition, in contrast, recognized that through undermining this cult-building process the acceptance and stability of the whole political system were to be substantially weakened in a wide segment of the population, including Hungarians and non-Hungarians as well. Comic journals with their caricatures were appropriate to convey political messages to different social and cultural groups, suitable for cult-building as well as cult-destroying. My paper presents the different Deák-interpretations published in politically differently orientated comic journals between 1858 and 1876 and presents the struggle for supporters in the field of symbolic politics.

Bálint Varga: Parallel Nation-Buildings and Symbolic Politics in Dualist Hungary

Nationalism became (again) one of the main issues in the politics of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1860s and remained so for almost a century. As Magyar nationalists occupied the main positions in the administration of the country, the other nationalist groups found themselves on the margins of politics and had to build alternative structures, confined mostly to ‘civil society’. At the same time, nationalism became also the most significant concept in symbolic politics, too. Benefiting from their dominant position in politics, Magyar nationalists had the widest chance to use symbolic means to promote Magyar national ideas. Resources of the state were increasingly utilized in this process. The gradual Magyar nationalization of symbolic politics alarmed other national activists, too, but their choices for representing their non-dominant national ideas were rather limited.

Adam Kożuchowski: The Compromise as an Invitation for Disagreement: Post-1918 Debates on the Compromise in Austro-German and Western Historical Discourses

The practical functioning of dualism provoked much criticism in both parts of the monarchy, against which Franz Joseph, the main protector and beneficent of the Compromise/Settlement, remained immune. When Austria-Hungary collapsed, however, this criticism received a powerful stimulus: dualism was now regarded as a fundamental cause of Austria-Hungary’s internal weakness, and the monarchy’s inability to modify it was viewed as one of the direct causes of its breakdown. Notably, it played a crucial role in the ‘who is to blame for the monarchy’s downfall’ discussion. It seems that dualism had been a source of prolonged resentment in Austria, which was now formulated and expressed with much bitterness and frustration, particularly directed against the Hungarians. It was popularly believed that the Hungarians perverted and abused the original sense of the settlement, gaining a disproportionately favorable position in the monarchy. A number of alternative historical scenarios were proposed, that were supposed to have had the potential to save the monarchy by replacing dualism by some more efficient, inspiring, or fairer settlement. Naturally, these debates were losing their intensity, as the generation who could still remember Austria-Hungary was passing. However, a number of arguments, ideas, and indeed emotions it produced or perpetuated, entered the historical discourse on Austria-Hungary in post-World War II Western Europe and America. This paper will reconstruct and analyze them, attempting to answer the questions about the causes of their popularity and durability.