

THE 1868 CROATIAN-HUNGARIAN SETTLEMENT:
ORIGIN AND REALITY

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The 1868 Croatian-Hungarian Settlement: Origin and Reality

Edited by

Vlasta Švoger
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“FOR CONFIDENTIAL POLITICAL PURPOSES” GYULA ANDRÁSSY, LEVIN RAUCH AND THE 121,000 FORINTS

Ádám Schwarczwölder¹

The dualist reconfiguration of the Habsburg Empire required a new constitutional framework for Croatian-Hungarian relations. After spring 1867, the balance of power clearly favoured Hungary. Ferenc Deák and Gyula Andrassy, major figures of the dualist reform, had differences over the Croatian question. Andrassy's position enabled him to persuade Franz Joseph of the need for restricted Croatian autonomy. At his proposal, the king appointed Levin Rauch as ban (viceroys) to ensure that dualism was accepted in Croatia and a Croatian-Hungarian Settlement could be signed. Rauch was not delicate in choosing his means, and the Andrassy government granted him 138,000 forints to be used for “confidential political purposes”. Our findings are based on previously-unresearched sources on the use and accounting of this money.

Keywords

Gyula Andrassy; Ferenc Deák; Levin Rauch; Unionists; subvention; accounting

I. THE SOURCES AND THE ISSUE OF INTEREST

In the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna lies a very interesting file among the petitions submitted to Franz Joseph by the Hungarian Széll government (1899–1903). In a proposal dated 12 July 1899, the prime minister, Kálmán Széll asked the king to

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cancel part of the Hungarian state debt. This was a sum of 121,000 forints that the prime minister, Gyula Andrásy, and the minister of finance, Menyhért Lónyay, had advanced in several instalments to the ban of Croatia, Levin Rauch, between 1867 and 1869. The money had served “confidential political purposes, namely the costs of the parliamentary elections in Croatia-Slavonia and preparation of the newly-established administration of Croatia-Slavonia.” Thirty years after these events, the debt was still accounted as payable by Rauch (and his heirs). As to why the king was now being asked to cancel the debt, the proposal offers only a partial explanation: “Since the amount in question was used for political purposes of a confidential nature, it could not be entered into the annual state accounts. [...] The advances have since been continuously stated in the annual accounts as state debt in the budget of the ministry of finance.” Széll pointed out to the king that the government had funds assigned for confidential purposes only after 1870, and so Andrásy and his associates were justified in transferring the sum to Rauch out of the “national fund”, despite that fund being subject to parliamentary scrutiny, because higher political considerations so demanded.²

The wording of the proposal leaves no doubt this was a truly extraordinary matter. The late-1867 Croatian elections, which were crucial to the process of reaching a Croatian-Hungarian Settlement, and the role of Levin Rauch, are the subject of a consensus Hungarian and Croatian historiography. According to László Katus, Rauch replaced officials with his own associates after summer 1867 and tried to suppress the opposition press. He then “through violence and bribery, assisted the Unionist Party, which wanted close relations with Hungary, to gain victory in the December 1867 elections.” Consequently, it was a Unionist delegation from the Sabor that arrived in Pest-Buda to negotiate the settlement.³ Dénes Sokcsevits also takes the view that “Rauch, of the old Hungarian-supporting school, took the unionists to victory in an election that was riddled with violence and fraud,” but adds that the popularity of the National Party had taken a temporary dip, which was a factor in the Unionists’ sweeping success.⁴ Imre Rész states that as ban (viceroy), Rauch had, during the election preparations, “removed the anti-dualist senior officials appointed by the imperial centrist government. The Hungarian-friendly mood was strengthened by general Croatian public dissatisfaction with the post-1849 [...] system.” By lowering the property threshold, the Unionists granted votes to the lower nobility, who looked to the Unionists to liberate the country from the legacy of the absolutist system. The Unionists promised the restoration of the Croatian constitution “and thus counterbalanced the National Party support among the urban bourgeoisie and educated clergy and minor officials.” The Unionists also “exploited their administrative and government positions to the full” in the December elections. The National Party

² Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (ÖStA HHStA), Kabinettsarchiv, Vorträge, 2242/1899. (Karton 12.)

³ L. Katus, *A modern Magyarország születése* [The Birth of Modern Hungary], 320.

⁴ D. Sokcsevits, *Horvátország a 7. századtól napjainkig* [Croatia From the 7th Century to the Present], 369–370.

members of the Sabor resigned in protest, and a deputation consisting only of Unionists set out from Zagreb to negotiate the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement.⁵ Dalibor Čepulo, in his account of the 1867 elections, states that the Unionist victory "was gained under pressure of drastic measures by the king, the Pest government and the Hungarian-friendly viceroy, Levin Rauch".⁶ Jasna Turkalj also writes that "the enforced election system and aggressive propaganda and methods" were what provided Rauch with a majority Unionist Sabor "fit for" passing the law on the Austro-Hungarian Settlement and arriving at a Croatian-Hungarian Settlement.⁷

We could certainly add examples from elsewhere in the literature, but these are sufficient to demonstrate that the taintedness of the elections that resulted in the Unionist Sabor—the parliament that passed the law on the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement in November 1868—is well known, as is the importance of the role played by Levin Rauch's methods. The aims of the Hungarian-friendly Unionist Party in 1867 and 1868 matched those of the Hungarian government, and its successes at that time are at least partly explained by the 121,000-forint sum that appears in Kálmán Széll's proposal of July 1899.

Sources on the story of this money have until now escaped the attention of historians. Fortunately, the document number of the Hungarian ministry (in our case, the Prime Minister's Office) appeared on all proposals sent to the ruler's Cabinet Office in Vienna. This enabled us to find the bundle of files connected to the case in the Budapest archives.⁸ In line with the Hungarian administrative practices at that time, all of the documents produced on the topic over thirty years, or at least all that could be found, were gathered together.

II. THE "PROVIDENTIAL STATESMAN" AND THE CROATIAN QUESTION

Count Gyula Andrassy was, in my view, the key figure in this matter and, more generally, in the creation, in 1867–1868, of a system of Croatian-Hungarian relations that endured to the end of the period. Rauch could not have done so well without the active backing of the Hungarian prime minister, who also persuaded Franz Joseph of the soundness of his plan. Andrassy was therefore one of the main catalysts, on the Hungarian side, of the final form of the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement.

⁵ I. Ress, "Az 1868. évi magyar–horvát kiegyezés" [The Hungarian-Croatian Settlement of 1868], 115.

⁶ D. Čepulo, "Entwicklung der Regierungsinstitutionen," 40. Čepulo has previously highlighted the Unionists' false promises and coercion and their obstruction of National Party propaganda. D. Čepulo, "Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba" [Croatian-Hungarian Settlement], 119–120.

⁷ J. Turkalj, "A horvát ellenzéki politikai pártok reakciói" [Reactions of Croatian Opposition Parties], 19–20.

⁸ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL), K 26, Miniszterelnökség (ME), 7468/1899. (XI. tétel, Horvát–szlávón ügyek).

The settlement with Franz Joseph and Cisleithania meant that supreme political power in the lands of the Hungarian crown was possessed by the Hungarian liberal elite, led by Ferenc Deák, József Eötvös, Menyhért Lónyay and Andrassy himself. They were now in a strong position to deal with the nationalities question and the status of Transylvania and Croatia. The first task was therefore to reach a settlement with Franz Joseph and the imperial government, after which the other “problems” could be dealt with. It is not fully correct, however, to say that “the Hungarian elite were preoccupied with Hungarian constitutional questions” in the 1860s and were less concerned with relations with the *partes adnexae*, “spending the time seeking their own path.”⁹ Although the Address-Resolution dispute attracted most attention, the nationalities question was discussed even during the Pest Diet of 1861¹⁰ and—albeit unfruitful—negotiations with Croatia were initiated. The possibility of reaching a settlement with the nationalities was useful, if for nothing else, as a device to apply pressure on Vienna. The Hungarian political elite also took an active interest in the Transylvanian provincial diet in Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Romania) in 1863. The union of Transylvania and Hungary proclaimed by law in 1848 meant that the diet was, from the Hungarian viewpoint, unlawful, and in the event, the Hungarian delegates did not attend.¹¹ “When the Nagyszeben diet opened in 1863, I was there with [Kálmán] Tisza and we watched from a restaurant the battalion of frock-coated, white-tie-wearing Vlachs who were going to the assembly, and we said that if we got into power, the first thing we would do would be to implement the union,” recalled Andrassy in a conversation in 1885.¹² Andrassy had broadly similar ideas on the Croatian question: even if, unlike Transylvania, Croatia could not be merged into Hungary, the settlement with Austria would enable the Hungarian government to dictate

⁹ Ž. Holjevac, “Horvát javaslatok a Habsburg Birodalom átalakítására” [Croatian Proposals for the Reshaping of the Habsburg Empire], 59–60.

¹⁰ Following a proposal by József Eötvös, a 27-member committee (with twelve national representatives) was formed to prepare the law on nationalities. The committee’s majority proposal did not, or would not have, satisfied the demands of the national groups, because the chief demand of both Slovak national assembly in Turócszentmárton (Martin, Slovakia) and the Serbian assembly in Karlóca (Sremski Karlovci, Serbia) was for regional autonomy, which the Hungarian politicians (except for a few, such as László Teleki) were most reluctant to grant. The majority proposal was based on the idea of the “historical” united Hungarian political nation and the belief that the nationality question could be solved by providing equality under the law. That proposal was adopted for Act XLIV of 1868. L. Katus, *A modern Magyarország születése*, 290–291., 340–341.

¹¹ The Hungarian and Székely delegates held prior discussions with Gyula Andrassy and Kálmán Tisza and eventually accepted Andrassy’s recommendation not to attend the provincial diet. A. Cieger, “A nemzetiségi elv az európai államalakulásban elvesztette fontosságát. Andrassy Gyula és Concha Győző beszélgetése a nemzetépitésről és a birodalmi érdekekről” [The lost importance of the nation principle in European state formation. Conversation between Gyula Andrassy and Győző Concha on nation-building and imperial interests (source publication)], 317.

¹² According to the 1850/51 census, Romanians made up 58% of the Transylvanian population. The 1880 census figures show that after the union, 17.5% of the population of Hungary (without Croatia-Slavonia) were Romanian speakers, falling to 16.2% in 1910. L. Katus, *A modern Magyarország születése*, 397–398. The quotation is from A. Cieger, “A nemzetiségi elv,” 317.

the terms of its relationship with the Croats. It was therefore no coincidence that within a year following the establishment and stabilization of the dualist system in Hungary (May-June 1867) and Cisleithania (November-December 1867), the Hungarian parliament passed laws on the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement,¹³ the union of Transylvania and Hungary,¹⁴ and "the matter of equal rights for nationalities."¹⁵

Andrássy's displacement of Ferenc Deák in the key position in spring 1867 was of thus of considerable significance for the Croats. Deák, another iconic figure of the settlement process, would have provided broader autonomy for the Croats than was agreed in 1868. His March 1861 article in *Pesti Napló*, responding to a circular put out by Zagreb county, was warmly welcomed throughout Croatia. This clearly set out his position on the constitutional bonds between Croatia and Hungary: "the solution to the union question depends above all on Croatia. If Croatia wishes to unite with us, we will be pleased to embrace the union, if it wishes to set terms in the interests of its own nation or self-government, we will not reject its terms. [...] If Croatia wishes to completely break every constitutional bond that exists between us, [...] we will not take any active steps to impede the secession and will not resort to force even if it is in our power to do so."¹⁶ An indication of how Croatia's bargaining position in both Vienna and Pest-Buda weakened between 1861 and 1867, and particularly after 1865, is that even Deák began to take a slightly less conciliatory position. He did not come close to Andrássy, however, "who in 1861 had wanted to give the Croats everything demanded by the National Party except Fiume," but as prime minister wanted to restrict Croatian autonomy to the minimum: "he says it would be dangerous to give the Croats rights that go beyond the autonomy of Transleithanian countries. That means we should refrain from any step that would bring about the reshaping of the Monarchy along federal lines."¹⁷ During the 1868 Hungarian-Croatian talks, for example, Deák wanted to give Croatia-Slavonia broad self-determination in financial affairs, but this attracted no support from Andrássy, the other Hungarian delegates, or even the Croatian Unionist delegates.¹⁸

The famous Hungarian historian, Péter Hanák considers Deák's most outstanding political skills to have been in convincing his opponents in open debate and in drafting legislation. Accordingly, he most liked operating in negotiations and debates in county

¹³ Act XXX of 1868.

¹⁴ Act XLIII of 1868. The decrees of the 1863 Transylvanian Diet abolished the Romanians' national and religious equality, but left the Saxons autonomy in place. Transylvania was effectively merged with Hungary.

¹⁵ Act XLIV of 1868.

¹⁶ *Pesti Napló*, 24 March 1861.

¹⁷ A. Csengery, *Hátrahagyott iratai és feljegyzései* [Documents and Notes Left by], 218–219.

¹⁸ L. Katus, *A modern Magyarország születése*, 320. Despite Deák's warning that the Unionist delegation "does not seem to properly represent Croatian public opinion," the view that won out was Andrássy's: financial autonomy "is not even in the interests of the Croats. They need large investments to raise their country from its present miserable condition. And the greater their autonomy, the less inclination there will be in Hungary to make investments in Croatia." A. Csengery, *Hátrahagyott iratai és feljegyzései*, 219. See also the chapter of V. Švoger on Ignjat Brlić and the Settlement in this book.

and national diets.¹⁹ Although his performance in confidential background discussions could hardly be described as inept (as his meetings with Antal Augustusz²⁰ show, for example), it was the opening of parliament in 1865 and the drafting of the articles of settlement that brought about the optimum conditions for Deák's jurist character, reminiscent of the old high court judges. As the settlement approached, however, Deák began to retreat from the leading role. At an audience after the defeat at Königgrätz, he renounced his position as prime minister (and was unwilling even to take on a ministry in the new Hungarian government)²¹. Deák recommended the "providential" statesman "given to us by the grace of God,"²² Gyula Andrassy, to take his place. This may not be the only reason, but was probably an important factor, in Andrassy coming out as the clear leader. According to Hanák, Deák sensed that the conclusion of the Austro-Hungarian Settlement marked the beginning of "a new situation, the building of a new system of governance for coexistence with the empire, [...and] the requirements of the new era would hardly be compatible with Deák's temperament."²³ At the talks in Vienna in January 1867 that were crucial for the settlement, Andrassy was the "leader" and Deák stayed in Pest.²⁴ As the emblematic figure of the governing Deák Party, which wanted to maintain the dualist system in Hungary, Deák was naturally a point of reference, but in his increasingly frequent conflicts with the Andrassy government, he usually had to concede. It is characteristic that the important part he played in the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement, too, consisted of open debate (between the two national delegations) and the drafting of Act XXX of 1868. But Andrassy was clearly the catalyst for everything that had to be done to reach that stage.

Andrassy was a much more intuitive, practical and success-oriented politician than Deák, and he also had considerable influence with Franz Joseph. When Andrassy held the power of prime minister, all that Deák could mobilize against him was the informal power of party leader. When Andrassy wanted to grant Croatia the most restricted autonomy possible, Deák could not get his own ideas accepted.²⁵

¹⁹ P. Hanák, *1867 – európai térben és időben* [1867 – In European Space and Time], 171–172.

²⁰ Baron Antal Augustusz (1807–1878), the loyal-conservative politician, deputy-governor of Hungary between 1852–1859, was clandestinely sent by Franz Joseph to Deák to negotiate in late 1864.

²¹ He did not even attend the coronation on 8 June 1867.

²² Quoted in: L. Katus, *A modern Magyarország születése*, 352. Deák's opinion was shared by József Eötvös, minister of culture. "I have known nobody except [István] Széchenyi who I consider to better deserve the 'man of genius' epithet than Count Andrassy. What others often realise only after great pains and hard work, is usually clear to him by intuition; and I have often found myself in a situation of struggling for weeks against different views before I finally have to admit that he was right after all. Besides, Andrassy [...] has more spirit than Széchenyi had, and is indeed a very good person [...]. But his brilliant attributes have their dark sides: such are his impatience and his pathological repulsion to official business in the normal routine, one might say, to orderedness." J. Eötvös, *Levelek* [Letters], 601–602.

²³ P. Hanák, *1867 – európai térben és időben*, 181.

²⁴ L. Katus, *A modern Magyarország születése*, 294.

²⁵ Hardly surprisingly, Andrassy's biographer, Ede Wertheimer, attempted to verify Andrassy's position, while Deák's biographer, Zoltán Ferenczi, attempted the same for Deák's. See: E. Wertheimer, *Gróf*

In a memorandum addressed to the king, Andrásy argued against extending Croatian autonomy by saying that it would encourage separatist ambitions throughout the empire²⁶ and thus threaten its integrity. He won the king over to this view. By spring 1867, Franz Joseph clearly regarded the Croatian question as subordinate to the more pressing matter of reaching a settlement with the Hungarians and the dualist restructuring of his empire.²⁷ Dualism—as was clear to the king, to Andrásy and to many others—“by its nature excluded any possibility that Croatia could become a third independent unit” in the empire.²⁸ After dualism became an established fact, it set the framework for any reinterpretation of the Croatian-Hungarian constitutional relationship.

Accordingly, on 1 April 1867, Franz Joseph announced at a session of the Hungarian council of ministers called expressly to discuss the Croatian matter that he regarded the Croatian question as a Hungarian interior affair. Interestingly, the Hungarian government and the king were joined at the meeting by the then imperial chancellor Friedrich Ferdinand Beust and the Croatian court chancellor Milan Kušević. From that moment, the only question that remained open was how broad Croatian autonomy was to be. The constraints on that autonomy, however, followed quite clearly from the principal criterion: the dualist framework was not to be stretched.²⁹ At the same meeting, the council of ministers adopted Andrásy’s plan for restricted autonomy.³⁰ Again under pressure from Andrásy, Franz Joseph appointed the eminently Hungarian-party Levin Rauch as ban (viceroys) in June 1867³¹ with the express instruction to break Croatian national resistance so as to ensure that the dualist system was accepted there and the way was opened

Andrásy Gyula élete és kora [The Life and Times of Count Gyula Andrásy], 446–476.; Z. Ferenczi, *Deák élete* [Life of Deák], 264–265., 348–354. Ferenczi also tried to prove that Deák was not so generous to the Croats as he actually was, and Wertheimer argued that Andrásy was decidedly indulgent in the Croatian question.

²⁶ I. Rész, “Informális hatalmi tényezők a dualizmus kori magyar-horvát kormányrendszerben” [Informal power factors in the dualism-era Hungarian-Croatian system of government], 56.

²⁷ There were signs as early as autumn 1865 that the emperor would fill the post of Croatian court chancellor with the Unionist Milan Kušević after the resignation of Ivan Mažuranić. At the advice of Kušević, Andrásy soon made contact with the Croat Unionists. Čepulo, “Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba,” 118–119.

²⁸ Ž. Holjevac, “Horvát javaslatok a Habsburg Birodalom átalakítására,” 63.

²⁹ The Croatian-Hungarian Settlement “provided Croatian constitutional rights, the sharing of state authority, the level of autonomy and the integrity of Croatian territory only up to the limits that seemed compatible with the interests of the two-centred centralized empire.” I. Rész, “Informális hatalmi tényezők,” 52.

³⁰ MNL OL, K 27, minutes of the council of ministers, 1 April 1867; I. Rész, “Az 1868. évi magyar-horvát kiegyezés,” 113.

³¹ The appointment of Levin Rauch to the office “can only be described as fortunate from the Hungarian viewpoint. Lázár B. Hellenbach or Count Gyula Jankovich, who might have come into consideration, were much less certain in their unionist character [...] Rauch has a firm conviction and vigour, and whatever he sees as right, he will carry out,” was a contemporary observation by the historian Gyula Pauler, later head of the National Archives. *Vasárnapi Ujság*, 6 September 1868. He was one of many in Hungary who saw the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement as having been made to the detriment of the Hungarians and to the advantage of the Croats.

for the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement.³² In this light, it is not surprising that Andrásy “regarded [the 1868 Croatian-Hungarian Settlement] as his own handiwork,” and subsequently, as common foreign minister, did his utmost to maintain it unchanged.³³

III. THE PAYMENTS TO RAUCH

The filling of the two key Croatian positions (court chancellor and ban) with Unionist high nobility in summer 1867 was highly favourable to Hungarian government objectives. As the quotations of various authors show, Rauch immediately set to work in preparation for the new elections. He attempted to undermine the opposition campaign, while the Unionists enjoyed extra support for their election campaign. Rauch also placed Unionist officials in key administrative posts.

Rauch funded the requisite press manipulation, bribery and secret police operations and the other costs of getting Unionists elected, using substantial Hungarian government subventions arranged by Andrásy. According to the sources, these amounted to a total of 138,350 forints between 1867 and 1869.³⁴ This included the 121,000 forints mentioned in the 1899 proposal as serving “confidential political purposes,” advanced to Rauch confidentially from the national fund. The remaining sum of 17,500 forints made its way to Zagreb by a more easily traceable route. On 14 August 1867, the council of ministers voted to provide 10,000 forints for publication of a Croatian newspaper that would serve the interests of the Hungarian government (this later became *Hrvatske novine*). Rauch received half of this in cash and the other half in state bonds.³⁵ The Hungarian finance minister, Menyhért Lónyay, provided another 7,350 forints in state bonds (interest-bearing National Loan Bond) for the use of the “Ban’s Government.”³⁶

Where did the 121,000 forints come from, how was the money paid, and what “confidential purposes” was it spent on? Andrásy and Rauch “fortunately” had an abundance of ideas about how much to spend on what, where they could get the funds, and how they could evade parliament’s right to inspect government spending. An attempt to influence

³² L. Katus, *A modern Magyarország születése*, 320. Josip Šokčević, who had occupied the post of ban since 1860, resigned over the establishment of dualism, but this only further strengthened the Unionists’ position. I. Rész, “Az 1868. évi magyar–horvát kiegyezés,” 115.

³³ I. Rész, “Informális hatalmi tényezők,” 55–57.

³⁴ For comparison: the total Hungarian public spending in 1868 was 148 million forints, and the autonomous Croatian-Slavonian budget in 1869 was 2.2 million forints, while the monthly salary of a minister at the time was 1000 forints. The amount spent on influencing voter behaviour does not at first sight seem very large. A factor to bear in mind, however, is that the population of Croatia-Slavonia was not large, and the narrow franchise meant that the “masses” to be influenced numbered less than 100,000.

³⁵ MNL OL, K 27, minutes of the 14 August 1867 council of ministers, agenda item 8.

³⁶ These bonds were “regarded as a reserve fund” in Zagreb, and Rauch later sold them. (Letter from Levin Rauch to József Szlávy, Stubica spa, 14 August 1873.) In 1874, the Prime Minister’s Office redeemed them at a value of 7,616 forints, for which the State Audit Office issued a receipt dated 10 March 1874. MNL OL, K 26, ME, 7468/1899.

election results in this way was not a complete novelty at the time, in either Hungary or Croatia. In March 1861, the Hungarian chancellor, Miklós Vay had requested 100,000 forints from the imperial government "to recruit friends for the imperial government at the impending parliamentary talks." The Transylvanian chancellor, Ferenc Nádasdy, also had 100,000 to spend during the 1863 Transylvanian provincial diet.³⁷ On 20 March 1865, Chancellor Ivan Mažuranić told the Council of Ministers³⁸ that he had obtained information about Unionists having recently received 30,000 forints from Pest.³⁹ He warned the government not to stand idly by lest they "come out worse." They must resort to the "usual means" with the electors, such as providing transport and entertainment, to ensure that the National Party won. The chancellor requested 100,000 forints towards this. He added that the purpose and way the money was spent must be kept strictly secret, otherwise the government would be exposed to savage attacks. He thus proposed that the 20,000 forints needed immediately should be given to Ban Šokčević before he left Vienna. Mažuranić would have liked to add this 100,000 forints to the Croatian chancellery's reserve fund for 1865, but Plener and Mecséry urged that it be provided from the Croatian national fund. Mažuranić argued that detailed accounts had to be submitted to the legislature on expenditure from the Croatian national fund, which would bring the secret expenditure to public view. The final decision was postponed until a fuller meeting of the Council of Ministers.⁴⁰

This took place on 30 March 1865.⁴¹ Plener summarized the discussion at the meeting ten days previously. Hermann Zichy immediately added that there would be expenditure of 5–600,000 forints for the imminent Hungarian parliamentary elections and the subsequent parliamentary session, and it could not be covered from the Hungarian national fund, because these accounts were supervised by the legislature. Mažuranić again highlighted the need to keep the election-related expenditure secret. Zichy considered that it would be impossible to keep it secret in any case, "because the last local judge [*szolgabíró*] will immediately realise where the money spent on convincing and entertaining the electors came from." Plener considered the anticipated costs in Hungary to be too high to be financed inconspicuously from the common special fund or from anywhere else. At this point, Count Mercandin, head of the imperial audit office, made a very interesting intervention. He considered that the secret expenses could be "accounted for" (*verbuchen*) as state receivables, "state advance on debt" (*Vorschüsse gegen Ersatz*). Such a "designation" would not officially generate a deficit. The amount would appear on the

³⁷ Á. Deák, "Zsandáros és policzájós idők" ["Time of Gendarmes and Police"], 537.

³⁸ The meeting was chaired by Archduke Rainer and attended by the minister of finance, Ignaz von Plener, the police minister, Karl von Mecséry and the Croatian chancellor, Ivan Mažuranić. The single item on the agenda concerned the secret expenses for the Croatian provincial diet.

³⁹ He did not give the source of the information, but an important question is who or which office in Pest could have provided such a large sum to the Unionists in early 1861.

⁴⁰ S. Malfér, *Die protokolle des österreichischen Ministerrates*, 229–230.

⁴¹ The meeting was attended by Archduke Rainer, Mažuranić, Plener, Mecséry, Anton Schmerling, the Transylvanian chancellor, Ferenc Nádasdy, the Hungarian chancellor, Hermann Zichy, and the president of the Supreme Court of Auditors, Franz von Mercandin.

assets side, and permission for the overspend could be requested from the legislature at a later date. He claimed that more than two million forints were spent in Hungary using this “accounting technique” in 1862–1863.⁴² The idea found favour among the attendees, although Schmerling remained sceptical. He did not think such expenditure could remain secret for the simple reason that “everybody can see that ministerial candidates (*ministeriellen Kandidaten*) in Austria, unlike those in England, are not sufficiently wealthy to cover the election costs themselves.”⁴³

Given what we have seen, it is not surprising that the 121,000 forints, transferred between 1867 and 1869 as a state advance, was paid by the Andrassy government to Rauch personally⁴⁴ and not, for example, to the office of the ban.

Table 1: Figures held in the ministry of finance in April 1873 concerning the amounts transferred to Levin Rauch between 1867 and 1869

By whose instruction, given by what means?	Date of transfer	Amount (forints)	Designation
Verbal instruction by Gyula Andrassy.	6 Aug. 1867	5,000	“For purposes known to Levin Rauch.”
Written instruction by Gyula Andrassy to Menyhért Lónyay.	19 Oct. 1867	25,000	“For costs of the Croatian elections.”
Written instruction by Gyula Andrassy to Menyhért Lónyay.	15 Dec. 1867	11,000	“For costs of the Croatian elections, retrospectively.”
Written instruction by Gyula Andrassy to Menyhért Lónyay.	6 Feb. 1868	10,000	“For purposes of new appointments.”
Written instruction by Gyula Andrassy to Menyhért Lónyay.	11 Feb. 1868	10,000	“For purposes of new appointments, retrospectively”.
Telegraph instruction by Gyula Andrassy.	29 Aug. 1868	50,000	“For setting up the Croatian-Slavonian government.”
Verbal instruction by Menyhért Lónyay.	5 Nov. 1869	10,000	“For surveillance of suspects, press relations, and spies on occasion of riots gripping the southern parts of the empire.”

⁴² We share the opinion of Ágnes Deák that the enormous sum stated by Mercandin should be treated with care, although “if anybody, he should have known”. Á. Deák, “*Zsandáros és policzájós idők*,” 538.

⁴³ S. Malfér, *Die protokolle des österreichischen Ministerrates*, 248–249.

⁴⁴ The sources highlighted that the ban was the person concerned, but this did not change the nature of the payments.

Not all of these seven instalments can be traced through the sources. We have been unable to find any further information on the 5,000-forint instalment of 6 August 1867 or the 50,000-forint instalment of 29 August 1867. The latter was the largest single transfer, and "setting up the Croatian-Slavonian government" could cover many things. In October 1867, Rauch considered that 3,000 forints would be required for each of the six counties to appoint "appropriate officials" and cover election costs, and that he would need a further 7,000 forints as a strategic reserve for his own use.⁴⁵ At Andrassy's instruction of 16 October, Lónyay sent 25,000 forints to Rauch and informed the prime minister accordingly on 19 October. He also informed Andrassy that "I have accounted this sum against the budget of the Prime Minister's Office."⁴⁶ Andrassy informed Kušević that Rauch had received the money, but instructed Lónyay in robust terms not to account the sum to the Prime Minister's Office, whose budget was "strained to the severest extent," and considered that the money should be accounted to the administrative costs of Croatia.⁴⁷ This shows that they had released the funds for Rauch without having a definite plan as to how they would account for the expenditure. They eventually saw no alternative to taking it out of the national fund.

When the elections were in progress, Rauch urgently requested—via Kušević—a further 11,000 forints on 14 December 1867. Kušević argued that the results so far (twenty Unionist delegates against ten from the opposition) had borne Rauch out, but "the whole thing could be endangered" if he did not get another 11,000.⁴⁸ At Andrassy's instruction to send the money immediately, Lónyay,⁴⁹ the same day, made arrangements to have the sum sent by "a reliable official" and informed the chancellor accordingly.

In February 1868, when the Unionists' election victory was complete, Andrassy had Lónyay send 20,000 forints to the ban "in an inconspicuous way" in two instalments "to cover the costs arising from the next elections of county and town officials (*tisztújítás*) in Croatia-Slavonia."⁵⁰ The sum of 10,000 forints paid separately from the others in November 1869, judging from the date and the description, must have been linked to the uprising in Dalmatia. The transfer was arranged by Lónyay and József Eötvös (as deputy prime minister) in Andrassy's absence. (Rauch had originally expressed the need for 15,000 forints.)⁵¹

There were clear efforts to limit the number of people who knew about the payment and the purpose of the confidential subventions. Even in the Hungarian government, it seems that only Gyula Andrassy, Menyhért Lónyay and József Eötvös knew of them. The

⁴⁵ Letter from Milan Kušević to Gyula Andrassy, Vienna, 10 October 1867. MNL OL, K 26, ME, 7468/1899.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Lónyay to Andrassy, Buda, 19 October 1867.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Andrassy to Lónyay, Buda, 28 October 1867.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Kušević to Andrassy, Vienna, 14 December 1867.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Andrassy to Lónyay, Buda, 15 December 1867.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Andrassy to Lónyay, Buda, 6 February 1868.

⁵¹ Ibid., Lónyay to Eötvös József, Buda, 8 November 1869.

documents also tell us about the “procedure”. When Rauch needed money, he contacted Andrassy via Kušević. The money was then passed to Rauch at the instructions of the prime minister or the minister of finance. Rauch issued receipts to Andrassy (or Lónyay), who informed Kušević when Rauch received the requested sum.⁵² Although there is no direct indication in the sources, it is almost certain that Franz Joseph was also fully informed of the events via Kušević or Andrassy. The last instalment—10,000 forints in November 1869—was paid after the closure of the Croatian Court Chancellery and the formation of the Croatian-Slavonian-Dalmatian Ministry, and Kušević’s place in the chain was taken by the minister, Koloman Bedeković.

Where did the Hungarian government get the 121,000 forints for its Croatian objectives after summer 1867? Imre Ress has found that when the dualist system was established, the Hungarian government received its quota (30%) of the secret reserve fund (*Dispositionsfond*) of the imperial chancellery as it was changed to the common ministry of foreign affairs. From the amounts approved by the delegations in 1868 and 1869, the Andrassy government thus received 141,600 forints each year to use for the prime minister’s press office and other information services. This fund diminished in 1870, however, and was abolished in 1871. This explains why the government requested and received from the Hungarian parliament, as a reserve fund, 120,000 forints in 1870 and 200,000 forints annually thereafter.⁵³ Since the government was not required to render detailed accounts to the parliament about the expenditure from the reserve fund, and the annual internal accounts were destroyed, we cannot know for certain whether later governments used it to finance political objectives in Croatia. Accounts of the Prime Minister’s Office reserve fund for 1872, however, have survived under unusual circumstances, and permit the conclusion that the Hungarian-friendly Croatian political grouping received further subventions from Budapest. In that year, Prime Minister Lónyay Menyhért put a large part of the reserve fund, 128,000 forints, towards ensuring the Unionists’ election victory.⁵⁴ This amount is perhaps not accidentally the same as was paid to Rauch by the Andrassy government. It says something about the effectiveness of Rauch’s activities in 1867 and 1868 that in 1872, despite substantial Hungarian financing, the Unionists were unable to secure a majority in the Sabor.

Since the Prime Minister’s Office reserve fund was only established in 1870, and in summer and autumn 1867, the Andrassy government may not even have had any funds reallocated from the *Dipositionsfond*, no secret reserve was available to spend on “con-

⁵² I managed to trace the passage of 61,000 forints by this route.

⁵³ I. Ress, “A kormányzati hírszolgálat átalakulása az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiában a kiegyezés után, 1867–1875” [The reform of the government intelligence service in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy after the Compromise, 1867–1875], 97–98.

⁵⁴ A. Cieger, “A kormányzati politika rejtett működése. A miniszterelnök bizalmas kiadásai 1872-ben” [The hidden operation of government. The prime minister’s confidential expenditures in 1872], 580. The ban, Antun Vakanović, received 105,000, Julije Jelačić 10,000, Josip Žuvić 8,000, and Ladislav Pejačević 5,000 forints for “political purposes.”

fidential political purposes." This explains why the greater part of the 121,000 paid to Rauch, 111,000 forints, came from the Hungarian national fund.⁵⁵ The government inherited the national fund from the period before the Austro-Hungarian Settlement. In previous years, it had financed the internal political-administrative affairs of the crown provinces, such as the operating costs of provincial diets. (Hungary, Transylvania and Croatia all had such funds individually until the Settlement.) We have seen from the March 1865 sessions of the Council of Ministers that its members were reluctant to use the national fund to finance sensitive matters like election costs because of the legislature's right of inspection. It is not clear why they made the Croatian payments from the national fund in 1868 when they could have avoided Hungarian parliamentary scrutiny by using the funds available from the foreign ministry. And having done so, it is not clear why they did not request parliament's retrospective authority for the cost overrun.

Given the subsequent developments, it is possible that no information on this money would have survived if Andrassy and Lónyay had not taken it from the national fund, because they effectively set in motion a protracted process of accounting for it. Although the State Audit Office had not yet been set up in Hungary when the money was paid to Rauch, parliament still had the right of inspection over the government's spending from the national fund. After the formation of the audit office in 1870, the presence in the open public accounts of the money sent to Rauch inexorably became an increasingly embarrassing problem.

IV. THE AUDIT OFFICE NEVER FORGETS

In spring 1873, Gyula Andrassy was hard at work as foreign minister at the Ballhausplatz, József Eötvös was dead, and Lónyay, as a fallen ex-prime minister was languishing in the periphery of the governing party, trying to keep his political career alive. Neither were Kušević, Rauch or Bedeković in their previous offices. One conscientious official of the audit office, however, noticed that the former national fund—which had been managed, and should have been accounted for—by the ministry of finance, was not in order. There was a deficit of 111,000 forints! The audit office therefore approached the minister of finance, Károly Kerkapoly, for advice. Kerkapoly, probably unaware of the details of the matter, asked for time and made excuses. All documents on the topic in the ministry of finance were brought out. That was when the state advance of 121,000 forints, which included the 10,000 forints paid to Rauch in November 1869, was arrived at. Kerkapoly prepared a statement on the payments this comprised, and

⁵⁵ The proposal of 12 July 1899 states that the 111,000 forints was paid "from the national fund as state advance to be reimbursed from the revenue of the former Croatian Court Chancellery." The proposal identified the source of the final 10,000-forint instalment, of November 1869, in somewhat vague terms: it had been paid "out of state funds." ÖStA HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv, Vorträge, 2242/1899.

forwarded all of the information to the prime minister, József Szlávy, with a request for advice on further action.

Szlávy took charge of the matter, and shortly afterwards sent a long letter to Rauch.⁵⁶ He explained that the Hungarian audit office had requested the ministry of finance to give itemized accounts of the 121,000 forints. As a reminder, he enclosed with his letter the statement that Kerkapoly had produced “which only in general terms” showed the purposes of providing the sums in question. It is unlikely that Szlávy would have been so naive not to have guessed, from the information in **Table 1**, what Rauch had spent the money on, but he closed his letter with the following polite request. “Since from the information here I have not become sufficiently enlightened on the matter, which is completely unknown to me, and I have no doubt that Your Excellency has full knowledge and records concerning the purposes the sums in question were used, I hereby approach Your Excellency with a request for your advice to put me in a position that the sums in question can be finally accounted for and this matter may be closed.”⁵⁷

In his reply, Rauch assured Szlávy of his cooperation. He claimed that he had requested Andrásy and Lónyay several times for the information that Szlávy had sent him, but in vain. He assured the prime minister that he had records of all expenses, but that several months would be needed to compile the itemized accounts. He promised it for October. He warned Szlávy, however, that the accounts would include items that it would be inadvisable to state in the published public accounts.⁵⁸ Subsequently, Rauch was constrained to spend an extended period at Stubica spa to have his gout treated, and requested a further extension.⁵⁹ In December, he apologised again for only then starting to compile the accounts, but at last “the gentleman who could help me with this part has arrived from his village herds,” and he promised the figures by January.⁶⁰

At Szlávy’s resolute urging, Rauch did eventually send the figures on the use of the 121,000 forints in January 1874.⁶¹ A detailed analysis of the 167-item, 20-page list written in German could take up a whole article by itself. The figures are very thorough, as suggested by the sheer length of the document, but we presently lack any information to check them against. The former ban had spent 35,000 forints on the press (*Presse-Zwecke*). For example, he had paid 9,000 forints to *Agramer Zeitung* and 16,800 forints to *Hrvatske novine* via private individuals (editors and journalists). He had spent the remainder on political and secret police matters (*politische und Polizei-Zwecke*), indicating,

⁵⁶ That Szlávy did not try to get information from Lónyay, who was his opponent within the governing party, is understandable. Less so is why he did not put any questions to Andrásy, who was his political ally and shared his thoughts on the Croatian question.

⁵⁷ Letter from József Szlávy to Levin Rauch, Budapest, 14 April 1873. MNL OL, K 26, ME, 7468/1899.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Rauch to Szlávy, Zagreb, 1 May 1873.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Rauch to Szlávy, Stubica spa, 14 August 1873.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Rauch to Szlávy, Zagreb, 15 December 1873.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Rauch to Szlávy, Zagreb, 19 January 1874. He enclosed the accounts with his letter. He slightly over-complicated, accounting for a total of 129,000 forints. This implies that Rauch had access to funds in addition to the 121,000 forints.

for example, how much he gave to certain county lieutenants, mayors, police officers and agents. The account is highly detailed in the sense that it also includes expenditures of a few forints, although there were some persons who received large sums on more than one occasion. The surnames are not written consistently, appearing variously in Hungarian, Slavic or German forms, and Christian names are rarely given. The purpose of the payments is usually stated only in general terms.⁶²

Understandably, even Szlavy was not keen on handing over the figures to the audit office. For want of better, the sum continued to be stated as a debt owed by Rauch, and from time to time, the current minister of finance was requested to present detailed accounts and files. In August 1875, the minister of finance, Kálmán Széll, advised the prime minister, Béla Wenckheim, that "since the documents requested contain sensitive information, and the State Audit Office would anyway find nothing useful in them," he had for the time being replied to the head of the Audit Office that talks with the Croatian party on accounting for the money were still in progress.⁶³ This referred to an—ultimately unsuccessful—attempt by the Hungarian government to "reassign" the deficit to the account of the Croatian autonomous government, saying that the money served Croatian internal affairs.

The official position of the cabinet was therefore that it could not provide the Audit Office with the figures because talks were still in progress. The Audit Office must have suspected the presence of more serious difficulties, but it pursued the matter with surprising persistence. In 1887, facing yet another request for an explanation, the minister of finance, Gyula Szapáry, warned the prime minister, Kálmán Tisza, that the matter had been dragging on for twenty years and "it was difficult to maintain the position that talks are still continuing on accounting for it." He asked Tisza what he should say in reply to the Audit Office.⁶⁴ No written reply from Tisza can be found among the files. It is telling, however, that in 1893, prime minister Sándor Wekerle had the following written on the binder containing the files: "Considering that this matter has not been pressed for more than five years, it should be closed until such time as it is pressed again."

In 1899, when the five years had become twelve, the Audit Office resumed its enquiries. Levin Rauch had died in 1890, but the debt had been passed on to his heirs, who also requested a prompt resolution of affair. Consequently, the minister of finance, László Lukács, and the prime minister, Kálmán Széll (who had already encountered the problem as minister of finance over twenty years previously) resolved to settle the matter once and for all. With the approval of the Council of Ministers,⁶⁵ he approached the king for assistance in the proposal discussed at the beginning of this article. Franz Joseph was asked to approve the removal of 121,000 forints from state receivables. Not surprisingly,

⁶² One typical item: "28. To Furkovics for a political service – 20 forints".

⁶³ Letter from Kálmán Széll to Béla Wenckheim, Budapest, 8 August 1875. MNL OL, K 26, ME, 7468/1899.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Szapáry to Tisza, Budapest, 30 November 1887.

⁶⁵ MNL OL, K 27, Minutes of the Council of Ministers meeting of 12 July 1899, agenda item 1.

the king gave his consent.⁶⁶ It is not clear, however, what royal prerogative was applied to bypass the legislature in the matter of a relatively large government expenditure from more than thirty years previously.⁶⁷ It seems, however, that neither side saw any profit in quibbling about this “trifle”, and the redeeming passage was finally written on the bundle of documents in the Prime Minister’s Office (and probably also in the Audit Office): “to be closed, in view of the reasons given.”

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