

Habsburg H-Net Discussion Network
Proclamation of Ferdinand to Jellacic and the Croats, June 1848

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[Source: Henry M. De Puy, *Kossuth and His Generals* (Buffalo: Phinney & Co., 1852), pp. 141-149.]

PROCLAMATION

We, Ferdinand I., Emperor of Austria, as King of Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia, Sclavonia, the Fifth, [sic] &c., we assure you, inhabitants of our kingdoms Croatia and Sclavonia, of our sovereign grace, and issue the following manifesto:

Croatians and Sclavonians!

Our paternal heart found warm satisfaction in the trust, that while, in compliance with the wishes of our

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faithful nations, we extended the benefit of constitutional freedom over all our subjects, we thus bound the nations, intrusted [sic] by Providence to our care, to be grateful toward ourselves, and to adhere firmly to our throne. We trusted, at the same time, that the establishment of equal rights and liberties would encourage our people to brotherly union in the effort of general improvement, for which we had opened the largest field. With full reliance in these our intentions, we were painfully struck by the sad discovery that with you, in particular, our trustful expectations were frustrated. Croatians and Sclavonians! who, united to the crown of Hungary for eight centuries, shared all the fates of this country ; you, Croatians and Sclavonians, who owe to this very union the constitutional freedom, which alone among all Sclavonic nations you have been enabled to preserve for centuries ; we were doomed to be mistaken with you, who not only have shared in all the rights and liberties of the Hungarian constitution, but who, besides -- in just recompense of your loyalty, until now stainlessly preserved -were lawfully endowed with peculiar rights, privileges, and liberties, by the grace of our illustrious ancestors, and who, therefore, possess greater privileges than any whosoever of the subjects of our sacred Hungarian crown. We were mistaken in you, to whom the last Diet of the kingdom of Hungary and its dependencies, according to our own sovereign will, granted full part in

all the benefits of the enlarged constitutional liberties, and equality of rights. The legislation of the crown of Hungary has abolished feudal servitude, as

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well with you as in Hungary; and those among you who were subjected to the socage, have, without any sacrifice on their part, become free proprietors. The landed proprietors receive for their loss, occasioned by the abolition of socage, an indemnification, which you, with your own means, would be unable to provide. The indemnification granted on this account to your landed proprietors, will be entailed on our Hungarian crown estates with our sovereign ratification, and without any charge to yourselves.

The right, also, of constitutional representation was extended to the people with you no less than in Hungary; in consequence of which no longer the nobility alone, but likewise other inhabitants and the Military Frontier, take part by their representatives in the legislation common to all, as much as in the municipal congregations. Thus you can improve your immediate co-operation. Until now, the nobility contributed but little to the public expenses; henceforward the proportional repartition of the taxes among all inhabitants is lawfully established, whereby you have been delivered from an oppressive charge. Your nationality and municipal rights, relative to which ill-intentioned and malicious reports have been spread with the aim of exciting your distrust, are by no means threatened. On the very contrary, both your nationality and your municipal rights are enlarged, and secured against any encroachment; as not only the use of your native language is lawfully guaranteed to you forever in your schools and churches, but it is likewise introduced in the public assemblies, where the Latin has been habitual until now.

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Calumniators sought to make you believe that the Hungarian nation desired to suppress your language, or at least to prevent its further development. We ourselves assure you, that these reports are totally false, and that it is recognized with approbation, that you exert yourselves to develop and establish your own mother-tongue, renouncing the dead Latin language. The legislature is willing to support you in this effort, by providing adequately for your priests, to whom is intrusted [sic] the spiritual care of the soul, and the education of your children. For eight centuries you have been united to Hungary. During this whole time the legislature has ever dealt with due regard to your nationality. How could you, therefore, believe that the legislature, which guarded your mother-tongue for eight centuries, should now bear a hostile aversion to it?

And notwithstanding all this, whereas the guarantee of your nationality, and the enlargement of your constitutional liberties, ought to have been greeted with ready acknowledgment, persons have been found among you, who, instead of the thankfulness, love and loyalty, which they owe to ourselves, have unfolded the standard of fanatical distrust; who represent the Hungarians as your enemies, and who use every means to

disunite the two nations, namely, the very same who persecuted your fellow-citizens, and by intimidation which endangered personal safety, forced them to leave their own country, because they had attempted to enlighten you as to real truth. Our deep concern relative to these excitements, was heightened by the sollicitudes, lest perhaps the very man had given

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up himself to this criminal sedition, whom we have overwhelmed by tokens of our royal bounty, and whom we had appointed as guardian of the law and security in your country. Our deep concern was heightened by the apprehension, that this man, abusing the position to which he had been raised by our bounty, had not corrected the notions of the falsely informed citizens, as he should have done; but animated by party hatred, had still more inflamed the fanaticism ; yes, unmindful of his oath as a subject, had attempted encroachments against the union with Hungary, and, hereby, against the integrity of our holy crown and our royal dignity.

Formerly, in Hungary and its dependencies, we administered the executive powers by our Hungarian chancery and home office, and in military concerns, by our council of war. To the orders issued in this way, the bans of Croatia, Dalmatia and Sclavonia were obedient, just as they were bound, in more remote times, to obey the orders of our Hungarian authorities, issued in a different manner and in different forms, according to the mode of administering our executive power, arranged by the Diet with our ratification.

In consequence of the request addressed to us by our faithful States, and guided by our own free will, in the last Hungarian Diet we graciously sanctioned the law, according to which our beloved cousin, his imperial highness the Archduke Stephen, palatine of Hungary, was, during our absence from Hungary, declared our royal lieutenant, who as such had to administer the executive power by the hands of our Hungarian ministry, which we simultaneously had appointed,

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entrusting it with all authority, which had rested before with the royal chancery, the home office, the treasury and the council of war.

In spite of this, Baron Joseph Jellachich, whom we graciously favored with the appointment of ban of our kingdoms of Croatia, Dalmatia and Sclavonia, is accused as having the temerity to refuse this becoming obedience.

We, the king of Hungary, Croatia, Sclavonia and Dalmatia, we, whose person is sacred to you, we tell you, Croatians and Sclavonians, the law too is sacred, and must be considered so! We have sworn to the eternal King of all kings, that we ourselves shall

preserve the integrity of our Hungarian crown, and of our constitution, and that we will no less ourselves obey the law, than we will have it obeyed by others.

We will keep our royal oath. We are gracious to our loyal subjects, forbearing to the guilty who repent, but inexorably severe toward stubborn traitors. And we shall give over to avenging justice those who dare presumptuously to trifle with our royal oath. He who revolts against the law, revolts against our royal throne, which rests upon the law, and Baron Jellachich is accused, with his notorious adherents, of not only opposing the law, but persisting in his disobedience, regardless of the fatherly exhortations which we have addressed to him.

The first care of our beloved cousin, the archduke palatine, and of our Hungarian ministry was, to call upon Baron Jellachich to explain himself in respect to your nationality, your rights, and your liberties; so that, as soon as possible -- besides other measures --

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the Croatian Congregation might be assembled, and those laws might thus be published, whose blessings we never intended to withhold from you, and that after this the ban should be publicly invested with his dignity; since before this installation he could not be considered as a legitimate office-holder.

Notwithstanding our repeated orders to Baron Jellachich to comply with the summons of our royal lieutenant, and our Hungarian ministry, the baron is accused of having disobeyed, and of having by this disobedience exposed you to the dangers of anarchy. But as though it were not enough that the ban himself did not obey, he is accused of having called the lawful authorities to the same disobedience, and of having forced them, no less than the people itself, by violent means, to hostile demonstrations against Hungary.

All of you must have witnessed the acts of which he is accused; all of you must have seen if he persecuted those, who wanted to keep the union of Croatia with Hungary unimpaired, if he deposed them arbitrarily from their offices, if he brought a trial by courtmartial upon all those who did not do homage to his political views, and by this means compelled many families to flight and emigration. All of you must have seen if the ban prevented the lawfully appointed lord-lieutenants from entering upon their duties ; if he violently seized the funds belonging to the treasury, and even employed our own troops to achieve this arbitrary deed.

You must know if, without the Diet, at his own will he charged you with new taxes, and without any authority strove to force the people to take up arms --

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an act which we ourselves cannot authorize without the consent of the legislative power. You must be able to witness, if he allowed, that his notorious adherents incited the people by tales and by false reports relative to the Hungarians, as if they threatened your nationality; if he allowed, that sedition was preached in illegal assemblies against the Hungarians; that arbitrary appointments were made ; and that in consequence of the excitement occasioned by these proceedings, bloody conflicts, and plunder and murder have taken place in Hungary. You know the personal affront which has been perpetrated under the very eyes of the ban, against an illustrious member of our royal house, against our royal lieutenant, the archduke palatine, in the public place of Agram -- a town which of late has repeatedly been the scene of illegalities. You must know it, if the ban punished the perpetrators of such deeds. It cannot be unknown to you, if he really refused obedience to our royal commissary, Baron Hrabovszky, our privy counselor, and lieutenant fieldmarshal, who has been appointed to re-establish public order and security.

Moved by fatherly care for the welfare of our perhaps misled subjects, we tried the last means -- to grant opportunity of personal defense to the accused, before we lent an ear to the complaints against him. We summoned Baron Jellachich, by our own autograph order, to retract the Croatian Congregation, which, without our sanction, and, therefore, in defiance of the law, he has illegally convoked for the fifth day of June of this year ; and we ordered him to appear personally before ourselves, in order to effect the

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conciliation which is needed for re-establishing order in Croatia.

But Jellachich has as little obeyed this our present command, as our former regulations, and has neither retracted the Congregation nor has he appeared before ourselves, at the appointed time. Thus stubborn disobedience to our sovereign command was added to so many complaints against Baron Jellachich. No other means was left, to relieve our royal authority from the injury of such behavior, and to uphold the laws, than to send our faithful privy counselor, lieutenant fieldmarshal Hrabovszkv as our royal commissary, to investigate those unlawful proceedings, and to open a law-suit against Baron Jellachich, and his possible accomplices; and lastly, to deprive Baron Jellachich, until his perfect clearance, of all his dignities as ban, and of all military offices. I sternly exhort you to renounce all participation in seditions, which aim at a separation from our Hungarian crown, and under the same penalty I command all authorities to break off immediately all intercourse with Baron Jellachich, and those who may be implicated in the accusations against him, and to comply unconditionally with the orders of our royal commissary.

Croatians and Slavonians! We guarantee your nationality and your liberties, and the fulfillment of your just requests with our royal word ; therefore do not believe any seducing insinuations, with which one aims to misuse you for attaining unlawful ends, by which your country is to be given up to oppression and infinite misery.

Listen to the well-wishing voice of your king

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addressing you, as many as still are his faithful Croats and Sclavonians.

Herewith we summon every one to publish and spread this manifesto, according to his loyalty to our sovereign authority.

Given in our town of Innsbruck the tenth day of June, 1848.

FERDINAND

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