

## Jelačić in the Summer of 1848

By ALAN SKED (London)

There is no space in this article either to show how Jelačić emerged as Ban of Croatia in 1848 or to provide a narrative account of events there during that summer. Lack of space also rules out any investigation of the legality of Jelačić's appointment or, indeed, his suspension and reappointment as Ban. The purpose of this article, rather, is to show what Jelačić's aims were and to examine to what extent he was able to achieve them, not in itself a particularly difficult task, since, although he was often deceived by others (the Court or Esterházy, for example), his own views were openly stated, consistent and acted on. Since he knew exactly what he wanted and – usually – what he had to do to achieve this, neither the Hungarians nor the Court could deflect him from the task in hand; hence he refused to take his oath as Ban in the presence of the Hungarians; refused to accompany the King to Buda; refused to have an audience with the King in the sole presence of the Hungarian Minister at Court, Prince Esterházy; and refused to obey the April Laws or have anything to do with the Hungarian Ministry. In a confidential letter composed after he became Ban, he wrote: "The die is cast! I follow the straight road and play the open game; if I come to an end thereby, I fall as a soldier, a patriot, and a true servant of my master the Emperor."<sup>1</sup> In September 1848 he told his colleagues:<sup>2</sup>

*"My aim is to uphold a united, strong Austria, to establish the Emperor on his throne, and that we should live in equal freedom. The German shall remain German; the Hungarian, Hungarian; and the Slav, Slav. Nothing shall turn me from the path I have chosen. Since my appointment as Ban I have received twenty-one letters from the Kaiser which it grieved me not to be able to obey. His Majesty has approved of my work at last; but, if he sends me twenty-one more commands to turn my course, I cannot do it. I must work for His Majesty, even against his will."*

Publicly, too, he stated from the very beginning what his policy would be. Having been made Ban, FML and Commander of the Croatian Military Frontier,

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<sup>1</sup> M. HARTLEY, *The Man Who Saved Austria, Baron Jellačić*. London 1912, p. 137. Cf. Ferdinand HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić's Kriegszug nach Ungarn 1848*. 2 Vols. Graz 1975 (Zur Kunde Südosteuropas, II/5), Vol. 1, p. 7: "Jelačić by nature was used to speaking openly and not concealing his thoughts."

<sup>2</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 224–5.

he issued a proclamation “to the Croat and Serb nation in the Three United Kingdoms of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia” promising equality with Hungary, political regeneration through the Diet, and social equality for all.<sup>3</sup>

On Hungary he stated:

*“The revolution has shattered and overthrown the old foundations of social life and the national and governmental relations, especially those with our old ally Hungary [...] therefore, remembering our ancient league with the crown of Hungary, it is necessary to renew the connection in a spirit of freedom, self-respect, and equality, and to form a basis worthy of a free and heroic nation, though on our side all relations with the present Hungarian ministry must be broken off.”*

On the diet:

*“We must accomplish the great work of national, governmental regeneration, above all in the proper, legal way through the National Diet (Sabor), where the wants of the whole nation can be debated and ascertained [...] Our national Diet will be the most proper field for the development of your strong spirit of nationality. Before it all the country’s wishes and requirements shall be laid, to be decided as best they may, and all will find help and fulfilment according to the will of the nation.”*

On social affairs:

Having promised that the Diet would operate “on a basis of national representation, so that, *without difference in rank*, [author’s emphasis] it may show the true will of the nation”, he added:

*“Therefore, union and brotherhood must be among us, without difference of creed; that brother has been a stranger to brother has been a cause of hate and strife between those of our blood aforesaid; No longer must the difference of belief and church make a gulf in social and official life between members of the same nation; for equality is declared. Safety and equal welfare in social and official life is now secured to every well-doing inhabitant of our Three kingdoms, without distinction of religion or rank.”* [Author’s emphasis.]

His subsequent speeches and proclamations would strike the same notes, particularly with regard to Hungary. For example, after his installation as Ban he told the crowd:<sup>4</sup>

*“Brothers! On the foundation of liberty, equality, and fraternity must be built all relations between government and people, state and state and nation and nation – this is the aim of the Time-spirit which forces humanity to struggle towards fulfilment [...] If, however, the Magyars do not behave as friends to us and to our race in Hungary, then in the words of our gallant Ban Erdödy: ‘One kingdom cannot prescribe laws for another’, and we must show them, with weapons in our hands, as we did long ago, that one nation cannot rule another [...]”*

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<sup>3</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., pp. 142–5.

<sup>4</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 169.

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And when his mission to Innsbruck failed, he published another proclamation, explaining:<sup>5</sup>

*“I took as a basis of mediation the resolutions of the Diet [...] The Archduke Palatine received me with sympathy; but neither he nor the President of the Hungarian Cabinet could give me satisfaction as to the conditions which I held to be sine qua non.”*

In short, Jelačić throughout the summer of 1848 made it clear to the whole world that he would only act as leader of a nation which enjoyed the same rights as all others under the Habsburg Monarchy and would disobey the Emperor himself, if necessary, in order to secure this. According to Hauptmann, Jelačić believed that such a programme would allow the Empire, not merely to live in peace domestically, but to dominate the Balkans, exclude Russian influence there and save blood being spilled in Balkan wars.<sup>6</sup>

### Popular support

In all of his actions he had the support of the population of Civil and Military Croatia and of the national diet. Indeed, he had been unanimously elected Ban as soon as the news of the Vienna revolution had reached Croatia by a packed town assembly at Zagreb, that is to say, even before news had arrived of his appointment to the post by the king. The same body drew up a list of thirty demands which a delegation took to Vienna, demands which were soon backed by Jelačić. They included:<sup>7</sup> – apart from Jelačić’s own nomination as Ban – the very first demand – the summoning of a national diet by 1 May, the incorporation of the Military Frontier into “a strong, new union in every respect” of the kingdoms of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia, along with “all the other parts of our country which in the course of time have become lost to us and united with the Hungarian counties and Austrian provinces”, the national independence of the above reunited kingdoms, the use of the national language as the language of internal and external administration as well as of public instruction, the foundation of a university at Zagreb, political and intellectual development on the basis of a free national spirit, freedom of the press, religion, instruction and speech, an annual diet sitting in turn at Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar and Rijeka (Fiume), the representation of the people at all future diets on the principle of equality without reference to ranks, equality before the law, public trials, independent judges, trial by jury, proportionate taxation “upon all classes, without regard to rank”, exemption from all compulsory labour services and the robot, the establishment

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<sup>5</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>6</sup> HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić’s Kriegszug*, Vol. I, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> William H. STILES, *Austria in 1848–49*. 2 Vols. New York 1852, Vol. 2, Appendix 17, pp. 379–81. On these events and the Croatian demands of 1848, cf. also the article by Nikša Stančić in the present volume of *Südost-Forschungen*.

of a national bank, restoration of national income from Hungary and a responsible finance minister, a national guard under a "lands captain" chosen by the diet, freedom for all political prisoners, the right of association, assembly and petition, free trade with the rest of the Monarchy, self-government for all towns, along with liberty and free speech, a modern and liberal organisation of county assemblies, the restriction of all public appointments, ecclesiastical or lay, to natives of the three kingdoms, the abolition of celibacy in the Church, and the use of the native language in church services, according to old rights and customs. There were also specific reforms demanded for the Military Border, reforms which will be discussed below. Jelačić, for his part, did everything he could to help meet these demands, although in a country on the brink of war with high levels of unrest, he had to impose martial law almost immediately; yet he never interfered with the work of the diet which he summoned as soon as possible, consulted regularly, and which eventually granted him full powers. (He had not sought them.)

Reports from the army to Vienna, meanwhile, also told of the mood of the borderers. For example, as early as 1 April 1848 a report from a lieutenant-colonel Gramont from the Gradiskaner regiment began:<sup>8</sup> "As Your Excellency already knows, there is an uncommon reaction in Croatia among Illyrians, Croats and Slavonians against the Hungarian nation and the former are using the present freedom of the press with all their means to win the people of the Border over to them."

### **The subordination of the Military Border to the Hungarian War Ministry**

The task of these Illyrians was helped immeasurably by rumours that the Hungarians intended to bring the Military Border within the remit of the Hungarian War Minister. At first such rumours were not believed but when, after anti-Hungarian disturbances in Pancsova, the general in command of the area, FML Piret, was sent threatening notes by two members of the Hungarian Committee of National Defence, he wrote to the War Minister, Zanini from Temesvar stating incredulously<sup>9</sup> that he could "not be in any doubt for even a moment that, according to the spirit of the ministerial decree of 7 April (No. 54), the incorporation of the Military Border within the Kingdom of Hungary [...] was in no wise

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<sup>8</sup> „Wie Euer Excellenz gnädigst bekannt sein wird, ist in Croatien ungemene Reaktion der Illirier, Croaten und Slavonier gegen die ungarische Nation, und die ersteren geben sich bei der gegenwärtigen Preßfreiheit alle Mühe, das Grenz Volk an sich zu fesseln [...]“; Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 54.

<sup>9</sup> „[...] kann ich nach dem Geiste des hohen Ministerial Erlasses von 7ten. April l. J. Nr. 54 keinen Augenblick zweifelhaft seyn, daß die Einverleibung des k.k. Grenzgebietes in das Königreich Ungarn auch für die Folge keineswegs in der Absicht des a.g. Monarchen und der verantwortlichen hohen Staats-Regierung liege [...]“; Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, KA (1848) 409, Piret to Zanini, 13 April 1848.



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part of the intention of our most gracious monarch and the responsible state-government”, he received only the following reply dated 18 April:<sup>10</sup> “If, to clear things up, I have the honour of discussing your report of the 13<sup>th</sup> of this month (No.106) in confidence – it is unfortunately presently probable [‘more than’ was scored out] that in the present link between the Military Border and the Kingdom of Hungary a closer relationship will soon be established [...]”. He was told merely to reply to the Hungarians that he been given no orders on the matter, but that of course law and order would be maintained.

Having received notes from the Hungarians informing him that all generals in Hungary and its associated territories were indeed, to go through the Hungarian War Ministry, Zanini himself, Austria’s first constitutional War Minister, told the Emperor that<sup>11</sup> “the position of the commanding generals in Hungary, Croatia, Slavonia and the Banat would be totally untenable under such circumstances”. The Emperor, however, simply referred him to the concessions he had already made to the Hungarians.<sup>12</sup>

Between then and 7 May, after a long correspondence between Zanini, Esterházy, the Hungarian Minister at Court, the Emperor, the Palatine, the Hungarian Premier, Batthyány, and General Lederer, the head of the Buda General Command, it was finally established that legally, the Hungarian War Ministry, and no longer the Austrian one, should be in charge of the Border.<sup>13</sup> General Hrabrovsky, in charge of the Slavonian General Command, saw the implications of this. Writing to Zanini on 1 May to inform him how the Serbs in the Military Border really hated the Hungarians, he most humbly suggested<sup>14</sup> “that it would greatly help avoid a bloody catastrophe if the Hungarian Ministry might arrange before assuming the direction of affairs in the Military Border to come to some friendly arrangement with the Austrian War Ministry or the Ban of Croatia.” Meanwhile Jelačić on 29 April had told Zanini that the reasons behind Hungarian demands

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<sup>10</sup> „Wenn – wie ich Euer etc. in Erledigung Ihres Praesidial-Berichtes vom 13 d. M. Zahl 106 vertraulich zu eröffnen die Ehre habe – es gleich leider sehr wahrscheinlich ist, daß rücksichtlich des Verbandes der Militär-Grenze mit dem Königreiche Ungarn ein engeres Verhältniß in Balden eintreten wird.“ Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> „[...] die kommandierenden Generäle in Ungarn, Croatien, Slavonien und dem Banate, deren Stellung unter solchen Umständen ganz unhaltbar werden würde [...]“; Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 882, Zanini to Emperor, 22 April 1848.

<sup>12</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 882, Emperor to Zanini, 29 April 1848.

<sup>13</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 882, Esterházy to Zanini, 24 April, MK (1848) 907, Batthyány to Lederer, 25 April, MK (1848) 908, Lederer to War Ministry, 29 April, MK (1848) Palatine to Zanini, 26 April, Batthyány to general commands in Hungary, 28 April, Zanini to Emperor, 2 May, MK (1848) 939, Zanini to Emperor, 27 May 1848.

<sup>14</sup> „[...] daß es zur Beseitigung blutiger Katastrophen viel beitragen würde, wenn das k. ungarische Ministerium vermocht werden könnte, vor der Geschäftsleitung in der Militärgrenze, sich mit Einem hochlöblichen Kriegsministerium oder mit dem Herrn Banus von Kroatien in gütige Wege zu verständigen.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 1001.

would not escape the just verdict of the people and would cause an excitement whose results would be unpredictable and for which [he] could not in the least take responsibility.<sup>15</sup> Both he and Piret, the head of the Banat General Command, refused to sanction troop movements ordered at this time by Batthyány.<sup>16</sup> Piret, indeed, on 6 May sent the new War Minister, FML Count Latour, three separate reports indicating how anti-Hungarian the spirit in the Military Border had become.<sup>17</sup> He himself concluded: There “is no sympathy at all among the people for the incorporation of the Military Border into the Kingdom of Hungary.” Another letter, from Hrabovsky to Latour, dated 7 May, begged the Emperor at least to introduce Hungarian control very slowly, if dangerous unrest was to be avoided.<sup>18</sup> It referred to “the ruling bitterness among the Slav people here against the Hungarians, particularly in the Military Border,” and their “loud and openly repeated intention under no circumstances to be subordinated to the royal Hungarian ministry.” Latour passed it on to the Austrian Cabinet but they declared themselves incompetent to deal with it.<sup>19</sup>

By 10 June,<sup>20</sup> Piret was openly predicting rebellion, especially among the Serb troops. Some communes were already arming, others protesting officially. A report from Colonel Ritter von Dreihann<sup>21</sup> from Weiskirchen again reported hatred of Hungary but loyalty for the king. However, Dreihann insisted that these feelings were by no means temporary nor the result of agitation by emissaries. Rather it was the course of events and Hungarian policy that had awakened attitudes the borderers were born with. They had come in delegation after delegation protesting their loyalty to the king, whose decisions, they insisted, were “not the results of the free will of his mild, fatherly heart, but had been extorted from him by the anarchistic intrigues of the Hungarians.” Their hatred for the latter was attributed to centuries of encroachments on their speech, religion, nationality and rights. Thus they did not wish to live with them, but apart from them as borderers. This, warned von Dreihann, was the spirit right across the Border and if the Hungarians persisted in their demands, the result would be widespread

<sup>15</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 926.

<sup>16</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 926 and 933b.

<sup>17</sup> „[...] für die Einverleibung des k.k. Grenzgebietes mit dem Königreich Ungarn, unter dem Volke durchaus keine Sympathien vorhanden sind.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 1191. Unless otherwise stated Piret reports from Temesvar, Jelačić from Zagreb and Hrabovsky from Peterwardein, the respective headquarters of their general commands.

<sup>18</sup> „Bei der herrschenden Erbitterung der hierlandigen slavischen Bevölkerung gegen das Ungarntum, bei der besonders in der Militär Grenze laut und offen ausgesprochenen Absicht, auf keinen Fall dem königlichen ungarischen Ministerium unterstehen zu wollen.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 2277.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 2480.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.: „[...] nicht aus dem freyen Willen seines milden Vaterherzes gefloßen, sondern Allerhöchstdemselben durch die anarchischen magyarischen Umtriebe abgedrungen worden sei.“

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misfortune. Jelačić, also writing on 10 June from Zagreb<sup>22</sup> said the fuss over the subordination of the Military Border to the Hungarian Ministry, was less one of avoiding bureaucratic rivalries than “the prevention of a full-scale uprising in the country and particularly in the Military Border [die Hintanhaltung eines vollständigen Aufruhrs im Lande und insbesondere in der Militärgrenze].” He assured Latour that if he “really undertook to publicise” what was happening (he had no intention of doing so of course) “it would cause a general revolt, the, as yet, firm faith in the Monarchy and loyal support for the imperial flag would be destroyed, and the authority of every office would be abolished at a stroke.” The lives and property of all officers and state officials in the Border would come under threat. It had to be remembered, he emphasised, that the borderers were “a thoroughly armed and warlike people, who as a result of their conditions [had] not yet reached a particularly high level of civilisation”<sup>23</sup> and thus could soon bring about anarchy and represent a great danger to the state. In the interests of the Emperor himself and of law and order therefore, he would not publicise the declaration of the Hungarian Ministry. He ended: “Croatia and Slavonia have not recognised the Hungarian Ministry, so that it is also for me a pure impossibility to do anything until a definitive settlement has been reached over this matter which takes into account the will of the nation as expressed legally in the present diet.”<sup>24</sup> (At this point, then, he still seemed to be hoping for a compromise – presumably on the part of the Hungarians.)

Reports to the War Ministry in Vienna on hostility to the Hungarian ministry continued throughout the summer. On 8 July, for example, Piret wrote<sup>25</sup> that officers who refused to commit themselves in writing to support the Hungarian Ministry would lose their pay and pension (“For those refusing the added threat is made that the National Committee would not be in a position to protect them from the people’s wrath”). On 11 July, he reported<sup>26</sup> that the Imperial Manifesto of 10 June (which dismissed Jelačić as Ban) had no credibility when distributed. Indeed, in many places its publication could not even be risked. Finally, on 23

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<sup>22</sup> „[...] wenn ich es wirklich unternehmen wollte, zu publiciren, dieß einen allgemeinen Aufstand verursachen würde, der bei dem Grenzvolk bisher noch feste bewahrte Glaube an die Monarchie, die treue Anhänglichkeit an die kaiserliche Fahnen wären erschüttert, die Autorität jeder Behörde wäre mit einem Schlage vernichtet.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 2503.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem: „daß die Grenzer ein durchaus bewaffnetes, kriegerisches Volk sind, welches in Folge seiner Verhältnisse noch auf keiner besonderen Stufe bürgerlicher Civilization steht.“

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.: „Croatien und Slavonien haben das ungerische Ministerium nicht anerkannt, daher es auch für mich eine reine Unmöglichkeit ist, bis zur definitiven Ausgleichung dieser Angelegenheit gegen den auf dem dermaligen Reichstage gesetzlich schon ausgesprochenen Willen der Nation Etwas zu unternehmen.“

<sup>25</sup> „Für die sich Weigernden ist die Drohung beigefügt, daß das National Comite sie vor dem Grimme des Volkes zu schützen, nicht im Stande seyn würde.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 3367.

<sup>26</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 3419.

July he was communicating threats from Meszaros, the Hungarian War Minister, who was telling all troops in the Military Border that opposition would not be tolerated and that orders had to be obeyed. Any officer unhappy with the Hungarian government would be told he could “exercise his duties elsewhere immediately [seine Dienste ohneweiters anderswohin antragen könne].”<sup>27</sup> By now, however, Hrabovsky had found himself at war with the Serbs of the Vojvodina, Piret had asked to be relieved of his command and to be given one in the field somewhere, while Jelačić simply held to his programme, telling Latour on 21 August.<sup>28</sup> “The land of Croatia and the whole Military Border will never submit to the Hungarian Ministry under any conditions, but will always remain loyal to the imperial house and the Monarchy as a whole and will sacrifice their last drop of blood to uphold them.” He added that whereas people expected not the slightest help from Hungary they placed much greater confidence in the more influential intervention of the imperial royal (i.e. Austrian) War Ministry.

### The problem of what to do

Despite the growing hostility of the Military Border to Hungarian policy, Latour could offer little help politically, telling Piret, for example, on 27 June 1848:<sup>29</sup>

*“However much I regret the growing unrest in the Borderlands, and the difficult position Your Excellency finds yourself in, I can only at the same time repeat what I was already in a position to tell you in my decree number 2691 MK of 20<sup>th</sup>. of this month, namely that in the present circumstances, I can exercise no influence at all on conditions there and can do no more than to bring your Excellency’s reports, which describe the position of the Border as well as the sad results which ensue from it, so clearly and vividly, to the attention of His Majesty and take any further steps which in his most wise judgement may seem necessary.”*

Under these circumstances Jelačić’s game was one of waiting and hoping while appeasing the Court as much as possible. Thus he would go to Innsbruck to

<sup>27</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 3805.

<sup>28</sup> „Das Land Kroazien und die gesammte Militär Grenze wird sich dem ungarischen Ministerium niemals und unter keinen Bedingungen unterwerfen, sondern stets treu dem allerhöchsten Kaiserhause und der Gesamt-Monarchie für deren Aufrechthaltung den letzten Blutropfen opfern.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 4526.

<sup>29</sup> „So sehr ich die immer mehr um sich greifenden Wirren in den Grenzländern bedauere und die schwierige Lage begreife in der sich E. E. befinden, so kann ich gleichwohl nur wiederholen, was ich Hochdemselben bereits in meinem Erlasse vom 20 d. Mtes. Nr. 2691 MK zu bemerken in dem Falle war, daß ich nämlich bei den bestehenden Umständen durchaus keinen Einfluß auf die bedrohlichen Verhältnisse dortselbst nehmen und nichts anders thun kann als E. E. Berichte, welche die Lage der Gränze, sowie die zu gewärtigenden, traurigen Folgen, in so klarer und eindringlicher Weise schildern, zur a.h. Kenntniß S. M. zu bringen und die weiteren zu ergreifenden Maßregeln Allerhochdessen weisestem [?, hardly readable] Ermessen anheim zu stellen.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv MK (1848) 2807.



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explain his case and go to Vienna to negotiate with Batthyány, although at no point being willing to concede anything. He had a few cards to play apart from the solid support of the borderers: the fact that key members of the imperial family sympathised with him; his support of Radetzky in Italy; the reluctance of the Hungarians to push their luck. Perhaps he even thought that the Hungarians would compromise if he held out long enough, for it was probably not until the breakdown of the Vienna negotiations that he decided to invade Hungary. At one point during his very early days as Ban, according to his brother George, he said:<sup>30</sup> “The Monarchy hangs by a thread; and if it is cut, then woe to our fatherland. The first consequence would be a Magyar raid into Croatia, and nothing would remain for us to do but to put on the red caps, mount pistols in our belts, and call out all the Turkish troops of our race; *and then would follow a race war with all its horrors, a thing I will do anything to prevent*” (author’s emphasis). Radetzky’s victory in Italy plus the refusal of the Magyars to consider a united Monarchy with equal rights for the South Slavs, however, would later make him reconsider the military option. On the other hand, he always believed that he would be supported by the army in Hungary, allowing a quick and relatively peaceful restoration of imperial authority if and when he did invade Hungary.

It is interesting to consider the strengths and weaknesses of his position in more detail.

### The position of the Imperial Family

Regarding the imperial family, all he had to go on were a few words from the Archduchess Sophie and the refusal of the Archduke John to break with him decisively, even after the Emperor had acquiesced in Esterházy’s demand to suspend him as Ban. He met the Archduke Franz Karl and the Archduchess Sophie after his emotional speech to the assembled court at Innsbruck where he had been summoned to defend his refusal to submit to Hungarian laws. Famously, he had reduced the Empress and the Archduchess to tears and had even made a profound impression on Esterházy by his eloquence on that occasion. (The latter had refused to countersign the imperial decree dismissing Jelačić, thereby presumably invalidating it.<sup>31</sup>) From the dramatic start<sup>32</sup> – “Sire, I ask Your Majesty’s pardon, but I want to save the Empire” – to the passionate *cri de coeur* “These gentlemen may live if they wish, when the Empire has fallen – But I, I cannot” – he offered the dynasty a new strategy for survival, namely the repudiation of the April Laws and alliance with the Slavs. Afterwards the Arch-

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<sup>30</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>31</sup> See István DÉAK, *The Lawful Revolution. Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848–1849*. New York 1979, p. 137.

<sup>32</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 179.



duchess had told him:<sup>33</sup> “You are our only hope, our strongest support [...] there are moments in the life of peoples when they must read the heart of their rulers without reference to what they say.” Meanwhile the Archduke John, who after all had been a key figure in securing his original appointment and who had arranged his appearance before the Court at Innsbruck<sup>34</sup>, would not have him dismissed, despite the Royal Rescript of 10 June which Kossuth had had published immediately after the Innsbruck speech, and which ostensibly removed him from the office of Ban. Instead, Jelačić was invited to Vienna to negotiate with Batthyány under the Archduke’s mediation, the invitation coming in an Imperial Letter addressed to “My Ban of Croatia, FML Baron Jellachich” and counter-signed by the Archduke himself.<sup>35</sup> The negotiations took place at the end of July and there is a Hungarian source for the Archduke’s attitude at this time, namely the secret reports in the Schwarzenberg Nachlass from Hungarian State Counsellor Eduard Zsédeny at Vienna to Batthyány and Kossuth.<sup>36</sup> The former, deputising for Esterházy, who was unwell, had a meeting with the Archduke on the 18 July (report from Vienna, 19 July) during which he had suggested that if Jelačić were not merely deposed but sent out of the Military Border altogether, the Hungarian government’s job would be so much easier since a new, capable Ban “could restore peace and order right away [allsogleich den Frieden und die Ruhe herstellen könnte].”

The Archduke replied, not exactly denying this, but said he wanted to give no definite answer until he had spoken to the Illyrians and Croats in Vienna and to Home Minister Dobbelhoff, the latter, being, according to rumour, in correspondence with Jelačić. The following day the Archduke was more definite. He said that the supporters of Jelačić would in no way agree to his removal or banishment but that in any case he himself “was convinced that Jelačić, should a peaceful compromise be reached, would honestly and successfully see it through.” He was also convinced that “if he were to be removed from there, there would be no peace to be reckoned with in Croatia.”<sup>37</sup> He was expecting Jelačić and a Croat delegation to arrive in Vienna soon and hoped that he would be able to return shortly after that to Frankfurt (he had been elected *Reichsverweser* of Germany) with the consolation that “as well as securing the rights of the Hungarian Crown,

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<sup>33</sup> Ernest BAUER, Joseph Graf Jellachich de Buzim, Banus von Kroatien. Schicksal und Legende des kroatischen Helden von 1848. Wien, München 1975, p. 135.

<sup>34</sup> For the role of the Archduke, see Ferdinand HAUPTMANN, Erzherzog Johann als Vermittler zwischen Kroatien und Ungarn im Sommer 1848. Graz 1972 (Zur Kunde Südosteuropas, II/I).

<sup>35</sup> BAUER, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>36</sup> Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettsarchiv, Geheimakten, Schwarzenberg Nachlaß, Karton 13, Fasc. VIII.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: „der Erzherzog selbst davon überzeugt sei, daß Jellacic für den Fall einer friedlichen Ausgleichung, die Pacification aufrichtig und mit guten Erfolg durchführen würde [...], in Croatien aber, wenn er sich von dort entfert, auf keine Ruhe zu rechnen ist.“

the inhabitants of Croatia would also have been put at rest by the fulfilment of their reasonable desires – so that the peace and agreement necessary for the whole Empire would have been secured.”<sup>38</sup>

On 21 July, Zsédeny wrote to Kossuth informing him that Esterházy had met the Archduke and had warned him both that all business regarding the Hungarian War Ministry had to go through him and that the sending of any weapons or war materials to Croatia at this time would be seen as an open breach of the peace and an unfriendly act – and would have the most serious results for Austro-Hungarian relations, particularly with regard to the link with Austria itself.<sup>39</sup>

*“The Archduke John in reply said that he knew nothing of that, but in any case he would speak to the War Minister right away and tell him that if Jellachich really demanded cannon and ammunition, ‘he was to be sent none under any circumstances,’ although he did add that the borderers had enough cannon so that they would not need any more.”*

Hrabovsky, indeed, had pleaded with the Archduke to mediate a peace. Zsédeny, however, believed that “should the Ministry here make trouble for us, then nobody could complain if we did everything to disturb the peace here and overthrow them [Sollte das hiesige Ministerium gegen uns seine Hähne reitzen, so kann es Niemand übel nehmen, wenn wir zu seinem Sturze auch durch Verwirrungen der hiesigen Ruhe alles aufbieten].” In fact, he tended to believe that if the Hungarians just closed the border to the Croats for six months, they would end up coming back to their senses, as he put it.

### The Hungarian attitude

This attitude seemed to indicate – as indeed did the whole tenor of his reports – that the Hungarians were in no great hurry to resolve the Croat problem other than by keeping up the pressure on Vienna. They were aware that Austria was in a very precarious position, with the war in Italy apparently going badly and Germany threatening to unite under Prussia. Some experts believe that their grand plan was simply to wait for the Monarchy to lose Lombardy-Venetia and be excluded from Germany, so that the dynasty would have to move to Buda and

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: „[...] daß er nebst der Sicherung der Rechte der ungarischen Krone, auch die Bewohner Croatiens durch die Erfüllung ihrer billigen Wunsche zufrieden gestellt, und so den – für das ganze Reich – so nothwendigen Frieden und Übereinstimmung herbeigeführt habe.“

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: „Der Erzherz. Johann äußerte sich dahin, nichts davon zu wissen, übrigens werde er allsogleich mit dem Kriegsminister sprechen, daß falls Jellacic wirklich Kanonen und Munitionen verlangt hatte, ihm solche auf keinen Fall verabfolgt werden. Der Erzherzog hat auch das beigefügt, daß die Gränzer mehrerer Kannonen haben, also nicht glaube, daß er solche verlangt hatte.“

base its future prospects on Hungary.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps there were variations of this idea circulating at the time. The secret papers in the Schwarzenberg Nachlass also contain a document<sup>41</sup> which describes a social evening in Frankfurt in July 1848 at which Szály, the Hungarian representative, von Radowitz, the Prussian statesman, Robert Blum, the German radical deputy and others discussed a plan of Kossuth's to absorb the Habsburg Monarchy into "a great federal Empire [ein großes foederatives Reich]" comprising four parts: the first, the German provinces, presided over by Emperor Ferdinand as German Emperor; the second, Hungary, with Transylvania, Croatia, Slavonia, the Illyrian Coast and Dalmatia under Franz Joseph as King; the third, Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia and the Bukovina as a Slav Empire under the Archduke Franz Karl with its capital in Prague; and the fourth, Italy, under Franz Joseph's brother Ferdinand, with its capital in Milan. This great federal empire would then attack Turkey and take over the provinces of Wallachia, Moldavia and Bulgaria, to which Hungary could rightly lay claim. However, they would form a new Empire of Wallachia under the sceptre of Franz Karl's third son, Karl. Predictably, according to the anonymous author of this report, it was von Radowitz who objected to these plans, saying: "the Hungarian government appears to want either to ignore the three hundred-year-old history of its nation or to deny it, if it follows such a miserable policy, which is not consistent with either the claims of a Europe which is regenerating itself nor with the interests of Hungary."<sup>42</sup> Only by getting rid of the Habsburgs, he said, could Hungary change Europe. She must give up the dynasty. He himself, would do everything possible to free Europe of the Habsburgs – and only awaited the signal from Kossuth, whom he had got to know at the 1847–8 diet at Pressburg.

If there were an element of fantasy about such discussions, the reality of Hungary's military position meant that she had every incentive to move slowly. For a start, the dynasty, as has been seen, was offering her control of all her own armed forces inside and outside of Hungary – including promotions and appointments, locations, provisions, and military justice. The raising and organising of new forces – the *honvedség* – was also underway and needed time to complete<sup>43</sup>,

<sup>40</sup> See István HAJNAL, *A Batthyány-Kormány külpolitikája*. Budapest, 1957.

<sup>41</sup> Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettsarchiv, Geheimakten, Schwarzenberg Nachlaß, Karton 10, Fasc. IV.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.: „Die ungarische Regierung scheint die dreihundertjährige Geschichte der Nation entweder ignorieren oder verläugnen zu wollen, indem sie so eine miserable Politik befolgt, die weder den Ansprüchen des sich verjugenden Europas angemessen, noch Ungarn nützlich ist.“

<sup>43</sup> On the build-up of the Hungarian armed forces see, Aladár URBÁN, *One Army and Two Ministers of War: The Armed Forces of the Habsburg Empire between Emperor and King*, and Zóltan BARCY, *The Army of the 1848–1849 Hungarian War of Independence*, in: Béla K. KIRÁLY (ed.), *East Central European Society and War in the Era of Revolutions, 1776–1856*. New York 1984 (*East European Monographs*, 150. *War and Society in East central Europe*, IV), pp. 419–438 and pp. 439–472 respectively. Also DÉAK, *op. cit.*

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while each side in the potential war had some difficulty in estimating the size of the other. For example, old Count Drašković at Innsbruck took care to inform Esterházy that the Croats could raise 60,000 men not to mention the battalions in Italy or the Serbs.<sup>44</sup> For their part, for reasons of finance and foreign policy, the Hungarians liked to underestimate the number of troops available to them. Thus when Batthyány was quoted on 2 May as saying that the total troop strength in Hungary was only 18,000 men, Latour, the very next day, sent Esterházy the latest, most accurate figure to date – 31,673, soon to reach 35,217, once troops on leave had returned to duty.<sup>45</sup> Clearly, Latour was very wary of the Hungarians, although so long as the war continued in Italy, so long as the Hungarian national defences were still being built up, and so long as the Emperor was prepared to continue making concessions to Batthyány all the time, there was little reason to fear a Hungarian attack.

### Jelačić and Italy

The final advantage that Jelačić possessed was his record on Italy. The Hungarians did not at first seem to understand this, with one Hungarian agent, a man called Sermage, reporting to someone called Vargha in Vienna as late as 21 August that<sup>46</sup> “the two battalions of regular borderers come from Italy and declare that they will not shoot at Hungarian troops with whom on campaign they shared bread and death, but that if ordered to fire they will put aside their weapons.” Moreover, the officers and troops of Jelačić’s camp were so tired of waiting around “that it could easily happen, especially in unfavourable times, that everything could go to the devil and they could go home.” In fact, this was really beside the point, for not only did Jelačić manage to contain pressure to recall the borderers from Italy (pressure that was manifested both in the thirty demands of the original Zagreb assembly and at the Diet in the wake of the 10 June Rescript dismissing him) but he sent reinforcements to Radetzky, while Kossuth withheld them, demanding instead that the Austrians make peace with the Italians on terms akin to surrender. In the end the Italians regarded the Hungarians as pro-Italian and the Croats as pro-Austrian. This point was not lost on the Austrian authorities in Vienna either, one of whose greatest fears during the summer of 1848 was that the Hungarian and South Slav troops in Italy would be recalled or simply desert to fight at home on account of events in the Military Border.

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<sup>44</sup> BAUER, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>45</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 999.

<sup>46</sup> Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettsarchiv, Geheimakten, Schwarzenberg Nachlaß, Karton 13, Fasc. IV: „Die 2 Baons. Regulirte Grenzer kommen aus Italien und erklären, daß sie gegen ungar. Truppen, mit welchen sie im Feldzuge, Brod und Tod geteilt, nicht schiessen, sondern wenn ‘Feuer’ comdrt. wird, ‘beim Fuß’ nehmen werden.“ And: „daß, es leicht geschehen könnte, besonders wenn die ungünstige Zeit eintritt, daß alle zum Teufel nach Hause gehen [...].“



Radetzky took great care to prevent a mini-civil war breaking out within his own army<sup>47</sup> and in this he was immeasurably aided by Jelačić, who at key points sent proclamations to the South Slav troops fighting under him. The first, dated 20 June and given to Schwarzenberg at Innsbruck, advised them:<sup>48</sup>

*“Do not allow yourselves to be diverted by reports and fears for the safety of your country from the arduous but honourable duty imposed upon you of defending the Throne and the State in Italy. Already the praise of your heroism and your perseverance under difficulties resounds throughout Europe. Do not soil your renown by any act which would be incompatible with your oath of allegiance or unworthy of yourselves or your brave fathers.”*

The climax of the proclamation was: “And be assured that we still feel strong enough at home to protect our houses and to defend our nationality without any assistance from you.” On receiving it Radetzky wrote to Latour from Verona on 23 June saying:<sup>49</sup>

*“I cannot help but admit that Baron Jellachich is a man who can render great service to the state and that he, as well as the nationality he represents, should be treated with respect and not unconditionally spurned. A rebellion, even the withdrawal of the borderers, would have a terrible effect on my position. What would be left for me to do if I had to fight a numerically strong army in front of me while an insurgency was going on in my rear?”*

But, admire Jelačić as he did, he still had to tell Latour in September 1848 that he had no funds with which to help him.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, Latour could do little either, informing the Field Marshal:<sup>51</sup> “I will do all I can as far as the ministry is concerned to get them to send the money needed by Jelačić to provide for his troops. I know it will not be enough and I am sorry that I cannot do more for him. I am sorry, too, that Your Excellency is in no real position to support him.”

By the beginning of October, with the invasion of Hungary and the Vienna revolution, things were looking bad once again in Italy. Schwarzenberg's great admirer, Hubner, put the situation thus:<sup>52</sup> “The Hungarians are restless, and proclamations of Kossuth's have been found among them. If they desert, the Croats will go too, to fight them at home, and nothing will stop them. Only Germans, a third of the army will remain, and the King of Sardinia, will seize

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<sup>47</sup> See Alan SKED, *The Survival of the Habsburg Empire, Radetzky, The Imperial Army and the Class War, 1848*. London, New York 1979, pp. 64–74. Also, IDEM, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918*. London, New York 1989, chapter three.

<sup>48</sup> Vienna, *Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 2863*. Quoted in SKED, *Survival*, pp. 71–2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Vienna, *Kriegsarchiv (1848) 4844*. Quoted in SKED, *Survival*, p. 72.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 262.



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the opportunity to break the armistice.” So Jelačić again came to the rescue with a second, similar proclamation.<sup>53</sup>

It was a mark of Jelačić's contribution to the survival of the Monarchy that Radetzky could build up his number of borderers from the 6,000 or so he had left after his initial reverses in Italy in 1848 (some 4,000 had been cut off or had had to withdraw to non-Italian territory) to 30,000 by December 1848. Yet Italy worked both ways, for once Radetzky had defeated Charles Albert at Custoza on 25 July, the need to appease the Hungarians disappeared, just as the need to reassert control over the Monarchy's finances and defences became both more obvious and more practical. Jelačić was the obvious beneficiary.

His position, however, in the summer of 1848, was basically always a weak one. Not only did he have to cope with the duplicity of the Court, but his financial position was precarious in the extreme. There were also complaints from the borderers that some of the grievances which they had been told would be remedied, remained.

### Jelačić as Social Reformer

The same Hungarian agent, Sermage, for example, who had reported that the borderers returning from Italy would never fight the Hungarians, also reported as late as 21 August 1848 that the credit for social reform was being given to the Hungarians. Thus it was “certain that not only in every Croat town and every small market the inhabitants, at least the better off, [had] completely deserted Jelačić.”<sup>54</sup> Better still, the peasantry “with perhaps only few exceptions [vielleicht mit sehr geringen Ausnahmen]” had attached themselves to Hungary, since they knew only too well “that Hungary had abolished feudal relations [daß Ungarn die Feudalverhältnisse aufgehoben hat].” Finally, the levying of an extra war tax was making the peasant say:<sup>55</sup> “to pay tax and to serve as a soldier in the guard –this is a heavier burden for me than the robot [zahlen und auch Soldatendienste leisten, dies ist mir größere Last als die Robot].” The peasantry, therefore, according to Sermage, believed that the Hungarians had been too good to them to fight them.

Perhaps this was not all just wishful thinking. The original thirty demands of the Croats had included not merely the abolition of the robot and all other forms of forced labour, but reforms which applied to borderers in particular, namely, the use of their own language as the language of command, the provision

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<sup>53</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–3.

<sup>54</sup> „Gewiß ist es, daß nicht nur in jeder kroatischen Stadt und in jedem Marktflecken die Bewohner, zumal die Bemittelteren, Jellacic gänzlich verlassen haben.“ Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettsarchiv, Geheimakten, Schwarzenberg Nachlaß, Karton 13, Fasc. VIII.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

of food, clothing and pay for frontier duties, native officers, the expulsion of foreign troops from the Border, the administration of the Border's finances by its own ministry and not from Vienna, equal rights with the citizens of the rest of the Triune Kingdom, the free import of sea-salt, free local government, and the restoration to communes of their forest and pasturage rights.

On 7 April disturbances in Semlin had already caused Zanini to promise Piret that the monarch would not refuse<sup>56</sup> "the brave and loyal population of the Military Border [...] all favours which their neighbours in provincial territories enjoy." However, he noted that reforms would take time and that they could only be introduced as circumstances permitted. In the meantime, he wrote:<sup>57</sup>

*"It is more important for the maintenance of general order that, until this can be arranged, all orders for compulsory labour, if not stopped completely, should be restricted, with all foresight, only to those which cannot be avoided, particularly public building projects, so as not to give any cause for calls to resist the authorities on account of presently avoidable orders or any abuse of public or field works."*

This view was circulated to Jelačić and Hrabovsky as well.

On 4 April, Hrabovsky had already made his own suggestions to the War Council regarding reforms.<sup>58</sup> These included lighter cordon duties (men were often left for two weeks at a time to fend for themselves), the abolition of compulsory labour services – the cost of which, he suggested, might be recovered by a tax on common grazing based on the number of cattle so the poor did not pay as much as the rich – and the abolition of taxes on cattle crossing over ditches built around young forest plantations. Often the ditches had never been dug so that the taxes were for things that didn't exist; in other cases, if cattle escaped, some families had to pay two to three times over. Hrabovsky was concerned that the borderers would be stirred into rebellion by Hungarian agents since they had long been complaining of their grievances "and with good reason [und hiezu auch allerding's einigen Grund haben]". Now young men were pointing out that in neighbouring lands the robot and tithe were *de facto* abolished and that freedom and equality were being preached everywhere. He therefore demanded speedy concessions for the borderers as well.

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<sup>56</sup> „Die treue und tapfere GränzBevölkerung wird wohl überzeugt seyn, daß unser Allergnädigster Monarch, ihnen jene Begünstigungen, nicht versagen wird, welcher sich ihre Nachbarn im provincial Gebieth erfreuen.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, CK (1848) 1109 Praes.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.: „Noch wesentlicher wird es zur allgemeinen Beruhigung beitragen, wenn die Grenz. Regter., bis dieser Gegenstand geordnet sein wird, alle Commandierungen zur aerarial Arbeit, wenn nicht ganz einstellen, wenigstens mit aller Vorsicht nur auf das unumgänglichste beschränken, was sich besonders auch auf die aerarischen Baulichkeiten begreift, damit nicht durch dortig vermeidliche Commandierungen im jetzigen Augenblick oder vielleicht gar durch Mißbrauch mit der aerarial oder GrundArbeit, irgend ein Anlaß zu Renitenz von den Behörden selbst hervorgerufen werde.“

<sup>58</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 54.

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Clearly one of his motives was to prevent unrest among the troops, for according to his report, when four companies of the Don Miguel Infantry (Hungarians) had entered Peterwardein they had been asked by the border troops<sup>59</sup> “if it was true that the Hungarian peasant enjoyed freedom and equality with his master, that he had to pay no robot or tithe, that he lived as an entirely free man and that the small number of officers at the disposal of the regiments was insufficient to teach the Border population what was really going on and to keep the peace?” Also Croat demands were being circulated which, naturally, would not fail to strike a response.

On 23 March, even before Jelačić had been given his command, Count Auersperg, the commander of the Croatian Military Command was sent a report from FML Dahlen, proposing a whole list of reforms.<sup>60</sup> Dahlen had spent four years in the Border and had travelled throughout all three general commands there, so that he felt that he knew the borderers and their problems well. His reforms included the reduction of cordon and watch duties to 120 days per year and at a distance no longer than four miles from their families; more than the present 4kr. a day (without bread) in pay for men used on supplementary watch and cordon duty; higher pay for reservists who received only 28kr. for 7 days work which required 3 days extra travel in the first place (for which they weren't paid) and who were given no subsidies for boots or cloaks; the abolition of compulsory labour services; the abolition of forced labour on communal projects (this was now undertaken “with a repugnance bordering on obstinacy [bis an Widerspenstigkeit gränzenden Widerwillen]”); the abolition of the “Concreto Anbau” or the cultivation of pastures and unused estates (often the grain was not even harvested, so that the borderers would have been better off tending their own farms); an increased supply of salt, which the borderers often had to do without; better payment for uniforms; fewer subsidies for local magistrates; better treatment for borderers found smuggling grain, salt or meat from Bosnia, many of whom were jailed for six months or had to run the gauntlet, despite the fact that there had been no plague for years on the Turkish frontier; less use of corporal punishment for those who were not enrolled on active service (it was supposed to be restricted to apprentices, day-labourers and servants but was used indiscriminately); and less harsh laws on woodlands. Auersperg backed Dahlen and added comments of his own. Some of these points, he admitted, were being addressed, while others had always been rejected as too expensive to implement. He himself thought that

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<sup>59</sup> „[...] ob es wahr sei, daß der ungarische Bauer mit seinem Herr Freiheit und Gleichheit genieße, keine Robotten, keinen Zehnten zu leisten habe, und überhaupt als freier Mann lebe, und die gegenwärtig nur in sehr geringer Zahl den Regimentern zur Disposition stehenden Offiziere reichen nicht hin, um die Grenzbevölkerung über das Geschehene gehörig zu belehren und zu beruhigen.“ Ibid. There was only one officer for about every 1,000 men.

<sup>60</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 129.

the list might be extended to include an end of compulsory labour for the upkeep of roads and alleys as well as the lowering of taxes on wine.<sup>61</sup>

Zanini replied on 10 April saying that these matters were being looked into, but that it was important to protect woodlands. Punishments, he agreed, should be kept as mild as possible.<sup>62</sup> The real question in the Border, though, was what difference Jelačić would make?

The answer was that on 25 April 1848, the birthday of Emperor Ferdinand and the saint's day of St. Mark, the patron saint of Croatia, the Ban abolished serfdom and forced labour services. In a report of 30 April to the Emperor, however, he admitted that the immediate result had been<sup>63</sup> "to put the entire peasantry in a highly excited mood" and had led in several places "to false ideas that the peasant was now the lord and the landlord no longer [had] possession of his land." Malcontents were telling the peasants "that they [owed] their freedom to the Magyars and [had] the Illyrians and nobles to thank for their taxes," while others were afraid for their lives and had a fear of communism. Certainly "all kinds of excesses had been the result." Meanwhile, after petitions from the borderers which the Diet had taken great care to deal with, the latter drew up a Border Constitution which was agreed by Jelačić. This not only extended to the frontier the general reforms already conceded to the rest of the Triune Kingdom but in a long list of articles set out the special rights and duties – civil, military and administrative – of every Border inhabitant. It covered topics such as forage, military equipment and woodlands, especially wood-cutting and tree-preservation, and even the use of acorns. On 6 August 1848, therefore, the Ban could issue a proclamation<sup>64</sup> which summarised the new rights, privileges, duties, taxes, pay during service etc. etc. and ordered that it and the General Order which followed it should be read in all churches on the next three Sundays. It said that the new arrangements had been approved by the Diet (including their own representatives of course), by him and by the King and included the words: "Thus the greater part of the alleviation you have so longed for is accomplished. This was your greatest burden, and now for ever it is raised from your shoulders; and all your other requirements will be attended to in due course." In the middle of all his other preoccupations, therefore, Jelačić found the time, in consultation with the diet, to abolish forced labour services and to remedy or try to remedy the other main grievances of the borderers.

Doubtless not everyone was satisfied, but by now the main preoccupation, after the failure of the Vienna talks, was the question of Hungary. And on this matter everyone knew exactly where Jelačić stood. Thus on 27 August he could report<sup>65</sup> that regiments under Hrabrovsky's command were deserting to him, en-

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> BAUER, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>64</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–4.

<sup>65</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv MK (1848) 4598.



closing protocols from the officers and men of the Broder and Gradiska border regiments that declared that in order to protect their nationality and the integrity of the Austrian Monarchy from “the separatist tendencies of the Hungarian Ministry [die separatistischen Tendenzen des magyarischen Ministeriums]”, they were freely transferring their allegiance from the Slavonian General Command, which followed the orders of the Hungarian Ministry to the Banat-Warasdin-Karlstadt General Command. From now on Jelačić himself would be their commanding officer, since, as he explained,<sup>66</sup> “without this rule both regiments would soon dissolve themselves, in which case they must degenerate into the same conditions that have occurred in the Syrmien and Banat border regiments.” The latter had split up under the impact of the Serb revolt against the Hungarians, when Hrabovsky became embroiled in the “mini-war” against the Monarchy’s Serbs. Indeed, Hrabovsky and Slavonia posed a constant threat to Jelačić and his plans.

### Hrabovsky<sup>67</sup>

The head of the Slavonian General Command was General Hrabovsky, an eighty-year old, who like Radetzky, had fought against Napoleon. He had been highly decorated (he was a knight of the military Maria Theresa Order<sup>68</sup>) and had been a secret counsellor and friend of Francis I. In other words, he had already been a figure of some importance while Jelačić was still a subaltern. Like Jelačić he was thoroughly devoted to the dynasty, but, unlike the Ban, attempted to follow the orders of the Emperor with military exactitude, however contradictory they appeared to be. Thus he took his orders from the Royal Hungarian War Ministry, while all the time keeping in contact with Latour. Crucially, following instructions from Buda, he refused to publish Jelačić’s proclamations in Slavonia.

This situation might not have caused Jelačić too much trouble, but twice – in May and then again in June – the Hungarians appointed Hrabovsky, a Magyar by birth, Royal Commissioner to Croatia and Slavonia, with the job of restoring law and order there. The first time, Hrabovsky took the appointment seriously until the furious reaction in Croatia disabused him (the frontier with Slavonia was closed, portraits of the Palatine burned, Hrabovsky’s proclamations torn down and Jelačić’s adjutant sent to warn him not to try to enter Croatia); then, after a meeting with Jelačić on 30 May at Gradec on the Croatian/Slavonian frontier, during which he was persuaded both of the loyalty of the Ban to the

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<sup>66</sup> „[...] ohne diese Maßregel sich beide Regimente bald auflösen und in einem solchen Zustand verfallen müßten, wie dieß bei den Grenz Regimentern in Syrmien und im Banat der Fall ist.“ Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See BAUER, op. cit., pp. 107–8, 115–117, 134–141 and Walter GÖRLITZ, Jelačić, Symbol für Kroatien. Die Biographie. Wien, München 1992, p. 102.

<sup>68</sup> DÉAK, op. cit., p. 331.



dynasty and of the impossibility of his own position, he restricted himself to running his general command from Peterwardein. By the time the Hungarians sought to revive his position he was much wiser, telling them that he would not make a fool of himself twice.<sup>69</sup> In any case he was so dissatisfied with a Hungarian policy, that, in his opinion, had provoked the Serbs of Lower Hungary and the Military Border to revolt (“a system of terror inflicted on an excited people merely inflames them further [das Schrecken System die aufgeregten Gemüther nur noch mehr aufreizt]”), that he had asked to be relieved of his post.<sup>70</sup> Having then become involved in a mini-war with the Serbs – which, he stressed he had not started<sup>71</sup>) – he was in no position to arrest Jelačić when the latter toured Slavonia in July, as the Hungarians wanted. In fact he had another meeting with Jelačić (one story was that he had originally set an ambush for him) but to no purpose. Jelačić gave his support to the Serbs, while Hrabovsky, his forces deserting to either Jelačić or the Serbs, remained marooned in Peterwardein, practically cut off from the rest of the army.<sup>72</sup> Jelačić, meanwhile, prepared to invade Hungary, doing so with such confidence that the eighty-year-old general convinced himself that the Ban must be acting on higher authority. He himself was still cooperating as much as possible with the Hungarians, but he wrote to Latour asking in confidence to be told either officially or unofficially what the truth really was.<sup>73</sup> He got no written reply.

By September, however, he had been put in charge of the Buda general command and was feeling just as mixed-up there. He followed the news of Jelačić's invasion and was prepared simply to wait for him to arrive in the Hungarian capital. As always, he was never sure either what was going on or who he should obey. He wrote to Latour on 26 September:<sup>74</sup> “I have the honour to bring it to the attention of Your Excellency that the confusion here grows even greater and in the end people do not know who is issuing orders or what is happening since contradictory orders are issued, commands are often countermanded and their execution is often impossible.” He hoped that the Hungarians would not view him as a traitor like Count Teleki, but since he stuck with his fellow Hungarians until January 1849, it was the Austrians who adopted this view. Despite the fact

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<sup>69</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 3201, Hrabovsky to Latour, 1 July and Hrabovsky to the Hungarian War Ministry, 28 June.

<sup>70</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 2637, Hrabovsky to Hungarian War Ministry, 14 June.

<sup>71</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 2673, and MK (1848) 4542, Hrabovsky to Latour, 23 August.

<sup>72</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 4612, Hrabovsky to Latour, 25 August.

<sup>73</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv (1848) 4542, Hrabovsky to Latour, 23 August.

<sup>74</sup> „Ich habe die Ehre, Euer Excellenz zur hohen Kenntniß zu bringen, daß die Verwirrung hier immer höher steigt und man am Ende nicht wissen wird, wer zu befehlen und was zu geschen hat, indem die widersprechendsten Anordnungen erlassen, die Befehle häufig contramandiert werden, und deren Vollzug oft unausführbar ist.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, (1848) 5441, Hrabovsky to Latour, 26 September, Buda.

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that he then went over to them, Jelačić would not shake hands with him, while Windischgraetz had him arrested, court-martialled and imprisoned, despite his venerable years and distinguished service to his monarch. All the old man had ever tried to do was to obey orders.

Because he had followed the orders of the Hungarian Ministry, however, Jelačić, of course, could never trust him. Nor could he help him against the Serbs, whose Patriarch had installed Jelačić as Ban, and who hated Hungarian rule just as much as he did. Besides, Jelačić needed Serb forces to fight the Hungarians, if and when the latter decided to invade the Military Border, and, in any case, they had thrown in their lot with the Triune Kingdom, despite their claim to a separate Serb Vojvodina. Thus Jelačić simply humoured Hrabovsky, assuring him of his loyalty to the dynasty, refusing to interfere between him and the Serbs, while witnessing the breakdown of the Slavonian General Command. There was always a possibility that Hrabovsky would do something stupid, (he had after all thought about entering Croatia and deposing Jelačić in May and, arguably, had provoked the Serbs into war in June), but on the whole, aware of Hrabovsky's moderation, physical isolation, and the unpopularity of the Hungarian Ministry, Jelačić, for most of the time, could simply ignore the old man.

### Jelačić and the 'Camarilla'

It should already be quite clear that Jelačić was neither the dupe of the court nor the tool of the War Ministry. The Court was quite prepared to appoint, dismiss and reappoint him at its convenience without any previous consultation; he pursued his own aims anyway; Latour was unable to help out in any serious way as his letters, quoted above, to Piret and Radetzky, make clear. Far from being the centre of a diabolical conspiracy of imperial family members and generals to defeat the revolution – the 'Camarilla' of left-wing demonology and myth – Latour often found it impossible to get these people to agree on anything.<sup>75</sup> None the less, since Latour was without doubt in correspondence with Jelačić, what did they correspond about and to what ends?

As already has been seen, one of the main problems was the need to avoid a full scale civil war in Croatia if the Hungarians persisted in trying to take over the Military Border. Even Hrabovsky, a native Magyar prepared to take orders from Buda and no friend of Jelačić, agreed here and may have been responsible for restraining the Hungarians to some extent. But the corollary of not recognising the Hungarian laws was that Kossuth as Hungarian Finance Minister would not pay for the troops in the Military border. He told the Hungarian Parliament in his speech of 11 July<sup>76</sup>, not merely that the Hungarians had offered the Serbs and Croats greater freedoms than their own leaders but at one stage: "a [...] note

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<sup>75</sup> See SKED, *Decline and Fall*, chapter three.

<sup>76</sup> See STILES, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, appendix 19, pp. 384–394.

[had] arrived, which clearly stated what a horrible man the Minister of Finance must be to refuse a grant of money to the rebel Jelačić; for, since Croatia has broken out into open rebellion, I have of course suspended the remittance of money to the commander-general in Zagreb." On 31 August the Hungarian government sent a note to the Austrian War Ministry again confirming it would give no money for Croatia.<sup>77</sup> It is against this background therefore, that Jelačić's correspondence with Latour has to be judged. For although, as shall be seen, Latour did try to secure funds for Jelačić, these funds were not for purposes of rearmament (although the Ban also occasionally asked for munitions) but simply to pay for his troops (and their families), as well as the widows, orphans and pensioners of the Military Border who had to eat, pay rent and buy clothes.

Latour, no doubt, had an insight into their problems, since his own Ministry found it very difficult to get money of any kind out of Kossuth. Even before Latour had taken office, Zanini, on 11 April had complained to Esterházy that a mere dribble of funds was coming in from Hungary. A note from the Finance Ministry of 8 April had said that it had been practically robbed of all its usual income<sup>78</sup>, with Freiherr Krauss, the Finance Minister, estimating that Hungary already owed 350,000 florins in military debts while he needed another 500–600,000 florins for June and July. A subsequent note explained that in May 590,000 florins that were usually paid out from Buda plus 138,811 florins and 40.25 kreutzer that usually came out of central funds would have to be covered by the Hungarians, May, he explained, being traditionally a low month for military expenditures.<sup>79</sup> Yet Esterházy did not want to know of these matters. On 23 April, the Palatine told the Austrian War Ministry that the Hungarians had still to decide matters of principle regarding payment of troops – for example, were non-Hungarian troops in Hungary their responsibility?; indeed, were Hungarian troops outside Hungary? (Kossuth had also refused to pay a penny on the interest on any debts contracted by the Monarchy before April 1848.) On entering office, therefore, Latour knew how difficult the Hungarians were being. Given that a war had to be fought in Italy and that troops on a war footing were paid double wages, given that after the outbreak of revolution the imperial economy came gradually to a standstill, and given that many people were not paying taxes, he was in no position to spend huge sums of money on anyone.

Yet Jelačić had the Border to pay for and had only Latour to ask for the money. (Promotions were another problem, but one which need not be discussed here.) Thus requests for money poured in all summer and Latour did his best to finance them. It would be impossible to run through all Jelačić's requests, but he usually asked for 100,000–200,000 florins a time until by the end of August he was requesting 500,000. Often he would get so much and then have to ask for more. For example, on 8 July he acknowledged receipt of 100,000 and requested

<sup>77</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 4823.

<sup>78</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 236 and 334.

<sup>79</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 806 and 1062.

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168,107 more.<sup>80</sup> It was this letter which motivated Latour to address a blistering request to Esterházy, which ran in part:<sup>81</sup>

*“[...] the steps taken by the [Hungarian] Finance Minister to deprive the Zagreb Military Treasury of its necessary regular monthly payments can clearly only contribute to associating with the discontent in Croatia sections of the population which have hitherto kept their distance from the prevailing troubles, people who will suffer from reduced incomes and will therefore see themselves abandoned to the most wretched misery. It must as a result make the proposed imperial settlement of the very regrettable quarrel all the more difficult in its present aspects and in the longer term.”*

Yet he was under no illusions and knew that his motives would be misinterpreted by Kossuth. Hence he continued:

*“But if he [Kossuth] intends to characterise my note of the fourth of this month referring to the costs of meeting [Jelačić’s] payments as a new example of the hostile spirit of the imperial government regarding the territorial unity of Hungary and as an attack on the legal guarantee of the independence and integrity of the Hungarian empire, I must protest in the name of myself and my colleagues most specifically against this, since I have repeatedly pointed out, that the oft-mentioned transfer of funds has taken place without any intent to support any political faction whatsoever, but only to cover the regular payments to troops, some of which are located in the direction of Görz, others in defensive positions*

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<sup>80</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 3421 and 3547.

<sup>81</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 3547 Latour to Esterházy, 23 July: „[...]daß] die von dem Herrn Finanzminister ergriffene Maßregel, der Agramer Kriegskasse die monatlich zu ihren regelmässigen Zahlungen benötigten Mitteln zu entziehen, voraussichtlich, nur dazu beitragen kann, den Unzufriedenen Kroaziens auch noch jene den vorherrschenden Wirren bisher fremd gebliebenen PopulationsTheile beizugesellen, die sich hiedurch gekränkt in ihren Gebühren verkürzt, ja dem bittersten Elende Preis gegeben sehen und daß in Folge dessen die Allh. eingeleitete friedliche Ausgleichung eines in seinen augenblicklichen Äußerungen wie in der ferneren Folgen höchst bedauerlichen Zerwürfnisses immer schwieriger werden muß.“ „[...] wenn er aber meine die Integration und der fraglichen Geld-Amortisierung enthaltende Note vom 4 d. als einen neuen Beleg der feindseligen Gesinnung, welcher das kk. öst. Ministerium ohne Rücksicht auf die Einheit der gemeinschaftlichen Souverains Ungarn gegenüber sey und als einen Angriff auf die gesetzlich garantierte Selbständigkeit und Integrität des ungarischen Reiches zu bezeichnen meint, so muß ich mich in meines und meiner Herrn Kollegen Nahmen [sic] aufs bestimmteste dagegen bewahren, indem ich wiederholt darauf hinweise, daß die mehrerwähnte Geldsendung ohne der Unterstützung irgend einer politischen Partheisache gegolten zu haben, nur zu Bedeckung der systemmässigen Gebühren der Theils nach Görz abgerückten, Theils zur Defension des vom italienischen Feinde bereits bedroht gewesenen Littorale aufgestellten Truppen zur Befriedigung der gerechten Ansprüche aktiver und pensionirter Staatsdiener oder ihre auf aerarische Subsistenz Genüsse hingewiesenen Hinterbliebenen, Witwen und Waisen bestimmt war und daß man daher hiebei nur jene Rücksichten im Auge hatte die eine Populazion unbezweifelt verdienet, welche schon seit Monaten und noch fortan mit musterhafter Aufopferung in zahlreichen Schaaren die Rechte ihres Monarchen auf blutigen Schlachfeldern verteidiget.“



*on the Littoral, which is threatened by the Italian enemy, as well as to satisfy the just claims of active and pensioned state servants or their dependants, widows and children, who rely on treasury support. The only considerations which have been borne in mind, therefore, are those which have undoubtedly been earned by a people which for months now has been, and still is fighting with admirable self-sacrifice and in great numbers to protect the rights of their monarch on bloody fields of battle."*

Predictably, however, the Hungarians did nothing. Jelačić continued to complain and ask for funds, wrapping up his requests in language like the following:<sup>82</sup>

"Without the borderers, the victories of Austria in Italy would not have been possible, without the borderers the Austrian monarchy would now stand on the brink of being overthrown without hope of salvation." Yet he always made it clear that there could be no compromise with Hungary.<sup>83</sup>

*"It is an undeniable fact that these border regiments will not recognise the Hungarian ministry under any circumstances and that I – even if I wanted to – [author's emphasis] could not subordinate myself to this ministry [Hrabovsky's example, one might think, proved that! –author], since in that case the General Command would lose its own authority and the maintenance of law and order among the border regiments here and further south would certainly break down."*

Latour had as little room for manoeuvre as Jelačić, whom he told as late as 12 August:<sup>84</sup>

*"The great many disadvantages which have arisen for the imperial service from the subordination of the entire Military Border to the Hungarian War Ministry and the persistent refusal of the borderers to recognise this position have long*

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<sup>82</sup> „Ohne den Grenzer würden die Siege Oesterreichs in Italien nicht erfochten sein, ohne den Grenzer stünde jetzt die oesterreichische Monarchie an der Scheide des unrettbaren Sturzes.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 4014, Jelačić to Latour, 5 August.

<sup>83</sup> „Es ist eine unläugbare Tatsache, daß die Grenzregimenter das ungarischen Ministerium durchaus nicht anerkennen wollen, und daß ich – selbst wenn ich wollte – den Befehlen dieses Ministeriums mich nicht unterordnen kann, weil sonst das General Commando sein eigene Amtswirksamkeit verlieren, und der Bestand der gesetzlichen Ordnung sich ebenso wie bei den untern auch bei den hielandigen Grenzregimentern auflösen müßte.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 4123, Jelačić to Latour, 8 August.

<sup>84</sup> „Die großen und manifachen Nachtheile welche aus der Unterstellung der gesamten Militärgrenze unter die Befehle des ungarische Kriegsministeriums bei der beharrlichen Weigerung der Gränzer diese Stelle anzuerkennen, für den a.h. Dienst schon erwachsen sind, wurden von mir längst mit Bedauern erkannt, und so sehr ich daher die Nothwendigkeit einsah, daß der allmählichen Auflösung dieses vortrefflichen Institutes nur dadurch vorgebeugt werden kann, daß man es unter seinen zeitherigen Verhältnissen zu dem kk. öst. Kriegsministerium belasse, so konnte ich dennoch den E. E. bekannten mit aller Bestimmtheit ertheilten a.h. Befehlen nicht entgegenhandeln und mußte in Bezug auf das ungarische und die gesamten Grenz-General-Commanden meine dienstlichen Wirksamkeit an das ungarische Kriegsministerium abtreten.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848), 4123, 14 August.



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*been regretfully recognised by me. But however much I have acknowledged the need, to tackle this intractable problem, by returning matters in stages to their previous situation, under the Austrian War Ministry, I cannot oppose the absolutely categorical imperial commands which are known to Your Excellency and, with regard to the Hungarian and all Border General Commands, must subordinate my administrative authority to that of the Hungarian War Ministry.”*

And as late as 20 August he issued a circular<sup>85</sup> to all general commands legally under Hungarian authority (including Jelačić's) that they were to communicate directly with Buda save for matters concerning foreign regiments or Hungarian ones located outside Hungary. A week later, on the other hand, he was sending an ultimatum to Esterházy:<sup>86</sup>

*“The troops, the administration must be paid; widows and orphans, pensioners, the wives of officers serving in the field who remain at home, are crying out for their means of subsistence! [...] Every helpful intervention on the part of the Austrian ministry is interpreted as having a sinister significance. This Ministry can therefore do nothing but urgently recommend Your Excellency to rectify the recent complaints of the General Command and to bring to Your Excellency's attention what want and privation will and must finally lead to, namely the decision to seek the absolutely essential means of subsistence by force next door.”*

He concluded: “I therefore urgently beseech Your Excellency in the name of the Austrian Ministry for immediate help and if a positive decision is not obtained within the course of the next week, nothing else will remain for the Austrian Ministry, but itself to put an end to the completely intolerable wretchedness in the Border by appropriate means.”

When nothing happened, Bach persuaded the Austrian Ministry on 29 August to issue its warning that it could no longer remain neutral in the quarrel between Hungary and Croatia.

Did this mean that Austria, through Latour, had been planning a war with Hungary all along? The evidence hardly suggests this, not merely on account of Latour's correspondence with his generals, including Jelačić, none of which

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<sup>85</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 4312.

<sup>86</sup> „Es müssen die Truppen, es muß die Administrazion bezahlt werden; Witwen und Waisen – Pensionisten und rückgebliebene Frauen von Offizieren, die im Felde stehen, schreyen um ihren Unterhalt! [...] Jedes helfende Einschreiten von Seite des kk. österreichischen Ministeriums würde abermals üblen Deutungen ausgesetzt seyn: und dieses Ministerium kann daher vor der Hand nichts thun, als die neuerlichen Vorstellungen des Gen. Commdo. der erfolgreichen Berücksichtigung Eu.etc. dringend anempfehlen, und Euer etc. darauf nochmals aufmerksam machen, daß Noth und Mangel endlich bringen wird und muß: nämlich zu dem Entschlusse, sich mit gewaffneter Hand die unumgängig nötigen Subsistenz Mittel im Nachbarlande zu suchen.“ „Dringend ersuche ich daher Euer etc. im Namen des österreichischen Ministerrathes um unverweilte Abhilfe, und um gefällige Eröffnung des gefaßten Beschlusses noch im Laufe dieser Woche [andernfalls] dem kk. österreichischen Ministerium doch nicht anders erübrigen würde als der ganz unzulässigen äußersten Noth der Grenze durch geeignete Mittel ein Ende zu machen.“ Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 4527.

demonstrates a desire for war, far less steps taken to organise one. What the evidence does suggest is that Jelačić decided that war was the only option after the complete breakdown of the Vienna talks with Batthyány hosted by the Archduke John on 29 July.<sup>87</sup> The Archduke was basically a supporter of Jelačić, although he had refused to help restore him officially to the position of Ban, however the invitation to the talks had been composed. Moreover, he feared – or his advisers feared – that unless Croatia remained within the Hungarian sphere, Jelačić's programme of equal rights for all nations in the Monarchy, would lead to its "Slavicisation" and thus undermine its German character.<sup>88</sup> But, crucially, it was Batthyány for the Hungarians who refused any concessions whatsoever,<sup>89</sup> sticking to the April Laws like glue and shouting at Jelačić that the sword would have to decide between them.<sup>90</sup> The talks ended with Batthyány telling Jelačić they would meet on the Drava, while Jelačić replied that they would meet on the Danube. Bach had attended the talks with Jelačić arguing, like him, that the portfolios of finance, defence and foreign affairs, should return to Vienna. Jelačić had demanded that Croatia be given the right to self-government and the use of the Croat tongue both inside Croatia and within the Hungarian Parliament. He had also argued that Hungary should recognise the rights of the Serbs to a Vojvodina. The Hungarians had refused everything, despite the experience of the past months over finance and the need to prosecute the Italian War.<sup>91</sup>

Jelačić also held talks with Latour before returning to Croatia. There he began to raise an army from volunteers, the fifth battalions of the border regiments and some regiments that had returned from Italy. Money was donated by clerics, aristocrats, and, according to some unsubstantiated and highly unlikely reports, even from Radetzky and the Archduke John. In fact, Jelačić's "army" was something of a rabble, although it numbered 48,000 men.<sup>92</sup> According to one authority:<sup>93</sup> "Overall, the Croatian forces were short of heavy artillery, modern rifles, and field equipment. Of the Grenzer, only about half were armed and equipped as prescribed by the existing military regulations; the rest wore their national costumes and carried whatever arms they could procure: flintlocks, shotguns,

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<sup>87</sup> Jelačić's report to the Sabor after the failure of the talks called them "our last word on peace". He said: "our last attempt at a friendly settlement of our national affairs has come to an end." HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić's Kriegszug*, Vol. I, p. 53.

<sup>88</sup> See HAUPTMANN, *Erzherzog Johann*, pp. 33, 44.

<sup>89</sup> They would make more at the end of August but would still not surrender the portfolios of finance, defence and foreign affairs or give up their claim to Fiume.

<sup>90</sup> Jelačić had perhaps been willing to accept the final verdict of the Archduke, but the latter had to return to Frankfurt and failed to deliver any. Meanwhile, "a comparison between the Croat and Hungarian conditions shows that in principle they were almost mutually exclusive." HAUPTMANN, *Erzherzog Johann*, pp. 47–8, p. 43.

<sup>91</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–199; BAUER, *op. cit.*, pp. 142–7.

<sup>92</sup> See György SPIRA, *Aus den Werken eines großen Fabulisten: Jellačić über die Schlacht bei Pákozd*, *Ungarn-Jahrbuch* 22 (1995/96), pp. 69–96, p. 71, ft. 7.

<sup>93</sup> See Gunther E. ROTHENBERG, *Jelačić, the Croatian Military Border and the Intervention against Hungary in 1848*, *Austrian History Yearbook* 1965, pp. 45–68, p. 59.

even pikes.” Jelačić was only too well aware of their deficiencies, telling Kulmer:<sup>94</sup> “[...] it is difficult to maintain discipline when soldiers do not receive their pay.” As he advanced into Hungary, one of his officers wrote:<sup>95</sup>

*“In four days’ time we will be before Pest and God help the town, for the frontiersmen are so embittered and angry that they will be awful to manage. Already they cannot be kept from excesses, and rob and steal frightfully. We order a thousand floggings to be administered every day, but it is of no sort of use; not even a god, much less an officer, can hold them back [...] I am driven desperate by this robber train and feel no better than a brigand myself.”*

Even in August, therefore, Vienna had done little to help him.<sup>96</sup>

With the end of the war in Italy (thanks to Radetzky’s decisive victory over Charles Albert at Custoza on 25 July), the mood, however, had changed. Whereas Pillersdorff, the Austrian prime minister, could write to the Archduke Ludwig on 30 March:<sup>97</sup> “The quick pacification of Hungary through concessions appears to me in the present situation an unavoidable necessity and an act of the highest statesmanship”, the situation after Custoza was summarised in the Hungarian Declaration of Independence of 14 April 1849:<sup>98</sup> “[...] Radetzky had in the mean time been victorious in Italy. The House of Lorraine-Habsburg, restored to confidence by that victory, thought the time come to take off the mask and to involve Hungary [...] in the horrors of a fresh war of repression.” Certainly the Archduchess Sophie, who praised God a thousand times for the “admirable Jelačić” was to note in her diary:<sup>99</sup> “Franzi (her son, the future Emperor Franz Joseph) informs me of Jelačić’s fine manifesto on crossing the Hungarian border.”

But there is very little evidence of any agreed conspiracy, with Jelačić again, in fact, being betrayed by the Court.

All the evidence to suggest a real conspiracy comes from Jelačić’s correspondence with Kulmer in Vienna, who as early as 30 March had written in direct contrast with Pillersdorf:<sup>100</sup> “Things look bad in Hungary. The new ministry has indeed been confirmed, although I think its effectiveness is zero. In the end Austria will have to reconquer Hungary.” Jelačić was the man to do this and he became frustrated with every delay. Hence he wrote on 28 August:<sup>101</sup> “[...] only after you have crossed the Drava will confidence in you, which is now rapidly declining, be restored. Once you have successfully invaded Hungary, you will

<sup>94</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 230. Kulmer was the Croat representative at Court.

<sup>95</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>96</sup> For the state of his army and the difficulties in provisioning and organising it, see HAUPTMANN, Jelačić’s Kriegszug, Vol. I, chapter 3.

<sup>97</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>98</sup> STILES, op. cit., Vol. II, Appendix 31, p. 415.

<sup>99</sup> GÖRLITZ, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Michaela GEISLER, Joseph Freiherr von Jellačić de Buzim, Banus von Kroatien. Wien Diss. phil. [unpublished] 1968, p. 38.

<sup>101</sup> ROTHENBERG, Jelačić, the Croatian Military Border and the Intervention, p. 59.

receive imperial sanction.” A few days later, he wrote:<sup>102</sup> “[...] the highest circles in Vienna expect, hope and desire that you will not stop until you have entered Pest. Therefore good friend advance!” He also gave the impression that Latour was behind such advice, writing on 16 August:<sup>103</sup> “I have just come from Latour who said, to me: ‘As minister I cannot give advice to the Ban, but if I were in his place, I shouldn’t hesitate for so long but would have marched already’.” The trouble is, Kulmer cannot be taken to have spoken for anyone but himself.

Two things have to be borne in mind at this point regarding the coherence of any conspiracy. First, although Ferdinand officially restored Jelačić to his position as Ban on 4 September, he still had no official sanction to attack Hungary when he crossed the Drava on 11 September. This was absolutely crucial, because he had no way of proving to Hungarian officers, who would otherwise have joined him, that he was not simply a rebel, but was acting on behalf of the king. (“It only requires clear instructions from the Court to the troops in Hungary to make war unnecessary”, complained one of Jelačić’s senior officers,”[...] but it is thought enough to offer merely sympathy.” When the Hungarian troops sent envoys to Jelačić they demanded to see “explicit, clear orders of His Majesty to march into Hungary” – orders which the Ban could not provide.)<sup>104</sup> Indeed, had he been given official instructions, FML Moga, who was in command of the Hungarian forces, would never have given battle. Jelačić could then have entered Buda and Pest without any opposition, instead of being halted unexpectedly at Pákozd on 29 September.

The second factor to bear in mind is that while Jelačić was proceeding towards Buda, his first reports indicated no opposition. Hrabovsky was also reporting in a manner that must have pleased Vienna, for as late as 26 September he recorded<sup>105</sup> that the anticipated imminent arrival of the Ban after his “uninterrupted advance [Der Banus rückt unaufgehalten vor]” was causing only “partial anxiety [nur theilweise Besorgniße]” in the Hungarian capital, where he, now the general in charge, expected to receive Jelačić “peacefully [seine Ankunft ruhig abzuwarten]”. It was precisely on this account – Jelačić’s stately progress towards the Hungarian capital – that on 25 September, the Court betrayed him. Already, on 21 September, Wessenberg, the Austrian prime minister, along with some “moderate constitutionalists” had asked the king to appoint a military commander-in-chief over both the Hungarian and Croat armies, who would impose an armistice.<sup>106</sup> Otherwise “a victorious general [Jelačić], carried forward

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> GEISLER, *op. cit.*, p. 57. In fact the Court was split over what to do about Jelačić. According to DÉAK, *op. cit.*, chapter 4, note 4, and pp. 363–4, the Archduke Franz Karl, the acting head of the imperial family, was definitely against offering support, a policy favoured only by Kulmer and Latour, although the latter did not wish to offer it officially.

<sup>104</sup> HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić’s Kriegszug*, Vol. I, p. 55, p. 59.

<sup>105</sup> Vienna, *Kriegsarchiv*, MK (1848) 5541.

<sup>106</sup> DÉAK, *op. cit.*, pp. 171–2.



by nationalist fanaticism, would be likely to do away with constitutional liberties.” The man chosen for this task was a moderate Hungarian magnate, Count Ferenc Lamberg, who had published an anonymous book on Hungary’s future in 1842 advocating mild reforms, had served in the 1847–8 Reform Diet, had been a patriotic commander of the Pressburg army corps and was respected by Batthyány. The only purpose of his appointment, therefore, was politically to outmanoeuvre Jelačić and do yet another deal with the Hungarians behind Jelačić’s back, this time from a position of much greater strength, thanks ironically to Jelačić himself.

Yet the plan misfired. Kossuth and the radicals denounced the appointment and neither Batthyány nor Lamberg could find each other in the confusion of the Hungarian capital, where the mob was howling for blood. Unfortunately it found the new commander before Batthyány, and having dragged him out a carriage, assassinated him. Hrabovsky reported to Latour on 28 September<sup>107</sup> that he had been stabbed eighty times, a fate which Latour himself was to suffer on 6 October. Batthyány meanwhile, on 29 September found Jelačić, whose army was just about to be attacked at Pákozd, told him of the king’s manifesto, and pleaded with him to stop fighting. Jelačić for his part, once again without instructions, claimed, realistically<sup>108</sup>, that he would have to await more detailed orders. In fact, in the aftermath of Lamberg’s assassination, he was appointed on 3 October commander-in-chief of all royal imperial forces in Hungary and royal commissioner-plenipotentiary to that country, which had been placed under martial law.<sup>109</sup> Latour began to organise reinforcements for him but on 6 October this caused a revolution in Vienna, where Latour was now murdered. Jelačić’s first task as commander-in-chief therefore was to save Vienna, not Buda-Pest.<sup>110</sup>

The story of how events had reached this pass was full of twists and turns, double-crosses, false hopes and unexpected outcomes. Yet it was hardly the stuff of consistent conspiracy. The only person who acted consistently was Jelačić who was double-crossed from beginning to end.

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<sup>107</sup> Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, MK (1848) 5541.

<sup>108</sup> SPIRA, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>109</sup> Jelačić could only write of the appointment: “Everything too late, everything, as always. Two weeks ago, all the Hungarian troops would have joined us in a moment, now they are our most bitter enemies.” HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić’s Kriegszug*, Vol. I, p. 105. The Court thought he was in Buda by now!

<sup>110</sup> The appointment of the Palatine as head of the armed forces in Hungary had for a short period after Jelačić’s invasion caused the Ban a serious problem, since Hungarian troops were unlikely to desert to him in the name of the Habsburgs while a Habsburg Archduke led the Hungarian army. However, the Palatine gave up that post and fled the country, a few days before Lamberg’s appointment. This, too, was an obvious set-back, but since Lamberg was murdered, Jelačić, who had got news of the murder just before Pákozd, thought that he would once again be the focus for large-scale desertions. The actions of Count Szápáry during the battle of Pákozd in seeking a cease-fire, reinforced this impression, although the rest of the battle ended such illusions. See HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić’s Kriegszug*, vol. I, pp. 81–87.

### Jelačić as a military leader

Today, Jelačić's military reputation, to put it mildly, is not high. The battle of Pákozd is seen as "the Hungarian Valmy or Saratoga" and a humiliating defeat about which he is accused of lying to Latour. His decision to head for Vienna afterwards instead of Buda-Pest in order to save the dynasty is seen merely as a rationalisation of that defeat, while his victory over the Hungarians at Schwechat on 30 October is no longer given the credit it once was. (Windischgraetz is seen in the text books as the man who reconquered Vienna.) Since, finally, he played a totally subordinate role during the 1849 campaign against Hungary, his military significance is seen as small.

This is certainly the line taken by Gunther Rothenberg, perhaps the world's leading authority on the Habsburg army, who has dismissed him as follows, after Pákozd:<sup>111</sup> "The Ban was saved from total disaster by the Hungarian failure to press pursuit and by a sudden change in the political picture (Lamberg's murder and the outbreak of revolution in Vienna) [...] This development allowed Jelačić to proclaim that he deliberately had diverted his forces north to save the emperor." Elsewhere he has written<sup>112</sup> of Pákozd:

*"there was some heavy fighting, though the battle itself was indecisive. Jelačić, however, lost his nerve and under cover of a three-day armistice he retreated northwards to Austria [...] Jelačić was able to extract himself from the consequences of defeat by proclaiming that he deliberately had diverted his forces to deal with the latest and by far most radical revolt yet in Vienna."*

Of Jelačić's later military involvement in the Hungarian campaign, Rothenberg writes:<sup>113</sup>

*"He was not only outnumbered but outgeneraled by the enemy, and it was a sign of his decreased influence that in May Radetzky bluntly refused his request for the release of seven Grenzer battalions from Italy for service in Hungary. At the same time, relations between Jelačić and Feldmarschalleutnant Baron Haynau, who had taken command of operations in Hungary were extremely poor and the Ban was often left in complete ignorance of the intentions of the supreme command."*

Recently, the battle of Pákozd has come under greater scrutiny by Hungarian historians, with both Aladár Urbán and György Spira writing on it. Urbán is the more moderate of the two, stating:<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Gunther E. ROTHENBERG, *The Military Border in Croatia, 1740–1881*. Chicago, London 1966, p. 154.

<sup>112</sup> Gunther E. ROTHENBERG, *The Army of Francis Joseph*. West Lafayette 1976, pp. 29–30.

<sup>113</sup> ROTHENBERG, *Military Border*, p. 157.

<sup>114</sup> Aladár URBÁN, *The Hungarian Valmy and Saratoga: The Battle of Pákozd, the Surrender of Ózora, and their Consequences in the Fall of 1848*, in: Béla KIRÁLY (ed.), *East Central European Society and War*, pp. 538–556, p. 549. Cf. Aladár URBÁN, *Pákozd 1848*. Budapest 1984.

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*[...] Jelačić himself took command of an assault, aiming at a breakthrough in the center [...] Jelačić realized that he could not dislodge the numerically smaller army from its position, so he pulled his forces back. By evening, however, it was clear that the Hungarian army was not holding onto its position either. Lieutenant General Moga, who did not even attempt to pursue the Croats, ordered a withdrawal to Martonvasar because he feared that the Croats on the right wing of his army would attempt an encirclement after nightfall [...] Jelačić, however, was not thinking of anything of the sort. For him it was now of paramount importance to wait for the right column to arrive and join him. Obviously this consideration played a role in his proposing and concluding a three-day armistice with the Hungarian forces. On October 1, however, acting in violation of the armistice, started a retreat [...] finally to the Austrian border and beyond.”*

In Urbán's view:<sup>115</sup> “The Hungarian army did not win a decisive victory at the battle of Pákozd. It did, however, force the invading enemy, which was nearly twice as large, to beat a retreat and to leave the country.” Nothing is said of events in Vienna.

Spira, for his part, calls Jelačić a liar, or at least “a great story-teller” (‘Fabulist’), arguing that he deliberately distorted his account of the battle to Latour. He accuses Jelačić of compiling reports with “a mixture of real and twisted facts”<sup>116</sup> and omitting others. Thus Jelačić supposedly stressed that his troops maintained their positions while the enemy retreated, thus implying a Croat victory.<sup>117</sup> Again, he only said that he “agreed to” a cease-fire, without stating that he had sought one.<sup>118</sup> His statements, moreover, that he had difficulties supplying his troops and that the enemy had more cavalry than he had, were only half-truths, since his troops were notorious plunderers and he did not mention that he had with him the Banderial-Hussars (peasant riders from the Military Border). Finally, his statement that he lacked sufficient material to take the fortress at Buda was misleading since everyone knew it was indefensible. Little wonder, therefore, that Latour gave him a “very cool” response on 6 October.<sup>119</sup>

What is one to make of these charges? Perhaps the only thing to do would be to reproduce Jelačić's short reports of 5 October from Altenburg, the first the official one, the second, a private report.<sup>120</sup>

Here in any case is the official report:

*“On 29<sup>th</sup> of last month my troops fought a battle at Pakozd. The enemy took up a secure position before Sukoro. We secured some advantages and the enemy withdrew during the night towards Martonvasar. However, I found it inappropriate to continue with my advance on Buda, since I could only oppose the numerous*

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<sup>115</sup> URBÁN, *The Hungarian Valmy*, p. 550.

<sup>116</sup> SPIRA, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> SPIRA, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–81.

<sup>120</sup> SPIRA, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–75 (translated from the version of the German original cited there).

*cavalry, which the enemy had collected, with one regiment of cuirassiers and four squadrons of light horse.*

*The enemy had already started to cut off my supply transports in the flank and rear. I could not prevent this. The area where I stood had been laid waste by friend and foe. The fortress of Pest could not be taken with the means at my disposal.*

*The Hungarian troops showed no disposition at all to join me, but fought bravely against my own troops. For this reason, I agreed a three-day armistice with the enemy and immediately used the time to reach Raab in order to attract fighting forces from other regular troops to me as quickly as possible. Yesterday I broke out of Raab to pick up Kress light horse. This has been achieved today. I am now remaining in position by Wieselburg and Altenburg, in order to undertake a secure advance on Pest as soon as possible.*

*I deem it necessary to send the levies from the borderer-regiment districts back to Croatia immediately, since they are needed there in the countryside which is totally denuded of troops, and are less suited to battles in the open field. It is also difficult with so few officers to keep these masses disciplined and to feed them. I therefore most humbly request Your Excellency to give the order to enable me to send these people from Bruck by railroad to Pötttschach, from where they can take the shortest route to Croatia. Since my link with Vienna is now restored, which caused me great anxiety, I shall keep Your Excellency informed continuously and completely of my position and operations.“*

The private letter of the same day conveyed much the same information. Latur's reply merely stated that he had arranged reinforcements, but that Jelačić should not wait another eight to ten days for the last of them. It also stated that due to the uproar in Vienna it would be impossible to send the Croats home by rail and that Jelačić, therefore, should think about what else he might do with them.<sup>121</sup>

It is up to the reader to decide whether all of this constitutes special pleading, lying and a cool response. The documents concerned might just as easily be taken to constitute two matter-of-fact situation reports followed by a matter-of-fact reply. After all, Jelačić *did* have fewer cavalry and guns, the Hungarians *did* retreat, they *had* taken up a strong position, and the plundering and indiscipline of the border levies *was* notorious, something which *did* lead to the local peasantry opposing them. The Hungarians, of course, are correct to point to the fact that their new national volunteers fought well and that although the battle was an "indecisive" victory, it none the less was one which diverted Jelačić from the task in hand. But given a couple of hundred dead out of 62,000 troops, it was hardly a Napoleonic encounter, so that Jelačić may surely be excused if he saw it as a temporary set-back rather than a defeat of world-historical significance. Spira, it seems to me, has wildly overstated his case. Indeed, he, it may be said, turns out to be the *Fabulist* rather than Jelačić.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> SPIRA, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–3.

<sup>122</sup> His total disregard of HAUPTMANN's evidence (Jelačić's *Kriegszug*, Vol. I, pp. 88–95) is incomprehensible.



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Jelačić's supporters, on the other hand, see events in a different light. Hartley admits that Pákozd<sup>123</sup> "was undoubtedly something of a check to the advance", but does not rate it any higher. Much more important – indeed vital – in Hartley's eyes, was the decision to march on Vienna.

While Jelačić was waiting to collect reinforcements before resuming his march on Buda, he received news on 7 October of Latour's murder, the Vienna revolution and the flight of the Court to Olmütz. What was he supposed to do? Advance on Pest and finish off the Hungarians or hasten to save the imperial capital, which, if captured by the Hungarians, might presage the end of the Empire? He later said:<sup>124</sup> "I should have been a traitor to my service and to Croatia, should I not have marched on Vienna." The Hungarians saw this as flight and dishonour (his 7,500 man reserve under General Roth was left to surrender on the same day, 7 October, at Ózora), but Hartley writes of speed of decision:<sup>125</sup> "Three hours after the news came, the orders were being carried out that 12,000 men (the militia and irregular troops) should march back towards Croatia to protect her borders and 27,000 should go on with all speed to Vienna." According to Hartley, moreover, the march to Vienna – and the capital was within sight on the night of 8 October – was "a feat of endurance quite worthy of the traditions of the Frontiersmen"<sup>126</sup> whose arrival Schwarzenberg and others were already praying for. In Hartley's opinion:<sup>127</sup>

*"Jellačić fulfilled his part of the requirements. He arrived before the Hungarians had time to concentrate or to march into Austria, and he gave a moral as well as material support to the Imperialists which was of inestimable value. It is, perhaps, exaggerating to say that his action in giving up the march to Buda-Pesth and flinging all his weight into the scale by advancing on Vienna actually saved the Empire; yet the fall of the monarchy might have been the result had he even been delayed, or had he been undecided about his course."*

Bauer, in his biography of Jelačić, maintains the battle of Pákozd was a draw since neither side lost territory and both sides retained their freedom of manoeuvre. He blames the confusion on the Croat side on the fact that just before the battle, Batthyány arrived and insisted on parleying with the Ban about Lamberg and the king's manifesto. The time loss involved in this created difficulties not merely for Jelačić but for his subordinates, since the marching orders due to be given to FML Hartlieb in Stuhlweissenburg were entirely overlooked.<sup>128</sup> "The loss of time involved in Jellachich's conversations with Batthyány in great part determined the whole course of the battle of Pákozd-Velence." Bauer also main-

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<sup>123</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>124</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 261.

<sup>125</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>126</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>127</sup> HARTLEY, op. cit., p. 247. HAUPTMANN, Jelačić's Kriegszug, Vol. I, p. 99 agrees. So did the 1850 Commission of Enquiry. (See HAUPTMANN, Ibid.)

<sup>128</sup> BAUER, op. cit., p. 181.

tains that it was the Hungarians, not Jelačić who first asked for an armistice<sup>129</sup> and that it was only natural, once the Croat levies had proved unusable against line troops and field-guns, that Jelačić should retreat in the direction of Vienna (where else?) to await reinforcements. He ridicules Hungarian accounts that see the battle as a Hungarian victory. Görlitz, Jelačić's latest biographer, also claims<sup>130</sup> that the armistice was instigated by the Hungarians.

Having arrived in Vienna, Jelačić was prevented from attacking the rebels more or less immediately by the military authorities there who were determined to await the arrival of Prince Windischgraetz, the designated saviour of the Monarchy. However, he did succeed in establishing a chain of posts around the imperial capital which cut off the city from the Hungarians. Then, after the arrival of "the eternal Windischgraetz" (so called because he took so long to get anywhere), the Ban secured the opportunity to resume the fight against the Hungarians at Schwechat. This time he was successful, although Windischgraetz, who was by now supreme commander of all forces around Vienna, (another double-cross on the part of the Court, since Radetzky, unlike Jelačić had not been subordinated to the Prince's orders<sup>131</sup>) had arranged that Prince Liechtenstein should take the battle honours. As it happened, Liechtenstein proved a great disappointment and Jelačić's army became the heroes of the hour. ("The glory of the hour belongs to Jelačić [...] it was due to him that half Vienna was taken by storm and the Hungarians were totally defeated at Schwechat," wrote the Saxon diplomat Vitzthum; Jelačić agreed: "The fact is my Croats took Vienna almost alone.")<sup>132</sup> Liechtenstein, according to Windischgraetz, lost a great opportunity to win the Maria Theresa Order, although, gallantly, Jelačić defended him. Given Jelačić's success, historical controversy regarding the battle has centred not around Jelačić, but around the inability of the rebels inside Vienna and the invading Hungarian army to join forces.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> This is not only proved by Hauptmann, but the latter shows that the attempts of Count Szápáry to arrange a cease-fire early in the battle upset Jelačić's own battle plans. See HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić's Kriegszug*, Vol. I, pp. 89–90.

<sup>130</sup> GÖRLITZ, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>131</sup> The Ban was instructed "actively to support Prince Windischgraetz in his undertakings and to cooperate with him forcefully to achieve his aims." "When he told the Prince he was happy to comply with this under the terms of Windischgraetz's appointment on 16 October, the latter replied: 'That goes without saying'." HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić's Kriegszug*, Vol. I, p. 128–131.

<sup>132</sup> See, HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić's Kriegszug*, Vol. I, p. 134 for both quotes.

<sup>133</sup> See, Ferdinand HAUPTMANN, *Banus Jelačić und Feldmarschall Fürst Windischgrätz*, *Südost-Forschungen* 15 (1956), pp. 372–402; Wolfgang HÄUSLER, *Das Gefecht bei Schwechat am 30 Oktober 1848*. Wien 1977 (Militärhistorische Schriftenreihe, 34); Friedrich WALTER (ed.), *Magyarische Rebellenbriefe 1848. Aemtliche und Privat-Korrespondenzen der magyarischen Rebellenregierung, ihrer Führer und Anhänger*. München 1964 (Buchreihe der Südostdeutschen Historischen Kommission, 13); and Friedrich WALTER, *Die Ursachen des Scheiterns der madjarischen Waffenhilfe für die Wiener Oktober-Revolutionäre 1848*, *Südost-Forschungen* 22 (1963), pp. 377–400.

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After Schwechat, Jelačić played a courageous and distinguished part in the campaign against Hungary. Yet his was always a secondary role, since Windischgraetz rarely followed his advice or allowed him to take the initiative. Under Haynau he commanded a southern army, but lacked resources and was out of the way of the main campaign. Meanwhile in Croatia, the population chafed at the lack of political freedom and resented the loss of their political rights. The establishment of a separate Vojvodina for the Serbs only created problems between them and the Croats over its borders; the continuation of the Military Border was not popular either; the lack of a Diet rankled greatly; while the use of German as the language of administration was a step backward. There were some positive points – the additional territory for Croatia, a new Frontier Statute (all feudal laws were abolished and the state paid for the food and clothing of serving borderers) and the establishment of an Archbishopric for Zagreb. At first Jelačić counselled patience, hoping that the union with Dalmatia, the right of self-administration, the use of Croat, and the recall of the Diet would all be granted shortly. Yet his petitions were ignored. His last report of 1853 challenged the use of German in Croatia and of Italian in Fiume. But it, too, was ignored. In 1854 he wrote to a friend:<sup>134</sup> “I did not fight for bureaucratic rule! You can imagine my present life!” His brother recalled:<sup>135</sup> “These perpetual disappointments of his aims by the government brought on the deepest depression. I saw with sorrow that his nervous system, always sensitive, was giving him continual dreary pain.” It was the beginning of the brain disease from which he died in 1859.

### Conclusion

Jelačić's role in 1848–9 was an extraordinarily important one. By emerging as the obvious candidate for Ban, he was able to unite and lead the South Slavs of the Empire behind the Monarchy with such charisma that Magyar schemes for its transformation were totally frustrated. His part in helping Radetzky hold his army together was also crucial, since the disintegration of the Field Marshal's army would have meant the end of the Monarchy as it then existed. The fact that he stuck with the Habsburgs after the news of his dismissal was made public – a furious Sabor wanted to depose them and join the Italians in opposition – may also have saved them. According to Hauptmann:<sup>136</sup> “If Jelačić had reacted in the same manner a catastrophe for the Monarchy could not have been avoided.” As a soldier, he should not be underestimated either. Not only did he construct a 50,000 strong army out of virtually nothing in the late summer of 1848, but despite unfair assessments of the battle of Pákozd, marched to Vienna when necessary with such speed that he both demoralised the Viennese rebels and greatly

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<sup>134</sup> HAUPTMANN, *Jelačić's Kriegszug*, Vol. I, p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>136</sup> HAUPTMANN, *Erzherzog Johann*, p. 30.

reinforced the doubts of the Hungarian military leaders who then knew that to link up with the rebels meant attacking the imperial army on Austrian soil. Their hesitation proved crucial, since, with the arrival of Windischgraetz's 40,000 troops, Vienna was an even less likely location for a military victory. And on the field at Schwechat, it was the Ban and his Croats, everyone agreed, who won the day. The great pity was that it was Windischgraetz, not Jelačić, who was put in charge of the Hungarian campaign. For Windischgraetz's serious deficiencies as a military commander meant that sooner or later the Russians would have to be summoned to help defeat the Magyar enemy. Haynau, to be sure, did most to defeat them, yet the Russian belief that they had saved the day for the Habsburgs, meant that after the Crimean War, they would never forgive Austrian "ingratitude". This fact, in turn, would have ominous consequences for the Monarchy for the rest of the century, as would Magyar resentment of Russia. Yet, arguably, the seeds of this bitter fruit were sown in 1848.

Regarding political affairs, Jelačić was a constitutional liberal who believed in working with the elected representatives of his own nation to achieve a constitutional Habsburg Monarchy in which all nations would have equal rights. "I love freedom and her Credo is mine [...]"<sup>137</sup> he told the Viennese. "I am a man of freedom, a man of the people [...]"<sup>138</sup> he told the Hungarians. He told his own people:<sup>139</sup> "Whether I am a man of reaction or of freedom is proved by my whole life and my present efforts to give my homeland, the equality of treatment and freedom demanded by the spirit of the times [...]" This was a more noble dream than that proclaimed by Magyar liberals, who claimed to be better able to legislate for Croats, Rumanians, Serbs and Slovaks, than these people themselves. Jelačić was also willing to work for social reform and helped not only to abolish feudal laws in Croatia but to promote ecclesiastical and educational reform there. He was honest and open in explaining his beliefs and never wavered from his basic principles. He dealt openly with all, from the monarch himself to the lowest borderer. In short he was an immensely brave, and admirable soldier-citizen. Nor was he a bloodthirsty militarist. His aim in 1848 – even after his invasion of Hungary – was to prevent civil war by attracting the serving officers of the monarch to his flag and thus bring a peaceful solution to the Monarchy's problems, something that might have happened had he been given imperial proof that he was acting under the monarch's instructions. The trouble was that the Habsburg Monarchy was being run for the Habsburgs, perhaps, in retrospect, Jelačić's most successful enemies.

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<sup>137</sup> HARTLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

<sup>138</sup> GÖRLITZ, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>139</sup> BAUER, *op. cit.*, p. 16.