

The Army of Francis Joseph and Magyar Public Opinion, 1849–1859

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1. The Sources

Mid-nineteenth century measurements of public opinion do not meet modern standards. Deficiency in methodology, however, can be compensated with the introduction of supplementary data and historical analysis. In attempting to give a reasonably accurate picture of public opinion vis-a-vis the Habsburg army in Hungary in the 1850's, the researcher must turn first to contemporary public opinion reports or *Stimmungsberichte*.

Initially, the *Stimmungsberichte* were prepared bi-weekly, then monthly, bi-monthly and, from 1855, quarterly. The degree of reliability is higher at the beginning of the decade and at the lowest administrative level. Such reports, which were filed regularly with the Ministry of Interior, were to aid the government in Vienna gain an accurate picture of the reaction of the Hungarian people to various governmental measures and international events. The government attempted to secure accurate reporting. Questionnaires were distributed. Reports from the same districts were demanded from the civil administration, the army, the police and/or the gendarmerie.

As authorities did at the time, we can now compare the reports to test their reliability. The lowest common denominator of such reports were, and still can be, generally accepted. In addition, one can put more faith in army reports since they had less political axes to grind after 1850 and because they presented more straightforward reports than the others. The accounts of the civil servants should be given some credence since they were written by local officials familiar with their districts—and with the reliability of their informers. On the other hand one should note the interest of the police

and gendarmerie to reassure their superiors that, as a result of their hard work, all was well in Hungary. Similar inclinations of local officials to present a rosy picture, however, were balanced by their desire to obtain popularity at home through the easing the burden of their charges.

In addition to the *Stimmungsberichte*, other sources which also reflect public opinion are available. The Hungarian press mirrors the views of certain intellectuals and nobles. Freedom of the press was curtailed little in the early 1850's. The peasants expressed themselves through collective appeals, demonstrations, violent actions and draft dodging, or through submission. The gentry and the middle classes showed their emotions through collaboration or resistance as did the aristocrats. Contemporaries later wrote of the heroic days of passive resistance in the age of darkness. Romantic and nationalist historians were happy to elaborate on such themes. Their works demand utmost skepticism. The reports of government agents provide a better guide to public opinion in mid-nineteenth century Hungary.

2. Army of Occupation

During the summer of 1849 there were three armies in Hungary: the Austrian, the Russian and the Magyar. By the end of the year there was only one, the Austrian. The Magyar soldiers were heading for home, the Russian interventionists were returning to their bases in Poland and southern Russia, while a quarter of Francis Joseph's armed forces settled down in Hungary for a long stay. His entire Third Army had been entrusted with the pacification of Hungary until 1868.

The actual size of the Austrian armed forces fluctuated from month to month and place to place. It is difficult to establish the size of the units stationed in Hungary at any given time. Usually, about half the army was on active duty. There were mass call-ups and mass furloughs, depending on the international situation and the domestic state of the economy. In January, 1848, 250,000 men were on active duty out of a total of 400,000.¹ The official tally of 1861 indicated a peace-time force of 280,000 and a war enrollment of 630,000.² To end the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, General Haynau employed 175,000 troops to suppress the Magyars. Soon many units were transferred to Bohemia to face the Prussians. More followed when war appeared to be imminent in 1853.³ Between 1849 and 1867 the average size of the Third Army can be set around 40,000. According to the *Ordre de Bataille und Dis-*

location of the Third Army,⁴ in the first month of each year the number of soldiers present in Inner Hungary was as follows:

1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867
46,000	48,000	41,000	36,000	39,000	41,000	48,000

Of these many were Magyars. Their presence was contrary to the traditional policy of assigning draftees away from their home province. Any significant breach of that policy can be taken as a sense of security by the authorities, although the question of emergency, that is, a shortage of other troops, should not be excluded as another plausible explanation.

For the 1850's the sources are less revealing. Professor Rothenberg states that in 1850 there were 90,000 soldiers stationed in Hungary and the Military Border Districts, but he does not give the ratio.⁵ The First Cavalry Corps in Hungary registered 10,634 men, 25% below the figures of the 1860's.⁶ There are no other indicators which point in the same direction. Recruitment remained steady until the 1860's. Hungary always raised a single *Feldjäger* (chasseur) battalion, the 23rd, from 1849 to 1860. The requirements were then substantially increased. The situation was similar in the other parts of the Empire.⁷

Table One
Distribution of Chasseur Regiments in the Austrian Empire

Year	Hungary and Transylvania	Bohemia-Moravia	Austria
1817	nil	7	5
1853	1	10	8
1857	1	8	8
1860	4	11	10
1867	2	18	13

Hungary provided 14 full infantry regiments both in 1853 and 1857 but in 1860 the counties sent enough recruits to fill 23, and, in 1867, 27 infantry regiments.⁸ Thus, one can conclude, despite the gaps in the data available, but taking into consideration population growth of the first half of the nineteenth century, that neither the Habsburg army nor the number of troops assigned to Hungary changed significantly between 1849 and 1860. As a matter of fact the

soldier/civilian ration decreased between 1817 and 1860 except for the years 1848–1849.

3. Army and Politics

The army was one of the traditional pillars of the Habsburg Empire. Vienna and the army, however, did not always see politics eye to eye as Hungary was reconquered in 1849.

A cabinet minister wrote to Commander-in-Chief Prince Windischgrätz on December 27, 1848 suggesting the division of Hungary into semi-autonomous districts of nationalities. Windischgrätz ignored the plan. The general, an ultra-conservative federalist, with influence at the court and a large army behind him, pressured the Liberal Centralist Austrian government of 1849 to cooperate with a group of Hungarian aristocrats, the so-called Old Conservatives. At a meeting on 6 January 1849, the Cabinet reluctantly authorized negotiations with the most active loyal aristocrats for the purpose of forming an unofficial council to advise the Government on the reorganization of Hungary.⁹ The Committee soon began its work but could achieve little, since the Cabinet, anxious to restrict their activities, sent a senior civil servant to oversee, in fact, confine, the Council's activities, to the application of governmental policies.¹⁰ This was not to the liking of Windischgrätz. Without waiting for instructions from the Liberal Centralists, the Prince began to pursue his own Hungarian policies independently of the Viennese Cabinet but with the support of the Old Conservatives. As his forces entered Hungary in January 1849, Windischgrätz appointed provisional royal commissioners to assist the military in pacifying and administering Hungary. The commissioners were, without exception, Hungarian Conservatives.¹¹

On 15 January 1849 László Szögyény-Marich, former Vice-Chancellor of Hungary and now a leading Old Conservative, received Windischgrätz's invitation to take immediate charge of Hungary's political administration. According to Szögyény-Marich the offer was accepted at their 17 January meeting on the condition that Hungary's integrity along with the country's constitutional institutions would be preserved. Magyar hegemony was to be safeguarded and, as a consequence, the official language of public administration was to remain Magyar.¹² On January 20th Szögyény-Marich occupied his post at Buda and began organizing various governmental offices.¹³ The civil administration's leading personnel were recruited exclusively from the ranks of the Old Conservatives, who were determined to shape Hungary as they had proposed in their

memoranda to the Crown. In Pest County, Commissioner Antal Babarczy obtained authorization from the Military for the parallel display of both Imperial and Hungarian colours. Similar concessions were granted in Fejér and Veszprém counties.¹⁴ Szögyény-Marich protested every step the Liberal Centralists had taken towards the separation of Croatia from the Kingdom of Hungary. On the publication of a new centralist constitution in Vienna, Szögyény-Marich, along with the Unofficial Advisory Council, submitted his resignation in protest. None of the resignations materialized when Windischgrätz reassured the federalist Old Conservatives of his continuous support.¹⁵

The Prince disapproved of Minister-President Schwarzenberg's Hungarian policies. Windischgrätz condoned the exclusive use of Magyar as the language of public administration despite the Government's explicit instructions to the contrary and in contrast with his personal preference for the German language. Pre-1848 institutions were restored at Buda and several officials were told outright not to maintain direct communication with the Liberal Centralist ministers without the Commander-in-Chief's authorization—in distinct contravention of earlier instructions to Windischgrätz by the Minister of Interior, Bach.¹⁶

The Liberal-Centralist ministers understandably prepared for the moment when they could convince the Emperor of the absurdity of the situation, the incompatibility of aristocratic federalism in alliance with a military clique and liberal centralism with a wider social base. It was Kossuth who unintentionally came to their rescue. His army mounted a successful spring campaign, shattering Windischgrätz's military reputation. On 6 April, 1849 the commander-in-chief was dismissed. When Windischgrätz's replacement, Lieutenant-General Baron Ludwig Welden, misunderstanding the existing political situation, invited the Old Conservatives to assist him in establishing a military dictatorship in Hungary, he met the fate of his predecessor.¹⁷

4. Haynau

The Cabinet now selected General Haynau to command the Third Army and to bring Hungary under martial rule. He was well qualified for the task being a fine commander, popular with his troops,¹⁸ and because of his past successes at suppressing local rebellions in Lombardy. Haynau lived up to his reputation by defeating the Hungarians without decisive support from the Russian interventionist forces, and by retaining control over Hungary until the

government became firmly established and the threat of a new uprising, if there was one, completely disappeared. Nevertheless, the Liberal-Centralist government did not intend to give a free hand to the military. On 4 June 1849 Baron Karl Freiherr von Geringer, Councillor in the Ministry of Interior and Bach's trusted official, was appointed commissioner in charge of the civil administration in Inner Hungary.¹⁹ Geringer and Haynau, the latter having become military governor of Hungary just five days earlier, were to apply Bach's centralist reform program to the pacified country.

At first there was little disagreement between Haynau and Vienna. Francis Joseph and his Cabinet were determined to treat the Magyar leaders with severity and punish the most dangerous revolutionaries. The young Emperor personally accepted Schwarzenberg's arguments on the necessity of expiation and terror.²⁰ Haynau, a mean, suspicious and hysterical person, agreed wholeheartedly:

I would hang all the leaders, shoot all the Austrian officers who had entered the enemy's service, and reduce to the rank of private all those Hungarian officers who had earlier served us either in civilian capacities or as sergeants. I accept the responsibility for this terrible example to the Army and to the world.²¹

During the autumn months Haynau and his military courts delivered a dreadful blow to Hungary. Death sentences were pronounced and actually carried out on 114 individuals, 89 of whom were former Imperial officers.²² An additional 386 persons were sentenced to death but their sentences were commuted to prison terms. Not less than 1756 people were jailed.²³ England, Russia and France exerted pressure on Austria not to persecute the Hungarian insurgents after their demise. Although the Viennese government rejected all interference in the internal affairs of the Empire, by the end of August 1849 the Cabinet began to yield. Haynau was instructed to moderate the policy of reprisal.²⁴ The general became infuriated. Neither he nor his officers had much respect for the Liberal-Centralist ministers. The generals and other senior officers, according to Adolf, a well informed spy in Pest, were Absolutists and only the junior officers cared for the March Constitution and the new policies of the government.²⁵ Haynau and his coterie felt that only military dictatorship could serve the Emperor and his glory. With great gusto Haynau embarked to discredit the ministers and create a new image of the Military.

The Hungarian press watched his shenanigans with amazement. The *Pesti Napló* reported on March 21, 1850 that Haynau has freed the revolutionary F. Shuller, who was recently sentenced to death. The paper reported eight more such reversals on April 4th. In the same month the general authorized a benefit concert for the political prisoners at the National Theatre.²⁶ Soon the Haynau Institute was established to aid the veterans of both sides.²⁷ Five colonels of the Kossuth army, who were recently sentenced to 18 years each, were suddenly released and their confiscated estates were also returned. An additional sixty officers were set free from the military prison of Arad.²⁸ Twenty six members of Hungary's revolutionary parliament who in 1849 participated in the dethronment of the Habsburgs were freed after sentencing.²⁹ In July Haynau was dismissed. The cabinet gradually deprived the army of its major role in pacification. The subsequent commanders of the Third Army, Count Wallmoden-Gimborn and Baron Appel, were political non-entities. By the time Archduke Albrecht took command in 1852 the Liberal-Centralists were on the run. The absolutist Emperor took Absolutist ministers and advisors thus eliminating the need of army politics.

5. Conscription

The army of Francis Joseph was thoroughly old fashioned. Gentlemen officers whose promotion was usually due to their high position in society and common soldiers whose very presence in the army was connected to either their low social or anti-state behaviour could not constitute a modern army.

Recruitment policies were part of the problem. Many of the officer corps were recruited from abroad, mainly from Germany and some from England. By 1859, 52% of the officers were "foreigners." Such commanders had little understanding of their men.³⁰ As a punitive measure, the government intended to enroll the whole Kossuth army, both the regular soldiers, the *honvéds*, and the local militia, the national guardists, under the imperial colours.³¹ On 20 August 1849 100,000 men were ordered to report to recruiting stations. This was a serious mistake. Neither the army nor the civil service had the capacity to handle so many recruits. In the early part of 1849 not even Kossuth was able to find enough soldiers for his revolutionary armed forces. His national guardists began to drift home in droves. The summer brought defeat, desire for family and civilian life. There was resistance to the Austrian draft too, and those who were caught in the new round up, particularly the former *honvéd*

officers who were enrolled as ordinary soldiers in various Imperial regiments, eventually became a volatile element.³²

Once in the army the new recruits talked among themselves of politics, often in the presence of police spies. Defection was frequent. They promised each other of beating Haynau to death, hanging the Kaiser and rushing home in case of a new rising.³³ The drafted *honvéds* had to be guarded. Every tenth soldier escaped from a Pécs transport.³⁴ Geringer reported to Vienna that the gendarmerie was unable to catch all the draft dodgers and that many newly enlisted men were in hiding.³⁵ Some villages refused to send a single soldier to the recruiting centres.³⁶ Others aided the deserters or threatened the guards of the new recruits. The 37 draftees who ran away at Dunaföldvár took their guards' weapons and began terrorizing the collaborators of Paks. The local administrator requested the dispatch of soldiers, who duly arrived but refused to deal with the situation. The case was left with the mere 36 gendarmes who handled the security of the whole county.³⁷

As the regime moved towards consolidation, the army released most of the veterans of the War of Independence, including those who were potential hazard to army discipline. Haynau freed all national guardists and *honvéds* over the age of 38, sons without brothers and those who paid the Treasury 500 *forinis* or supplied substitute. The defenders of Fortress Komárom, the last Hungarian stronghold, received amnesty.³⁸ Before the end of 1850 the Minister of War exonerated draft dodgers who were on the run, or in jail or who were about to be tried.³⁹ Searching for volunteers was temporarily suspended in Hungary.⁴⁰ The Emperor pardoned those officers who had left the Imperial Army without the retention of their ranks.⁴¹ In January, 1851, several categories of *ex-honvéds* were released and the following summer the Minister of Interior terminated the *honvéd* draft altogether.⁴² The Imperial Script of October 12, 1851 ordered the reduction of army staff and the dissolution of reserve *honvéd* regiments. Many other types of regiments were also disbanded or reduced. Masses of soldiers were sent on unlimited furlough.⁴³

From mid-1851 drafting became a routine matter accepted by the population as part of life. The government remained cautious; despite the increased population most counties were required to supply the same number of recruits for their regiment in 1853 as in 1817.⁴⁴

Table Two
Infantry Regiments Raised in
Inner Hungary and Transylvania

Crownland	Year			
	1817	1853	1857	1860
Hungary	10	14	14	23
Austria	10	9	9	9
Bohemia	9	7	4	10
Galicia	11	11	11	13
Moravia	5	4	4	4

Table Three
Population of Selected Hungarian Counties

County	Year			
	1821 ⁴⁵	1847 ⁴⁶	1857 ⁴⁷	1869 ⁴⁸
Máramaros	159,000	177,000	185,000	221,000
Heves-Borsod	369,000	320,000	350,000	528,000
Bereg	110,000	126,000	138,000	160,000
Békés-Csanád-Csongrád	167,000	368,000	483,000	514,000

New regiments were established by the counties of Máramaros, Heves, Borsod, Bereg, Békés, Csanád and Csongrád, where the population growth was well above average.

The call-up for military service was administered by the civil service usually once a year, between February and April. Married people, only sons of elderly parents, civil servants, priests, teachers and college students with good marks were exempted.⁴⁹ The Liberal-Centralists democratized the process; for a while no cash payment

was authorized for release from military duty. Later the old system was reintroduced but the cost of exemption was too high for most noblemen to take advantage of. The charge was 1500 *forints*, the average yearly salary of county chiefs.⁵⁰ Among those who were of draft age only 10 to 25 per cent were actually taken for the usual eight-year stint. In the Buda District, for example, 30,114 men registered for military service in 1856. Only 67 paid the exemption fee, 3975 were absent without cause and 8542 moved, emigrated or died since the census of 1851. The actual contingent drafted numbered 3940 men.⁵¹

The drain on manpower was not overwhelming. Secret agents reported few complaints. According to one such agent grievances about call-ups ceased once the *honvéds* and the National Guardists were released.⁵² Brigadier-General Heyntzal reported in 1852 on the prevailing satisfaction in his district over the universality of the levy.⁵³ Two years later the army's agents noted a similar mood among the peasants while the police observed the outrage of better families concerning the outlawing of substitution. In fact, in 1854 large contingents were secured by the enlistment of volunteers in the Nagyvárad District.⁵⁴ A contemporary police gazette listed by district the names of all draft dodgers wanted between 1852 and 1854. There is no evidence of mass avoidance of service. The list contains a meager 69 names for Szabolcs County, 240 for Somogy, 133 for Békés and 610 for Abauj-Torna for the first half of 1852. By the end of the year there were 764 on the Szabolcs county list. Next year the Somogy county list shrank to 50, 2/10,000 of the population. From Nyitra, only 149 made the list, and from the populous town of Nagyvárad, only 16 draft dodgers were wanted by the police.⁵⁵ Only by the end of the decade was the rhythm of drafting interrupted by hard times, political troubles and military defeats.

In 1859 the officers of the 46th Infantry Regiment began to complain about the high frequency of desertion of new recruits.⁵⁶ The Sopron District public opinion report, for the first time spoke of opposition to the draft and blamed it on labour shortages. The *Stimmungsberichte* speculated on the possibility of criminal elements volunteering to obtain arms and then might join the deserters to threaten public order.⁵⁷ Another report frankly stated that the so-called volunteers were actually now "roped in".⁵⁸ Next year more and more furloughed soldiers would not return to their units. Military authorities, however, were reluctant to admit to such breeches of discipline which would damage regimental reputation.⁵⁹ In Gömör County the peasants of Osgya openly debated ways and means of preventing the draft of their youth. In Zemplén County

some peasants blamed the local nobility's renewed political opposition to the government for the recently increased drafting quotas.⁶⁰ The draft for 1860 had to be suspended. The peasants rejoiced.⁶¹

Between 1849 and 1859 the soldiers were simply "putting in time." In 1859, they were asked to fight and possibly die for the Emperor, fight and die far away from their homes. After 1848, after emancipation, this was too much to ask.

6. Servicing the Army

Quartering, *corvée* and the occasional use of the army to dampen the class struggle in the countryside created conflicts between soldiers and peasants. On the other hand, the use of soldiers in the aid of flood victims and in the prevention of natural disasters, such as floods, eased the tension between the army and the lower classes. The generally apolitical behavior of the peasantry, which was partly due to their increased standard of living in the 1850's, meant law and order in Hungary and the correspondingly reduced role of the army as a policing force.

The presence of three armies in Hungary in 1849 imposed immense burden on the population. The economic hardship hit the peasants worst since they were the primary suppliers of soldiers, foodstuff, quarters and transport facilities. According to a county official, there were more troops in Pest County than the population could possibly feed. The leftover crop was not enough for the support of the villagers. The situation at one point became critical because the Austrian army used the peasants' essential draft animals.⁶² The Town of Vác complained that the presence of cavalry battalions and their 2700 horses led to the impoverishment of the population.⁶³ Often the problem was the unfair distribution of quartering obligations among districts.⁶⁴ At time payment for quartering was avoided but the new county chiefs made their protests at Pest effectively.⁶⁵ In 1851, a new law regulated services for the army: barracks were built, cash payments were made obligatory and a fairer distribution of the burden attempted.⁶⁶

Services rendered to but not paid for by the imperial army during the Hungarian War of Independence became tax deductible.⁶⁷ In the 1850's the army either paid with money or tax vouchers or a combination of the two. The use of vouchers occasionally caused problem in the cash-starved countryside. According to a Trencsén County report when the initial cash payments for food transport from army depots was replaced with tax vouchers, the few additional pennies the peasants received was not enough to buy fodder for

the draft animals for the two-three day trip.⁶⁸ Difficulties multiplied during the Crimean War when large Austrian units were moving across Hungary towards the eastern and southern extremities of the Empire. The First Cavalry Corps, for example, stayed in the Kassa District for more than three months in 1855. People complained and claimed that the soldiers paid and treated their hosts better in Galicia, Bukovina and Transylvania.⁶⁹ Similar grievances were filed from other districts.⁷⁰ During the previous year the problems were not as severe. The 7th Gendarmerie Regiment reported that the population despite the extraordinary demands for quartering and draft animals, expressed no dissatisfaction to date. The local Viceroyalty Office in the same district observed that the villagers were doing their best, but hinted at the existence of political tension. The officials of the Pest and of the Nagyvárad districts expressed their astonishment over the fact that the peasants performed transport service "accurately and willingly" not excluding harvest time.⁷¹ The reason for cooperation was economical rather than political. The *Stimmungsberichte* show the complete disinterestedness of the peasants in the Eastern Question and other foreign policy issues. What mattered was the extra income from transport, housing the army and the increased agricultural prices. There was a good harvest in 1854. Nevertheless, prices kept climbing and contemporaries attributed the rise to army procurement.⁷² By 1855 increasing demands began to interfere with production. The vouchers disturbed the accounting of the peasants. Wherever quartering was used as a punishment to a community, and that was done sparingly, resentment flared.⁷³ The main body of the peasantry cooperated with the army. They posed no security problem and showed no great hostility towards the army.

With the exception of the years 1849 and 1862, there were few recorded peasant disturbances in Hungary between 1849 and 1867. Political demonstrations were not numerous when compared with occupations of the former commons or properties of estate owners and with contract breaking incidents. Less than ten per cent of the conflicts involved death or injury.⁷⁴ In the history of Hungarian peasantry the significant dates were not August of 1849, the surrender at Világos, or 1860, the end of Neo-Absolutism, the year when a deal was struck between the Hungarian nobility and Francis Joseph, but April of 1848, 1853 and 1862. In 1853 the emancipation which began in 1848 was finalized. The number of conflicts between authorities and the peasantry declined until the early 1860's, when returning anti-Habsburg county officials rekindled the class struggle.⁷⁵

Law enforcement, in any case, was within the domain of the gendarmerie from 1850. The army was rarely called in by this new police force of about 1500 men, mainly composed of Magyars and former army men, who in time earned the respect of the population. The gendarmerie was feared by all, including the army and as a result the commanders were reluctant to involve their troops in political oppression. The role and influence of the army in political affairs was gradually reduced. From November, 1850, the civil and military administration of the country was separated. Already in July the military courts were excluded from the purge of the civil service and educational institutions. The military courts, nevertheless, remained active and retained wide jurisdiction until 1854, when in the midst of the Crimean War, the state of siege was lifted.⁷⁶ Contemporary Hungarians could not understand this latter development because at the time, war was not far from the borders.⁷⁷ The reduction of the standing army by 109,000 men and the parallel war preparations of the Third Army further confused the public.⁷⁸ In fact, in many parts of Hungary there were no soldiers within miles.⁷⁹ The High Command felt secure enough to use Magyar units to replace those garrison battalions which moved to the Principalities to face the Russians.⁸⁰ In 1857 a further reduction of the Third Army was ordered along with the dissolution of army security forces.⁸¹ The High Command properly conceived that the security situation in Hungary did not demand the active participation of the army in political administration. The weak internal cohesion of the military establishment in the 1850's cannot be explained with the destructive influences of the heavy commitment of the Austrian army to the maintenance of internal security.⁸² Neither can Solferino be blamed on Austria's inability to deploy her entire armed strength in the field in 1859 because of the alleged need to have large formations in Hungary and Croatia to guard against uprisings.⁸³ An explanation for the behaviour of Magyar units in Italy 1859, mass desertion and general unreliability, must be sought elsewhere, certainly not in the Hungarian domestic scene, but possibly in the impact of exile propaganda and in the influence of the enrolled former Kossuth officers.

Between 1849 and 1859 the most radical wing of the nobility in exile, in the army or in retreat in the countryside, was politically discredited; resistance to the regime could be but minimal. The aristocrats campaigned with the support of the gentry against the Liberal-Centralists but failed to obtain political concessions, although they contributed to the destruction of the reformist cabinet and its replacement by a much worse one from the Hungarian point

of view, the Absolutist- Centralist regime. The bulk of the gentry faithfully adhered to the aristocratic leadership; the Old Conservatives waited patiently for concessions, collaborated massively, caused no trouble and required no military measures. Only after Solferino, when the Hungarian nobility rediscovered the weakness of the Habsburg Empire and discarded the inefficient Old Conservative leadership, was the army called upon to restrain and bully nationalist gentry-led demonstrators in the towns of Hungary. But before 1859 many nobles collaborated. They may have snubbed army officers at balls or longed for Austrian involvement with defeat in the Crimean conflict but their faith in the Old Conservatives, their disappointment with 1849, their fear of the gendarmerie and the lower classes, their post emancipation economic malaise politically paralyzed them for a decade. The army was not one of their main concerns and the army viewed them as impotent dreamers. In 1859 and 1866 the roles were reversed; as the weaknesses of the army became obvious so grew the influence of the Hungarian nobility. The Austrian Liberal-Centralists were swept away, the peasantry neutralized, and the Absolutist-Centralists' credibility destroyed on the battlefields. Now the gentry could reach out for political power, for a deal which included the replacement, at least in Hungary, of the Habsburg army with a Hungarian one. The deal was struck in 1867. A new army was created a year later.

Notes

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