Apple of Discord

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Published by Purdue University Press

Armour, Ian D.
Apple of Discord: The "Hungarian Factor" in Austro-Serbian Relations, 1867–1881.
Purdue University Press, 2014.
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Part of the problem confronting the Habsburg Monarchy, in its relations with Serbia, was that the Principality could never be dealt with in isolation from the South Slav minorities in either the Monarchy or the Ottoman Empire. What affected Serbia tended to affect other South Slavs, and vice versa; at least, this was the assumption in Vienna, borne out by years of experience.

By extension this problem also confronted the Hungarian government in its attempts to influence policy toward Serbia after 1867. If anything, Hungarians like Andrássy and Kállay were even more aware of the nexus, since most of the Monarchy’s South Slavs were Hungarian subjects. It would not be too much to say that the principal reason for intervening in Serbian affairs, for the Hungarians, was precisely to mediate between Serbia and other South Slavs, to control the relationship and rob it of what, from the Hungarian point of view, appeared to be its menace.

The nature of the Regency regime in Serbia, which turned out to be only notionally less authoritarian than that of Prince Michael, meant that relations between the Principality and the rest of the South Slav world continued to be troubled. After an initial period of confusion following the Topčider assassination and the Regents’ marriage of convenience with the Serbian Liberals, it became apparent that the new government intended pursuing the same quietist, and pro-Hungarian, course. This had an inevitable negative effect on relations with both the Serb and Croat nationalists in the Habsburg Monarchy, with the various nationalist movements in the Balkans, and with Montenegro, Greece and Romania.

This, of course, was precisely what Andrássy and Kállay wanted. In their scheme of things, the different communities of the South Slav world were to be kept as isolated from one another as possible, their contacts monitored by
the Hungarian government. A total, hermetic quarantine was, however, scarcely feasible. Instead, Kállay maintained a sedulous watch over the movements of key individuals where he could, and reported in detail to Andrásy as the situation warranted. The irony of this vigilance was that, for all their proclaimed satisfaction with the loyal attitude of the Serbian government, both Kállay and Andrásy reacted with immediate suspicion to any and all contacts between Serbia and the outside world. It may be argued that such unremitting vigilance was at best unnecessary, at worst self-defeating.

Where Serbia’s relations with the Croat nationalists were concerned, the measures taken by the Hungarian government to guard against Yugoslavism seem out of all proportion to the reality behind the rhetoric of individual Serbs and Croats. When, in the autumn of 1868, Kállay learned from Blaznavac that Bishop Strossmayer intended visiting Belgrade, his outward reaction was that he “didn’t have anything against him.” Behind the scenes, however, the Strossmayer visit played a significant role in hardening Kállay’s views on how Croats and Serbs could be played off against one another.

In Hungarian-Croatian affairs 1868 had been dominated by the negotiations for a constitutional settlement, and much ill will had been generated among the Croats by the methods employed on the Hungarian side. Rigged elections to the Croatian Sabor, in December 1867, returned a Unionist majority of fifty-two deputies favorable to Hungarian terms, as opposed to a mere fourteen from Strossmayer’s National Party. This packed Sabor duly sent its delegation to the negotiations in Pest which hammered out the details of a compromise. The agreement, or Nagodba, eventually passed by both parliaments in September 1868, was, in the words of one authority, “more favorable to Croatians than is generally assumed.” It recognized Croatia as a “political nation possessing a separate territory,” with legislative and governmental autonomy as far as its “internal affairs” were concerned. It conceded that Dalmatia and the Military Border in Croatia-Slavonia should be part of Croatia proper, and confirmed Croatian as the language of administration. Yet the grip on the office of governor, or Ban, and the final say in finances, which the Hungarian government reserved for itself, remained outstanding grievances for Croat nationalists. Even after a partial revision of the Nagodba in 1873, Croatian autonomy seemed more a pious aspiration than a reality; in 1868 the Andrásy government appeared determined to keep overall control of the Kingdom firmly in its hands.

For a leading figure of the Croatian opposition to visit Belgrade was therefore a political event. Strossmayer was preceded, early in September, by Jovan Subotić, whom the Croatian National Party sent down to sound the Regents on their attitude toward the Nagodba. Was it really true, Subotić asked Blaznavac, that the Serbian government enjoyed a friendly relationship with the Hungarian? And if this was the case, what did Blaznavac advise with regard to the Nagodba?
Blaznavac’ reaction was revealing. He defended the connection with Hungary as advantageous to both countries, especially since “Serbia doesn’t want to be used as a tool by Russia, indeed it will serve as a dyke for Hungary against the encroachments of Russian influence.” With regard to the Nagodba, the Regent told Subotić the only course available was to negotiate openly with the Hungarians; a strong Hungary, he claimed, was a necessity, since “it [Hungary] protects the Slavs from German expansion.” Significantly, Blaznavac immediately turned to Kállay for assurance that he had said the right thing. And Kállay, while endorsing Blaznavac’ language, thought he should see Subotić for himself.

Subotić called on Kállay on 7 September, and as a result Kállay was able to inform Andrássy that “the Croatian national party seriously and sincerely wants to negotiate.” Subotić was evidently deputed to open a channel to Andrássy via Kállay. “There is no doubt,” Kállay wrote, “that the attitude of the Serbian government has had a great influence on the tractability of Subotić and his party.” This did not, however, mean that the Hungarian government could afford to ignore the “undeniable” fellow-feeling which persisted among the South Slav peoples. Kállay was convinced

that the so-called national party . . . is in a decisive and overwhelming majority in Croatia. . . . On the other hand, if the plans of the, in my present view, fictitious majority go through, the national party will form the opposition at once, and they will try to cause disturbances by every possible means. . . . an appeal to the oppressed Slav nationality would still meet with the sort of sympathy beyond our borders, especially here in Serbia, which the present Serbian government, for all its good intentions, would perhaps be unable, or would not dare, to get the better of.”

Here was the worst nightmare of the Hungarian political class, and Kállay evidently thought Andrássy should make a push to avoid it by building a bridge to the Croat nationalists.

The silence from Pest on this issue, over the next couple of months, was deafening. This may simply have reflected the genuine obstacles to agreement between the Andrássy government and the Croatian Nationalists. The government hardly needed the Nationalists’ support, and the latter were unlikely to make demands acceptable to Pest. It was evident that, much as he valued having Kállay in Belgrade, Andrássy did not always see eye to eye with him. Their differences over Hungarian domestic political affairs were to surface increasingly over the next two years.

When he arrived on 30 October for what was ostensibly a pastoral visit to the Catholic community in Serbia, Bishop Strossmayer was thus still very much the unreconciled bogeyman of the Hungarian government, and it was as such that Kállay, for all his outward courtesies, treated him. Kállay spent much of his time during Strossmayer’s visit working to prevent a torch-lit procession in the
Bishop’s honor, a prospect which, since Strossmayer was to be the guest of the Austro-Hungarian consulate, filled Kállay with consternation. He lobbied with Blaznavac to have any such demonstration banned, and suggested to Strossmayer that the Bishop spend the night across the river at Zemun. In his interview with Blaznavac on the 31st, Strossmayer openly reproached the Regents “for conclud-
ing an alliance with the Hungarians at the expense of the Croats”; and although Blaznavac was able to deny such a link with perfect truth, he made no secret of his desire for good relations with Pest.\textsuperscript{12}

Kállay’s efforts to muzzle Strossmayer in Belgrade were not, however, wholly successful. Strossmayer delivered a sermon on 1 November, in which he predicted peace and understanding between nations, “not with some over others but happily alongside one another, and the strong will try to help the weak.”\textsuperscript{13} A demonstration was held in front of the Metropolitan’s palace that evening, and in a speech made the next morning Strossmayer’s most daring utterance was to declare himself “ready to sacrifice the last drop of his blood for the mission of the Serbs in the East.”\textsuperscript{14} Rhetoric though this was, both Kállay and the Regents felt obliged to take it seriously. Ristić went out of his way to assure Kállay that, although “a lot of people are trying to cloud the friendship which exists between us . . . they will not succeed in this.”\textsuperscript{15}

Behind this petty manoeuvring there was undoubtedly a deeper purpose, which Kállay only intermittently committed to paper but which was dimly perceived by at least some outside observers. The Strossmayer visit was followed with interest in the Slav press of the Habsburg Monarchy, and one organ, the \textit{Correspondenz} of Prague, openly denounced Kállay for his part in it. Kállay, said \textit{Correspondenz}, although a young “homo novus” with no diplomatic experience, had already contributed to the Karadorđević trial, to the suppression of the \textit{Omladina}, to the estrangement of Serbia from the nationalities on either side, to the involvement of Hungary in the Eastern Question. The motive could only be that the Hungarian government feared any closer development of Serbo-Croat relations on the eve of the \textit{Nagodba}.\textsuperscript{16}

The chief significance of Strossmayer’s visit to Belgrade, however, was that as far as Serbo-Croat cooperation was concerned, the Bishop came away emphatically empty-handed. It was clear Strossmayer had no hope of winning the Regents from their pro-Hungarian policy. This was due partly to the Hungarian courtship of the Serbian government, but partly also to the continuing mutual suspicion of Serbs and Croats, which Kállay saw and was determined to exploit.

This suspicion was easily aroused. It was typified on the Serbian side by Ristić’s comment in November that

\begin{quote}
The Croats have not wanted to recognize their antecedents or that there are Serbs in Croatia, and when the Hungarians have forced them to compromise, then they start showing affection for the Serbs. And they have wanted to draw
\end{quote}
us into their struggle with the Hungarians so that when, with our help, they save themselves, the Serbs will continue to be sacrificed even further. . . .

Strossmayer, by contrast, had a very different viewpoint in January 1869:

The Serbian government prefers the Hungarians and Turkey to us. . . . In Serbia it is believed that Serbia profits from our being downtrodden and powerless. How blind, what Byzantine wickedness and envy! But let us not give up hope.

Strossmayer’s followers were even less inclined to exercise the Christian virtues, and it was with them that Kállay saw his opportunity to sow further dissension among the South Slavs.

A couple of weeks after Strossmayer’s departure Kállay received a visit from Orešković, who made no secret of both his and the Bishop’s dissatisfaction with the Serbian government. The two discussed Orešković’s plan for achieving South Slav unity by annexing Bosnia to Croatia, after which, he insisted, Serbia would inevitably be drawn into a voluntary association under Hungarian auspices. Kállay’s solitary reflections that evening were revealing:

This conversation has strengthened the conviction I have had for years that in these provinces [Bosnia-Hercegovina] we can achieve a lot by making use of the jealousy which the Serbs and the Croats feel against one another. We must exploit this skilfully on one side and the other.

Four days later, Kállay called on Ristić, who launched into a bitter tirade against Orešković. Kállay did not neglect this opportunity to encourage these signs of rancor between the government and their Croat adviser:

I mentioned that in Hungary we were very well aware of the aspirations of the Croatian so-called national party, [which are] directed at nothing less than the takeover of Bosnia and the foundation of a Greater Croatia, to which Serbia would have to be annexed later.

This exchange gave rise to further nocturnal musings by Kállay, which provide one of the clearest possible illustrations of the principle of “divide and rule”:

It really would be a beautiful result if I could alienate the Croats and Serbs from one another. . . . It is my old idea that these two nations can’t be friends; both are striving for hegemony, especially with regard to Bosnia. The Bosnian question, consequently, is an apple of discord which, thrown in between them skilfully and at the right time, can naturally alienate them from one another.

The Bosnian question, then, was not just a device for winning Serbia over to the Habsburg Monarchy; it was envisaged as playing a key role in managing the nationalities within the Monarchy itself.

Kállay developed this theme in a letter to Andrássy in mid-December. At a time when the Hungarian parliament had just passed the Nationalities Law, he
argued, it was more essential than ever to maintain the present Serbian regime’s indifference to nationality questions to the north. Blaznavac, Kállay reported, had reiterated that the Regents “don’t care even if the nationalities in Hungary are oppressed forever, Serbia’s mission is in the Balkan Peninsula and not north of the Danube.”23 This had an obvious application to the situation in Croatia and southern Hungary. By supporting Serbia’s aspirations in the Balkans and ensuring the goodwill of Belgrade, “not only would the nations be completely preoccupied with their own affairs, but our nationalities too, seeing that nothing was to be expected henceforward, would finally settle down.”24 Serbia, which Kállay considered “the focal point of the Eastern Question,” would be won over completely if the Monarchy could guarantee it possession of Bosnia, while the very fact that Serbia had Bosnia would suffice to enrage the Croats and divide them permanently from the Serbs.25

Andrássy appears implicitly to have approved this scenario when, in his reply of 27 December, he endorsed the “soundness” of Kállay’s views.26 In the meantime, Kállay was also encouraging Croatian ambitions in another direction. Orešković, whom he saw on 20 December, declared that “the Croats can be completely satisfied if they really get Dalmatia and the [Military] Border.”27 In the following months Kállay went out of his way to support this solution.28 What he seems to have envisaged was a species of enforced trade-off: Serbia, whether the Croats liked it or not, would be awarded Bosnia, or at least the lion’s share of it; the Croats would regain control of the Military Border and Dalmatia. The Bosnian issue would ensure, when all the territories in question had been parcelled out, that neither side would ever be able to cooperate with the other against the center.

The Hungarian aim was plainly to keep Serbia and Civil Croatia divided. In the Military Border, by contrast, the objective was more negative: simply to exclude Serbian influence and encourage the Regency’s professed indifference to what happened there.

The whole question of the Border’s dissolution was acute by the beginning of 1869. Andrássy was determined to abolish this institution which, in the past, had served the absolutist Monarchy against Hungary and which, even after the Ausgleich, was considered to be, in Wertheimer’s words, “a constant threat to Hungary, which saw in the Border an unshakable pillar of the reactionary circle ranged against it in Vienna.”29 In addition to being what Kállay was apt to refer to as “the den of reaction,”30 the Border also appeared to Hungary’s leaders as a seed-bed of South Slav nationalism. From the Hungarian point of view this was all the more dangerous because the traditional hostility of Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs was not maintained in the Grenzer regiments, whose shared role engendered “a good deal of common feeling.”31 Here was a Slav population, trained to bear arms, where the policy of divide and rule faced unusual solidarity, and which constitutionally remained the exclusive domain of the Emperor and
the military. It is hardly surprising that the continued existence of the Border worried the Hungarian government.

On the other hand, it is possible to see how exaggerated these fears were when one considers the extent to which the Border was regarded as a liability even in Vienna. The wars of 1859 and 1866 had demonstrated the waning military effectiveness of the *Grenzer* troops and, what was more important, their unreliability. In an age of nationalism the *Grenzer* were no more immune than any other of the Monarchy’s ethnic groups, and the Austrian government was well aware that the Border figured largely in past plans by the Serbian government for a rising in Bosnia; indeed, the staunchest advocate of such plans was the ex-*Grenzer* officer, Orešković. This not only gave rise, in the general staff, to counter-plans for a preventive occupation of Bosnia, but also made the imperial government all the more ready to compromise with the Hungarian leadership.32

There is no convincing evidence that the Austrian military consciously entertained the designs attributed to them, by Hungarians like Andrássy and Kállay, with regard to the Military Border. Apart from anything else, the determination of the Emperor himself to adhere to the deal struck with the Hungarians in 1867 would have made using the Border as a springboard for reaction almost unthinkable; and where the Emperor did not lead, his generals were unlikely to initiate their own action.33 The chief argument against dissolving the Border, for the generals as for Francis Joseph, was the fact that it constituted a preserve of military power, free from civilian control, and thus desirable in itself.34

The debate on the future of the Border swayed back and forth in the first half of 1869, but the Hungarian viewpoint finally prevailed in the common ministerial councils of 26 May and 1 July. For the Emperor the decisive point was when Andrássy convinced him of the reality of the South Slav nationalist threat. Feeling in the *Grenzer* regiments against the Hungarian government was by now running high, and found expression in a spate of violently anti-Hungarian pamphlets; the fact that the Croatian National Party sided with the *Grenzer* against Pest only served to reinforce the impression of a Border succumbing to the virus of nationalism. On 13 August 1869 Francis Joseph approved a gradual dissolution of the Border.35

It is difficult to distinguish fact from fiction in some of the Hungarian arguments deployed against the Border’s continued existence. Kállay, in particular, seems to have been ready to believe almost anything about the doings of the “Vienna military reaction”; yet the sources for some of his alarms suggest that he was better at scaring himself than others on this subject. It was Blaznavac, for instance, who told him in August 1868 of a communication received from a *Grenzer* officer, to the effect that “the Border can still be used by the Austrian reaction as an instrument against Hungary, but Serbia can exercise a great influence on it.”36 Kállay warned that “neither Vienna nor Buda can rely on the Border, only Serbia,” and that “the military party, despite the unfavorable situation, fan the
flames with hints of an annexation of Bosnia.” To Beust Kállay painted the situation in the Border “in very dark colors.” To Andrásy he reported “revolutionary agitation,” and on the basis of reports from contacts in Hungary concluded that “there is a disposition against us so hostile that at the given signal the scenes of 1848 could be repeated any time.”

In reality the Hungarians held all the best cards in this tug-of-war with the military. They could make any number of allegations against the generals’ loyalty to the Dualist settlement, lend credence to every rumor branding the military as incompetent dabblers in politics, and cap all this with the undoubted fact that the Border was clearly past its heyday as a military asset. The military, by contrast, could appeal only to the Emperor’s sense of tradition and the agreeable freedom from civilian control which the Border offered. The growing Croat and Serb agitation against the government in the Border thus had three results. It played the decisive role in convincing Francis Joseph of the justice of the Hungarian case against the Border. It convinced Kállay, if not Andrásy, of the existence of an alliance between the Croats and the military. Finally, it confirmed Andrásy and his government in their view that no compromise was possible with either nationalist movement, and created the climate of opinion in which Kállay could seriously contemplate assassination as a means of resolving political difficulties.

Kállay was glad to encourage Croats like Orešković to think that Dalmatia and the bulk of the Border would eventually be reincorporated into Croatia. In the case of the Serbs in the Border it was Kállay’s object to demonstrate the inevitability of their reincorporation into either Civil Croatia or Hungary itself. This, however, was a goal which clearly clashed with the demand, newly formulated by Miletić in January 1869, for a Serbian autonomous region within Hungary.

Kállay’s immediate preoccupation was to steer the Serbian government clear of this domestic Austro-Hungarian controversy. As a conversation with the British consul in the spring of 1869 reveals, he encouraged the equivocal attitude of the Serbian government toward the Grenzer: “The truth is the Government here [i.e., in Pest] looks upon the whole Grenzer system with ill-disguised fear and suspicion.” Grenzer officers like Orešković were better trained and educated than the average Serbian officer; but as former servants of the Habsburgs no Serbian government could ever completely trust them.

These are weaknesses and peculiarities of character, which Mr. Kallay has studied, and knows very well to turn to the best account, if by working on a common sense of danger, he could evoke a common feeling of antagonism to the Grenzers, he would undoubtedly render a good service to the Hungarian, whatever he might to the Austrian Government.

The irony was that, while seeking to arouse this antagonism, Kállay was also busily promoting the Bosnian scheme, which was bound to increase the Serbian
government’s reliance on the training and administrative experience which the Grenzer alone could offer.

Kállay and, through him, Andrássy certainly knew about the various secret but ultimately abortive contacts between Vienna and the Croats in the course of 1869. The conclusions that they drew from the evidence available, however, were unduly alarmist. Kállay read the worst into Orešković’s meetings with General Wagner, military governor of Dalmatia. “Since these plans are not being conceived in either the foreign ministry or the Hungarian ministry,” he wrote Andrássy on 28 July, “their seat cannot be other than the . . . military party.” The mere fact of meetings between Strossmayer’s confidant, Matija Mrazović, and someone like Wagner, in mid-summer 1869, indicated to Kállay that

something is being matured behind the scenes, which is directed principally against Hungary. . . . The plans recently prepared for the reform of the Border appear to prove this. They give a degree of autonomy to the Border communities which they could scarcely enjoy once they were joined to Hungary.

At the very time when the Delegations were debating the Border question, Kállay suggested, “it is perhaps being relied upon that the population of the Border will not see any advantages in union with Hungary and Croatia and will thus resist it.”

Here was the nub of Hungarian concern about the Border: the situation, at least in Kállay’s opinion, could conceivably lead to armed revolt. He repeated his warning about an alliance between the Croats and the military early in September, by which time the activities of Miletić, on behalf of the Serbian Grenzer, were also troubling him. His general foreboding was only deepened when, in Pest a few days later, he discussed the Border and the general situation with Andrássy. The latter

especially voiced the certainty that Russia will fall upon us as soon as she completes her railways. The important thing, in the struggle, is that our back, as well as that of the Turks, should be protected against the South Slavs. Because of this we must win the Serbs over completely.

The Bosnian question was the specific reference for this policy, but it would be equally essential, if war really were imminent, to head off any unrest in the Border.

The Dalmatian revolt, which broke out in the Cattaro region in mid-September 1869, set these Hungarian alarm bells ringing all the more urgently. Originating as a purely local dispute over the application of the Austrian military service law of December 1868, the revolt proved difficult to suppress and dragged on until January 1870. Apart from being an embarrassing revelation of the Monarchy’s weakness, it quickly became a focus for South Slav nationalist discontents, and consequently a natural source of apprehension in both Vienna and Pest. The fear was, first, that the insurgents might attract the armed support of Montenegro,
which adjoined Dalmatia, and the material and financial support of Slavs every¬
where else, including Serbia. Second, and this was a particularly Hungarian preoccupation, it was thought the Dalmatian example might prompt a similar explosion in the Border.

Ironically, one effect of the Dalmatian revolt was to scupper once and for all any real likelihood of cooperation between Croat nationalists and the Austrian military along the lines feared by Kállay. General Wagner, in particular, whose ineffective efforts to repress the uprising led to his replacement as governor of Dalmatia in December, became the object of universal obloquy among the Slavs inside and outside the Monarchy. Conversely, the reaction of government circles to the revolt, especially the military authorities, was immediately to suspect the Croatian National Party of being its instigator.

Kállay, however, remained convinced of the existence of a Croat-military combination. His apprehensions were increased late in September when his deputy Theodorovics reported, after a visit to Pančevo across the river, that “in the people a great fear of the Hungarians prevails and a great irritation, and it would only need instigators for a rebellion like 1848 to break out.” Articles in the military-inspired Border paper Zukunft, in Kállay’s opinion, constituted a call to the Border to rise up in arms, which “again shows that the military reaction and Croatian national party are in agreement.” Reporting to Beust in November, on the sympathy for the Cattaro insurgents in the Border, Kállay pointed out that the longer the revolt dragged on, the livelier the interest with which the Serbs followed it, and the higher their hopes that something might happen to make Serbia’s own aspirations realizable. It was yet another opportunity for Kállay to reiterate his thesis that Serbia was the linchpin of peace in the Balkans, and that “If Serbia moves, however, then all of a sudden the whole Eastern Question comes to the forefront.”

In fact the behavior of the Serbian government was something from which Kállay could derive some comfort. On the Border, both Blaznavac and Ristić stressed their disinterest in the fate of the Grenzer, to the point even of informing Kállay of the movements of nationalists there and warning against the machinations of the military. The fact that Miletić was a supporter of the Serbian Grenzers’ claim to an autonomous territory disinclined the Regents from sympathizing with the Grenzer cause.

On Dalmatia, an even more inflammatory issue in that actual fighting between the Austro-Hungarian army and Slavs was involved, the determination of the Serbian government not to get involved was all the more remarkable. The fact that the revolt lasted as long as it did, and that in the end the imperial government was forced to accept a humiliating failure and suspend the application of the military service law in the Cattaro region, was a source of tremendous excitation in the South Slav world and was seen as a great moral triumph.
the Regents, despite face-saving allegations by the Austrian authorities that the insurgents were inspired from Belgrade as well as Cetinje, had no hand in this and could take none of the credit. Why?

The principal explanation must be Kállay’s success in convincing them that, as he put it to Blaznavac on 4 November, the revolt itself “was in reality called forth by the Vienna military reaction.” Kállay appears to have believed this himself. The imputation was that Dalmatia was a pretext for intervening in force in Bosnia, an interpretation reinforced by what Kállay knew by now of military plans for an occupation, and by the suspected links with the Croats. Dalmatia thus highlighted the differences between Vienna and Pest over the Monarchy’s goals in the Balkans. Whereas Hungary still opposed an Austro-Hungarian presence in Bosnia, and indeed sought to help Serbia to the administration of the province, Austria was at least toying with the idea, perhaps as a means of redressing the balance of nationalities struck by the Ausgleich to Hungary’s disadvantage. Hungary could thus be presented as the only force preventing the Monarchy’s annexation of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Not only did Blaznavac respond to this reasoning, with “a categorical assurance in favor of Hungary, and against Austria,” but a couple of weeks later he told Kállay he would be glad if the Dalmatian rising were crushed, so that Russian influence in the region would be checked. Kállay, reporting officially to Beust, naturally did not mention the first of these sentiments. Beust, as might have been expected, replied expressing the Austro-Hungarian government’s warm appreciation of the Serbian stance.

Kállay’s success in immobilizing the Regents was recognized by his fellow diplomats. The British consul got the clear impression that Blaznavac accepted there was a link between Cattaro and the Austrian military, a belief due to Kállay’s activity: “Able, astute and versatile, Mr. Kallay has perfectly succeeded in persuading the Servians, that their best, if not only allies are the Hungarians.” The Prussian consul reached identical conclusions: “Hungarian policy . . . does not want to let any powerfully organized Serbia arise as crystallization point for a future Yugoslav empire.” Yet Kállay, Rosen added, constantly praised things Serbian and flattered the national sense of importance, by encouraging the Serbs to think their territorial aspirations “justified, indeed attainable.”

Thus Mr. Kállay has undoubtedly succeeded, on the one hand in isolating the Principality of Serbia within the general Slavic movement, and on the other hand in cutting off the ties between the Serbs of the Vojvodina, the most difficult faction among the Hungarian Slavs, the mainspring of their agitation, and their independent brethren south of the river.

The extent of the Regents’ psychological dependence on the Hungarian link can be judged by Blaznavac’ admission to Rosen, in January 1870, that it had been a
mistake to fight Hungary in 1848–49, and that “Hungary’s friendship is one of our principal necessities.”\textsuperscript{65}

There was, however, a growing divergence of views between Kállay and Andrássy as to the proper handling of the South Slav question. Andrássy, while yielding to no one in his determination to triumph over nationalist subversion in Hungary, evidently did not share Kállay’s sense of impending crisis. Though aware of the danger of a rising in the Border (which in fact happened in October 1871), he was probably more confident of his ability to suppress it than Kállay. Then again, Andrássy was already showing signs of impatience with the Serbian policy, which he had been trying to implement before Kállay had even gone to Belgrade.\textsuperscript{66} The result was an increasing disinclination to take Kállay’s advice, particularly when this bore on Hungarian domestic affairs with which, in any case, Kállay had nothing to do officially.

This became painfully apparent in the spring of 1870, when Kállay, in response to an initiative from the ever-active Orešković, took up the idea of a propaganda campaign in the Border in favor of a rapid dissolution. Kállay was perfectly aware, by this stage, that Orešković was playing a tortuous double game between Vienna and Pest, and had conducted talks with both Wagner and Beust.\textsuperscript{67} The upshot of this, according to the report which Orešković filed with the Regents on his return, was that Beust had proposed a formal agreement between Vienna and Serbia which endorsed Serbia’s “legitimate aspirations,” bound the Monarchy to stay out of Ottoman domestic affairs, and would be kept secret from the Hungarians.\textsuperscript{68} No record of these talks survives in the Vienna archives, and it is probable, given what we know of Beust’s views, that the talks were a diversionary tactic on his part.\textsuperscript{69} Kállay, moreover, got the gist of Orešković’s report courtesy of Blaznavac, so he knew what Orešković had been up to; yet he clearly was so convinced of the need to win hearts and minds in the Military Border that he preferred adopting Orešković’s propaganda plan to doing nothing.\textsuperscript{70} Orešković’s conditions, for persuading his fellow Grenzers that dissolution was inevitable, included a number of points which Kállay knew would be unacceptable to Andrássy, such as Strossmayer’s appointment as archbishop of Zagreb, and the removal of the unpopular Baron Levin Rauch as Ban of Croatia.\textsuperscript{71}

Kállay, however, was destined to receive a rude shock when he eventually talked the matter over with Andrássy in Pest on 9 May. To Orešković’s demands regarding Strossmayer and Rauch, Andrássy gave short shrift:

He would never consent to Strossmayer being appointed Archbishop of Zagreb, because he is an unreliable person, very deeply sunk in the South Slav agitation which the Russians support. . . . In the same way he can’t promise Rauch’s removal, as he had been such an exponent of the union [of Croatia with Hungary]. . . . And as far as financial assistance is concerned, he will be glad to give it to Orešković’s people, if they want to agitate in a unionist spirit. However, if he should act in a
contrary sense, then he [Andrássy] will oppose him energetically and if necessary he will order the agitators to be imprisoned, and even hanged. . . .

To reinforce this uncompromising stance, Andrássy mentioned that a general was now being sent to take command in the Border who would act “in a completely Hungarian spirit.”

Kállay accordingly made no attempt to talk Andrássy over, “since our views have completely diverged.” In Belgrade, he did what he could to soften the harsh tone of Andrássy’s answer to Orešković, although he could do little to alter the substance. Orešković, however, showed himself the eternal optimist. The Croatian National Party, despite their recent feelers toward Vienna, and even Moscow, still regarded “reconciliation with Hungary as a matter of life and death.” Orešković was thus still prepared to sound the mood in the Military Border. Kállay felt obliged to stress that any agitation should be conducted along the lines laid down by Andrássy, and on this basis the two tentatively worked out a program for joint action. Orešković was eventually to get the promise of “some privileges” for the Border, and an offer of 10,000 forints toward the cost of the agitation, when he met Andrássy again in July, although Andrássy made no concessions on the substantive issues.

In the meantime, Kállay had sustained yet another blow to his hopes of influencing events from Belgrade. By late June 1870 he had become seriously alarmed at developments among the Monarchy’s South Slavs. The situation in the Border, the wrangling between Croat nationalists and Rauch in Zagreb, and the increasing opposition to the Hungarian government among the Vojvodina Serbs all contributed to Kállay’s sense of unease. Some of this nationalist ferment had communicated itself to what passed for public opinion in Serbia, and was causing the Serbian government concern.

Kállay thus traveled to Pest on 28 June anxious to impress on Andrássy the full gravity of what he saw as a crisis in Hungarian domestic affairs, as well as a hazard to good relations with Serbia.

His interview with Andrássy confirmed his worst fears. Kállay set forth his belief that “the Újvidék [Novi Sad] agitation is reaching huge proportions,” and that “behind all this agitation is lurking the Archduke Albrecht”; but Andrássy was unconvinced. The minister president felt sure that Albrecht had reconciled himself to the Ausgleich and was not involved in any agitation; it was far more likely, he suggested, that some individual general officer was acting on his own. To this not unreasonable interpretation, Kállay could only reflect bitterly “I fear that these fine illusions of Andrássy’s are soon going to be dispelled very unpleasantly.” Andrássy clearly thought that matters in the Border and Croatia were now better, with the popular mood already swinging around in favor of incorporation.

Kállay gave up. “Seeing that Andrássy is again seeing everything through rose-tinted spectacles,” he decamped for Belgrade the next day, but not before
his long conversation with Andrássy on Serbian affairs in general had convinced him that

in our way of thinking . . . we differ from one another so much, especially as regards the relations of Hungary with the South Slavs, that it's not worth my wasting any more words on it at all. . . . I shall . . . in my reports confine myself exclusively to the affairs of the Principality.81

It is hard not to conclude that Kállay was led astray by having only a worm’s eye view of the nationalities problems in Hungary, Croatia, and the Military Border. Based as he was at Belgrade, he simply did not have all the facts at his fingertips. Andrássy, too, thought the military dangerous, especially because of their power-base in the Border; but being at the hub of things he tended to have a more just appreciation of the extent of the threat, if any.

Judged in the short term, Andrássy was right to take a more relaxed view. The Military Border by 1870 was an institution on the way out. With regard to the nationalist movements in Croatia and the Vojvodina, Andrássy had even less intention of compromising in his defense of historic Hungary. He saw no need to make concessions to Strossmayer’s party on the issue of greater autonomy for Croatia; and he was ready to resort to judicial repression as a weapon against the obstreperous Miletić. Andrássy, in fact, was demonstrating the fundamental paradox of Hungarian liberal nationalism in the nineteenth century: as its hold on power was consolidated, so it increasingly paid only lip service to its liberalism, whenever the nationalism of others reared its head. There seemed very little room here for Kállay’s youthful vision of a federalist southeastern Europe.

In the long term, Andrássy’s approach to the problems that beset the Kingdom of Hungary on its southern border seems unimaginative and ultimately disastrous. It was precisely this refusal of leaders like him to budge on the nationalities issue which sowed dragon’s teeth for the future, and helped make non-Magyar nationalists even less ready to compromise than they were already.

Kállay’s vision of things was not necessarily more accurate. He could accommodate the idea of territorial enlargement for Croatia as well as Serbia; he was possibly in favor of a greater measure of Croatian autonomy;82 he could envisage, however vaguely, a federalist solution. The prerequisite for these solutions, however, was always that Hungary should have the deciding voice, that it should exert the ultimate control. And in the way he went about trying to shape events in the South Slav world, Kállay, like Andrássy, was manipulative and divisive. It never seems to have occurred to him that, although his opponents were no less devious, such methods were hardly a recommendation for Hungarian hegemony in a reshaped southeastern Europe. On occasion, this tactical myopia could blind Kállay to the most basic ethical considerations, and lead him into actions quite startling in their ruthlessness.
As a coda to Kállay’s involvement in the politics of the Monarchy’s South Slavs, therefore, it remains to record his part in the plot to assassinate Svetozar Miletić in 1869–70. That Kállay should have regarded this as necessary at all seems bizarre; but his candid references to it in his diary convey the impression that eliminating a major political figure in this way was the most logical thing imaginable.83

Miletić, though deposed as mayor of Novi Sad, continued to sit in the Hungarian parliament as the town’s representative, and his interpellations of Andrásy’s government were a source of chronic annoyance. His National Party demanded the establishment of an autonomous Serbian territory, carved out of the Hungarian part of the Military Border and the Banat, a solution viewed with anathema by Hungarian politicians. He was also a supporter of the Serbian Omladina. Miletić was thus a thorn in the side of the Hungarian government, and feared by the Serbian Regents, who were vulnerable to his charge that they had sold out Serbian national interests to the Hungarians.84

Kállay had been aware since his arrival in Belgrade that Blaznavac, in particular, thought Miletić should be “strung up.”85 In the summer of 1869 he received renewed evidence that Blaznavac thought no differently: “About Miletić and his friends he declared that they [the Serbian government] couldn’t, admittedly, hang them, but if we Hungarians hang them not one voice would be raised against it in Serbia.”86 Kállay was in any event disposed to take this seriously. He knew as well as the Regents that the upcoming Omladina congress would be yet another occasion for attacks on the Serbian régime.

On 14 August Kállay was visited by Miloš Popović, his newspaper hack, who was “terribly depressed” over Miletić’s activities, and feared “some sort of outbreak soon.” Popović thought some sort of action necessary, “especially at the Omladina congress . . . some sort of scandal has to be cooked up.”87 Popović already had a suitable agent for such an operation in the shape of Stevo Mirković, a Belgrade innkeeper; and in the event the Serbian government acted on its own, sending four agents to spy on the Omladina proceedings.88

The next step appears to have involved the Hungarian government itself, or at least junior officials of it. On 13 September Kállay received a visit from Gyula-Károly Mayerffy, the Hungarian interior ministry’s agent in Novi Sad.89 Mayerffy turned out to be in contact with Mirković, who was definitely on Blaznavac’s payroll. Mayerffy believed Mirković would be “the best individual to use for Miletić’s murder, especially if Milivoj [Blaznavac] entrusted him with it, so he asked my help in the matter.”90 Kállay accordingly sounded Blaznavac the next day, and learned that “Even now he expresses himself about them [Miletić and the Omladina] just as he has up to now.”91

Nothing seems to have come of this first initiative, however, nor does Kállay appear to have mentioned it to Andrásy on paper. The matter rested there until the following summer. Kállay, on a visit to Novi Sad in June 1870, was warned
by Mayerffy and another Hungarian official, Kormos, about the level of nationalist agitation there.92 Three days later, Mayerffy appeared in Belgrade, informing Kállay that he had come to discuss Miletić with Mirković, “whom Milivoj sent to Kikinda last year to kill Miletic.”93 The next day, the 20th, Mayerffy was able to announce that Mirković

    gave his word that if he can get the necessary money Miletić won’t exist any more after 5 weeks, since he has 3 safe people through whom he can have him done away with. He will need 300 ducats. . . . Mayerffy promised him he would get it. . . . I handed over 50 ducats to him at once.94

Apart from the fee, all Mirković wanted, for what he seemed to regard as an act of patriotism, was a commission in the Hungarian home guard for his son, “which Mayerffy (at my suggestion) promised him.”95

    Kállay, by now, had been called to Pest for talks with Andrássy, but preparations for the murder went ahead as planned. A disagreeable surprise, however, awaited Kállay. The interview on 28 June was where Kállay received such unequivocal evidence of what he saw as Andrássy’s fatal complacency on the South Slav question. More important, Andrássy, though the subject was not discussed, did not give the impression of a man who would welcome the assassination of even the obnoxious Miletić for the mere political éclat of the thing. Kállay therefore, on his return to Belgrade, sent for Mayerffy with the reflection that, since “in Buda they once again see everything rosily, I think that Miletić’s destruction would not yield the expected result, so I want to discontinue this business.”96 Mirković and his cronies were accordingly called off, and no more was undertaken in this direction.97

    One could say that Kállay’s approach to the Miletić problem betrayed the crudity of youth; there were in fact more sophisticated ways of dealing with nationalist politicians. In October 1870 the Andrássy government managed to get Miletić condemned to a year in prison for alleged violation of the Hungarian press law. It was to prove a favorite stratagem thereafter against Miletić, whose health and reason were eventually broken by prolonged incarceration, most of it before any trial, in the late 1870s.98 The story of the Miletić assassination plot, however, has remained firmly bound in Kállay’s diary ever since. Although many harsh things had been said of Kállay by the time he left Belgrade in 1875, this was one tidbit that escaped public knowledge. It seems doubtful that John Stuart Mill would have approved.

Notes


2 Kállay Diary, 6 Sept. 1868 (Dnevnik, 86).


4 Jelavich, “The Croatian Problem,” 100. As Law XXX (1868) in Hungary and Law I in Hungary the Nagodba received royal assent on 17 November (Magyarország története 1848–1890, 2:1515).

5 Kolossa, “A Dualizmus rendszerének kialakulása,” 801, quoting the text.

6 Ibid; see also Kállay to Andrássy, 7 Sept. 1868, OSZK, FH 1733/136–39.

7 Ibid., f. 136.

8 Kállay Diary, 6 Sept. 1868 (Dnevnik, 86).

9 Kállay to Andrássy, 7 Sept. 1868, OSZK, FH 1733/137.

10 Ibid., f. 138.

11 Kállay Diary, 19, 22–23 and 30–31 Oct. 1868 (Dnevnik, 103–5, 106–7); Kállay to Andrássy, 30 Oct. 1868, OSZK, FH 1733/149; Kállay to Andrássy, 4 Nov. 1868, OSZK, FH 1733/151.


13 Kállay Diary, 1 Nov. 1868 (Dnevnik, 108).

14 Kállay to Andrássy, 4 Nov. 1868, OSZK, FH 1733/152. Cf. Kállay Diary, 2 and 3 Nov. 1868 (Dnevnik, 109, 110).

15 Ibid., 2 Nov. 1868 (Dnevnik, 109).

16 “The Serbian Regency and the Bulgarian Uprising,” Correspondenz, 10 Oct. 1868; and “The National Question in Hungary,” ibid., 6 Nov. 1868; both articles summarized by Radenić in Dnevnik, 685, note 122.

17 Ristić to Bogičević, 30 Oct./11 Nov. 1868, in Vučković, no. 201, 391.


19 Kállay Diary, 15 Nov. 1868 (Dnevnik, 114); J.A. von Reiswitz, Belgrad-Berlin, Berlin-Belgrad 1866–1871 (Munich & Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1936), 64, note 47.

20 Kállay Diary, 15 Nov. 1868 (Dnevnik, 114–15).

21 Ibid., 19 Nov. 1868 (Dnevnik, 116).

22 Ibid.

23 Kállay to Andrássy, 12 Dec. 1868, OSZK, FH 1733/156–57.

24 Ibid., f. 157.
172 ♦ Apple of Discord

25 Ibid.
27 Kállay Diary, 20 Dec. 1868 (Dnevnik, 131).
28 Ibid., 22 Apr. 1869 (Dnevnik, 173).
30 Kállay to Andrásy, 7 Sept. 1868, OSZK, FH 1733/139.
34 Rothenberg, The Military Border in Croatia, 168–70.
36 Kállay Diary, 14 Aug. 1868 (Dnevnik, 75).
37 Ibid., 23 Aug. 1868 (Dnevnik, 80).
38 Ibid., 25 Aug. 1868 (Dnevnik, 81).
39 Kállay to Andrásy, 7 Sept. 1868, in Petrović, vol. 1, no. 245, 556; Kállay Diary, 11 Nov. 1868 (Dnevnik, 113).
41 Longworth to Clarendon, 1 Apr. 1869, PRO, FO 78/2088.
43 Kállay Diary, 27 July 1869 (Dnevnik, 204).
Kállay to Andrásy, 28 July 1869, OSZK, FH 1733/183–84.


Kállay to Andrásy, 28 July 1869, OSZK, FH 1733/184. See Wertheimer, Graf Julius Andrásy, 1:395–97; Kállay Diary, 15 Aug. 1869 (Dnevnik, 209).

Kállay to Andrásy, 2 Sept. 1869, OSZK, FH 1733/235; Kállay Diary, 2 Sept. 1869 (Dnevnik, 214).

Ibid., 7 Sept. 1869 (Dnevnik, 216).


Ibid., 28.

Vončić to Orešković, 10/22 Nov. 1869, in Vučković, no. 213, 407.

Kállay Diary, 21 Sept. 1869 (Dnevnik, 224).

Ibid., 21 Nov. 1869 (Dnevnik, 246); see also Radenić’s note 207, 717–18, which points out that Kállay exaggerated the implications of the Zukunft articles, which made no explicit call for an uprising, but rather defended the Grenzers’ right to self-determination. Cf. Rothenberg, The Military Border in Croatia, 171; Krestić, “Vojna granica u nacionalno-oslobodilačkim planovima Srba i Hrvata,” 258; Wertheimer, Graf Julius Andrásy, 1:406.

Kállay to Beust, 30 Nov. 1869, HHSAS, PA XXXVIII/183.

Kállay Diary, 14 Aug. 1868 (Dnevnik, 73); 30 July 1869 (Dnevnik, 206).

Reiswitz, Belgrad-Berlin, Berlin-Belgrad, 175–76.

Kállay Diary, 4 Nov. 1869 (Dnevnik, 241).

Reiswitz, Belgrad-Berlin, Berlin-Belgrad, 176. It is interesting how the Kállay diary, published forty years later, confirms Reiswitz’s analysis, which is in turn based on the reports of the Prussian consul, Rosen. On the military, see also Kos, Die Politik Österreich-Ungarns, 41–42, 49–51.

Kállay Diary, 4 Nov. 1869 (Dnevnik, 241).

Ibid., 16 Nov. 1869 (Dnevnik, 245).

Kállay to Beust, 5 Nov. 1869, HHSAS, PA XXXVIII/183.

Beust to Kállay, 15 Nov. 1869, HHSAS, PA XXXVIII/183.

Longworth to Clarendon, 29 Nov. 1869, PRO, FO 78/2088.


Rosen to Bismarck, 17 Jan. 1870, quoted ibid., 178.

Kállay Diary, 20 May 1869 (Dnevnik, 181).

Ibid., 26 Mar. 1870 (Dnevnik, 285); and Kállay to Andrásy, 29 Mar. 1870, OSZK, FH 1733/185–87, both reporting that Orešković had been to Vienna early in March.


Orešković to Ristić, 9/21 Mar. 1870, in Vučković, no. 218, note 3 by Vučković, 422.

Kállay Diary, 26 Apr. 1869 (Dnevnik, 294).


Kállay Diary, 9 May 1870 (Dnevnik, 297).

Ibid.
74  Ibid.
75  Ibid., 16 May 1870 (Dnevnik, 300–1, 301).
76  Ibid., 13 and 22 June, 10 July 1870 (Dnevnik, 304, 308, 313).
77  Ibid., 28 June 1870 (Dnevnik, 309).
78  Ibid.
79  Ibid.
80  Ibid. (Dnevnik, 310).
81  Ibid.
82  Kállay Diary, 24 Oct. 1872 (Dnevnik, 502).
83  An account of the Miletić murder plot has already been published in Armour, “Austro-
Hungarian Covert Activity in Belgrade 1868–1875,” Pr. 2: 15–17.
84  Slobodan Jovanović, Druga vlada Miloša i Mihatla (Belgrade: Geze Kona, 1933 [1923]),
1:135–39; Gale Stokes, Legitimacy through Liberalism: Vladimir Jovanović and the Trans-
formation of Serbian Politics (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1975),
149–52.
85  Kállay Diary, 7 May 1868 (Dnevnik, 16).
86  Ibid., 28 July 1869 (Dnevnik, 205).
87  Ibid., 14 Aug. 1869 (Dnevnik, 209).
88  Ibid., 2 Sept. 1869 (Dnevnik, 214).
89  Ibid., 13 Sept. 1869 (Dnevnik, 218).
90  Ibid. (Dnevnik, 219).
91  Ibid., 14 Sept. 1869 (Dnevnik, 220).
92  Ibid., 16 June 1870 (Dnevnik, 305).
93  Ibid., 19 June 1870 (Dnevnik, 305).
94  Ibid., 20 June 1870 (Dnevnik, 306).
95  Ibid.
96  Ibid., 2 July 1870 (Dnevnik, 311–12).
97  Ibid., 10 July 1870 (Dnevnik, 313).
98  Vasa Stajić, “Svetozar Miletić and the Liberal Idea among the Jugoslavs,” Slavonic Re-
view 5:13 (June 1926): 112–13; Katus, “A nemzetiségi kérdés és Horvátország története,”