

Habsburg H-Net Discussion Network
Archduke Palatine Stephen to the Hungarian Diet, July 8, 1848

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[Source: Henry M. De Puy, *Kossuth and His Generals* (Buffalo: Phinney & Co., 1852), pp. 149-152.]

In the name, and as representative of our glorious reigning king, Ferdinand V., I hereby open the present Diet. The extraordinary circumstances in which the country has been placed, make it necessary to summon at once a meeting of the Diet, without waiting for the completion in detail of all the propositions and administrative measures which the responsible ministers of the crown were charged and directed by the past Diet to prepare and complete. Croatia rose in undisguised sedition; in the districts of the Lower Danube, bands of armed rebels have broken the peace of the country, and while it is the sincere wish of his majesty to avoid a civil war, his majesty is, on the other hand, convinced that the assembled representatives of the nation will regard it as their first and chief duty to provide all the means required to restore the troubled tranquillity of the country, to preserve the integrity of the Hungarian realm, and maintain the sacred inviolability of the law. The defense of the country, and the state of the finances will therefore form the chief subject toward

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which, under these extraordinary circumstances, I call the attention of the assembled representatives. His majesty's responsible ministers will submit to you propositions relating to these points. His majesty entertains the confident hope that the representatives of the nation will adopt speedy and appropriate decisions on all matters connected with the safety and welfare of the country.

His majesty has learned with deep feelings of regret and displeasure -- although he in his hearty paternal wish for the happiness of this country, following solely the impulse of his own desire, sanctioned during the last Diet, by giving to them the royal assent, those laws which were necessary to the progress of the country to prosperity, under the demands of the time -- yet that, especially in Croatia and on the Lower Danube, evil-disposed, rebellious agitators have excited the inhabitants of those countries, speaking different languages and holding different creeds, with false reports and terrorism to mutual hostility, and have driven them, under the calumnious representation that those laws were not then sanctioned out of the free will of his majesty, to oppose the ordinances of those laws and the legal authorities -- that some even have gone so far in rebellion as to

announce that their violent resistance to those decrees is for the good of the royal house, and takes place with the knowledge of his majesty.

For the tranquilization of the inhabitants of those districts, of all tongues and creeds, I therefore hereby declare, under the special commission of his most gracious majesty our lord the king, in his name and as his representative, that his majesty is firmly resolved

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to maintain intact, by his royal power, the integrity and inviolability of his crown against all attacks from without, and against all discord within the realm, and to assert and enforce at all times the laws he shall have sanctioned. And as his majesty will allow no one to curtail the freedom assured by the laws to the inhabitants of the country, his majesty expresses his displeasure with the daring conduct of all those who venture to assert that any illegal act or disobedience shown to the law can have taken place with his majesty's knowledge or in the interest of his royal house.

The union of Transylvania with Hungary was sanctioned by his majesty, in part because he by that step fulfilled the earnest desire of his dearly beloved Hungarian and Transylvanian people, but also because the united countries will in future form a firmer support to the throne and to freedom. His majesty's ministers for Hungary will submit all the details respecting this already accomplished union, which remain for the consideration of the legislative body.

With regard to foreign affairs; in the Lombardo Venetian kingdom, where the hostile troops of the king of Sardinia, and of other Italian powers, have attacked the army of his majesty, the war has not yet been brought to a close. With the other foreign powers, the peaceable relations have remained inviolate, and his majesty has the less doubt of their being maintained as he reckons it to be the highest duty of his government to neglect nothing which, without injury to the dignity of the throne, and the safety of his loyal subjects and their legitimate interests, may confirm a peaceable understanding with foreign powers ; and his

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majesty has a right to hope that as he adheres to the principles of neutrality as regards the internal affairs of other countries, this neutrality will be responded to on the part of foreign countries in equal measure. His majesty does not doubt that the Diet, in the combined interests of the throne and of constitutional freedom, will order, without delay, all that the welfare of the country so urgently demands.

I only fulfill the demands of his majesty, when I assure the Diet, and the whole loyal nation, of the gracious disposition entertained toward them by our illustrious lord, the king. [...]

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