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CENTRALISM OR AUTONOMY? THE SITUATION OF TRANSYLVANIA
AROUND THE COMPROMISE OF 1867

(Summary)

Keywords: Transylvania, political nations, union, integration, centralism, autonomy.

In Transylvania, during the principality era (c. 16-17) a system was crystallized based on the older roots of the three political nations and four main religions, which partially survived after 1848. The three political nations have also split power in space: the counties were considered the land of the Hungarian nobility, the Székely Land belonging to the Székelys, and the so called Royal Land belonging to the Saxons.

The administration system inherited since before 1848 was inadequate for a modern and efficient administration, so it was almost unanimously accepted the need to reorganize. In this context, the Diet of Sibiu in 1863-1864 was an important step in restructuring the political system by recognizing by law the equality of the Romanians and the Romanian language with the other nations or languages in Transylvania. The Diet of Sibiu in 1864 again drafted a bill on administrative reorganization of Transylvania. The guiding ideas were an efficient administration and judiciary system and, as far as possible, the grouping of homogeneous populations within administrative units.

The Union of Transylvania ultimately came into force at the same time with compromise of 1867. Two days before the appointment of the Hungarian government, on February 15th 1867, an informal council of ministers was held, unofficially chaired by the emperor, where Prime Minister Andrassy presented the point of view of the government in the matter of Transylvania. He believed that for the new government to strengthen its position, the union should have been treated as an accomplished fact and demanded the dissolution of the Transylvanian Aulic Chancellery, as well as the appointment of a royal commissioner in charge of the Gubernium of Cluj, which also meant the subordination of the Gubernium to the Hungarian government. The discussions included the matter of the appointment of a committee that would have prepared the draft laws on the union and the integration of Transylvania. Andrassy also promised to protect the interests of all residents of the province.

Finally, the restructuring of the *Royal Land* was conducted under the great administrative reforms of 1876, when, during the administrative unification the government, both the *Royal Land* and the Székely seats were dissolved. The idea of a Hungarian political nation, the idea of a centralized national state, however, was not compatible with the granting of national autonomies. The principle of centralism unequivocally won the fight with the preservation of local autonomy, but it was a double-edged victory: on one hand helped to strengthen the state apparatus, but on the other hand maybe more weakened the adhesion of the nationalities and their participation in Hungary's political life.

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