

*Béni Balogh – Ágoston Olti*

## The Issue of the Hungarian-Romanian Population Exchange between 1940 and 1947

### 1. The Issue of Population Exchange between 1940 and 1944

The Romanian political elite did not give up the concept of creating a homogeneous Romanian nation-state, therefore the idea of population exchange either. During the era of the Antonescu-regime the most important public opinion forming "national ideal" was the restoration of lost borders and regaining primarily North-Transylvania at all costs. The different population exchange concepts<sup>1</sup>, which were created in this period, almost without exceptions, took the 1939 borders as a basis and reckoned with the reestablishment of Great-Romania.

Prime Minister Ion Antonescu<sup>2</sup>, who got into power in the beginning of September 1940, possessed coherent "ethnopolitical" concepts. He had a very good personal relationship with Sabin Manuilă and asked for his opinion in all important issues, concerning population policy.<sup>3</sup> One of his major long distance aims was to create a homogeneous nation state, and to remove all non-Romanian inhabitants from the country. For example he argued that after winning the war there is no other solution than to "remove" minorities on the basis of a "reform" in order to "remove these masses of minorities from the Romanian settings".<sup>4</sup> Mihai Antonescu<sup>5</sup> Deputy Prime Minister had similar opinion and emphasised it in the meeting of the ministers' council on 17th June 1941, that: population exchange and peace solutions would have an important role in the ethnic and racial "calming" of the future Europe.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of these was the 1941 concept of Vasile Stoica which is to be covered in the next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Antonescu, Ion (1882-1946): General from 1931, marshal from 1941. He was Minister of Defence for a short period in 1937-1938. Plenipotentiary Prime Minister "leader of state" between 1940 and 1944. He was brought to trial and executed in Bucharest in 1946.

<sup>3</sup> Achim: Romanian-German Collaboration in Ethnopolitics... p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944. Vol. II. Problema evreiască? în stenogramele Consiliului de Miniştri. Volum alcătuit de Lya Benjamin. Bucureşti, 1996, Editura Hasefer, document 175., p. 524.*

<sup>5</sup> Antonescu, Mihai (1904-1946): jurist, politician Minister of Justice in Ion Antonescu's first government, later Minister of State and Minister of Propaganda. Appointed Deputy Prime Minister on 21st June 1941, appointed Foreign Minister on 29th June. He was brought to trial and executed in Bucharest in 1946.

<sup>6</sup> *Stenogramele edinelor Consiliului de Miniştri. Guvernarea Ion Antonescu. Vol. III. (aprilie-iunie 1941). Ediţie de documente întocmită de Marcel-Dumitru Ciuc? et al. Bucureşti, 1999, p. 570., 17th June 1941.*

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We can find the most complete summary of ideas, which served as grounds of this policy, in Sabin Manuilă's 1941 autumn population exchange concept.<sup>7</sup> The well-known Romanian demographer constructed a detailed project plan for the final settlement of the Hungarian-Romanian contradiction, and for the opportunities to apply population exchange, which he sent to Ion Antonescu on 15th October 1941. Since Manuilă constructed the project plan following one of their meetings, it is likely that it was in accordance with Antonescu's ideas in its major characteristics. The starting point of the document was the borders of Romania before 1940, and its main focus was to achieve the ethnically homogeneous Romania. For that purpose "all minorities, which have centrifugal intentions, have to be placed outside the borders of Romania, and all Romanians, might they be anywhere, have to be brought home and the new borders of the eternal Romania must be drawn in such a way, that the political borders should precisely coincide with the ethnic borders".<sup>8</sup> He considered the population exchange to be an ideal solution. He would have got rid of the "centrifugal" minorities (Hungarians, Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Serbs) by the means of a "full and obligatory population exchange", which would have been executed in several steps. During the course of which 3.5 million individuals would have left the country and 1.6 million Romanians would have arrived in Romania. As regards the Transylvanian Hungarians, they would have been moved to Bachka and the Serbian Banat (the latter would belong to Hungary) partially and the rest into the Nagyszalonta-, Nagyvárad-, Szatmárnémeti-line (this area is approximately 5800 km<sup>2</sup> and would be submitted to Hungary) the Szeklers would be moved to Subcarpathia, instead of the Ruthenians, who would be moved to Ukraine. By moving them and other minorities a new Romanian nation state – which would have been homogeneous to a 91% extent - would have been born on the area of which would have been 5000 km<sup>2</sup> smaller than that of the 1939 Great-Romania.

Mainly because of disadvantageous external circumstances (war events, lack of agreement of the neighbouring countries and – as we suppose - Germany's approval) Manuilă's concept could not possibly be executed. Although the concept never became the official program of the government, population policy of the Antonescu-regime was still shaped in accordance with Manuilă's ideas.<sup>9</sup> It is confirmed by the Romanian-Russian-Ukrainian population exchange concepts of September 1943<sup>10</sup>, which did not have Hungarian aspects, but we note it because

<sup>7</sup> Informs Sorina Bolovan – Ioan Bolovan: *Problemele demografice...* op. cit.; On the basis of this the concept is presented by Zoltán Szász: *Tévutak keresése...* pp. 17–19.; See the English translation Achim: *The Romanian Population Exchange Project...* pp. 609–617.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Szász: op. cit. p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Achim: *The Romanian Population Exchange Project...* p. 607.

<sup>10</sup> Arh. N.I.C., Iond PCM, dos. 1155/1943, f. 6–9.; Presents Achim: *Proiectul guvernului de la București...* pp. 395–421.

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of its being a characteristic document, which is typical of the era. The concept (which included a far more detailed description of the actual duties, than the 1941 document) was elaborated by an inter-ministry committee presided by General Corneliu Dragalina, governor of Bukovina. Summary of the committee session highlighted, that the Romanian government had decided to solve the issue "utterly and finally", therefore population exchange was to be executed "immediately". This meant, that altogether approximately 930 thousand Russian and Ukrainian would have to be moved from "compact Slavic" areas of the North-Bessarabia, North-Bukovina and from the Danube delta to East of Dniester. 400 thousand Romanians would have to be brought in: 250 thousand from Transnistria and 150 thousand from East of the Bug. In case of its execution, population exchange would have been full and obligatory.

In the relevant literature we did not find any trace of the fairly excessive Romanian-Hungarian population exchange concept of Dr. Victor Bolchi Tordán dated on 14th February 1942.<sup>11</sup> Eugen Cristescu, the head of Special Intelligence Service, sent the document to the committee of the Presidency, which dealt with the Hungarian-Romanian issues as a letter attachment. We learned from the letter that Bolchi was an educated jurist and "occasional informer" of the secret service, as well as the retired director of C.E.C.<sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> The basic idea behind the concept was, that owing to the increasing pan-Slavic danger, both countries were interested in establishing the atmosphere of lasting peace, trust and even mutual friendship. This could only be achieved by the means of population exchange. The author introduced two possible versions. 1.) Hungarians should be offered 3-4 counties in Transnistria in order to move Subcarpathian Rusyn. Following this all the "Szeklers and Hungarians" would be moved from Transylvania to Subcarpathia, then Northern Transylvania would be submitted to Romania. So the Romanian population of Transylvania would remain intact. 2.) In case the previously described concept cannot be executed for some reason, then a new "more just" border line would be drawn in Northern Transylvania (taking into consideration the Hungarian-Romanian population rates and strategic aspects as well) and a mutual and obligatory population exchange would take place. As Bolchi believed this latter concept would require greater sacrifice on behalf of the Romanian side but still less than a possible war "even if we win".<sup>14</sup> He was convinced that it was impossible to come to an agreement with the contemporary regime of "counts and rich Budapest Jews", but he hoped that in case the Arrow Cross Party would get into power in

<sup>11</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond 71/ Transilvania, vol. 359., f. 351-392

<sup>12</sup> C.E.C. = Casa de Economii i Consemnapiuni, Romanian financial institute.

<sup>13</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond 71/ Transilvania, vol. 359., f. 410

<sup>14</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond 71/ Transilvania, vol. 359., f. 355.

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Hungary would consider the idea of population exchange.<sup>15</sup> As for the long term concept Bolchi considered population exchange to be possible with Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Ukraine, in order to create a strong ethnically homogeneous Great Romania.<sup>16</sup>

Gheorghe Tite, who was familiar with the affairs and relations in Hungary, was asked to express his opinion about the Bolchi concept in the Prime Minister's Office.<sup>17</sup> He considered the author to be an "earnest and well-meaning" person but he did not find anything new in the idea of population exchange, because "the Romanian government had already agreed with that long before".<sup>18</sup> As an evidence for his sense of reality he thought, that Bolchi's opinion about the Arrow Cross Party was mistaken, and he declared, that there is no party in Hungary that would accept the idea of population exchange, nor does the public opinion, especially if it includes loss of territories. Tite considered the Hungarian-Romanian population exchange to be a realistic option only in case a major international power would interfere like in case of the 2nd Vienna Decision.

Hungarian leaders did not consider population exchange or deportation as a solution of the Transylvanian problem. When on 19th August 1941 Henrik Werth, Chief of General Staff, suggested in a memorandum that all Slavic and Romanian inhabitants, who lived inside the 1000-year-old Hungarian borders, should be deported, so that the Carpathian basin would be living-space of the Hungarians exclusively, Prime Minister László Bárdossy rejected the proposal definitely and he put it as non-executable and a harmful idea.<sup>19</sup> The Hungarian elite in Transylvania remained divided concerning this issue. A significant proportion of those Hungarian politicians, who became representatives of a majority and left a minority position behind, started to believe in a "nation-building" view, instead of the protection of minority interests, and they did not exclude the option of re-settlements after the war.<sup>20</sup> According to one of Árpád Paál's notes from 1941 one of the ways to eliminate the opportunity to live in minority in a "humanly" way would be "re-settlement".<sup>21</sup> As opposed to Pál Szász, who was left in Southern Transylvania, condemned nation state aspirations and favoured multinational empires, like St. Stephens's, and thought that population exchange would not solve the problems of Transylvania.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond 71/ Transilvania, vol. 359., f. 353.

<sup>16</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond 71/ Transilvania, vol. 359., f. 359. The following and most lengthy part of the concept regulated all the technical details of the desired population exchange with juristic accuracy.

<sup>17</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond 71/ Transilvania, vol. 359., f. 435-440.

<sup>18</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond 71/ Transilvania, vol. 359., f. 435.

<sup>19</sup> Szinai, Miklós – Szűcs, László (ed.): Horthy Miklós titkos iratai. Second edition. 1963, Kossuth Kiadó, document 59., pp. 306-307.

<sup>20</sup> Bárdi, Nándor: A múlt, mint tapasztalat. A kisebbségből többségbe került erdélyi magyar politika szemléletváltása 1940-1944 között. Limes, 2006. vol. 2. p. 58.

<sup>21</sup> Horváth: op. cit. p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Same as the previous p. 12.

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ing these issues; d) preparation of memorandum concepts, which are to be handed over to the Allied Forces; e) selection, completion and systemising of cartographic materials which support Romania's rights and interests; f) revision of the propaganda publications, which serve the country's interests, and wording proposals to complete them.<sup>26</sup>

The Committee was placed under direct order of the Foreign Minister. During the course of its operation it examined all possible issues, that the country could possibly face in the future peace conference. It forwarded the accomplished proposal to the Foreign Ministry, which could utilise them in case the issue was placed on agenda.

The Peace-Preparatory Committee placed the negotiation of two separate aspects of the minority issue on agenda: Romanian minority living outside the borders of Romania, and national minorities living within the borders of the country. The guiding principle and basic idea behind the Romanian peace-preparation was that after the end of war – on the grounds of the collected experience - minority issues would be settled "more effectively" than in 1919.

According to the Committee<sup>27</sup> the factors which could have an impact on the future decisions could be the following: 1) recognition of the fact that international protection of minorities, which were elaborated and settled in the 1919-1920 treaties, was not effective; 2) the occurrence and existence of impingements of several countries against minorities; 3) the aspiration to "ungear" such national communities which had had a considerable role in the unleash of the World War II; 4) a firm decision to eliminate the possible reasons of inter-state conflicts; 5) partial solution of the issue in certain regions by Greek-Turkish, Greek-Bulgarian, Romanian-Bulgarian population exchange and re-settlement of the German minority.

During the course of peace settlements, which took place after the World War II, all these factors got into focus in Eastern Central Europe. So they highlighted a way of thinking not only typical of the Romanians, but a far more general view, which was characteristic of the era and the region – but was not taken upon by many in public.

In the following we briefly examine the analysis<sup>28</sup>, which was accomplished by Emil Opriano.<sup>29</sup> In order to solve the issue of minorities, living on the territory of the country, the study proposed that the Romanian government should elaborate its own strategy on the basis of measures, which had already been taken by other

<sup>26</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 9–10.

<sup>27</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., f. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., f. 10–15.

<sup>29</sup> Opriano, Emil (1906–?): Romanian diplomat. Secretary of Peace-Preparatory Committee between February 1945 and July 1946.

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It is difficult to ascertain how certain groups of society related to the issue of population exchange. Supposedly both on the Romanian and the Hungarian side there was a layer which would have gladly moved but most wished the leaving of the individuals who belonged to the other nation. According to the 30th October 1941 report of the Hungarian Royal Consul in Brasso, Zoltán Sztankay, the youth of the "three Transylvanian nations" (Hungarian, "Saxon", Romanian) is under the influence of "ideas of the era", the impatient nationalism and there is "a gap between them which cannot be bridged". According to his opinion the Saxon youth, which is under national socialist influence, would deport the Romanian from Southern Transylvania, many of the Hungarians in Southern Transylvania would do the same if Transylvania would be re-taken by Hungary while the Romanian young, who are under the influence of the Iron Guard, would "massacre" the Hungarians like many Jews in Romania.<sup>23</sup>

### 2. Hungarian-Romanian Population Exchange Concepts in the Romanian Peace-Preparation between 1945 and 1947

#### 2.1. The Romanian Peace-Preparation Committee and the Solution of the Minority Question

The Romanian Peace-Preparation Committee was formed in February 1945 with the leading of Eugen Filotti<sup>24</sup>, as the technical preparing organisation of the Foreign Ministry, on the grounds of the Office of Peace<sup>25</sup>, which had been created in June 1942 by Mihai Antonescu.

The committee was to fulfil a technical preparatory role. Its main focus was described as in the followings: a) systematisation and reviewing the materials, which were stored in the archives of the Foreign Ministry, and which could serve protection of Romania's rights in a future peace conference; b) accomplishment of studies which deal with issues which are to be solved in a peace conference; c) wording of proposals, which are necessary to elaborate an official policy concern-

<sup>23</sup> MOL K 28-40-M.E.-1941-0-25339. According to a confidential Hungarian police report which dated in November 1941 the word spread among the German and the Romanian inhabitants in Beszterce that after the end of the Anti-Soviet war that the Transylvanian Romanians will be re-settled "partly to Bessarabia and partly to the Trans-Dniester area". (MOL K 28-372. item-I-25840/1941. No. M.E. II.)

<sup>24</sup> Filotti, Eugen (1896-?): Romanian diplomat. Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry between autumn 1944 and March 1945, then the leader of the Peace-Preparation Department, after that the technical leader of the Political Committee of the Romanian delegation which participated in the Peace Conference.

<sup>25</sup> Concerning the Office of Peace see Ardeleanu, Ion: „Biroul păcii”: Proiecte privind soluționarea problemei frontierei României și realizarea unor bune relații în Balcani (1942–1943). In *Europa XXI*. I-II/1992–1993, Iași, 1993, pp. 128–132.; Dobre, Florica: Ion și Mihai Antonescu scrutează viitorul. *Biroul Păcii. Dosarele Istoriei*, 1997. vol. 2., pp. 8–11.

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### 2.2. The Romanian-Hungarian Population Exchange Concepts

Being assigned by the Peace-Preparatory Committee Sabin Manuilă elaborated the population exchange concepts to the importance of which Gheorghe Tătărescu, the Foreign Minister himself, drew the attention of the committee. (Tătărescu was concerned with the issue of population exchange before the country's entering the war. After the handover of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina he suggested population exchange in order to solve the country's minority problems in one of his studies<sup>32</sup>, which was published in summer 1940.)<sup>33</sup> The elaborated concepts were discussed in the meetings of the Committee.

There are two population exchange concepts among the documents of Peace-Preparatory Committee in the archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry. The first document<sup>34</sup> was dated in the era of Romanian neutrality following the burst out of the World War II, the second one<sup>35</sup> was prepared by Vasile Stoica<sup>36</sup> and bears the date 23rd November 1941. The first, unanimous concept's – most likely constructed by Sabin Manuilă – primary aim was to make the country homogeneous to the most possibly achievable extent as regards nationalities before the break out of forthcoming conflict and if there is a chance then to prevent conflicts which could be "provoked" by minorities. The impact of the changed international circumstances can be felt when reading the second concept, as for it was elaborated by the consideration of the changes, which had taken place meanwhile (the second Vienna decision, the country's entering the war, recapture of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina). Both documents look minorities as potential sources of conflicts. The first concept – as opposed to the 1941 version – did not link population exchange with territorial modifications.

The first concept considered ethnic problems as the major reason of war; therefore these mean the exclusive resource of danger for Romania, so a solution has to be found. According to the concept the ancient method of "candy and whip" is to be applied. This would mean that the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs should establish a calm public atmosphere. The author did not see this policy could be executed when minorities receive "encouragement from abroad". The "calming" measures have to be taken at the right time in order to justify the country's policy. Competent personnel of the Romanian foreign policy were supposedly aware of the importance of

<sup>32</sup> Gheorghe Tătărescu: *Evacuarea Basarabiei i Bucovinei de Nord*. Craiova, 1940.

<sup>33</sup> Sorina Bolovan – Ioan Bolovan: *Inițiative românești*, p. 96.

<sup>34</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., f. 198–200.

<sup>35</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., f. 193–196.

<sup>36</sup> Stoica, Vasile (1889–?): Romanian diplomat. As member of the Romanian delegation he took part both in the 1919-1920 and the 1946–1947 Paris Peace Conference. He was the director of the analysis department of the Romanian Foreign Ministry between 1941 and 1944, his main duty was peace-preparation. For a short period he was the secretary general of the Foreign Ministry after the war.

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states, which were dealing with similar problems. Oprianu counted on the general settlement of minority issues in Europe, which would mean population exchange in their particular region. He assumed that the following countries and groups would be involved in a possible population exchange, re-settlement: 1) Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia – Germans; 2) Italy, Austria, Hungary – Croats and Slovenians; 3) Austria, Germany, Poland – Czechs; 4) Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania – Slovaks; 5) Germany and Czechoslovakia – Polish; 6) Poland, Romania, Hungary, Subcarpathia – Rusyns, Russians, Belorussians; 7) Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia – Hungarians.<sup>30</sup>

Oprianu sketched possible solutions concerning the Romanians, living outside the Romanian borders.<sup>31</sup> One of these was to hand in a demand for the territories which are neighbouring the country and are inhabited by Romanians. He did not consider this to be an executable solution, because he thought that this would escalate the hostile relationship with the neighbouring countries. He also rejected the strategy of showing apathy towards the transborder Romanians because the government would sacrifice these Romanians without providing guarantees to assure minority rights for them. Furthermore the Balkanian states would see this as a sign of weakness and would come up with territorial claims.

Similarly to the Hungarian diplomacy the Romanian also ponders the necessity to elaborate an international system for minority protection. Oprianu rejected the concept because he thought that there is not a system of this kind without backstairs, additionally it can function as a conflict source among Balkanian states. The study also disapproved the opportunities to provide local autonomy on the grounds of bilateral agreements since it would be very difficult to enforce them against the victorious states on the one hand and minority Romanians would still be naked to the majority on the other.

He suggested obligatory population exchange as a resolution. By executing which – according to Oprianu's belief – the major source of conflicts with the neighbouring countries could be eliminated, as well as Romania would get rid of nation groups, which sympathise with neighbouring countries, and it should not be neglected that, Romania could cover - at least partially - the losses of war.

According to the authorised personnel of the Romanian peace-preparation the population exchange would take place in the course of a general settlement of the issue involving the whole Eastern European region. They expected that as a consequence to the newly ended world war conflict, the whole region will attempt to create homogeneous nation states. Taking this into consideration it seemed natural that Romanian peace-preparators took a similar position.

<sup>30</sup> Arh. M.A.E., Iond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., f. 3.

<sup>31</sup> The study analysed the issue of Romanians who lived on the Balkan Peninsula and did not deal with the issue of the ones living in Bessarabia.

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Crnja), Magyarcsernye (Nova Crnja), Csösztelek (Cesterek), Rogendorf, Itvarnok, Felsőelemér (Srpski Elemir), Tiszatarrós (Taraš) to Hungary.

4. The Romanian-Hungarian border would be North-East from the point where the Fekete-Körös reaches the Trianon border and would take place threw the hills to the Gutin and Máramarosi Mountains West of Pálosremele (Remepi) and East of Kistécső (Teceu) going threw the River Tisza up to the Popadia Peak.

5. The Rusyn, living in Hungary, would be moved Ukraine.

6. The Szeklers would be moved to the area that had been left by the Rusyn.

7. Romanians who happen to live west of the new border would be moved to the Eastern side of it.

8. Hungarians who lived between the new, to-be Romanian-Hungarian border and Szeklerland would be moved west of this new borderline into Szatmár, Szilágy, Bihar, Arad, Temes-Torontál counties and into the Northwest of Banat to the place of Romanians who were to be moved from this area.

According to the concept the Bessarabian and Bukovinian Russians would have also been deported to the Eastern side of the River Bug. They did not withdraw their claims concerning Cadriater or Southern Dobruja, which had belonged to Bulgaria since 1940, and where Romanians from Bulgaria, Albania and Greece would have been moved to, while the Romanian minority from Serbia would have been settled in Szeklerland. The document – which took after the Sabin Manuilă concept of 15th October 1941, and which has already been presented in the previous chapter – was highly ambitious. It is important to emphasise that the author of the document, Vasile Stoica, who was respected as friendly to England, was a relatively influential person in the Foreign Ministry of Romania even between 1940 and 1944 had an important role in the Romanian peace-preparation after this period. As we can see from the concept, Stoica intended to establish ethnic borders already in 1941 taking into account the modification of the western border tightly linked to population exchange. This principle was also visible in the concepts which were worked out after the war.

Concepts after 1944 were mostly the revived versions of population exchange concepts which had been made for the Hungarian-Romanian negotiations before the 2nd Vienna Decision. Elaboration of them was assigned to Sabin Manuilă once again, so it is not surprising, that Manuilă attempted to enforce his theses, which were based on his already existing analyses. The aim of the concept was to prepare the decision makers to all possible options and one the issue of population exchange would become expedient the Foreign Ministry of Romania should have all instruments at hand. Correspondingly not only one accurately and finally elaborated idea was presented, but they offered a consideration of several options.

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more conciliatory measures, which were to be taken towards minorities, and the later known (at least among the experts who deal with the issue of Transylvania) as Petru Groza-kind of nation policy had some extent of establishment before 1944.

The most important issue and the primary focus of the concept was still the reduction of minorities' rates. Altering the ethnic proportion was desired to be achieved by two means: first by a controlled census (which would provide evidence for the growth of the rate of Romanians), second by organising population exchanges and deportations. Resistance of certain ethnic groups was intended to be weekend by the exchanges. To process was planned in such a manner that on the long run it would lead to the extinction of the ethnic group in question. The sphere of those, who were included in and excluded in the population exchange, was decided along economic and safety-policy, and reproduction principles, based on experience, related to Sudeten Germans. We find adults in capable of reproduction and urban members of the minority, who multiply at a far lower rate, among the excluded ones as well as political agitators with non-agricultural jobs, who are considerably more "dangerous" outside the borders and the wealthier layers, whose properties would mean a major difficulty to eliminate. The concept restricted the sphere of to-be exchanged to those who carry less importance and are easier to be replaced i.e.: uneducated workers, youngsters and poor. The long term aim was to create a homogeneous nation state which would mean the accomplishment of the Romanian nation building process. (Debts of Germany which derived from the trade-relations with Romania would also be arranged by the left-behind properties of the deported Germans.) The concept considered the exchange of minorities (Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, Turkish, Bulgarians, Serbs, Gypsies) living in Romania a desirable solution only in case of preserving neutrality. It considered a mere organisational issue to deport unilaterally those ethnic groups which are not protected by the country's allies – in case of entering the war.

The 1941 concept, which was elaborated by Vasile Stoica, was established on the population and geographic situation of Hungary. Stoica was convinced that it was Hungary's basic interest too to break the "centrifugal" forces of minorities and to form a both strategically, and geographically coherent state. He esteemed the establishment of ethnic borders to be exclusive effective solution of the Hungarian-Romanian conflict. Since the population of Transylvania was excessively diverse, Stoica proposed a population exchange linked to border-modification. The concept offered the following solutions:

1. Romania hands over – either the whole or parts of – the territory which is located west of the Zsombolya-Battonya line.
2. Hungary hands over the villages of Battonya and Dombegyháza.
3. Romania makes over the territory among Zsombolya, Szerbcsernye (Srpska

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Romanians would not have compensated the number of Hungarians a new system of criteria – based on complicated calculations – was introduced. This took place in case of plans "T2, T3" too. The area marked by the "T2" line – which included the North-western half of Maramaros county, two-thirds of Szatmár, Bihar and Szilágy counties, a quarter of Arad county and the Western part of Temes county – which could not possibly house more than 651.950 Hungarians, out of which 242.930 had already been living in the area. Therefore (according to the Romanian data) out of the 988.268 rural Hungarians living in Transylvania, 336.318 would have still been left in Romania.<sup>40</sup> In order to avoid having to increase the territory to submit, they introduced the principle of occupation. They calculated that 75.55% of the rural Hungarians make a living from cultivating land as opposed to the 88.46% of the Romanians. On the basis of this, the concept stated that only those need land who make their livings from agricultural work, as a consequence to this it is only them whose existence requires territorial compensation. They took this percent rate as multiplier and that is how they could increase the number of Hungarians to be deported and decrease the amount of territorial compensation at the same time.<sup>41</sup> According to this calculation Romanians who lived in these areas were "worth more", so more Hungarians can be deported into their place. The 1930 census data provided the grounds for the concept.

Though application of the principle of ethnicity was aimed in the population exchange concepts, the necessity of Temesvár's and Arad's belonging to Romania was supported by historical and economic arguments. They considered it to be important not to break away the population who lived around the shire-town and possessed a more developed economic level. The historical argument appeared in case of Temesvár: according to which the Hungarians are just settlers who had arrived in the area in the near past.

### 2.3. The Discussions of Population Exchange Concepts

The discussions of population exchange concepts took place on two meetings of the Peace-Preparation Committee on 21st and 24th August 1945. The members of the committee possessed significantly different attitudes and viewpoints concerning the judgement of the situation of the Hungarian minority.

The committee was aware of the fact, that situation of minorities had changed considerably in Romania compared to the inter-war period. Before the World War II three minorities (Hungarian, German, Jewish) had well formed and expressed interests, and they attempted to enforce them at the relevant forums. After the war size of the Jewish community decreased by volumes. As for the German question,

<sup>40</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131, I. 167.

<sup>41</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., I. 128.

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The borderlines<sup>37</sup> of the elaborated concept which signal the area to be handed over to Hungary can be seen. (See the maps in the Appendix.) They would have moved the whole, or a part of the Hungarian population of the Transylvanian territories, to the to-be-handed-over territory from East of the new borderline during the course of the population exchange.

- „T 1” line.
- „T 2” line: signals 13 168 km<sup>2</sup>.
- „T 3” line: 19 289 km<sup>2</sup>, would make the exchange of the “agricultural” population possible.
- „T 4” line: 16 599 km<sup>2</sup>. All Hungarians from Transylvania would be moved here and “agricultural” Hungarians would be given land.
- „T 5 A” line: would involve the “rural” Hungarians of Transylvania (988 268 people).
- „T 5 B” line: would also mean the exchange of the rural population but 89 298 Hungarians would remain without offset.
- „M 2” line: 3129 km<sup>2</sup>, „ethnic” borderline.
- „M 7” line: 5812 km<sup>2</sup>, would involve Hungarians of the bordering counties. (428 457 Hungarians out of the total population of the region’s 482 611 inhabitants.)
- „M 8” line: 10 125 km<sup>2</sup>. Would mean in-taking of all the Hungarians who live in diaspora (987 283 Hungarians).
- „D 19 A” line: would involve the whole Hungarian population of Transylvania.
- „D 19 B” line: would be the maximum cession in case of taking in all the Hungarians of Transylvania and “part of the Szeklers”.
- „I 22” line: 19 886 km<sup>2</sup>, would mean a full population exchange.

When elaborating the population exchange concepts, Hungarians living in Romania were divided into three groups along their habitat: Szeklers, sporadically dwelling Hungarians between Szeklerland and the close-border areas and Hungarians living in the bordering counties. According to Manuilă’s data 934.646 Hungarians lived in the area of the historical Transylvania, 97.849 in Banat and 320.795 in the Partium.

Solidarising the borders was a major argument point for the population exchange, since the presence of the “hostile” Hungarian population on both sides of the borders provided a potential “danger resource” for the Romanian state.<sup>38</sup> All concepts considered territorial compensation only in case of agricultural population. (Exchange of the rural, village population was not a new idea. Romanian leaders had already been pondering this opportunity during the course of their negotiations with Hitler in Berchtesgaden on 26th July 1940.)<sup>39</sup> Where the number of

<sup>37</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., f. 34.

<sup>38</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 131., f. 87.

<sup>39</sup> Sorina Bolovan – Ioan Bolovan: Inițiative române... p. 99.

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headed by him forecasted higher multiplication rates of the Romanians and the assimilation of the Hungarians on the long-run.<sup>47</sup> (As we have already mentioned achieving ethnic homogeneity of Romania he thought to be the result of the combination of "natural" and "artificial" population moves.) Hardly five years after he had published these survey results as a consequence to the already mentioned events, Manuilă changed his point and instead of slow assimilation he was undoubtedly and exclusively in favour of a far more rapid changes, therefore population exchange.

Ion Christu<sup>48</sup> and Radu Crutzescu<sup>49</sup> favoured reconciliation with the Hungarians on the grounds of the European ideal. Vast majority of the members of the body opposed this point. Chairman of the committee, Eugen Filotti, advanced his point that those, in favour of these ideas, are unaware of reality in Transylvania.<sup>50</sup> Păclianu emphasised that Hungarians cannot give up the hope to regain Transylvania, because "any nation, which gives up imperial efforts, are sentenced to death."<sup>51</sup> Sabin Manuilă argued that it would be a comfortable solution to protect the Trianon borders and hope for assimilation in a political sense, but he thinks it to be more than an issue of borders. It is the question of existence for the Romanian nation.<sup>52</sup> His point was not supported within the committee though Filotti remarked: "there is not a person in Transylvania today that would not support the complete separation of the two nations."<sup>53</sup>

As a conclusion the committee did not suggest the government to solve the Transylvanian issue by population exchange although the plans were "at hand" in case Romania would be forced to submit territories in order to be prepared for population exchange as well.

<sup>47</sup> See the chart below concerning the natural multiplication of ethnic communities in Transylvania (between 29th December 1930 and 1st January 1940). (Arl Louis Roman: *Demografia istorică în opera lui Sabin Manuilă*. In Sorina Bolovan ? Ioan Bolovan [ed.]: *Sabin Manuilă. Istorie și demografie* Cluj-Napoca, 1995, Centrul de Studii Transilvane ? Fundația Culturală Română, p. 39.)

NATIONALITY	%
Romanian	7,5
Hungarian	5,7
German	3,1
Jewish	0,5

<sup>48</sup> Christu, Ion (1895–1953): Romanian diplomat and economist. He was Minister of Foreign Trade from February 1940 to June. He was a member of both the delegation which signed the Romanian Armistice on 12th September 1944, and of the one which took part in the Paris Peace Conference.

<sup>49</sup> Crutzescu, Radu (1892–?): Romanian diplomat. Director of the Political Department of the Foreign Ministry, Ambassador to Berlin (1939), then to Ankara, and worked in the central administration of the Foreign Ministry after these.

<sup>50</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 130.

<sup>51</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 129

<sup>52</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 129

<sup>53</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 130.

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the committee hoped that it would "get solved on its own" with the Allies approval to deport the community.<sup>42</sup> These considerations meant that minority issues got reduced to the Hungarian minority.

During the course of the discussion concerning population exchange it jelled that the primary interests of the country was to protect the Trianon borders. The committee emphasised – as a consentaneous point – that any modification of the borders which Romania has to be subdued must be accompanied by such a population exchange that after it no Romanian would remain under Hungarian rule and "parallelly the number of Hungarians must decrease especially in the near-border areas".<sup>43</sup>

There were major arguments within the committee between two experts of ethnic issues, Sabin Manuilă and Zenovie Păclianu, concerning the sacrifice for the execution the population exchange. According to the protectors of the Trianon borders modification of the borders, which would include submitting 20.000 km<sup>2</sup>, would be far too excessive price. Even so there would still be minorities left in the country: "Jewish and Gypsies; we would lose a creative/constructive but hostile minority and would keep others who are pernicious and would still be unable to create ethnic homogeneity even more we would lose territories."<sup>44</sup>

It is Romania's national interest to execute the population exchange so that to solve the conflict between the Hungarian and the Romanian people according to Manuilă. Păclianu did not agree with that and excluded the possibility of coming to a peace with Hungary regardless of Hungarians remaining in Romania or the execution of the population exchange.<sup>45</sup> Both experts agreed the importance of the Hungarians in the country's economic life, and both considered creation of the homogeneous nation-state to be an aim. While Manuilă was a supporter of the "instant solution" and considered border modification acceptable, Păclianu thought that population exchange would require excessive sacrifice (loosing Nagyvárad, Szatmár, Nagykároly), therefore he would have preferred slow assimilation.

There views also differed concerning the prospects of Hungarian minority. Păclianu's thesis, that the faith of the Szeklers is to melt slowly, was thought to be supported by the inter-war Szekler emigration. Manuilă assessed the inter-war period by stating that the Hungarians "have passed the exam of existing as a minority", therefore did not share the views of those hoping for slow assimilation.<sup>46</sup> Manuilă was inclined to reconsider his earlier points by loosing North-Transylvania and the World War II. Since the studies which were conducted in the inter-war period and were

<sup>42</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 100.

<sup>43</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 1–34.

<sup>44</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 129.

<sup>45</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 129.

<sup>46</sup> Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947), vol. 94., f. 126.

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Hungarian National Alliance concluded their proposals concerning the solution of the Transylvanian issue as a result of their meeting in Kolozsvár in April 1946. They expressed their disapproval – besides other issues - concerning any solution which “intends to solve the issue of Transylvania by deporting the Hungarians” in their declaration.<sup>57</sup>

Both the left and the right wing of the Romanian political elite took loyalty of the Transylvanian Hungarians to the Romanian nation-state as a condition of its staying in Romania. Ionel Pop, Transylvania's Newly Appointed Commissioner of the Peasant Party<sup>58</sup>, viewed the issue in the following way – which was published in an interview with the title: Changes in Transylvania will be Executed in a Humanly Manner - not too long after the Romanian occupation of Transylvania in autumn 1944. “If Transylvanian Hungarians possess the necessary intelligence and fortitude to except reality – Transylvania will belong to Romania forever – and give up their irredentist efforts and desires for good, they can finally join the great community of Romania on this condition, we will provide better circumstances for them in all aspects, than those of their kinsmen in Hungary, and they will proved to be useful citizens for Romania. I hope that this will happen in the lack of this trust we must consider and more extreme solution: their repatriation.”<sup>59</sup> We cannot state it for sure because of the lack of archive evidence that the National Peasant Party openly declared the intention to deport Hungarians, but the above cited proclamation allows us to conclude that the opportunity of deportation was seriously considered within the party.<sup>60</sup>

Political circumstances – which emerged by the inauguration of the Petru Groza government - improved by volumes for the Hungarians as opposed to the state of affairs in autumn 1944, but several hundred thousand Hungarians still lived in juridical insecurity since they were not in possession of citizenship.<sup>61</sup> Even in the recent Romanian historiography it is claimed that Hungary intended the ethnic constitution of Transylvania because of a possible referendum and the Paris Peace Conference after the World War II, and it encouraged Hungarian refugees to return to Transylvania.<sup>62</sup> According to our findings so far there is no evidence that there

<sup>57</sup> Naslasă, Lucian (coord.): *Minorităţi etnoculturale, mărturii documentare: Maghiarii din România (1945–1955)*. Cluj, 2002, Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, p. 246.

<sup>58</sup> The 487 Law, which ordered the establishment of the Administration Commissariat of the Freed Transylvanian Areas published in 234th vol. of *Monitorul Oficial* on 10th October 1944. Ionel Pop was the nephew of the potent leader of the National Peasant Party Iuliu Maniu.

<sup>59</sup> *Curierul*, 25th October 1944.

<sup>60</sup> Nagy Mihály, Zollán: *A román pártok magyarságpolitikája (1944. augusztus – 1945. március)*. Manuscript is in the possession of the author.

<sup>61</sup> In respect of citizenship issues see Vincze, Gábor: *Állampolgárság és kisebbségpolitika Romániában a II. világháborút követő években. Magyar kisebbség, 1999. vol. 2/3.* <http://www.jak-ablfy.ro/magyarkisebbsseg/index.php?action=cimek&cikk=m990217.htm>

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At the recent phase of our research we are not in possession of data concerning the extent of support of the population exchange idea within the government; but it is a fact, that it was discussed in the presence of the Foreign Minister, and analyses were elaborated on for his request, which tones the judgement of the policy of the Petru Groza government, which had been respected as "Hungarian-friendly".

Although changes in the international circumstances (conflicts between the major powers and the role which was to be fulfilled by Romania in the peace process) did not provide an opportunity for a Hungarian-Romanian population exchange, significant ethnic moves still took place in the country following the World War II. The most significant ethnic move was deportation of the native German-speaking population for forced labour in the Soviet Union. According to Romanian resources more than 70.000 Romanian Germans were deported by the active cooperation of the Romanian authorities.<sup>54</sup>

Forced deportations<sup>55</sup> also took place in Romania after the World War II. Czechoslovakian Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Vladimír Clementis, brought up the issue of the Slovaks, who were deported from Romania, in a negotiation with Romania's Ambassador to Prague on 16th April 1946.<sup>56</sup> Approximately 700 Slovaks were deported from around Nagyvárad to Pozsony among extremely bad circumstances. Clementis explained that in case Romania intends to deport Slovaks the two countries have to enter an agreement, but it can only take place after the completion of the Hungarian-Slovakian population exchange. We have no information that further Slovaks were repatriated in mass volumes and the two countries never entered a population exchange-treaty.

No similar measures have been taken concerning the Hungarians, but in spite of the non-occurrence of forced mass-deportations, Hungarians were still living in a constant threat in Romania these years. Minds of the Hungarian minority were also occupied by the issue of deportation because of the Czechoslovakian precedent and the tense nationalist conceit, which could be felt in Romania (both on behalf of the historical parties and the Romanian Communist Party). Those leaders (Áron Márton, János Vásárhelyi, Ede Korparich, István Lakatos, Pál Szász) of the Transylvanian Hungarians who did not agree with the official guidelines of the

<sup>54</sup> See Karl M. Reinerth ? Fritz Cloos: Zur geschichte der deutschen in Rumenien, 1935?1945. Munich, 1998; Dokumentation der vertend der deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa, Bd. III. Munich, 1984; Ignat Fischer: Date despre deportarea în Rusia a etnicilor germani din Banat. In *Analele Sighet* 2. 1995, pp. 416?418 ; Dumitru ?andru: Etnicii germani i detaamentele de muncă forțată din România, 1944?1946. *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, 1995, vol. 1. pp 26?29.

<sup>55</sup> Forced deportation can be mentioned when it is not preceded by a written agreement between the ones involved as it used to happen in case of mutually supported secession or split up. Salat, Levente: *Etnopolitika a konfliktustól a méltányosságig. A kisebbségi lét normatív alapjai*. Marosvásárhely, 2001. Mentor Kiadó, p. 56

<sup>56</sup> *Arh. M.A.E., fond Conferința de pace de la Paris (1946–1947)*, vol. 69., I. 86.

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was a link between the issues of citizenship and the possible concept of deportation/population exchange or referendum. Minister of Justice, Lucrețiu Pătrăcanu, estimated the number of those, who deliberately did not state their citizenship or were present on the territory of Romania illegally, to be 300.000 - 400.000 in his Kolozsvár speech on 8th June 1946. He considered those who did not possess citizenship to be a major potential resource of dangers and declared: "our permissiveness has also got its limits. We have a commitment to eliminate this state of affairs".<sup>63</sup> As evidence to the fact, that it was not a mere "slip of the tongue" from an influential politician of the Romanian Communist Party, he emphasised it several times in private company and in colloquia that although it would have been necessary – as opposed to Czechoslovakia – Romania missed the opportunity to deport all Hungarians.<sup>64</sup> The idea of deportation was most likely agreed with by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej; according to some memoirs<sup>1</sup> in one of his negotiations<sup>65</sup> with Stalin after the Romanian party-leader had complained about "extremist" Hungarians Stalin allegedly explained his point about the issue: "Why did not you chase them [all Hungarians] out of the country together with the Horthy-troops ... since you did not solve the problem by the help of violence in the proper moment, you have nothing else left to do, than to solve your conflicts by the means of diplomacy."<sup>66</sup>

We do not know to what extent was the idea of deporting Hungarians from Romania supported in the leaderships of Romanian political parties, but in the recent phase resource processing we can surely claim, that the Romanian peace-preparation seriously considered this opportunity and would have accepted any possible border modifications (disadvantageous for Romania ) only on the condition of population exchange. We can find such high-ranked politicians both in the left and the right wing Romanian parties, who expressed their support for the idea of deportation in a more avowed way. Being familiar with the contemporary situation of Romania it is most likely that these were not accidental expressions, but they marked that part of the Romanian political elite did consider the opportunity of population exchange and deportations.

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<sup>63</sup> Dumitru \*andru: *Micări de populație în România (1940?1948)*. Bucureți., 2003, Editura Enciclopedică, pp. 338–339.

<sup>64</sup> Florin Constantiniu: *P.C.R., Pătrăcanu i Transilvania (1945–1946)* Bucureți., 2001, p. 151.

<sup>65</sup> See Betea: *Maurer si lumea de ieri*. Arad, 1995, Editura Fundației Ioan Slavici, p. 223

<sup>66</sup> The negotiation supposedly took place at the end of 1945.

<sup>67</sup> Betea: *op. cit.* p. 260.

