

Abstracts

Anna Adorjáni: *The Concept of the Nation in the Hungarian Press in Transylvania in the Period of the Reforms (2)*

The editor of Erdélyi Híradó, presenting a panorama of French newspapers' reports about the reburial of Napoleon, cannot hide his concern over those not being correct and trustworthy, expressing his anger thus: "And should we then write history from such sources!" Yet, this is what I attempt in my paper.

My topic is the identification of the *concept of the nation*, its components and ranges of meaning through the analysis of two newspapers in Hungarian from Transylvania, dating from the period of the 19th century Reforms: the *Múlt és Jelen* (Past and Present) as well as its appendix the *Hon és Külföld* (At Home and Abroad), and (as a basis of comparison) the oppositional Erdélyi Híradó (Transylvanian News), with the numbers belonging to volumes 1841, respectively 1847. Our view-point is the analysis of definitions, meanings and usages referring to concepts of the nation, originating from the belief that definition is an argument by itself, and using concepts in this respect is already an interpretation of reality, therefore also its construction.

Our sources confirmed us that programs of modernization and programs about the nation are closely related: the nation, the Hungarian nation can (and must) only be "refined, educated" and modern, while a competitive and modern society, "a community of us" is possible only in a national frame, it can only be the homogeneous nation – at least on the level of language, an idea shared by both liberals and conservatives.

Sándor Balázs: *The Tismăneanu Report versus a Personal Opinion*

The Report – which presents and analyses the situation of Hungarian minority following the communist system's coming to power – is being added such subjective perspectives from the present writer that make the interpretation of the analysed period more complex and complete. He thinks that changes intervened in the situation of the Hungarian minority must be analysed in a longer period of time, because this allows for a foregrounding

of differences between the situation of Hungarians in Northern, and respectively Southern Transylvania in the period preceding the Communists' coming to power. Thus not only the processed amount of facts and data increases, but the change of reference points leads to a change of the frame of interpretation and the perspectives of interpretation as well, resulting in a more nuanced presentation of the beginnings of communists' coming to power.

Gyula Dávid: *Our Present and Our Problems in the Tismăneanu Report*

The intervention begins with considering the recommendations of the chapter entitled *Conclusions*, weighing their necessities (and) possibilities in a general Romanian situation, and particularly its Hungarian bearings. According to the author, from our standpoint, a specific expectation would be to start revealing the Department of the Interior written material concerning Hungarian institutions and churches, as well as continuing research on Hungarian movements in Romania – with the part about the Hungarian revolution having processed to a point thanks to its 50th anniversary – and, furthermore, assuring an adequate institutional background and forums of publication in this respect.

The intervention considers – besides the Hungarian chapter of the Report published as a volume in 2007 – the other chapters as well, as far as the Hungarian connections are concerned. In the author's view it is deplorable that these connections have not been coordinated with the "Hungarian chapter", though, in many cases with simple (cross) references (or vice-versa) the reader might have been offered a more complete vision of the events concerned and the Hungarian personalities who played a central role in opposing dictatorship (such as László Tőkés, Károly Király, Géza Szöcs). The Report is also deficient from the perspective of not including minorities other than Hungarians, Germans and Jews, though Serbians, Rusins, Lipovans, Turks and Tatars from Romania also had their histories of suffering in the decades of dictatorship.

With reference to the "Hungarian chapter", the author thinks that a more nuanced analysis of the school question – including the specific phenomena of the period following nationalization – would have been important, for example that the minority school network (even in the first, "positive" period succeeding nationalization) how did not follow demographical changes in the country, not to mention the systematic annihilation of Hun-

garian schools in the diasporic regions. This is particularly important (in his view) because the Romanian schools which became the propriety of the state after nationalization continued to be *Romanian* schools, while in the case of minority schools the policy of nationalization also (and always) meant forced Romanization.

Furthermore, the panorama of Hungarian politics between 1944-1947 is much too centered on the MNSZ in the author's opinion, and the battles fought against the Communists' coming to power by the Roman Catholic church lead by Marton Aron and the Hungarian line of the Social-Democratic Party have not been duly emphasized.

In the second part of his intervention, answering questions addressed to him, the author states that the year 1956 is being a turning point in the fate of the Hungarians in Romania as well, since it blocked a "melting" process that started with/from the XX. Soviet Party Congress and it marked Hungarians in Romania as "collectively guilty". Right after the rise of Ceaușescu it seemed that this process beginning in 1957 continued in the Hungarian institutions founded then. Yet these institutions also contributed to a significant amelioration in the system's "Western" judgment, which created another trap for those working in the institutions, as well as the Power itself. This latter one, by the 1980s, started to force remaining Hungarian institutions, with more and more drastic methods, to conform to its rules.

Gábor Egry: *The Interpretation of the Past, Confrontation, Communism, Hungarians. Observations on the Hungarian Chapter of the Tismăneanu Committee's Report*

In his intervention the author concentrates on problems of the Report's coming into being and its contents. This is being centered around three questions – problems and importance of revealing the past, the "participation" of the Hungarian minority in redacting the Report, and finally the Report – of which the first two questions are interrelated. Other questions are also mentioned the analysis of which may contribute to a nuanced knowledge of the era. The first of these is the party policy referring to nationalities and minorities, as mirrored in the national ideology, the perception of the nation. The second is constituted by the possibilities and limits of a nation-based interest-assertion, differences between an informal and a formal sphere based on archival sources discovered so far and those forthcoming. The third problematic, partly related to this is the functioning of the

central(ized) or regional(ized) institutions founded after the liquidation of minority institutions, the situation of Hungarians within these, their possibilities, differences and factors behind these phenomena. Finally an important point of view is the interior division of the Hungarian minority, their social changes and the continuity an/or change of minority ideology.

Mihály Fülöp: *Stalin's Gift. About the Tismăneanu Report*

How can we settle with the legacy of Romanian national communism? Traian Băsescu, president of the republic in his parliamentary political declaration from the 18th of December 2006 condemned the “guilty and illegitimate” communist system in the name of the state and asked for the forgiveness of its victims. His speech was based on the political indictment of Sorin Ilieșiu. The condemnation of communism was “intellectually and morally” supported by Tismăneanu’s committee. The approximately four dozens of social scientists and historians, among them young Hungarian researchers organized by Salat Levente, using new archival sources, demonstrated that Ceaușescu’s communist nationalism, as well as the extreme right-wing radicalism renewed in the shadow of the tyrant created a system opposing both nation and society. Tismăneanu uses the yardstick of democracy and freedom, and has a “Western” eye. In Romania, Soviet-type, internationalist and Romanian, nationalist communism had the same source. The system, from its birth to its collapse, remained an essentially Stalinist one, in its use of power and its ideology, being first based on Soviet troops and the secret police, then under the mask of the nationalist communism. This was a prison for the most part of the population. The Report’s chapter analyzing the role of the Soviet advisers is a new result even in an international comparison. However, the main lack of the Report is that there is no mentioning of the system’s birth “error/accident”, giving Northern Transylvania to Romania, yet this Stalinist “gift” meant for the Romanian left was the one which created the basis for the communists’ reign and for their mass support occurring after 1945. Thus the Tismăneanu Report is but an overture for new research, thanks to which Romania may start on the road to democracy and freedom.

József Gagy: *On the Report and on a Different Approach*

The working group that prepared the Hungarian-part of the Tismăneanu Committee's Report had as a task to summarize in 15 pages the history of the communist system in Romania from the point of view of Hungarians in Romania.

The result is the completed Hungarian part – and that thanks to the work performed in national and county archives more than ten thousand pages of documents have been revealed, these illuminating different aspects of the relationship linking Hungarians in Romania to communism.

What did not the working group achieve? It did not – could not – draw, based on the revealed documents, “the new image of the history of Transylvanian Hungarians during communism”. And it did not compile “an interpretative synthesis enabling (among others) an identification of personal responsibilities”.

What did the working group achieve? – It prepared a study: it considered “the fundamentals of the Transylvanian Hungarians at the time of communism's coming to power”, and it also sketched “the road leading to the situation in which the community was found by the collapse of the system”.

What are the basic differences between the Romanian and the Hungarian parts? – The chapter dealing with Hungarians in Romania “only limits itself to description, while trusting the burden of judgment (in accordance with the initial idea) on the president”. That is, If I understand it correctly: contrary to the Romanian part, the persons responsible for the fate of the Hungarian society in Transylvania are not named, their parts in guilt not being countered, and supported by historical material.

The paper presented may be read – as formulated in the last paragraph of Levente Salat's introduction – both as “a Hungarian justice report from Romania”, and, from the perspective of the Hungarians in Romania, “a summary of the history of the communist system in Romania”. The first naming does not correspond to reality, in accordance with what I said above. Thus the second remains. I interpret and analyse the text according to this.

Gábor Gyórfy: *The Romanian Communist Press Propaganda in the Stalinist Period*

In the years following the Second World War written press fulfilled one of the most important roles in spreading party propaganda. Thanks to the increasing amount and page number of communist-direction papers a significant percentage of the population could meet with the voice of the party. The central, Hungarian and Romanian, organs of the party – the *Scântea* and the *Romániai Magyar Szó* – became mandatory models concerning the presentation of all the home and foreign political affairs, economic and social processes.

Following Jacques Ellul's categorization we may differentiate within the communist system between canvassing and imitational propaganda. The first has the aim to turn the popular masses against the enemies of the communist power, while the second wishes to create a loyalty for the communist system, as well as, on the long run, a uniform society.

Tamás Lönhardt: *On Some Aspects of the Tismăneanu Report*

There are several modes known as for “confronting the legacy of communism” and its symbolical/moral disavowals, as detailed in the introductory paper by Dr. Salat Levente. When analyzing the different Eastern-European forms of symbolical/moral disavowal of the collapsed communist system it is important to emphasize a differentiated prevalence of the relating multiple target-system: the “*lustrational*” – the emphasized naming of those responsible, a formulation of personalized responsibility, as well as the “*compensational*” – centered on defining the circle of victims as well as those entitled for compensation – efforts sometimes appear together, but other times separated or only partly separated. Furthermore, *an effort to delegitimize* as the tool of elite-changes formulated a propos the change of systems – as the component of position-battles between different groupings of elites – also occupies an important place among such acts of symbolic disavowal and judgment.

It is a specific element of the Central and Eastern European system change process showing different emphases in different states that concerning “confronting the legacy of communism” we may simultaneously speak of models such as *personal calling to account connected with “lustration”* (Poland, Albania), *personal calling to account and essays of compensati-*

on without “*lustration*” (see the case of Hungary, the debate concerning the suspended sentences on the events of 1956 as well as the compensation process), and finally the model *symbolical disavowal without “lustration”* (as in Romania). It is an important point of view in the analysis of the “*lustrational*” efforts’ multiple target-system and that of the symbolical/moral disavowal of where the emphasis falls: on the *symbolical and/or material compensation of the victims*, or the *de-legitimization* of the responsible ones.

Ágoston Olti: *The Romanian Communists and the Question of Transylvania between 1944-1946*

In the period between 1944-1946 the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) and its leaders gradually delimited themselves from the party opinion professed between the two world wars, and they positioned themselves in the direction of representing the Romanian national interests. This process becomes most striking for us if we compare the Romanian communist standpoints dating from the period 1945-1946 with the “autonomy principle containing dissidence” in between the two world wars, or the conception of an independent Transylvania written in 1944 by one of the party’s leading theorists, Valter Roman. The present paper deals with the changes intervened in the standpoint of the communist party between the break away on the 23rd August 1944 and the 1946 Paris Peace Conference, as well as the consequences of the whole process.

This problematic has practically no literature in either Hungarian, or Romanian respects. Hungarian historical research has dealt so far with the minority political concerns of the question. The period’s otherwise most interesting aspect for the historians is, without doubt, the transition, that is the history of the Soviet military administration. That is why both the Hungarian and the Romanian sides have presented an interpretation of this period, which, in most cases, tend to be each other’s opposites, yet both are characterized by being centered on the region of Cluj Napoca. The present author has a different approach as he analyses the events from the perspective of the party’s Bucharest headquarters, thus offering a new approach.

János Pál: *Attempts to Re-Romanization and Romanization in Secler Unitarian Parishes*

The Romanian political elite, as declared in the 1923 constitution, had as an aim the creation of the unified and indivisible national state, since the territorial increase also increased the number of ethnic minorities, leading to an ethnically heterogeneous country.

It was an aim that they tried to attain through the termination of ethnic schools, economical and cultural associations, through a breaking down of their economical power, through removing Hungarians from the state jobs, and similar other operations.

In this category belonged the forced conversion of the population to the Orthodox and Greek Catholic religions. From a Unitarian point of view the forced conversions, which were present in nearly every parish, had the strongest effect on the villages of the Nyárád and Homoród Valleys, where there were living in a more significant number Unitarians of a Romanian origin, but who were totally integrated from a linguistic and cultural view into the Secler ethnicity, and who had a Hungarian identity.

As for their conversion, different methods were used, physical assaults, psychical, cultural and existential pressures. The action coordinated from Bucharest necessitated the participation of the whole state apparatus, and the active involvement of the two churches considered the “national” ones: the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic.

The ideological basis of the conversions was provided by the historian Nicolae Iorga's theory, the essence of which could be sketched as such: Seclers were moved to their actual living places by the Hungarian kings and among the native Romanian population. Into the mass of homogeneous moving Secler population the native Romanian one quickly dissolved, yet its culture influenced to a significant degree the Secler society, popular customs, tradition and culture. The influences between the two ethnicities, according to Iorga, were one-way, while the Romanian population kept its culture untouched in the middle of the Seclers. As a result of the cultural and blood mingling the population of Seclerland is linked to the Romanian people through relationship, since most of the Seclers are of a Romanian origin.

Iorga's theory started from real facts: namely, that beginning with the 16th century a significant number of Romanians started to move to the Secler counties, a part of whom became fully assimilated from the point of view of religion, culture and language. It was this settled in population that

Iorga considered as the/a native one and this assimilated population, as well as the Secler one, the state hoped to re-Romanize and Romanize, with the idea of changing the ethnic proportions in the Secler region, an effort legitimized with the following discourse: since the native Romanian population was forcibly assimilated, it is their patriotic duty and right to ameliorate such a historical injustice.

The Re-Romanization and Romanization attempt coordinated by the state however failed, since most of the targeted persons had a strong Hungarian identity, who, following the Second Vienna Dictate, re-converted to the Unitarian religion in a great number. As a reverberation of this forced Romanization may be considered the fate of those Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches which were built during the Romanian reign, and which became the symbols of the oppressive power: in the villages of the Homoród Valley these were demolished on the order of the Hungarian state authorities.

Levente Salat: *The Romanian Legacy of Communism and the Transylvanian Hungarians*

The official representatives of the Romanian state decided that the legacy of communism could be confronted fifteen years after the collapse of the Ceaușescu regime. The president of Romania, Traian Băsescu, considered it due on the spring of 2006 to condemn communism, and fulfill the expectations addressed to him. The president entrusted the political scientist, Vladmir Tismăneanu, to form a committee, which was then entrusted with the creation of a report considering the Romanian legacy of communism. Transylvanian Hungarians were also named in the committee, and their task was to list the Romanian consequences of communism from the point of view of the Transylvanian Hungarians. The paper presents the work of the Tismăneanu committee in the context of the “truth committees” and the Central and Eastern European efforts to de-communization, and it specifically deals with the history of the Hungarian chapter of the report.