

noted, was unmistakable. His response after reading the last couple of chapters was frustration: they represent a condemnation of the dupes in Odorhei rather than of the cunning villains in Bucharest.²⁶² I was told it would have been instructive to look at the subsequent conflict between Roibu and Burgel, which would have provided the true background of the conflict.

I can easily understand my friend's frustrations but my view of the events continues to be different from his. Looking beyond the dupes versus villains scenario, the conflict in Odorheiu Secuiesc raised a fundamental question: that of the relation between individual and collective rights. In order to defend collective rights as legitimate one also needs to be prepared to point to their obvious limits. One limit which should have been strongly affirmed in the Odorhei case that of individual rights.

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Let me add a couple of words on conflict management. I have attended several events on conflict management in Romania after 1990. The organizers and the attending associations would meet, experts would be flown in and attend the workshops... However, I know of no case in which a credentialed team of negotiations actually did solve a real conflict (and not because I lack the necessary information.) It is good to have groups and individuals with the capability of swift response in case of confrontations. But the clashing actors in this country have generally proven to be incapable of thinking out the clash in terms of possible compromises and, hence, of negotiations. The basic idea behind conflict management is the introduction of a third, neutral actor into the fray who should facilitate a compromise between the parties. Neutrality is the condition for accepting the mediator. However the main problem in this stage of political immaturity is not so much that of accepting a third actor, but that of agreeing to sit down at the same table with the adversary.

This is why whenever conflicts were diluted, extinguished or prevented over the past years the trick was to influence the parties to acknowledge a position they would not have, in principle, accepted. The "third actor", where successful, accomplished

²⁶² Both the nuns and Roibu actually came from the capital.

something not because it brought neutrality to the table, but rather because it managed to exploit a capital that mattered in the broader game.

36. LETTERS TO THE UDMR

There have been times when the positions adopted by the UDMR leadership threatened to result in important losses for all the players. As a consequence, I sometimes addressed to them open letters. To make public appeals is to implicitly invoke a capital that the addressees and perhaps also the bystanders can acknowledge. Since I stood completely outside Hungarian culture or language (unlike, say, Smaranda Enache), there was seemingly no reason for the Hungarian leadership to see me as a competent eyewitness to their destiny. I realized that writing open letters should not therefore become a habit. Yet, as I have noted, the “magnifying glass” effect and the “pro-Hungarian” reputation of people like Smaranda, Doinea Cornea and myself throughout the Romanian media helped a lot. I have always believed it important to remind Hungarian political leaders that they were responsible for everything that went on in the country and not only for what was going on their turf. As for the reasons that caused such appeals and open letters (some were addressed exclusively to the UDMR leadership) the following lines speak by themselves.

“August 23, 1996

An appeal to the leaders of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania

Several days ago the Romanian and Hungarian Ministries of Foreign Affairs announced decisive steps toward the finalization of the Good Neighborhood Treaty between the two countries. These steps concern chiefly the acceptance by the Romanian party of including Recommendation 1201 among the documents which the Treaty would invest with legal force; and the agreement by the Hungarian party to confirm in a distinct clause that Recommendation 1201 does not refer to collective rights and does not obligate any party to grant territorial autonomy or a special status to the national minorities.

Referring to this agreement, UDMR president Marko Bela noted that the treaty between Romania and Hungary should not be signed before the general elections. Recently, UDMR’s Operative Council resolved to pressure the two governments into adopting a different text reflecting the requests made by UDMR’s own Program.

The UDMR's failure to participate in the latest talks of the representatives of political forces in Romania on the progress toward finalizing the treaty will only strengthen the general public's conviction that the UDMR actually opposes the compromise which has recently been reached.

Signing the basic treaty is a commendable decision on the part of both Romania and Hungary and is likely to amplify the international prestige of both countries. The treaty's importance for stability in the region and for the two countries' positions in the European integration progress does not need to be further emphasized.

Moreover, turning Recommendation 1201 into a document with legal force through ratification will have direct and positive effects on the rights of the Hungarian minority, especially in the field of the use of the mother tongue in the administration. The interpretation of Recommendation 1201 in the treaty, according to which the document does not acknowledge collective rights, territorial autonomy and special status, actually throws light upon the true substance of the document's provisions. The improvement of the legal and political framework for the protection of national minorities in Romania and Hungary to be achieved upon ratification does not in any way imply that domestic debates on optimal conditions for the minorities will be discontinued.

It is worth adding that the agreement reached by the Romanian and the Hungarian Ministries of Foreign Affairs are likely to have an auspicious effect on the relations between the citizens of the two countries, thus leading to the marginalization of nationalist-extremism in Romanian political life.

For these reasons and in view of the reservations recently expressed by the UDMR leadership, I call on the leaders of your organization to refrain from obstructing and to actually lend their support to the speedy finalization of the Romanian-Hungarian Treaty. The latter's impact on the electoral campaign is a relatively minor question that should not impair the signing of the treaty. A rational analysis of the benefits of finalizing the basic treaty under the current terms, respect for human and minority rights and for peaceful cohabitation, and the responsibility for the state of Hungarians in this

country and for Romanian society at large, should determine the UDMR leadership to act as friends rather than enemies of the recent developments.

Gabriel Andreescu”

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The crisis within the government coalition which broke out in the middle of 1997 prompted an appeal to president Constantinescu and other political leaders. The open letter signed on September 22, 1997, among others by Doina Cornea, was motivated by the “fear ... that, faced with a concerted [nationalist] campaign, you might choose a defensive stance. It was motivated by the feeling that, now more than ever, the coalition is in danger and the country is facing a period of instability...” However, in three months’ time we felt compelled to issue a new appeal, this time addressed to the Alliance’s Council of Representatives.

“December 12, 1997

Open letter to the UDMR Council of Representatives

Dear Sirs,

One of the prerogatives of UDMR’s Council of Representatives is to define the policies of the Democratic Alliance. We are aware that the Council possesses this power as a matter of fact and not merely on paper and that your association is organized democratically. We address this letter to you because we are concerned by the Council’s likely decision during its December 13-14 [1997] session to the effect that the UDMR should leave the coalition.

We seem to share the same understanding of the current state of affairs. The nationalist forces within the coalition have succeeded, after a campaign that lasted several months, in getting a set of measures adopted by the Senate which restrict education in the mother tongue in the case of subjects such as the ‘History of Romanians’ and the ‘Geography of Romania’. Similarly restrictive regulations affected the field of higher education. These measures constitute a violation of the December 3, 1997 protocol concluded between the PNTCD, USD, PNL and the UDMR, despite the fact that only a little more than a week has elapsed since the signing of this document. The UDMR’s decision to suspend the activities of its ministers was an understandable

response to this complete erosion of the very concept of a political agreement. Should the UDMR now go even further and leave the government for good?

It is our belief that the UDMR's participation in the government serves Romania in general, and the Hungarian community in particular. The consequences of leaving the governing coalition would be severe and unavoidable. The decision would

- constitute a victory for the ultra-nationalist forces in Romania and would strengthen the PDSR-PRM-PUNR-PSM group;
- lethally weaken the current coalition, among other things by its losing precious human resources;
- represent a serious setback in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration (the disillusion, following the traumatic events of 1990 and current notion of a 'model of ethnic reconciliation in Romania', would hurt the entire Romanian society);
- deteriorate the national minority protection system in this country;
- impair relations between Romania and Hungary.

For these reasons the self-conscious, rational and responsible political forces in Romania, whether Hungarian or Romanian, have a duty to avoid the crisis so long as this remains possible. Note that not all the steps to enactment have been exhausted: votes in the Senate and in the House, Arbitration Commission proceedings, promulgation by the President.

As for the bill on education, it is still going through the first stages in the Senate. The public commitment made by president Constantinescu on December 10 to uphold the December 3 protocol signed by the Hungarian leaders is one more argument in favor of cooperation between the various political forces for the purpose of ensuring education in the mother tongue without restrictions for persons belonging to national minorities. Naturally, this goal would not be achievable in the absence of the UDMR's participation in the government.

We therefore call on the Council of Representatives to reflect upon the implications of the alternatives. We hope to receive a confirmation of the UDMR's willingness of further participate in the government.

Gabriel Andreescu

Doina Cornea

Smaranda Enache

Renate Weber”

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It took less than one year to reach the next major crisis. The Council of Representatives convened once again to decide whether the UDMR was to stay in the government. The executive had adopted a decision concerning a Hungarian-German university as a compromise meant to appease both Hungarians and the other coalition members. Strictly speaking in view of its previous decision the UDMR should have quit.

“September 2, 1998

To the members of the UDMR Council of Representatives

Over the past year we have all witnessed the tremendous pressures targeted at the removal of the UDMR from the government. This tactic now seems very close to achieving success. On this context, the recent Government Decision on the establishment of the multicultural state university with teaching in Hungarian and German “Petofi-Schiller” was a path-breaker. The decision

- (1) strengthens Emergency Ordinance no. 36 by enforcing its most sensitive article, Art. 123.
- (2) takes a practical step in the direction of establishing a university with teaching in the mother tongue under the applicable laws (the fact that teaching shall be provided in two languages rather than one is of lesser import for the time being).

The aforementioned Government Decision was issued in a delicate moment. It was aimed at answering requests by the Council of Representatives which cannot be fully realized in a strict sense. Indeed, voting on a law which has passed the Senate presupposes adoption in the House and then a negotiation process which ends with a vote in both houses convened. Under such circumstances, it would be practically impossible to enact the bill amending and supplementing the law on education no.

84/1995 before the end of September. The government's decision of September 30 therefore meets an important demand advanced by the Council in its last decision, although this demand is met in its spirit rather than in its letter.

The UDMR Council of Representatives is now in the position of deciding whether the step taken by the government is compatible with its latest requests (which we believe to be the case if the request is read appropriately) or not (which we believe to be the case if the request is interpreted literally).

As militants for Romanian-Hungarian reconciliation we hope that the decision of the UDMR Executive Office will be propitious for both communities. One of our chief concerns is that by leaving the coalition after the government's last move the entire responsibility would fall upon the Alliance's shoulders. It would then be easy to argue that the UDMR's request of enacting the bill before September 30 could not have been fulfilled, so this government actually went further than any of its predecessors. It would become difficult to argue that the Romanian "partners" do not accept Hungarians' requests or that they have failed to act as real partners. We fully acknowledge the sometimes offensive actions of the majority coalition, but what matters at the end of the day is what gets written into law.

What will happen if the recent government decision is overruled by the Parliament? This possibility cannot be ruled out. However, such an outcome would at least testify to the UDMR's interest in negotiating and its rational approach to policy-making, strongly contrasting with the coalition partners' bad faith. When the partners can no longer be trusted the Hungarian minority would be legitimate in its decision to regard internal self-government as the only way out and the only available means to affirm its identity.²⁶³

We call on the UDMR Council of Representatives to reach a reasonable solution and to give a chance to the interests of the Hungarian minority and of the majority.

Sincerely,

Smaranda Enache / Pro-Europe League

Gabriel Andreescu / Helsinki Committee"

²⁶³ We were so concerned with what the Council's decision might be that we used the idea of internal self-determination to soften the hardcore hearts.

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Some other letters went so far as to comment on the competition within the Alliance between the two main factions, the moderates and the radicals. That such letters were made public was not an inconvenience for *all* Hungarian leaders. The messages were well regarded by the moderates, whose principles we openly supported. Below is a final sample:

“Bucharest, May 15, 1999

Dear Mr. President,

Dear Participants [to the Sixth Congress of the UDMR],

Allow me to begin by thanking you for the invitation to participate in the Sixth Congress of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. Unfortunately, I shall be unable to join you. Nevertheless, I would like to make my presence felt by addressing to you a few words in writing.

I am not persuaded that the period between the fifth and the sixth congresses has been the one in which the UDMR has been the most articulate, or the most demanding, or the most outspoken so far. But I am fully convinced that it is the period during which it has achieved the most.

Some of you may remember, perhaps with a certain nostalgia, the daring days of the silent demonstrations. Some of you may feel proud about having sent children riding on bicycles to Strasbourg in order to protest against the PDSR’s education act. Some of you may feel exalted about your greatest display of force and unity so far – gathering in a short while no less than half a million signatures on a legislative initiative.

I am reminding you of all this because I feel that it is being difficult for the UDMR to leave its *heroic* politics behind and move on to *political* politics. I believe that genuine participation in political life requires less daring and more patience. Sometimes such patience may seem too hard to bear. Genuine participation relies less on the self-confidence of the just and more on the delicate science of compromise. It forces one to leave behind the comfort within one’s tightly knit community and to seek out the intelligence necessary to solve the community’s problems while simultaneously accommodating broader interests. There will be less honors awaiting you at the end of

your new political mandate, but there may be more occasions to point to the additional rights, liberties, and opportunities you will have secured for the future generations. A hero may point out that despite his or her best efforts and sacrifices nothing more could be obtained. The politician cannot find refuge in such ill-achieving consistency.

What has the UDMR achieved between its last congress and this one? It is sufficient to compare the conditions enjoyed by the Hungarian minority in 1996 and, respectively, in 1999. The list of auspicious changes is long. Please receive my appreciation for it.

Good luck!

Gabriel Andreescu”

Such letters were read from the floor. The real problem in 1999 was to point to what should have been otherwise obvious: participation in the government had brought real advantages to the Hungarian community. In other words, the strategy of the Bela Marko wing had been the right path to follow. Such declarative letters were meant to tip the scales of persuasion in the Alliance’s Congress. A while later, research conducted by Marius Lazăr and Istvan Horvath of the Center for Interethnic Relations in Cluj demonstrated the undeniable results. To a substantial extent, Hungarians believed that the UDMR’s participation in the government was beneficial.²⁶⁴ Bela Marko deserves a lot of credit for this victory.

²⁶⁴ Irina Culic, Istvan Horvath, Cristina Raț, “Modelul românesc la relațiilor interetnice reflectat în ‘Etnobarometru’”, în Lucian Nastasă, Levente Salat, eds., *Relații interetnice în România postcomunistă*, Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, Cluj, 2000.

37. THE CLUJ STATEMENT AND DEVOLUTION IN TRANSYLVANIA

“The official funerals of the leaders of the 1956 Hungarian revolution – Imre Nagy, Geza Losonczy, Pal Maleter, Miklos Gimes and Jozsef Szilagyi, executed by the Kadar government on June 27, 1958 (Geza Losonczy died in jail) – were carried out in Budapest today, June 16 [1989].

The Hungarian government has been pressured by the public opinion to allow the commemoration. The funerals have been organized exclusively by the national opposition and in particular by the Hungarian Democratic Front, the most important opposition group in terms of size.

Besides Hungarian individuals or groups, a foreign delegation was also invited to attend. It is worth mentioning that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (PC) was not invited and, indeed, was refused participation to the ceremony. On the other hand, the state was represented by the prime minister and the president of the parliament, both of whom laid a crown of flowers. The day before, in a joint communiqué, the government and the parliament used for the first time in an official statement the term “revolution” to refer to the 1956 events.

In inviting Budapest ambassadors to attend the ceremony, the organizers made clear that they would not invite the representatives of four nations: China, North Korea, Albania, and Romania. However, Romanians, as opposed to the Romanian state or Romanian officials, were represented by two delegations: the ‘Free Romania’ association of Romanian refugees in Hungary, and a group of six Romanians living in France, Germany and Switzerland invited by the Hungarian Democratic Forum. Crowns of flowers were laid by both delegations: the first by Doru Staicu and Emil Iovănescu, two of the current leaders of ‘Free Romania’, was placed at the feet of the heroes of the 1956 revolution; the crown of Western Romanians, adorned with a ribbon painted in the colors of the Romanian flag and inscribed with the words ‘In the name of Romanian-Hungarian friendship’, was placed by Stelian Bălănescu, Mihnea Berindei, Ariadna Combes, Ion Vianu, and Dinu Zamfirescu.”

The news piece above was published under the title “Correspondence from the funerals of Imre Nagy” in a 1989 issue of the magazine *Dialog*. I have thought it worthwhile to reprint it here because of the richness of its implicit information. It lets the readers in on the power of the opposition in Budapest, who could ban the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party from placing flowers on Imre Nagy’s grave; on Romania’s assimilation to the Chinese, North Korean, and Albanian regimes; on the existence of groups of Romanian exiles in Hungary; and, last but not least, on a group of active Romanian émigrés in the West – Stelian Bălănescu, Mihnea Berindei, Ariadna Combes (the daughter of Doina Cornea), Ion Vianu, and Dinu Zamfirescu – who performed in 1989 a gesture of great symbolic significance for the solidarity of Romanians and Hungarians. Not only did they participate in a commemoration of the heroes of the Hungarian revolution, but they also signed the following message: “Today, June 16, 1989, on the occasion of the celebration of the victims of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, an event of utmost importance for all the peoples of Europe and especially for those still under communist rule, members of the Hungarian Democratic Forum and Romanians were brought together and signed the following STATEMENT...”

These are the opening lines of a document known as the “Budapest Statement”, signed by the five Romanians above, as well as by Mihai Korne and several Hungarians who were later to play important roles in the evolution of their country: Laszlo Antal G., Julia Balogh, Gaspar Biro, Sandor Csoori, Lajos Fur, Maria Illyes, Geza Jeszensky, Gyula Keszthelyi, Gyula Kodolanyi, Gusztav Molnar. The ideas put into the Statement were radical enough to have survived through all these years of major changes: that the resolution of conflicts cannot under any circumstances come from changes in frontiers but from changes of the latter’s significance; that the improvement of relations between Hungary and Romania will occur as part of the process of Europe’s democratic restructuring; that Transylvania was and still is a space of complementarity and should become a model of cultural and religious pluralism; that the right of each nation to autonomous political representation and cultural autonomy should be guaranteed; that the Hungarian university in Cluj must be re-established.

All of these major questions voiced by the 1989 Statement were still burning, legitimate and hotly debated 10 years after the revolution. In the meantime, Lajos Fur had become Minister of Defense (but was later marginalized in political life); Geza Jeszenszky has been a Minister of Foreign Affairs and, in 1999, became Hungary's Ambassador to Washington; Gaspar Biro was advisor to the Hungarian President and one of the main Hungarian experts on minorities' issues.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, none of the Romanian exiles was welcomed with open arms in Bucharest. Immediately after 1990 Ion Vianu tried to rekindle the debate over psychiatric abuse under communist rule. He came to Bucharest to initiate among "independent" Romanian psychiatrists a movement to bring justice to the victims of this abominable practice. He failed completely: the solidarity of this professional group in covering up responsibilities turned out to be more powerful. To Romanians Vianu remained a symbol, as well as the author of many excellent articles in the weekly 22.

Ariadna Combes visited Romania with humanitarian aid and taught for a while at the university of Cluj. Mihai Korne founded together with Gabriel Liiceanu and a third Paris *companion* the Humanitas publishing house and continued his editorials in *Lupta* criticizing the Bucharest regimes. Dinu Zamfirescu returned to Romania and became a well-known (but second-rank) leader of the Liberal Party, as well as one of the few politicians to have consistently supported the causes of human rights and of Romanian-Hungarian reconciliation. As for Stelian Bălănescu, he has preserved his otherwise remarkable discretion.

The most spectacular presence among the attendees of the 1989 commemoration in Budapest has been Mihnea Berindei. He arrived in Bucharest as early as December 23, 1989 and over the coming days he established, almost single-handedly, the Group for Social Dialogue, which he supported enthusiastically during its infancy and more discretely after it had matured. He supported the weekly 22, then the Romanian Helsinki Committee, then the Civic Alliance, the Civic Alliance Party (PAC), the campaigns of the Democratic Convention, and even the Liberal Party into which the PAC had dissolved, and the list is long. He has been a great provider of resources, and yet virtually nobody, not even those whom he had helped to a substantial degree, has

ever offered him an appropriate position that should officialize his relation to Bucharest authorities, acknowledge his merits, and capitalize on his position among the French elite.

From the “Transylvanian problem” to the “European problem”

But let me return to one of the Hungarians who was directly involved in the commemoration and was responsible for the presence of the Romanian delegates – Gusztav Molnar. After flirting for a while with ideology of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF), he eventually went the path of independent research and became the head of the Geopolitics Group with the Institute for Central and Eastern Europe/Teleki Foundation. He specialized in Romanian affairs and gradually became a rather frequent presence in Romanian media. This is how we started to collaborate. After a while, his name became tied to the issue of Transylvania’s devolution. The movement that he would initiate in a few years’ time was directly related to his involvement in the 1989 Budapest Statement together with a group of Romanians and Hungarians who had come together to rethink the foundations of the relationship between their two nations.

Fast forward to 1997, the year Gusztav Molnar published his study on “The Question of Transylvania” in *Magyar Kisebbség*, thus catapulting the issue of the province’s devolution into the public forum. The study triggered an ample debate among specialists and in the Romanian political environment. The following issue of *Magyar Kisebbség* (nos. 3-4/1997) published some swift reactions, and more followed in later issues. Smaranda Enache and Elek Szokoly, the editors of *Altera*, republished some of the articles in Romanian language in an issue (8/1998) of their periodical. They extended the devolution debate by organizing a debate on “From the ‘Question of Transylvania’ to the ‘Question of Europe’”²⁶⁵ in Cluj (June 3, 1998). The event was also attended by Adrian Marino, Alexandru Cistelean (the author of an oft-quoted essay on the loss of Transylvanian identity),²⁶⁶ Paul Philippi (a scholar of Transylvanian history), Sorin Mitu (the representative of the “new school” of historians of the imaginary),²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ This was the title of my study published in *Magyar Kisebbség* and then in *Altera*, Vol. 8.

²⁶⁶ “Provincia ratată”, republished in *Altera*, Vol. 9, 1998, pp. 77-86.

²⁶⁷ See especially his *Geneza identității naționale la românii ardeleni*, Humanitas, 1997.

Marius Lazăr (of the Center for the Research of Interethnic Relations in Transylvania), Miklos Bakk (the UDMR expert on national minorities),²⁶⁸ and Victor Neumann.

The debate was rounded off by a project in which I co-opted Gusztav Molnar: jointly editing a volume on the question of Transylvania and inviting Mitu, Bakk, Renate Weber, Liviu Andreescu, Tom Gallagher, Liviu Antonesei, Elek Szokoly and a few others to comment on devolution. The volume got several reviews and provided an analytical reference on the issue at stake, but had a hard time penetrating the wider cultural consciousness despite the fact that, so far, it remains the most complete public statement on this frequently debated topic.

The issue of devolution received big media coverage on September 24, 1998, when the Budapest periodical *Beszelo* organized a debate and printed Molnar's original "The Question of Transylvania" and the replies signed by Antonela Capelle-Pogăcean, Sorin Mitu and myself. There were many participants and many other speakers besides Molnar and myself: Biro Toro (UDMR), Renate Weber, Zsolt Nemeth (the new Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs after FIDESZ's electoral success), State Secretary Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu (who was then in Budapest).

The discussion in Budapest was mainly academic. By contrast, back home in Romania the daily *Cotidianul* launched a scandal-mongering issue with titles such as "The Federalization of Romania, a Plan by the Western Chancellors", "Suspect Avalanche of Statements in Support of Federalization", "Soros Foundation Supports Devolution of Transylvania".²⁶⁹ The message was that a plan for the federalization of Romania had been put together in Budapest. Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu was attacked on several occasions for his failure to protest against the speeches on the "question of Transylvania" that he had auditioned in the Hungarian capital. Molnar's devolution had become an integral part of the Romanian political imaginary.

Sabin Gherman's devolution

It was roughly at this point that Gusztav Molnar's (originally) academic contribution intersected Sabin Gherman's media adventure. An editor with the TVR

²⁶⁸ See, among others, the Miklos polemics on the UDMR platform in *RRDO*, Vols. 6-7, 1994.

²⁶⁹ Renate Weber had been elected president of the Soros-funded Open Society Foundation in 1998.

Cluj television channel, Gherman published at the end of September 1998 a text the title of which soon achieved country-wide notoriety: “I’m fed up with Romania”. The author made several sound general remarks and posed several unavoidable questions: “I’ve read in the newspapers that the government was careful to allocate to Bucharest a sum from the central budget that is larger than the amount disbursed to the entire Ardeal region.”; “I stand in line at the finance offices, the savings house, or some other state agency, and it’s always impossible to do anything without bribes and gifts. Such Turkish habits seem inescapable. So what’s my choice? I do not want to emigrate but I see that nothing gets mended here.” He spiced up such commonsensical with sundry insulting or provoking remarks: “What about us? We have never shown our valiance off, we used to flee to the forests when we were invaded, we would faint in the antechambers of the halls where our history was being decided, and now we are struggling for a loaf of bread but even our crooked ways cannot secure it...”; “In the space between two burps and a curse, the people (the people, ladies and gentlemen!) fills with pride on remembering Posada, Michael the Great, and ‘May Moldova, Ardeal and Wallachia live forever!’...”.

Gherman concluded bluntly: “I’m fed up with Romania and I want my Transylvania back”. He established a Pro Transylvania foundation which included among its statutory objectives “the rebirth of the spiritual values of Ardeal”. The press milked the story as hard as it could for some two weeks and then turned it into a constant reference in discussions on the “separation of Transylvania from Romania”. It was not only Romanian nationalists who capitalized upon the September (1998) scandal – some nationalist Hungarian associations invited Gherman to speak in Hungary, secured a scholarship in the US etc.

The following year Minister of Justice Valeriu Stoica managed to get Gherman’s foundation declared unconstitutional in the face of constitutional principles and values. The author of the first Romanian human rights coursebook and back then the first vice-president of the Liberal Party (PNL), Stoica denied the right to associate to people fostering Transylvanian identity. The accusation that they promoted an autonomous status for Transylvania within the Romanian state, which was alleged to be

unconstitutional, was a piece of sophistry that the PNL had never dared employ against, say, the fashionable monarchist groups. Gherman sued and the case is still pending, though he is almost certainly going to win in Strasbourg if it comes to that. Nevertheless, preventing people from associating around the question of regional identity is a kind of pathetic act of political opportunism that self-styled “democratic” politicians in this country sometimes indulge in. As for the other, less democratic politicians, it is not even worth mentioning them.

The Bucharest Statement

In 1999 Gusztav Molnar found an opportunity to promote his project: the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the “Budapest Statement”, the symbolic event which had brought around the same table “the sympathizers of anti-communist opposition in Hungary and the Romanian immigration.” The event was well worth celebrating, so Molnar suggested that a new document, the “Cluj Statement” be issued.

We first discussed this idea in Budapest but I actually got to read a draft of the statement only later in Cluj. My response was that the initiative was a counterproductive adventure. Molnar already knew what my arguments were and in deciding to show me an early draft in Cluj he had clearly considered my skepticism. (For this reason my name was not on the list of those who were to be contacted to endorse the Statement.) During that meeting I also added some circumstantial arguments: 2000 would be a general election year in Romania and if the nationalist left came to power the country would go crazy once again. Keeping the nationalist forces out of power would be our chief problem for the 16 months to come. Why move the spotlight away from the great political battle and direct it toward sophisticated yet counterproductive debates on devolution?

The two pages that Molnar showed me were a first draft. Other presumptive signers were to be contacted and a form acceptable to all was to be drafted. Since I was in Cluj, I also met Andor Horvath, one of the names on the list. His opinion was similar: the issue was hardly pressing. I also spoke to Daniel Vighi. He was not aware of the proposal and he did not find the issue of devolution opportune. This was also the

response of Mihnea Berindei, one of the signers of the original Budapest statement. In fact, he started work on the draft in order to put the weight of the statement in a different place.

Imagine how shocked I was to read the following in the national press on June 8, 1999: “On Friday, President Constantinescu issued a warning in Târgu Mureş ... to the effect that a manifest-letter would be launched which promotes the federalization of Transylvania... Visibly concerned, Constantinescu emphasized that the bloody war in Yugoslavia started with a document drafted in similar language...” (quoted from *Adevărul*). The daily *Ziua* was even more emphatic: “President Emil Constantinescu issued a dreadful warning to the public opinion and the political class.”

The press was closely followed in its steps by the Union of Right Wing Forces (UFD). This party, which had been created to secure parliament seats for Vosganian, Ulici and Iorgulescu, demanded that the General Prosecutor immediately start appropriate investigation procedures and enforce Art. 166 of the Criminal Code. In other words, the authors of the letter should have been punished, according to the UFD, with between five and fifteen years imprisonment provided it could be proven that they had proposed devolution and the federalization of Romania.

The full transcript of Emil Constantinescu’s Târgu Mureş speech (finalized on June 10) proved a lot less inflammatory than the newspapers had made it look. “It happens that several days ago I was informed about the draft of a so-called ‘Cluj Statement’... Without carrying any signatures ... this project attributed to intellectuals from the cities of Banat and Transylvania ... aims at rekindling a debate on the autonomy of Transylvania and Banat...

While I do hope that any debates may be carried out among intellectuals, because intellectuals and open societies know of no taboos, and since I have not surrendered my position as president *and* as Romanian intellectual ... I will repeat this for as long as it takes: we cannot accept separatist principles which negate the basic principles of our Constitution and disagree with the chief interests of the Romanian people.

Agitating federalist provocations at this particular point in time is especially dangerous because the internal political situation requires, now more than ever, unity and steadiness in overcoming difficult economic circumstances. At the same time, Romania's regional position demands our focus on what matters most to us now – stability. I believe nobody wants us any longer to become a part of the so-called gunpowder barrel in the Balkans. Just the opposite, we should foster this model of Romania as a country respectful of human rights, which are the basis of any democratic state. I have already said this in the past – the wisdom of Romanians laid the ground for a model of cohabitation able to withstand challenges...

...my appeal to you as this city's distinguished intellectuals, and to the important intellectuals of Transylvania in general, is to tackle the issue, discuss it among yourselves, for we want no taboos. But discuss it responsibly. Let us not get carried away by adventures that look like intellectual games but may have to be repaid dearly by the people of this country..."

There are several notable confusions in the president's speech (e.g., mistaking federalization for separatism), and it is unclear to say the least why he asserted so boldly that regional decentralization was contrary to the "essential interests" of the Romanian people. Regionalization had worked well throughout entire Europe. But other than these details, his speech had nothing indecent in it. The press had miserably but predictably and thoroughly changed the tone of the Târgu Mureș speech.

It also insisted in manipulating, sometimes coarsely, at other times with undeniable finesse, the public opinion. "As *Adevărul* has been warning for a long time, the inevitable has taken place." Dan Diaconescu's *Cotidianul* followed suit. In the June 8 issue of *Ziua*, Sorin Roșca Stănescu rearranged passages of Constantinescu's speech so as to be able to offer the readers a bellicose image. He then issued several admonitions: "this is the most important attempt at national sovereignty after 1964"; "how was it possible that such a dangerous act targeting the state be initiated without the SRI duly informing the head of state?"; "how did the president find out about the slashing of Romania into pieces?"; "territorial autonomy is a crime. The most serious crime imaginable against the state, its sovereignty, and the nation."

I expected more from Bogdan Teodorescu and his editorials in *Curentul*. But he too wrote that “The letter of intellectuals in Ardeal and Banat is serious because it speaks of the breaking up of Romania.”

The only intelligent comment that I have seen (admittedly without reading everything that was written on the issue) belonged to Cornel Nistorescu in *Evenimentul zilei*: “That ... several individuals drafted a statement is something absolutely normal in a civilized world. Whether it will be adopted or not, it remains to be seen. So far, it has not been signed and it is hard to imagine that in this initial form drafted by only one or two persons it would be adopted. But let us start from this exaggerated premise. Let us say it will be signed in precisely the current form. So what? Ten intellectuals claim to promote the economic interests of the historical provinces which have a right to regional institutions. They further claim they respect ‘national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Romanian state, and the free exercise of the powers of central authorities in the fields of foreign policy, defense and taxation.’... Is Romania democratic enough to organize ample debates starting from a first draft?” The judgment was impeccable and was delivered without knowledge of the president’s whole speech.

This was, in short, the story of the Cluj Statement. A while later we commemorated at the Group for Social Dialogue the tenth anniversary of the Budapest Statement by proposing an anniversary Bucharest Statement. It did not mention devolution, so the press was not interested in mentioning, analyzing or publicizing the new document.

Devolution in the late 1990s; Provincia in the new century

I described above the career of a concept that was first promoted in 1989. The view advocated then, namely that Transylvania “is a space of complementarity and should become a model of cultural and religious pluralism”, did not necessarily lead to a single conclusion but was logically expressed in the notion of the province’s devolution. Between 1997 and 1999, the issue was merely one among many other debated in a society already immunized against images of a Romania torn to pieces by Hungarian, Jewish, or Western conspiracies. In spite of considerable efforts by forces

desiring an autarchic Romania and despite the mercenary work of journalists and newspaper-persons, the devolution specter did not have major political effects.

This was happening at a time when civic militancy was showing signs of fatigue. Even the weekly 22, long a medium for open thought, had made a few forays into hysterical journalism. There are many factors which contributed to this change of attitude, and they include hypocrisy, theoretical misunderstandings, and a lot of psychological details injected in a space that was meant exclusively for ideas. Editors Gabriela Adameşteanu and Rodica Palade, as well as other members of the Group for Social Dialogue which had supported them, had already entered into minor political arrangements. Their dilettantism became accordingly manifest. However, by the end of the 1990s the weekly 22 had lost its crucial role in public debate. Consequently, its lamentable take on issue of the “national unitary state” enjoyed a reduced impact. Balance in Romanian-Hungarian relations was now a something to be achieved mainly by political forces. The UDMR’s participation in the governing coalition had already proven a success. Nobody realized it back then, but the elections in the fall of 2000 would preserve the contract between Romanians and Hungarians at the highest level of political power.

The issue of Transylvanian identity was ultimately successful. In 2000, Gusztav Molnar obtained a sponsorship for a regional periodical the name of which needs no further explanation: *Provincia*. Edited by Molnar and Cistelean, the periodical could boast about a team of highly respected collaborators: Hugo Agoston, Miklos Bakk, Mircea Boari, Marius Cosmeanu, Caius Dobrescu, Sabina Fati, Marius Lazăr, Ovidiu Pecican, Traian Ştef, Elek Szokoly, Daniel Vighi. Significantly, the list included residents of Bucharest who were sympathetic to regionalism. *Provincia* proved to be a worthy instrument of Ardelean identity.

At the end of 2000, the magazine hosted an ample debate on the creation of a regional party, as if to prove that the option was hardly merely theoretical. The debates were less analytical in content and more promotional, so the significance of this option ought not to be exaggerated. Nevertheless, I was somewhat surprised when during a

May 26, 2001 debate on Romania's political future many residents of Bucharest regarded the establishment of a regional party as probable and even appropriate.²⁷⁰

The following year *Provincia* became an self-standing journal. I do not know whether this fact increased its audience, but its newly acquired status gave more stability to this group which had assumed the mission of promoting regional identity. The supporters of autonomy for Transylvania are now, in early 2000, largely a silent mass the size of which is difficult to gauge. It is however very much apparent that a pro-Transylvanian political force could be launched and defended with relative ease both conceptually and in terms of motivation and human resources. Yet I believe that this topic still remains one of peripheral importance in defining Romanian-Hungarian relations.

²⁷⁰ This "historical" meeting included Smaranda Enache and Elek Szokoly (the organizers), Renate Weber, Cristian Pârvulescu, Aurel Ciobanu-Dodrea, Mariana Celac, Valentin Constantin, Mihaela Miroiu, Sorin Moisă, and Luminița Petrescu.

38. SCHOLARLY NATIONALISM

When, around the end of 1998, the UDMR's separation from the coalition seemed imminent and the "model of Romanian-Hungarian reconciliation" prompted general ridicule, Horia-Roman Patapievici published in 22 an editorial with a menacing title: "The imperial minorities". The author, who had acquired unquestionable prestige among the magazine's readers, diabolized the demands of the Hungarian minority using leitmotifs such as "separation", "closure" and "segregation". Briefly put, the article was distrustful and accusatory.

I immediately wrote a response editorial in order to set the record straight. It was not the first time I tried to fine-tune 22's outlook on the national question. A real crisis had taken place in 1995 when an article²⁷¹ by Andrei Cornea was published in a column called "The free stand" and reserved for materials from which the editors emphatically dissociated themselves. What were the causes of such an attitude on the part of editors Gabriela Adameşteanu and Rodica Palade? Probably the real culprits were ideas such as "integration presupposes an explicit surrender of some of the national powers", or the fact that the treatment of minority problems by the West was said to employ "a language of firmness and justice". In the immediately following issue Ilie Şerbănescu, the outstanding economic policy journalist that the GDS magazine was fortunate to have as a collaborator, voiced his own anti-Hungarian theories. (They had been previously expressed in the electronic or provincial media, but never in 22.) Page three of the issue printed headlines such as "Recommendation 1201 seems to be merely one end of the bridge"; phrases like "it is difficult to interpret Hungarian positions ... as anything other than separatist". It also gave credence to the notion that Hungary had been entrusted with a Western mandate to prevent NATO from expanding closer to Russia.²⁷²

As if to officialize a new foreign policy line at 22 which starkly departed from what the publication had been doing ever since 1989, the weekly published an interview with the former King Michael. The interview belonged to Adrian Pop, the former

²⁷¹ Titled "Preţul integrării", 22, No. 28, 1995.

²⁷² Ilie Şerbănescu, "România prea la Est pentru extinderea occidentală spre est", 22, No. 29, 1995.

editor-in-chief of the *Romanian Review of International Studies*.²⁷³ The questions posed were tendentious and created the impression that the former king accepted the interviewer's outlook, which described Hungarians' policies as "the major stumbling block in Romanian-Hungarian relations" thus implicitly exonerating the anti-Hungarian extremism spanning Romania's political life from Ion Iliescu and Virgil Măgureanu to Gheorghe Funar and Vadim Tudor.

I responded with a letter addressed "To the editors of 22" in which, after an analysis of the three aforementioned articles, I asked: "What is going on?".²⁷⁴ In response I received several insidious reproaches from Gabriela Adameșteanu²⁷⁵ but going public was worth it: no anti-Hungarian tilt plagued the magazine for the following 3 years.

But by 1999 the context had changed at the magazine, at the GDS and in the society at large. Patapievici had published his article as an editorial. I sent in my reply and Rodica Palade received a text by Gusztav Molnar responding to the same article. The magazine's deputy editor-in-chief had no option but to publish it.²⁷⁶ However, as a true guardian of the proper 22 ideology she excused herself by appending the following note: "This article does not express the position of the editors. We are publishing it because it claims to be a response to an article by H.-R. Patapievici entitled 'The Imperial Minorities'..."

What was so uncomfortable in Molnar's article as to compel the magazine to clearly assert its distance? Below is just one sample of what I believe to have been the main inconvenient points: "it is not the Hungarians that are the Achilles' hill of the Romanian state, but the Romanian political regime itself, which is based on the supremacy of Bucharest exercised not only against a stubborn national minority, but also on regional majorities the aspirations of which it will be impossible to restrain in the future with the instruments of state-sponsored nationalism so eagerly deployed against the legitimate aspirations of Hungarians."

²⁷³ Adrian Pop, "Interviu cu M.S. Regele Mihai I de România", 22, No. 34, 1995.

²⁷⁴ Gabriel Andreescu, "Ce se întâmplă?", 22, No. 35, 1995.

²⁷⁵ Gabriela Adameșteanu, "Un răspuns pentru Gabriel Andreescu", 22, No. 37, 1995.

²⁷⁶ Gusztav Molnar, "Imperii și pseudoimperii...", 22, No. 45, 1998.

Since such ideas probably seemed too eccentric, Rodica Palade had taken care to invite historian Dinu C. Giurescu to counter the Hungarian researcher. Professor Giurescu produced two pages on the idyllic history of a national, unitary state in which the majority and the minorities were unified in a natural if perhaps not ideal relationship.²⁷⁷ But the question of why the state has to be necessarily national and unitary could not be avoided. Giurescu explained that “The provision in Art. 1 of the 1923 Constitution, reading that ‘The Kingdom of Romania is a national, unitary and indivisible State’ expressed an actual reality: Romanians amounted to 71.9 percent of the population, and the absolute majority of the Romanian nation was living within the borders of the state.”

So this was, in the opinion of Professor Giurescu, what defines a national unitary state. Why is it then that Italy, Finland, Germany (and I shall not continue the long list), all of which had minorities amounting to less than 10 percent of the total population as well as majorities living within the boundaries of their states, were not defined as national and unitary? What about Romania’s evolution in terms of its ethnic composition? Are we perhaps becoming a super-national and super-unitary state? Is this, in the view of Professor Giurescu, the logic of modern democracy and multiculturalism in societies with distinct ethno-political entities?

The article commissioned by Rodica Palade juggled with a lot of information but failed to consider specific data and avoided the fundamental issue raised by Molnar. It completely forgot to mention Bucharest’s nationalist policies in Transylvania, Bessarabia and Dobrogea before World War II, as if that had been a state of normality. Professor Giurescu’s pre-1989 Romania had crafted some balance between the various identities; after 1989, it had been nothing less of a true model. “An unprejudiced look at existing data, devoid of misconceptions, shows that the Romanian state did not practice between 1919 and 1939 any systematic and concerted assimilationist policies – whether cultural, religious or economic – targeting the minorities.” Or: “Romanians and Hungarians have been living in Transylvania for over 900 years. The advances toward

²⁷⁷ Dinu C. Giurescu, “Imperii și pseudoimperii, între teorie și realități”, 22, No. 45, 1998.

the consolidation and affirmation of minority identities and cultures have been notable and essential.” It was as if no minority problem had ever existed in Romania.

Naturally, the reality has been quite the opposite. This is still one of the things that must be clearly spelled out to the cultural and political elites in charge of the future of this country. Since I referred to the politics of interwar governments toward Bessarabia in a previous volume,²⁷⁸ I shall dwell here on the issue of the policies of the Bucharest regime toward Transylvania and the Hungarian minority after World War II, at a time when the specter of Hungarian revisionism could no longer be credibly agitated.

During the first period following the Soviet occupation, inter-ethnic relations were governed by Leninist-Stalinist principles in what Gabor Vincze aptly referred to as “the display case policies” at the end of 1944. This period was followed by the philo-Hungarian policies of the Petru Groza government, then by a second “display case” interlude which lasted until December 12, 1948. Afterwards, the policy toward the Hungarians was reversed to the old practices.²⁷⁹

Deliberate Romanization started in the cities as early as 1947 through the enactment and selective application of restrictions concerning the residence of newcomers. The establishment of the Autonomous Hungarian Region marked the elimination of bilingual plates, which started outside this territory.

Hungarians have proved particularly sensitive to the state of their education system. The Hungarian department at the Cluj Polytechnic Institute was disestablished in 1953-54. Admissions to the Hungarian department of the Agronomics Institute was canceled one year later, then shortly reestablished after the Budapest Revolution; eventually, the entire department was disbanded in 1959. The very same year the last Csango schools with teaching in Hungarian were closed down, and the Babeş and

²⁷⁸ See the essays by Ernest Latham and Ladis K.D. Kristof, respectively, referred to in Gabriel Andreescu, “Addendum” in Andreescu, Molnar, eds., *Problema transilvană*, Iaşi, Polirom, 1999.

²⁷⁹ Gabor Vincze, “De la minoritate naţională la ‘români de naţionalitate maghiară’”, *Altera*, Vol. 15, 2000, pp. 85-128. While I shall quote Vincze copiously, I do not necessarily endorse his position in its integrality. He sees all actions of the communist regime (including cooperativization and nationalization) and Ceauşescu’s various aberrations (such as the demolition of villages) as a matter of “anti-Hungarian feeling”. I do not believe this to be the case. Furthermore, there has been enough anti-Hungarian feeling in Romania for these exaggerations to be beside the point.

Bolyai universities in Cluj were unified. This last measure spelled the end of independent Hungarian higher education. High schools with exclusive teaching in Hungarian disappeared in the mid-seventies and the expulsion of Hungarians (but also of members of other ethnic minorities) from leadership positions in the army, intelligence services, and foreign affairs was stepped up. The proportions were preserved in representative bodies such as the Great National Assembly for purely propagandistic reasons. After the mini-cultural-revolution of 1971 Hungarian theatres were turned into “sections” of Romanian institutions, as were Hungarian higher education departments.

After cuts in the number of teachers’ schools toward the end of the 1970s, the percentage of Hungarian primary and secondary school teachers and tutors reached 4.5 percent (the Hungarians made up 7 percent of the population). The number of Hungarian law school students dropped to 1.2 percent and the number of economics students was halved in the mid-seventies, which suggests a deliberate attempt to limit the access to key disciplines. Tellingly, there had been no reduction in the number of candidates.

The Hungarians graduates would be systematically assigned jobs in regions without Hungarian population. The community was so concerned about this trend that in 1978 Lajos Takacs, Andras Suto and Janos Fazekas addressed a memorandum to Nicolae Ceaușescu. Not only did the nationalist Ceaușescu (and his wife, a hysterical anti-Hungarian according to various reports by insiders) fail to change the strategy, but they actually accelerated the process. In 1985, of the 21 graduates of the Hungarian language section of the Philological Department, only 5 were offered jobs in Ardeal. Between 1980 and 1989 the number of Hungarian candidates admitted to the Târgu Mureș Medical School dropped by approximately 75 percent.²⁸⁰

In accordance with an 1988 decree the names of localities were written in their Romanian form in the publications of the nationalities. In fact, this practice had had a long ancestry and was amply documented in a book by ... Constantin C. Giurescu (*Ardealul în istoria poporului român*, Minerva, 1968), also published in Hungarian, in

²⁸⁰ These figures were supplied by Gabor Vincze, *op. cit.*

which topographical names in Transylvania are in Romanian only. Around 20 to 25 titles had disappeared from the Hungarian press by 1971.

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Anti-Hungarian politics dominated the political philosophy of the Romanian state after 1918 and scored an incredible comeback in the late 1940s. It continued to the last days of the Ceaușescu regime and is so well documented as to be unchallengeable. Romanians should try to keep in mind that behind figures and statistics such as those briefly introduced above there were always real, flesh-and-blood people.

It is therefore hardly surprising that what strikes many people most are not the figures themselves but the stories recounted by Hungarian friends. Hugo Agoston, the editor of *A Het* and the author of a remarkable series entitled “Bucureștiul de altă dată” (“The Bucharest of Yore”) published in *Provincia*, has got just such a story to tell. He once entered a pub in the capital together with some friends and after a few glasses started to sing in Hungarian. A policeman came in and arrested him. “Why are you singing the Hungarian anthem?” he inquired furiously. The situation was aptly described by Sandor Huszar, the editor-in-chief of the magazine and a former member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. In returning to meet the editor, he showed his official insignia to the head of the police station and asked the colonel to sing the Hungarian anthem. “How am I supposed to know the Hungarian anthem?”, panicked the officer. “How was the sergeant who arrested him supposed to know it?” came back the reply that bailed out a Hungarian intellectual reckless enough to sing a Hungarian song after a few glasses in a Bucharest pub.

Here is another story. A friend of Sandor Szilagyi was thrown out of “virtually every Romanian high school” because of his having offended Romanian sentiments. In a written paper in chemistry (a discipline he ignored because he lacked any interest in it; he pursued a artistic career) asking students to discuss fuel oil, he had written that “The Dacians were using fuel oil to oil the axles of their wagons.” This naïve sentence was branded a nationalist slur and the author was thrown out of school and, for many years afterwards, had to suffer the consequences.

Szilagyi also mentioned once something that traumatized him. A Romanian teacher from the Ardeal came to his Cluj primary school. Because he was not very intelligent and because the environment allowed it, the teacher, who could hardly speak Hungarian, was ironic toward the language of Petofi. In order to show how awful Hungarian sounded, he changed the names of the pupils. He called him Alexandru; his colleague Zoltan was called Irimie, and so on. After the children couldn't take any more of this vulgarity, they stopped talking and refused to speak again. They were graded only on the basis of written papers. The change of names was worse than any other imaginable offense.

What about the absurd but consistent obsession with color? Sometimes kids were forbidden to use green pencils. Tree foliage was to be painted blue, so that its natural color should not intersect the white of the paper and the red of the flowers.

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Is this merely the testimony of exaggeratedly sensitive Hungarian individuals? Are these stories the expression of some subjective perception that the authors cannot put behind themselves? Then perhaps it is worth quoting a true-blue Romanian, a man who unfortunately left us much too early.²⁸¹ "It's as if you have not been living in Transylvania," he answered the open letter of a native of Sibiu, "for the past twenty-five years, or as if everything that happened during this period completely eluded you. Were you ever curious enough to open a history textbook made available to Hungarian children in order to see what it said of their ancestors? Are you aware that a widow from Maramureş who had married a Hungarian physician was requested to change her and her children's name in order to be promoted? Are you familiar with the story of the children in Oţelu Roşu whose school prizes were taken away because their names sounded un-Romanian? They were told this straight to their faces. I have been unable to assist some of my best collaborators and students in getting a promotion because of their non-Romanian-sounding name."

"I could go on for pages," Radu Popa continued, "because I have recorded these events with a lot of indignation over many years." But, he eventually exclaimed, "you

²⁸¹ Radu Popa died of cancer in 1992.

are either completely unaware of what you are talking about, or simply refuse to understand!”²⁸² These words, originally meant for a certain Vasile Avram from Sibiu, would have suited Dinu C. Giurescu just as well.

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It is therefore not illogical to suggest that well-informed Romanian intellectuals with otherwise decent attitudes, such as professor Giurescu,²⁸³ had a problem that was not primarily theoretical in nature. Rather, it was a matter of their ability to lend their ears to communities invoking past injustices. Where there is receptivity, the rest (information, conceptual frameworks) will easily come about. Individuals with disciplinary authority are able to exert for lengthy periods the largest degree of influence on the debates among the elites. Indeed, they are the ones who steer the elite’s projects.²⁸⁴ Dinu Giurescu’s involvement in the dispute surrounding Molnar and devolution still seems to be one of the most disappointing moments in the post-communist debate on Romanian nationalism.

“Scholarly nationalism” was hardly practiced by Giurescu alone. But his position left an indelible impression. The responsibility is also shared by the editors of 22.

²⁸² Radu Popa, “Stafii poate naive și speranță realistă”, 22, No. 19, 1990.

²⁸³ It is worth noting here that professor Giurescu published an article in *Cotidianul* (November 26, 1991) in which he noted that “a majority earns and safeguards its fundamental rights and freedoms to the extent that it respects and guarantees the same rights and freedoms for ethnic communities speaking different languages...” He contested the 1991 Constitution adopted by the Parliament on November 21, 1991 precisely because it failed to provide for the necessary guarantees for minority protection.

²⁸⁴ The same Dinu Giurescu has had an impressive and salutary intervention in the debate on alternative textbooks. On that occasion, the power of disciplinary authority was very visible to all involved.