

### 39. NATIONALISM WITH A FACELIFT

There have been attempts in the Romanian press to legitimize forms of “decent nationalism”. It is ironical that the author who is most commonly referred to in this context is Octavian Paler, a man wholly irrelevant to the questions addressed here.<sup>285</sup> The polemics collected in the volume *Naționaliști, anținaționaliști... O polemică în publicistica românească*,<sup>286</sup> to which he participated, explains perhaps in part this identification. “Moderate nationalism” does not seem to have gained a symbolic strength proportional to the number of those who are invoking it. I would even go so far as to say that its career has fared worse than the concept deserved. After all, the role of minorities’ nationalism or of nationalism “under occupation” is too serious to be treated with superiority complexes. A possible explanation would be the “migration” of publicly visible anti-minority energies toward *ad literam* democratism – that is, to the legitimization of the domination of majorities over minorities. The group of literal democrats is well-represented by the stylistic excesses and paroxistic verbalization of Cristian Tudor Popescu and Horia-Roman Patapievi.

A more subtle and as yet not defused threat is that of what Marius Lazăr called, in referring to nationalist attitudes which rely on analytical arguments, “nationalism with a facelift.” This package does sometimes deceive the media, the cultural elites without specific analytical experience, and the students. Scientific pseudo-theories sometimes behave like the cuckoo chick that kicks genuine research out of the nest. I do not intend here to provide a typology of so-called respectable or moderate nationalism, although such a task ought to be taken up sometime.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Octavian Paler noted in an article published in 2001 (“De ce îl cred pe Năstase”, *Cotidianul*, August 31) that “I know of no state that turned from ‘national’ into ‘federal’.” Well, he should have known that Germany became a federal state after a “national” period and that Spain and Italy evolved in the 1970s from a unitary to a semi-federal administrative model. Octavian Paler belongs to the group of nationalist demagogues eager to embrace theories on the loss of Transylvania if this serves opportunistic populism. (The quoted article interprets the term “federalization of Romania” as a “prudish name for the separation of Ardeal from Romania.”)

<sup>286</sup> Gabriel Andreescu, ed., *Naționaliști, anținaționaliști... O polemică în publicistica românească*, Iași: Polirom, 1996.

<sup>287</sup> It will have to include sociological research developed in centers such as the one led by Ilie Bădescu.

For a while Alina Mungiu remained aloof of the minority issue, with only cursory, liberal-minded, essay-like incursions into the domain. The dramatic change occurred in 1996, when she elaborated and published a long study titled “Toward Transethnic Democracy in Transylvania”. The study opened with some surprising statements: “individuals who debate ... the project of the Hungarian elites in Romania who are preparing some distant secession in the future completely neglect the essential question of the individual and collective rights of European minorities in our century.” But there was actually no UDMR-drafted document and no actual action of the Alliance which suggested preparations for a “distant secession in the future”. Such baseless conjectures had no place in a serious study. (In fact, they simply repackaged the discourse of Vadim Tudor and Gheorghe Funar in a more respectable box.) Or: “individuals who discuss the issue from the perspective of ethnic conflict are in effect turning it into a question of security which predictably neglects individuals, communities, and any sense of justice in order to solve the question of stability.” But the ethnic conflict perspective on the relations between majority and minorities is actually a fundamental component of research in the field. It is also the object of international institutions. To reject this paradigm out of hand is to abandon an indispensable instrument.

Recommendation 1201 was not, the author continued, “anything more than a recommendation”. I have noted several times before that in the case of Romania the Recommendation was a political commitment because, through Opinion 176 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Romania undertook to enforce it. Mungiu’s use of the phrase “internal territorial autonomy of the Hungarian community” was absent from the UDMR documents and, as such, meaningless. The notion that “the UDMR ... should guarantee its loyalty to the government” rehearsed the 1995 attack against the Alliance. And how could a so-called “analyst” seriously argue that “the new law of education ... reestablishes some of the facilities provided by the communist Romanian state to Hungarians”? Rights are not “facilities” and a curtailment of rights is not a “reestablishment”.

Alina Mungiu also provided a long argument of why it would be in the interest of Hungarians to have admittance exams and other similar contests in Romanian (essentially because of competition on the labor market). She also applied the same arguments on the use of language to Hungarians and to foreign students who come to study in Romania for the entire duration of the undergraduate study. She seemed to believe that minority self-government beyond the sphere of information “should be the object of negotiations between the Romanian state and local administrations.” But minority self-government should become a matter for negotiations only if the minority is delegated some powers previously entrusted to the state. The text confused the self-government of minority institutions (resulting from the exercise of the right to association) with latter’s status as public entities (which necessitates an adjustment of the positions occupied by the minorities and the state).

According to Alina Mungiu, “internal self-determination” and “personal autonomy” are “innovative but ill-defined terminology”. It must be strange then that this terminology had a real correspondent in the relatively distant past (the Estonian law of 1925 and the case of Swedes in Finland). According to our author, a law establishing a form of subsidiarity is a “challenge to state sovereignty”, as would be a constitutional right to referendum. But the latter ideas are absurd, while the argument that the UDMR documents propose “trans-territorial autonomy” was completely unfounded. The same is true of statements to the effect that UDMR’s proposals “are extending the theory and practice of European government beyond any acceptable limits” and constitute “a challenge to the contemporary European conception of state sovereignty”.

The paper was shabby in terms of professional ethics. Information was biased, errors abounded, and in some instances there was also misinformation. In the end, the study was little more than an assembly of the author’s impressions, misconceptions, and prejudices. Reference to relevant international laws were completely absent, as were crucial bibliographic landmarks (Capotorti, Hannum, Thornberry, Cassesse etc.). The author seemed to have ignored the important Romanian works and research on the policies advanced by the Hungarian minority in Romania.

I wrote about all this in a 22 article “Disparaging minority research”.<sup>288</sup> The conclusion noted that “The paper titled ‘Toward Transethnic Democracy in Romania’ is a half-learned product. It does no honor to the institute sponsoring its publication<sup>289</sup> or to the funding organization. It can be used as an excellent case study on how *not* to do research. ... The minority issue is too important to be left at the mercy of such superficiality and contempt.”

My conclusion was probably a bit too belligerent but to let public opinion be sold such anti-Hungarian clichés under the guise of “scientific research” was something that revolted me. The following issue of 22 contained a surrealistic response from Mungiu introduced by a sort of editorial note signed by Gabriela Adameșteanu (“A few remarks”).<sup>290</sup> The editor-in-chief complained that my review overstepped the boundaries of neutrality and eventually expressed her disappointment at the “extreme subjectivity” (and the many inaccuracies) in Alina Mungiu’s reply.

The texts signed by Mungiu and Adameșteanu were hard to fathom but they were followed by another response which really mattered a lot: that of the UDMR. In recalling the Alliance’s interest in any initiative analyzing the activities and platform of the UDMR, Anton Niculescu, political counselor to the UDMR president, flatly denied a statement by Mungiu to the effect that she had received the approval of the UDMR representatives for the arguments presented in the paper. On the contrary, “many of the statements in the review signed by Gabriel Andreescu ... coincide with those expressed by UDMR officials during the public debate mentioned by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi.”

Andrei Cornea had the final word in the debate. His masterly article “‘Peaceful separation’ or control hermeneutics” was published in two successive issues<sup>291</sup> and was infused with the friendly distance that has been perhaps the main quality of Cornea’s writings in the past. The text had nothing of the steamy involvement that friends have taken me to task for. He predictably opened this text with welcoming words and small

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<sup>288</sup> Gabriel Andreescu, “Compromiterea cercetării în problematica minorităților”, 22, No. 24, 1996.

<sup>289</sup> The Center for Political Studies and Comparative Analysis.

<sup>290</sup> The editor-in-chief’s remarks were denied vehemently later on, under different circumstances. Her words were justified as an attempt to cool down the heated argument: she “opted [by publishing the falsities of A.M.] in favor of publishing ‘uncomfortable’ texts, even those containing ... unfair or erroneous statements...”

<sup>291</sup> 22, Nos. 28-29, 1996.

compliments, but then went straight to the heart of things: “the author needs to make a plausible case that her main presupposition, that the Hungarian elites or the UDMR are planning secession, is true. ... this thesis should be supported by documents and believable, real actions. Any reference to radical plans should be fully documented; we should not claim that such evidence is missing simply because Hungarians are suppressing it, as some have maintained in the past.

In the light of publicly available documents and actions ... I see absolutely no reason why a person without prejudices and preconceptions would state that the project of the Hungarian elite is a ‘distant secession in the future’.”

Cornea went on to identify another falsification hidden deeply in the argument: “Alina Mungiu also claims to have uncovered this intention in another fragment of the Council Decision of January 14, 1996, which says that the Hungarian community demands that the Romanian state recognize it as a ‘distinct political subject’. Although the author cites this paragraph on page 14, on the following page she refers to the request above with the phrase (for some reason placed between inverted comas) ‘separate political subject’. There is no such phrase in the UDMR document. The author employs the same phrase again on page 18, where she claims that in order to eliminate any suspicion of separatist and secessionist intentions, the UDMR, which claims to be a ‘separate political subject’, should officially acknowledge the Constitution of Romania.

I think it is easy to understand that ‘distinct’ is not the same as ‘separate’. To be distinct is not to oppose integration in Romanian society, while to be ‘separate’ can be construed as just such a form of opposition.<sup>292</sup> To misquote such terms is not an entirely innocent affair!”

As if this splendid argument was not enough, Cornea punched in other lethal blows. Take for instance the term “peaceful separation”, which A.M.-P. had attributed to the UDMR project. “Alina Mungiu’s phrase ‘one counts on immigration’ leaves me wondering who is actually ‘counting’ on it? Is it the Hungarian elite? Which part of it,

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<sup>292</sup> In fact, literature on minority issues does speak of a need to maintain a certain degree of separation. But in this context “separation” sounds so bad that Cornea’s point is crucial. Precisely because of the political psychology that associates minorities with separatist intentions I proposed in 2001 the concept of “community privacy” (see Gabriel Andreescu, “Problems of Multiculturalism in Central Europe”, Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, 9-10 Juillet, 2001).

exactly? ... Where is the evidence for such a severe statement? This kind of talk can easily be turned into phantasmagorical scenarios such as those spun by Pavel Coruț... We would soon find ourselves claiming that Hungarians, Jews, or Turks are ‘counting’ on poisoning our wells or sabotaging our prosperous economy.”

Cornea sums it all up magisterially, with a premonition of the electoral outcome: “it is possible that in this autumn’s elections the opposition will surpass the existing government coalition in terms of votes. But for such an electoral success to remain more than simple arithmetic, we will need a new coalition from which the UDMR cannot be excluded. Yet how could the CDR or the USD negotiate with an Alliance suspected of harboring Quebec-style separatist plans?”

To round off his remarkable article, Andrei Cornea appended to it the following message: “I believe that the firm attitude of the GDS and its magazine 22 over the past 6 years against all forms of nationalist emphasis, its commonsense and its ethical or intellectual strength in resisting the sirens of false patriotism and democracy, will secure its important and perhaps unique place in Romanian political life.”

Such comments provide an insight into the enthusiastic way in which intellectual solidarity was experienced by some GDS members at a time when history was very much in the making and values were lived rather than merely affirmed. Later in, by the time the magazine had adopted a more hypocritical stance, the fruit of its past attitudes had ripened. The Cluj Statement crisis in 1998 and the distance taken on the minority issue had lost effectiveness. The political game had almost completely replaced the civic game, at least with respect to the relations between Romanians and Hungarians.

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What few knew at the time was that the Center for Political Studies and Comparative Analysis which published Alina Mungiu’s research was headed by Dorel Șandor, whose anti-Hungarian feelings I had experienced on several occasions. Some suggested that this explained the skepticism with which Karen Fog, the former head of the EU Delegation to Romania, to which Șandor was close, regarded the UDMR. In my conversations with Șandor I had the opportunity to listen to more than nationalist jokes

with Hungarians. I also found out about meetings with “*Bozgors*” before 1989, in Budapest of all places.

Alina Mungiu-Pippidi’s second important public achievement relevant to the national minorities issue arrived in 1999 with the publication of her book on *The Subjective Transylvania*. It came out a few months after *The Question of Transylvania*.

I was invited to the book’s launching. I genuinely hoped to read an instructive volume. On December 16, publisher Gabriel Liiceanu did his job well and uttered many words of praise with little actual content. He underlined the cool impartiality of the author, the use of ample bibliography and the up-to-date methodology. He offered a few additional epithets in a field he knew nothing about.

Eventually, I felt compelled to write about Mungiu’s second work too:

“According to the ‘Introduction’, this research was intended as a ‘Romanian contribution not to the issue of Transylvania alone ... but to the more general issue of national identity and nationalism in contemporary Europe.’ This seems to be a fair statement: despite the title, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi’s book looks into the broader relevant issues of nationalism and minorities and not only to Transylvania, where the empirical investigation was carried out. Let me also note that *The Subjective Transylvania* has the literary quality that is so characteristic of Alina Mungiu-Pippidi’s writing. The book communicates easily and fluently, and the style makes it very attractive.”

The quote from the analysis I published soon after the book was launched emphasized the priority of the methodological, conceptual and informational aspects of the book:

“As for the methodology, the author used several concepts belonging to psycho-sociology and her own investigations in order to eventually develop a perspective on the relations between Romanians and Hungarians and to propose solutions for decision-makers and public policies. There is, however, a leap of logics between the premises and the conclusions, the nature of which is similar to the expectation that an aerial shot with a resolution of 1 meter/pixel would offer details on the handle of a diplomatic briefcase. In other words, theories and research findings are used in the book for purely rhetorical purposes.

A second methodological observation is related to the fact that the author seems to be very keen on basing her argument on her own field investigations. The intention itself deserves a lot of praise, especially since it runs contrary to the widespread habit of speculating on the basis of pure impressions. On the other hand, the limits of the author's methods need to be clearly defined. First, the investigation is in danger of quickly becoming dated. Once a study performed on a larger sample and with better methodology is published, Mungiu's research will immediately become obsolete. This type of research abides by the logic of syntheses which new investigations later augment and clarify. Unfortunately, the 15 focus groups and the July 1998 poll on 597 individuals are rather instruments even compared to available research. The book's study of the religious beliefs of Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania is easily surpassed by the ample research conducted by Tomka Miklos in October 1999 [already published in Hungarian] and soon to be published in Romanian in the excellent journal *Altera*. The author's views on the mutual perception of majority and minority populations should have been corroborated with and tested against the results of an ample study published in March 1999 by Ioan Andrei Popescu, Mihaela Oancea and Dragoş Popescu of the *Institute for Statistics and Opinion Polls*. There is rich literature in the field of public policy that the author ignores while preferring to quote (admittedly notorious) literature with little to say on the matters at hand.

Several confusions will probably irritate the specialists. To argue that 'subsidiarity ... is not identical to the decentralization of a modern state, but closer to the philosophy and organization of the Middle Ages', and then to place this concept in the category of religious vs. secular simply contradicts everything we know about the meaning of this concept today. The UDMR's support for subsidiarity should not be confused with support for federalization (which not a single UDMR document ever mentions); the term 'special status' employed by the Hungarians refers to territories rather than communities; to treat the post-1996 regime as a type of 'consensualism' because the UDMR received ministerial positions as a member of the governing coalition is to reduce consensualism to the logics of coalition-making. I believe this to be inappropriate.



The volume published by Humanitas also contains factual errors. Not all of them may be corrected. For instance, Ordinance 22 was not ‘rejected’ by the Senate – this was simply a matter of parliamentary procedure –, but by a decision of the Constitutional Court (which contested the urgent nature of the Ordinance). Hungarians’ exclusion from positions of leadership by abandoning the percentage rule started long before 1990. Remus Opriș’s involvement in the Odorheiul Secuiesc affair was not “his right as an official” because he illegally broke the seal applied by a court of justice. Instead of mediating the events, he triggered a serious crisis resolved by the involvement of civil society.

Conceptual and factual errors would have been easily avoided had Humanitas, the publisher, submitted the manuscript to reviewers. There is nothing wrong with getting a confirmation from specialists; in fact it’s a worldwide (and in some cases mandatory) procedure. Hopefully Humanitas will keep this in mind for the future.”

It is difficult to stand aside when scientific deontology is violated, but the fact that the issue was delicate made a response mandatory. This time as well my article was less an in-depth review or analysis and more of a protest against this type of research and the irresponsible treatment of issues with such a serious stake. This time as well Alina Mungiu benefited from better reviews than my own. A short while after I published my position *Provincia* (no. 1/2000) published an excellent piece by sociologist Marius Lazăr. I shall let him have the last word. He labeled this type of investigation “nationalism with a facelift” because, in his view, it offers a deceptive image not merely of the attitudes, but also of the instruments.

“The author undertakes the difficult task of deconstructing with the tools of the psychologist the two ‘subjectivisms’ (actually ‘ethnocentrisms’, but Alina Mungiu does not use this concept) at the foundation of Romanian and Hungarian nationalism in Transylvania. She quickly disparages the quantitative analysis underlying a vast amount research. ... The new and much more ambitious intellectual position which she adopted starting with her first book *Romanians after 1989* put her into a field where intentions have to be matched by the adequate methodology, while the otherwise profuse perceptiveness has to match the theories. Mungiu is split between the civic activism

which underlies her political reflections and her aspiration to expert-status, on the one hand, and the need to professionalize in a discipline where her initial academic training is largely irrelevant (since journalism does not make you a scholar, just as life does not make you a philosopher), on the other hand. She therefore tries to convert her symbolic capital as an opinion leader into the intellectual capital of a scientific authority. This conversion follows a double strategy: on the one hand, she exploits her status as ‘opinion leader’ to consolidate the reliability of her judgment of reality; on the other, she substitutes, by way of self-promotion, accumulated references for research abroad or previous works for professional competence.”

This introductory paragraph of the review was not aimed at opening a “Mungiu file”. But a professional immediately understands, almost at gut level, methodological abominations. “In identifying sociological research with polls and in failing to draw the elementary distinction between a poll and a survey the author states without even blinking that ‘We have no school capable of designing descriptive polls or carrying out simple measurements of answers to questionnaires – most often they cannot be called attitudes, or beliefs, evaluations, social representations, or values. Except for electoral or similar options ... polls have so far told us nothing relevant about our culture...’ ... ‘The 597-person sample of individuals aged over 15 was representative for the structure of the population of the aforementioned counties with respect to age, ethnic structure, residence, and sex. The poll was conducted between June 16-24 in the form of a mailed questionnaire. The results were compared to other polls with larger samples and have in all cases been consistent... The “rate of error” on this sample is 3-5 percent.’

This fragment should be looked at in more detail, because it points to the improvised nature of the research and it eventually undermines the Mungiu’s study. ... How could a sample of 597 individuals be representative for the structure of the aforementioned counties is not explained. Is it representative at the level of each county? (This is, in fact impossible.) Is it representative for the counties as a group, that is, for Transylvania as a whole?” Lazăr goes on to point out that the sampled population cannot be representative for both of the two ethnic groups; that the mailed questionnaire is not a very reliable method; that “rate of error” is not the right term and that, if the

author was referring instead to the error margin, she should have been referred to a +/- figure; that there is no information about the probability with which the conclusions extend to the entire population etc. “Unfortunately, the same treatment is applied to other notorious concepts in specialized literature, such as the pairs primordialism vs. instrumentalism, essentialism vs. relationism. In the latter cases, the conceptual confusions are compounded by the extremely negligent formulations. All this has a negative impact on what is really interesting about the book: abundant examples and the analyses of the answers provided by the interviewed subjects.”

Perhaps all this is ultimately unimportant or marginal to an observer of Transylvanian or minority issues, or even to a political scientist,<sup>293</sup> at least compared with the paramount issue of nationalism. Marius Lazăr actually goes beyond technical details, although the issue of professionalism cannot be pushed aside so quickly by insisting on the greater importance of the issue itself. He reaches for the essence of the intellectual endeavor. I shall quote again at length:

“It is obvious that, in spite of her efforts to reach objective conclusions, Transylvania remains for Alina Mungiu an exotic realm full of bizarre occurrences. The ‘subjectivity’ mentioned in the title is mostly characterized as ‘illusory’, ‘deformed’ or ‘inexact’ beliefs. Naturally, the analyst’s point of view is none of these things. Romanians and Hungarians often seem to be the victims of some preposterous misconception such as regionalism, which is in need of immediate rectification.” As for Mungiu’s exceedingly brutal conclusion (“Transylvania is marginal”), the Cluj sociologist comments as follows: “I am not persuaded this is really the problem. Nevertheless, it is impossible to miss the discrete apprehension that informs the *mise en scene* and the way it is fed by attempts to reform the current centralism. And yet the author cannot be suspected of bad faith beyond what has been said above. Her attempt to demolish the nationalist mindset and its attending self-delusions is certainly courageous. The unresolved issue remains that how to use the book’s conclusions. It is for this reason that we need to be careful about nuances. We never know whether they

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<sup>293</sup> Lazăr also notes that “I cannot help but point to a statement that is typical for the author’s strategy of persuasion: ‘in my book *Romanians after 1989* I was the first in Romania to use focus groups in a scientific investigation.’ No comment!”

will eventually neutralize nationalism or merely repackage it under a ‘scientific’ guise. That is, whether they can reach beyond nationalism or will merely turn it into – as there is reason to suspect – a nationalism with a facelift.”

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As noted above, this nationalism “with a facelift” has not yet been completely defused. There is still no group of professionals able and willing to do away with bad research. Could this happen in the near future? I think that it is possible given the currently available resources – a doctorate in multiculturalism (Levente Salat), several think tanks (The Center for Ethnocultural Studies in Cluj, the Helsinki Committee in Bucharest), and several specialized journals (*Altera*, the *Romanian Human Rights Review*).

Unfortunately, there’s little hope from the rest as long as a character like Ilie Bădescu is elected president of the Romanian sociologists’ professional association. Professional consciousness in the study of minorities and the broader discipline of nationalism studies remain a desideratum, especially at a time when Romanian society is weak and needs sources of legitimacy able to guide it on the long term. Fortunately, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi’s contributions were not part of the competition for political legitimacy when this competition really mattered. At the peak of the struggle between nationalists and anti-nationalists other studies managed to provide the necessary positive thinking.

#### 40. NATIONALISM AS AN INTELLECTUAL ABERRATION

Nationalist extremism is an intellectual aberration; extremism in general is a negation of the role of reason in human behavior. These pages have provided some examples as to the possible forms and causes of extremism as a disfigurement of attitude. In most of these cases extremist discourse was employed solely as an instrument of political will.

Yet in some cases which prove relevant to our discussion of nationalism the major stake seems to be not political domination but the discourse itself. Despite the fact that such discourse often emerges as an aberration, it (and the intellectuals who produce it) gets much more easily accepted on the market of ideas, perhaps because it does not belong to compromised groups (as many politicians in fact do). As such, its potential impact extends longer in time and has a larger symbolic relevance in the cultural life of the country. I have three separate examples to offer here: Horia-Roman Patapievici, Cristian Tudor Popescu, and Ovidiu Hurduzeu.

Horia-Roman Patapievici approached the minority issue rather late in his intellectual career. One can encounter substantial fragments on this question only in writings dating from the late 1990s. Given his widely recognized ability to energize his negative feelings, and somehow deeply and irreversibly affected by the “claims” of Hungarians, gays and other eccentrics, he immediately ideologized his affections. Patapievici’s earlier introspections had indeed prompted his enthusiasm about his membership in the dominant majority, to which he confessed in a widely discussed essay on the “American communism”. Soon introspection gave way to other-regarding sentiments, in this case aversion toward minorities.

Despite rich, luscious phraseology and arguments expanding over many intersecting paragraphs, H.-R. Patapievici is not difficult to quote. Most of his writings belong to the family of lexical invention, they are artificial dissertations that mimic rather than create ideas. This becomes rather obvious as soon as one starts looking for the bare kernel, just as an X-ray exposes the meager bones hidden under a mass of fleshy tissue. His essays (some of which were published in regional periodicals such as

Timișoara's *Orizont*) are variations on a given theme which is perfectly captured in the title of one landmark article on "The Problem of Identity".<sup>294</sup>

"Traditional man had one master, one religion, and one kin." The man of classical modernity is the result of the disappearance of masters and of the conventional nature of names, "of the privatization of belief and nationalization of loyalty." As for the so-called "man of recent modernity", whom Patapievici deplores, he has nothing "above him" and nothing "below". According to our author, we have awakened on an empty plot with "the transitory evanescence, nervous trepidation, the consciousness of isolation within our identity, the vocation of victimhood, the tensions of minority imbalance and the pride of singular claims – ... aggressive features ... doubled by the consciousness that the minority member *qua* minority member is always right against the members of the majority." This polyphonic discourse goes on for about a page and a half but is eventually revealed as nothing more than a prelude to a deluge of frustrations. The minority member is allegedly aggressive, has the vocation of discrimination, makes loud claims, among which that to eternal justice. In invoking polemics and nostalgia, adversity and tradition, function and substance, electedness and the fantasmatic, transcendence and putativeness,<sup>295</sup> in quoting Rene Char immediately after H.H. Stahl and William Petty alongside Max Weber,<sup>296</sup> Patapievici sets the stage for an immense cosmological battle. After which he promptly points the finger towards the real problem: "the inversion of natural majorities into invented minorities". Hence the emergence of "the optional minority, the dandyism of deliberate segregation, the profitable ethnicity"; hence the advent of the "minority member who uses membership as a political weapon, who knows that he can dominate the shapeless mass of arithmetical majorities by claiming to have been victimized and by diabolizing the latter."

Eventually, Patapievici's intellectual production turns into nothing more than aberrant lexical arrangements designed to support primitive accusations hollered at members of minority groups. To hide the naked truth from the audience – and probably

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<sup>294</sup> H.-R. Patapievici, "Problema identității, I, II, III", 22, Nos. 11-12-13, [year].

<sup>295</sup> A series of concepts designed to delight readers who seek obscure significations and over-worded lexical constructions.

<sup>296</sup> The eclectic nature of his quotations has always been a disconcerting characteristic of his essays.

from himself as well –, he builds a theoretical castle that is so baroque, so artificial, so remote from reality and sensible concepts, that it deserves the label of aberration.

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In terms of style, Cristian Tudor Popescu offers what is perhaps the opposite picture. While Patapievici works like a busy silkworm striving to cover the bare meaning of his concepts, Popescu excels at exposing his grisly notions by taking the most direct and transparent path to truth. In terms of their attitudes, however, the two are strikingly similar,<sup>297</sup> with Cristian Tudor Popescu crowning himself as the uncontested champion of discursive extremism. The smugness in the discourse of this literati, who are otherwise ill-equipped to speak about minorities, seems to spring forth from their sense of membership in the dominant majority (with a strong emphasis on “*dominant*”). It is not the number itself, but its associated privilege which is the foundation of the comfort they find in uttering patent absurdities. The privileged can afford to do it, seems to be the hidden message. They are entitled to have the last (and sometimes the only)<sup>298</sup> word. Although there is plenty to quote from in Popescu on the subject of national and other minorities, I shall limit myself here to his hateful lines about women. They intimate what is possibly the best illustration of a master’s pride (the master of a newspaper, of the public opinion, of a territory, of a country, eventually of epistemology and ontology). In a notorious response published in 22, philosopher Mihaela Miroiu commented on some of Popescu’s writings.<sup>299</sup>

“Women appear to be inhuman, childish beings: ‘Women are so different from the human male that they seem to belong to a different, unearthly species.’<sup>300</sup> ... Women do not think and they communicate according to animal codes: ‘no matter how

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<sup>297</sup> Which reminds me of an insight of Dorin Tudoran which I found rather surprising in 1997 because it referred to the close similarity between H.-R.P. and C.T.P.

<sup>298</sup> The obsession of a single, legitimate and dominant voice is explicit in the articles signed by Cristian Tudor Popescu (e.g., “How Many Histories Does Romanians Have?” published in *Adevărul*): “How is it possible to speak about alternative versions of Romanian history? Why do we have a Romanian Academy, where are the emeritus scholars and historians? What is more logical and more normal than having a National Commission made up of such people agree on a single textbook, a single book for the study of the History of Romania for all the students of this country?”

<sup>299</sup> Mihaela Miroiu is the founder of gender studies in Romania. Her article appeared in 22 on March 21, 1988.

<sup>300</sup> This and the following quotations are taken from Cristian Tudor Popescu, “Femeia nu e om”, *Adevărul literar și artistic*, March 10, 1998.

different in terms of their intellect, age and bodily shape, [women] all look the same, just as the members of a different species all look the same, just as cats and chicken look the same.’ Being incapable of articulate communication, women cannot shut up: ‘two women ... will immediately make use of the language and minimal set of concepts of a different species’ because their mind is ‘a collective mind, a mental carpet the knots of which are the various female individuals’. In fact, ‘women do not think. With few exceptions, as few and far in between as blue penguins, they mimic human thought’. ... What passes for thought is, beyond the white noise, an almost mechanical activity...: ‘women themselves have no clue about what is going on in their heads.’ ... And the undeniable proof of women’s epistemic helplessness is their inexistent role in history: ‘History is naturally understood as the history of men. Men are busy doing philosophy, science, history, politics. Men make inventions, decide, fail or succeed. Women only follow.’”

The brief essay titled “Women are not humans” was published and its author continued to be a member of respected cultural circles.<sup>301</sup> The events he hosts or to which he is invited are attended by pivotal personalities of Romanian culture (Ileana Mălăncioiu, Dorin Tudoran, Mircea Martin, Alexandru Paleologu and others). The fact that they sometimes join Cristian Tudor Popescu shows the extent of the resistance to multiculturalism in post-communist Romania.

Enmity to multiculturalism always ends up (and perhaps even starts by) having a political dimension. Popescu’s ample, overreaching theories weave together ideas of different magnitude with excessive, often apocalyptic overtones. The only thing that equals the energy of his prose is the arbitrariness of the concepts it circulates. Popescu’s tortuous interpretation of contemporary reality yields the image an ideological attack, orchestrated chiefly by Americans, against dear-old Romania: “the *ideology* of American expansionism is born. It is known by many names, some of which are similar without completely overlapping: political correctness, multiculturalism, globalization, postmodernism... Injected a nation-state with a dose of this ideology and its key ganglia

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<sup>301</sup> Vadim Tudor, Adrian Păunescu or Ion Coja cannot claim such respectability.



will be immediately attacked: its central authority, official language, history, church, traditions, culture, the set of spiritual values that define a nation.”<sup>302</sup>

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This story of globalization, multiculturalism and other dangers coming from the West receives more elaborate treatment by the third member of our group: Ovidiu Hurduzeu. Hurduzeu is the creation of cultural weekly *România literară*, which lent its pages on several occasions to this Romanian-born American university professor whose long, stylistically harmonious phrases would appear in a different cultural environment to be the product of adolescent phantasizing. But then again, the intellectual environment cultivated by the managers of many of our cultural periodicals is different. Rather more difficult to believe (or reconcile oneself with) is the notion that Hurduzeu is now a household name,<sup>303</sup> despite the fact that the product he is selling on the cultural market is old stuff: partly the naïve mystique of some invaluable Romanian identity, partly a caricature of Western thought and attitudes.

Unlike his two companions, Hurduzeu remains mostly composed. He is a gentle deconstructionist, acting as if he were merely engaged in some scholarly exercise. His take on the national issue is mostly implicit, the other side of the coin of his anti-Western, anti-global, and anti-multiculturalist stance: “The Romanian personality cult, the infatuation with value hierarchies, contempt for collectivism, egalitarianism and the hedonism prevalent today, and the nostalgia for the heroic times of yore, all belong to an aristocracy of the spirit that the Romanian people has never surrendered.”<sup>304</sup> No protochronistic aggressiveness here, just the style of a Rădulescu-Motru. But then the issue of multiculturalism comes up:

“Under the generous cover of the principles of ethnic diversity in an interdependent world, multiculturalism is hiding its thirst for power and its will to destroy all UNIQUE VALUES. ... Multiculturalists are far from having some deep understanding of the notion of culture and cultural diversity. In a multiculturalist world, value standards are completely arbitrary. ... Mediocrities become ‘universal values’

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<sup>302</sup> Cristian Tudor Popescu, “Legea lui Marx și România-abțibild”, *Adevărul*, December 1, 1999.

<sup>303</sup> The only authors who have condemned these mystifications are, to my knowledge, Adrian Marino, Elek Szokoly, and Andreea Deciu.

<sup>304</sup> Ovidiu Hurduzeu, “Individualismul românesc”, *România literară*, No. 51-3, 1999.

overnight simply because they belong to the minority group. On the contrary, real values are nothing unless they have a 'multicultural' base. Kafka, Borges or Cioran would have a hard time finding a publisher in the West today."<sup>305</sup> Or: "In order to achieve its goals, multiculturalism is now fighting to prevent and punish any form of conduct that would harm the interests of the 'minority' group. ... In effect, no Western intellectual may today speak against the multiculturalist dogmas without running the risk of being labeled a racist and an elitist and having to live with the consequences."

Naturally, not even Ovidiu Hurdzeu, an "ontological being" like all true-blue Romanians, can actually transcend the political struggles of everyday life. He therefore urges Romanian intellectuals to be "lucid and watchful of danger". For should they "once again fall victim to illusions and opportunism (this time coming from the West), they might find themselves in twenty years' time living in the 'autonomous', federalized regions of Wallachia, Transylvania, and Moldova; their children and grandchildren will study in 'multicultural' schools about 'Carpathic histories' and a chauvinistic and phallogocentric Eminescu."

The emphases placed in this final paragraph suggest that authors such as Hurdzeu may easily be capitalized on by the likes of Adrian Năstase and Adrian Păunescu. And yet Hurdzeu seems to me to be more useful as an anesthetic numbing the sense of justice and realism – both are indispensable to an understanding of ethno-political realities – of the cultural groups who cannot stomach the political aggressiveness of Năstase and Păunescu.

Although very different from Horia-Roman Patapievici and Cristian Tudor Popescu, Hurdzeu shares with the latter not only anti-minority theories, but also the strange stylistic constructions that are called upon to balance the trivial nature of their conceptions. The three are also similar in their impact. In spite of their obscurantism, reductionism and ultimately phantasmagorical constructs, they share some mysterious ability to magnetize followers and multipliers. They are currently at the intellectual center of one of the most insidious, definitely anti-American and perhaps even anti-Western, cultural movements in this country.

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<sup>305</sup> Fortunately, such empirical statements point to the bogus nature of this discourse.

#### **41. WHY HAS ROMANIA AVOIDED THE FATE OF YUGOSLAVIA?**

Dennis Sammut's American mission of July 13, 1994, which I have mentioned before, summarized in four separate appendices the ethnopolitical state of the country: (1) the major positive security steps taken by the main actors in Romania; (2) their acts which were perceived as hostile; (3) the concerns of the main actors; (4) the latter's aspirations. The list of actors which the American mission regarded was playing an important role in the interethnic relations in this country included the Romanian government of Romania, Hungarian government, the leaders of the Hungarian minority, and the nationalist groups.

In the report read at the 1994 round table, the American mission failed to mention civil society. The only addition operated to the list above concerned international organizations. But if the actors identified by Sammut had been the only major players, it is quite possible that Romania would have been today in a very different position. Yugoslavia provides a good example: while hardly a model for the region's other states, it continues to act as a reminder of what could happen in a country where an important minority and a majority led by irresponsible leaders are unable to build bridges and, ultimately, even to talk to each other. Since the similarities between the Milosevic and the Iliescu regimes are hardly superficial, the following question immediately recommends itself as worthwhile: why have the two countries followed such different paths?

There are 1.8 million Albanians in Yugoslavia, about the same number as that of Hungarians in Romania.<sup>306</sup> The former have enjoyed assistance from the Albanian government and possibly from several Arab states. The others can claim the support of Hungary and a great measure of international sympathy. Both communities are extremely close-knit, and both have preserved for many years a single representative group. Both have elaborated projects which included internal self-determination as a desideratum.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> This figure, somewhat different from that of the 1992 census, was provided by Hungarian demographers.

<sup>307</sup> The Kosovo Albanians are moving toward forms of external self-determination.

In both Romania and Yugoslavia the post-communist evolution has been dominated by a struggle for legitimacy of groups fighting to secure political power. As communism fell in Belgrade, Slobodan Milosevic, a member of the nomenklatura, dealt the nationalist card and won. After the Romanian December revolution of the same year, four former communist leaders with links to Moscow emerged as heads of the Council of the National Salvation Front. To spare themselves widespread contestation in the capital in an already very volatile situation, the group around president Iliescu launched an ample xenophobic and nationalist campaign. The part of the press that was still amenable to outside control was aptly manipulated. In Yugoslavia, Milosevic used the secret police for manipulation, blackmail and murder, and generally capitalized on anything that could salvage his nationalist strategy. The forces in Iliescu's occult army interested in saving members of the former Securitate started the bloody confrontations of Târgu Mureș.

But perhaps the most spectacular similarity between the Milosevic and the Iliescu regimes has been the use of paramilitary forces against those who opposed their political adventures. In the early nineties, the Romanian president called on thousands of miners in the Jiu Valley in order to solve political tensions. He did so not one, but five times: first, in January 1990, as a means of intimidating contesters; in February 1990 in order to crush demonstrators; on July 13-15, the miners were brought to Bucharest to terrorize the opposition into silence; in September 1991, the miners came to bring down a government whose reforms had started to look much too menacing.

These examples suggest that, just like Milosevic in Yugoslavia, Iliescu was unrestrained in the use of violence as a means to the preservation of political power. Both employed nationalist, anti-minority campaigns and it is possible that Iliescu might have pursued the open conflict with Hungarians to a bloody climax.

I am not claiming that such a conflict in Romania would have followed the pattern of the Yugoslavian war. Fundamental differences – such as Hungarian participation in political life (not the case with Kosovo Albanians), or the demographics of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania (where it amounts to a “mere” 35 percent of the total population) – as well as the absence of a tradition of arms use would have

proven decisive in the case of open conflict. My claim is merely that an escalation of violence would have been possible and it might have engulfed the entire nation thus destabilizing the whole region.

Unfortunately, similarities between Romania and Serbia also exist at the level of political opposition against the nationalist regime. In both countries opposition movements were weak, fragmented, confused, and ultimately second-rate. The advent of the Democratic Convention in Romania in 1992 as an opposition coalition was possible against the will of many party leaders.<sup>308</sup> It was only the terrible pressure exercised by mass movements such as the Civic Alliance that made such a political marriage possible. The 1996 electoral campaign, including the control of the electoral system, which enabled the opposition to win, depended to a decisive degree on the efforts of the same civil society organizations.<sup>309</sup> Furthermore, the opposition leaders have not shied from trying to win the other party's voters through nationalist statements. The CDR's infatuation with the ideal of the Greater Romania was no less firm than our neighbor's fascination with the Greater Serbia.

So what was so different in Romania and Serbia as to render their ethno-political destinies so different? The cultural and political differences outlined above certainly play an important part, but to my mind so does the role of civil society. The previous 40 chapters have been, among others, an attempt to justify this assessment.

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A recent article by Christopher de Bellaigue invites a different analogy: could not Romania have evolved toward a form of military authoritarianism similar to the one Turkey relies on to deal with the Kurdish issue?<sup>310</sup> The conflict between the Romanian authorities and the Hungarians could have led, *proportions gradées*, to a quasi-military institutional system utilized against the Hungarian minority in a way similar to that in which the Turks are utilizing the power of their own military against the Kurds.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Among them, Radu Câmpeanu and Sergiu Cunesco, whose attitudes I witnessed live as vice-president of the Civic Alliance.

<sup>309</sup> Most importantly, the observers of Pro Democratia and the Human Rights League.

<sup>310</sup> Christopher de Bellaigue, "Justice and the Kurds", *The New York Review*, June 24, 1999.

<sup>311</sup> Which is not to say that the situation of the Hungarians and that of the Kurds are similar in any other way.

One could argue that, up to a point, such a system has actually been in the making. The analogy is supported by the place occupied by the symbol of the “national unitary state” in the lives of Romanians and Turks. Between 1992 and 1996, Ion Iliescu and his party, together with the other participants in the government coalition (PUNR, PRM and PSM), enacted legislation incriminating “the dissemination of separatist propaganda” or “endangering the unity of the state”. The same happened in Turkey. The existence in Ankara of a State Security Court judging particular crimes outside the regular justice system has some (admittedly weak) correspondent in the Supreme Council for the Defense of the Country.<sup>312</sup> The importance of security services in the political designs of the centralized state lends itself to another analogy.

Without using the example of Turkey, Renate Weber and I looked at many of these issues in our 1995 study on “Nationalism, Stability and the Rule of Law” published in the first issue of *International Studies*. Fortunately, the dangers inherent in the prevalence of quasi-military institutions similar to those of Turkey have been overcome.<sup>313</sup> But they remain a potentiality which may still actualize itself.

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<sup>312</sup> The correspondence is weak and applies only in limited sense that military institutions enjoy a certain priority over civil democratic institutions.

<sup>313</sup> This is not to say that such institutions have disappeared from Romanian life. An amendment to the SRI Law was announced in 2001: it would enable the institution to intervene in cases involving pro-federalist attitudes.

## 42. THE 2000 ELECTIONS: CONSOCIATIONISM AND THE END OF THE CIVIC ERA

We have seen that between 1996 and 2000 the coalition bringing together the CDR, the USD and the UDMR found itself under relentless nationalist pressures. The latter were intensified on the eve of negotiations between the coalition members and continued until immediately before the elections. Nationalist pressures explain, to a certain extent, the government's indecisiveness and errors, as well as its difficulties in meeting the terms agreed on by the coalition partners in the fall of 1996. They also partly explain why individual and organizational actors in the civil society maintained a certain influence in Romanian ethnopolitical life until as late as the end of the nineties. The tensions sparked by the inauguration of the Hungarian consulate in Cluj, by bilingual plates, mother tongue education, the scandal in Odorheiu Secuiesc, the Csango question, the Hungarian university, alternative manuals, devolution, federalization and countless other issues could not be dealt with exclusively at political level. Somewhat paradoxically, this was the case despite the fact that Hungarian and Romanian leaders were government partners.

The Helsinki Committee, in particular, cooperated well with the Department for the Protection of National Minorities. During Gyorgy Tokay's leadership of the Department, the two organizations maintained a permanent dialogue on the evolution of the "Romanian-Hungarian reconciliation project".<sup>314</sup> Tokay seemed to me to be one of the most flexible players in Romanian politics at the time, and perhaps the best negotiator among the Hungarian leaders I have ever met.

The cooperation with Peter Eckstein-Kovacs as head of the DPNM had several chief objectives to achieve. One of the most important successes was the introduction of

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<sup>314</sup> Gyorgy Tokay proposed that I should be Romania's independent "expert" in the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe. The final decision belonged to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then headed by Andrei Pleșu. The MFA leadership appointed Iulia Motoc in a decision that surprised even the high-level officials in Strasbourg. They apparently regarded this appointment as one more proof of the cronyism pervasive in Bucharest: Iulia Motoc was the wife of Mihnea Motoc, director in the Romanian MFA. Mihnea Motoc himself was well-known to the Council of Europe because of his participation in the early 1990s, Romania's most conservative period on national minorities issues, in the debates on Recommendation 1201 and the Framework Convention (see the CAHMIN working reports).

a legal norm covering the great empty space left in Romanian law by discrimination.<sup>315</sup> Ordinance no. 137 concerning the elimination of all forms of discrimination was adopted in the summer of 2000, during the period of parliamentary vacation. I still find it hard to believe that it was passed as the opposition of those whom it targeted (politicians and the press) was visceral. It took a tenacious DPNM<sup>316</sup>, outside support from the Center for Legal Resources and the Open Society Foundation, the salutary intervention of Eberhard-Wolfgang Wittstock<sup>317</sup> before the House's Human Rights, Religious Cults and National Minorities Commission, as well as the capacity to bring all these actors together to get this antidiscrimination camel through the ear of the legislative needle.

By the end of the 1996-2000 legislature the boundaries had begun to thicken between the political class and the civil society which had immersed itself prior to 1996 in the battle for political power. The parties came to dominate completely the arena of public interest. The same seems to be true with respect to the relations between Romanians and Hungarians. At the end of the 1990s only a few civic initiatives were still able to play an important ethno-political role. The only groups that managed to prod high-ranking party officials to the negotiation table and remind them of their responsibility toward minorities were Pro Democratia and, later on, the Romanian branch of the Project for Ethnic Relations. Pro Democrația succeeded in obtaining signatures from the leaders of the most important political parties on a protocol committing the latter to a positive and rational campaign and the avoidance of nationalist and extremist discourse in the coming local and general elections of 2000.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> The existing provisions – Art. 317 of the Criminal Law concerning nationalist-chauvinistic propaganda, incitement to racial or national hatred, and Art. 247 concerning the abuse of office by discriminating on the basis of nationality, race, sex, or religion – were hardly sufficient to cover the various forms of discrimination. Nevertheless, despite the many cases brought before the General Attorney only in a single one did a court issue a sentence based on Art. 317 (and that was as late as October 1999).

<sup>316</sup> The technical mind inside the DPNM behind the promotion of Ordinance 137/2000 was Attila Markó. He closely monitored the process from the drafting stage to its selling to the Parliament. His consistency proved crucial, especially in exploiting to a maximum the window of opportunity which led to the adoption of the first legal norm fighting discrimination in Central and Eastern Europe.

<sup>317</sup> Mr. Wittstock was then vice-president of the Romanian German Democratic Forum and the Parliament representative of the German community.

<sup>318</sup> The protocol was respected only during the first part of the campaign.



Also in 2000 Project on Ethnic Relations secured from the representatives of the most important parties (PNTCD, PDSR, PNL, PD, ApR, UDMR) the promise of an extremism-free electoral campaign (“The Poiana Braşov Statement”).<sup>319</sup> The following year the PER brought together the main political forces in a Predeal seminar on Romania’s evolution toward ethnic accommodation. The participants included Octavian Ştireanu, Eugen Mihăescu, and Gheorghe Răducanu representing the Romanian Presidency; Valer Dorneanu, Viorel Hrebenciuc, Cosmin Guşe, Răzvan Ionescu, and Mădălin Voicu from the PDSR; Valeriu Stoica and Mona Muscă from the PNL; Constantin Dudu Ionescu and Călin Cătălin Chiriţă from the PNȚCD; Nicolae Păun from the Roma Party; and Bela Marko, Csaba Takacs, Laszlo Borbely, Janos Demeter, Peter Eckstein-Kovack, Denes Seres, Zsuzsa Bereschi and Istvan Bartunek from the UDMR.<sup>320</sup>

The two organizations mentioned above were headed by individuals whose position made them relevant to the needs of political leaders. Both Cristian Pârvulescu and Dan Pavel are political scientists with a significant TV and newspaper audience. Their power of persuasion over the political parties and their leaders owed a great deal to this (non-institutional) influence in the media and the professional environment.<sup>321</sup> In the case of the Project on Ethnic Relations, the associations’ relations within the US establishment also mattered. Still, we ought not to forget that these two organizations were among the very few exceptions.

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The coming elections were regarded as a reason for serious concerns about Romanian-Hungarian relations. Although no one quite foresaw the fall’s major

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<sup>319</sup> The Statement was signed by Ioan Mureşan, Nicolae Ionesc-Galbeni, Gabriel Țepelea, Mihai Gheorghiu (PNȚCD), Adrian Năstase, Ioan Mircea Paşcu, Liviu Maior (PDSR), Valeriu Stoica, Mona Muscă (PNL), Teodor Meleşcanu, Dan Mihalache (ApR), Bela Marko, Peter Eckstein-Kovacs, Attila Verestoy, Gyuorgy Frunda, Laszlo Borbely, Lazar Madaras (UDMR). See Dan Pavel, “The 2000 Elections in Romania: Interethnic Relations and European Integration”, Working Paper, PER, Princeton, New Jersey, 2000.

<sup>320</sup> Dan Pavel, “Political Will: Romania’s Path to Ethnic Accommodation”, Working Paper, PER, Princeton, New Jersey, 2001.

<sup>321</sup> The two organizations also promoted together a program for training Roma in the 2000 elections.

catastrophe<sup>322</sup> (not even the beneficiaries), PDSR's and PRM's lead as reflected by the polls appeared irreversible.

We all worried about the elections. On this background, the PDSR launched its electoral program in early November 2000. It provided several surprises, especially perhaps in the chapter on national minorities. By and large the document had a lot of positive things to say: "The protection of national minorities will be achieved by ensuring opportunities for the free manifestation of all minorities and safeguarding respect for human rights as mandated by Romania's commitment to European and Euro-Atlantic integration." We had seen this kind of rhetoric before so we expected more demagoguery in what followed. But this time around the PDSR delved into specifics such as "the continuation and development of institutional and legislative initiatives assumed over the past decade". Its reference to "institutional and legislative developments" was an implicit reference to pending legislation such as the law on local administration.

"The PDSR will promote the development of cultural diversity for the benefit of the entire society so as to exclude the advent of extremist groups promoting intolerance and interethnic hatred." Ethno-cultural diversity was mentioned as a value and was contrasted to extremist activities – this was definitely not a run-of-the-mill statement.

Such attitudes were underscored by a further and rather surprising point: "The PDSR believes minorities are a major resource in every country. Good resource management will both serve the development of the minorities' identity and guarantee intercultural cooperation. Such a model may be defined as civic-multicultural."

The notion of a "civic-multicultural" model was something completely new in the conceptions advanced by Romanian political groups. The governing program defined the concept in terms of ensuring a community framework favorable to the development of each cultural model, the transfer of minority cultural values to the majority, the management of diversity and of the occasional tensions and distortions,

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<sup>322</sup> My use of the term catastrophe should not be understood as an expression of a particular political sympathy. The disaster was "objective" in that Vadim Tudor's PRM became the second party in the country while the parties competing with the PDSR were completely marginalized (and the PNȚCD failed even to enter the Parliament).

and the prevention of conflicts. In short, the concept of “multiculturality” was used appropriately.

It is not clear to what extent the PDSR was fully aware of the radical nature of its doctrinal leap forward. But this conception constituted one of the chief obligations undertaken by a party that was soon to become (as was almost certain in November 2000) the future government.

The PDSR also considered the extension of the existing legislative framework on minority representation in the decision-making and administrative structures and the minorities’ association in the government. It promised Hungarians to enhance existing provisions on education, to integrate Hungarian cultural programs in radio and TV programs, and to ensure conditions for the use of the mother tongue in public activities.

By publishing the program, the PDSR introduced into its political discourse a new framework for debates. It opened up the party to negotiations with a party representing a national minority. The chapters of the PDSR program concerning the minorities were translated into Hungarian and sent to the Transylvanian branches.

A possible cooperation between the PDSR and the UDMR had been rumored long before the elections. There were many among the UDMR leadership ready to join forces with the Party of Social Democracy in a future government. Some would have liked Hungarians to be given additional details on the benefits of this status. The monthly *Provincia* in Cluj provided ample space for a debate on the UDMR’s participation in a future government.

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The promises of the electoral program were not broken during the subsequent activities of the Năstase government.<sup>323</sup> In early 2001, Adrian Năstase, the prime vice-

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<sup>323</sup> One exception is the turning of the Department for the Protection of National Minorities into a Department for Interethnic Relations headed by a state secretary within the Ministry of Public Information. On this point, the institutional system was downgraded rather than enhanced, as it had been initially promised. The APADOR-CH stated on December 19, 2000 the following: “APADOR-CH calls on the PDSR leadership to surrender a decision that would diminish the ‘participation rights’ already secured by the national minorities in Romania. This decision would represent a negative signal with respect to the way in which the new political forces intend tackle the national minorities issue. APADOR-CH urges that the existing status of the head of this department, that of Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister and member of the government, be preserved. An announcement in this respect from the PDSR would alleviate the concerns of the national minorities and of those who promote their protection.”

president (and later president) of the party, and Bela Marko, the UDMR president, signed a common protocol. Its chief points included the following: finalizing the law on local administration with a special reference to “provisions concerning the use of mother tongue where minorities make up at least 20 percent of the population”; gradual demilitarization of several community services by 2002 at the latest; the creation of an organizational and professional framework to ensure adequate funding for the Hungarian section of Babeş-Bolyai University; expanding Hungarian-language education by making it available in other higher education institutions; interconnecting Hungarian cultural shows with and integrating them into radio and TV programs, among others by establishing new channels and expanding air time; ensuring fair representation in the governing process and in socio-professional structures by enforcing equality of opportunity. The PDSR and the UDMR committed themselves to review the fulfillment of the obligations under the protocol at least on a quarterly basis.

In mid-February 2001 president Marko Bela stated that: “We have to admit that, right now, the most devoted and committed supporter of the protocol signed with the UDMR and of the enforcement thereof is the prime minister himself. This attitude may be nothing more than a political strategy, but I believe that PDSR’s leadership, including Ion Iliescu, have understood that this is the right position on the Hungarian issue and not the one before 1996.”<sup>324</sup> The statement was motivated by the reluctance of the PDSR leadership to put up with the dissident attitudes of nationalist parliamentarians Adrian Păunescu and George Pruteanu, who condemned the 20 percentage point provided for in the law on local administration as well as other provisions in protocol.

In its turn, the UDMR turned out to be a very loyal parliamentary supporter of the PDSR (and later of PDSR’s offspring PSD). So loyal, in fact, that Marko Bela’s party agreed to vote the state and service secret bill, a document which made an outright mockery of Romanian democracy.<sup>325</sup> The budget battle was won by the PDSR with Hungarians unflinching support. The leaders of the governing party and the Hungarian

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<sup>324</sup> *Cotidianul*, February 16, 2001.

<sup>325</sup> The bill was adopted but only after Adrian Năstase excused himself for its enactment did the Constitutional Court rule it to be unconstitutional.

political association congratulated each other several times for their ability to stick to the projects and conduct agreed on in the protocol.

Naturally, the PDSR's politics on minority issues was not 100 percent consistent. The doggedness of the old PDSR guard which Marko Bela alluded to in the statement quoted above meant that the pressures on interethnic relations were still serious. But one has to emphasize the remarkable fact that the political group which derived a large part of its electoral support from nationalist citizens and groups, though perhaps not the extremists as such, was now represented by leaders who negotiated its governing plans with the UDMR. In a way, the Alliance was indeed inseparable from the governing process. To the Hungarians, it was important not so much to take part in everyday decisions but rather to have a say on minority questions.

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So it is that by the summer 2001 the UDMR could boast with the status of a partner which had enjoyed a five-year old, unbroken participation in the governmentally-mediated administration of minority interests.<sup>326</sup> Little by little, the condition of the Hungarian minority in Romania began to look like a different animal. In conceptual terms, the story of consociationism in Romanian political life had begun.

Ironically, Alina Mungiu had mentioned consociationism in her book *Transilvania subiectivă*. Yet she had used the term in inappropriately referring to the UDMR's participation in the government. The notion was later correctly appropriated by Gusztav Molnar,<sup>327</sup> whose analysis opened the way for more thoroughgoing and perhaps more technical studies, such as those authored by Alpar Zoltan Szasz and Zoltan Kantor in the monthly *Provincia*.<sup>328</sup> As a result, we have today a breakdown of the main arguments and assumptions concerning the possibility of Romanian-Hungarian consociationism – a system in which the Romanian majority will negotiate with the

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<sup>326</sup> As before, some of the provisions it supported went beyond the minority issue and affected the entire population (e.g., the demilitarization of some community services).

<sup>327</sup> Molnar prefers the term "consociative". See his "Șansele democrației consociative în Transilvania", *Provincia*, vol. 6, 2000. Consociationism was introduced by Arend Lijphart in his *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977).

<sup>328</sup> Szasz Alpar Zoltan, "Modele ale democrației în România – șanse și realități", *Provincia*, vol. 3, 2001, p. 4; Kantor Zoltan, "Consocierea în Ardeal", *Provincia*, vol. 4, 2001, p. 7.

Hungarian minority solutions for minority issues according to a consensual plan rather than by relying on the mechanism of voting.

According to Molnar, a consociationist system should be envisaged for Transylvania, the region inhabited by the vast majority of the Hungarians in the country. This territory should become, politically as well, the “common” space of the Hungarians and Romanians inhabiting it (of Transylvanians) and should preserve its civilizational values by means of its devolution within the Romanian state.<sup>329</sup> Molnar’s analysis looks, in effect, like his older theory repackaged. The author further argues that “[t]his harmony-seeking democracy by consensus will solve conflicts through the cooperation of various elites rather than through majority-decision.”

The problem with this solution advanced by Molnar is, as I have argued in a reply published in the same monthly,<sup>330</sup> that the devolution of Transylvania seems to be, at least within the politically-relevant timeframe, completely illusory. If there is a consociationist program, it should focus on the Hungarian community in Romania and the Romanian population rather than on the community of Transylvanian Hungarians and the Transylvanian Romanians. The point here is that a question of principle makes sense if it is also practical. But as soon as the scale of the community changes, the logic of the possible changes as well. Negotiations between communities whose numbers are 1-to-3<sup>331</sup> look different than negotiations between communities whose numbers are 7-to-100.<sup>332</sup> It is one thing to solve the issues of a population of 7.7 million and a completely different thing to manage a population of 23 million.<sup>333</sup> While it would be possible to imagine Romanians in Transylvania being represented on community issues

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<sup>329</sup> Molnar Gusztav, “Problema transilvană”, în Andreescu & Molnar, eds., *Problema transilvană*, pp. 12-40.

<sup>330</sup> Gabriel Andreescu, “Alegerile locale și definirea unui alt joc politic”, *Provincia*, vol. 3, 2000.

<sup>331</sup> According to the 1992 census there are 1,603,923 Hungarians and 5,684,142 Romanians in Transylvania (Arpad E. Varga, “Îmbă maternă, naționalitate, confesiune. Date statistice privind Transilvania în perioada 1880-1992”, în *Fizionomia etnică și confesională a regiunii carpato-balcanice și a Transilvaniei*, Odorheiu Secuiesc, 1996, pp. 83-133).

<sup>332</sup> However, at ethnocultural level the issue remains one of principle, irrespective of the scale.

<sup>333</sup> Hence the functional consociationism in smaller states such as Holland, Belgium or Switzerland is less surprising.