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Cultural Heritage in Hungary



Civil Society, and the DAHR in the Government
of Romania



Austrian Perception of Hungarian History

2002

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HISTORY

CONSTANTIN IORDACHI

Citizenship and National Identity in Romania: A Historical Overview

Recently, there has been renewed scholarly interest in the concept of citizenship, in an interdisciplinary effort of political scientists and historians, anthropologists and sociologists.¹ Challenged by socio-political developments in the post-Communist and post-Maastricht era, numerous scholars have re-examined established definitions of citizenship and their relationship with issues of identity, civil society and the foundations of democracy. However, as Bryan Turner has rightfully pointed out, the growing body of scholarly works on citizenship has concentrated overwhelmingly on theoretical aspects, so that the history of the institution of citizenship in western and Eastern Europe has still remained largely under-researched.²

This article is designed as a first historical overview of Romanian citizenship legislation from 1866 up to the present, a subject that has received so far a limited scholarly attention.³ It focuses on the historical roots of the institu-

1 From the vast scholarly production on citizenship in the last decade, I can mention selectively the works of: Will Kymlicka: *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. New York, 1989; Michael Mann: "Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship". *Sociology*, 1988, No. 2, 339–354; Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship. Studies on Our Changing Social Order*. New Brunswick and London, 1996. Second, enlarged edition); Rogers W. Brubaker: *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, 1992; and Charles Tilly (ed.): *Citizenship, Identity and Social History*. Cambridge, 1996. See also the collection of articles by B. S. Turner and Peter Hamilton (eds.): *Citizenship. Critical Concepts*. London, 1994, 2 Vols.; and R. Beiner (ed.): *Theorizing Citizenship*. New York, 1995.

2 B. S. Turner: "Outline of a Theory of Citizenship". *Sociology*, 1990, No. 2, 189–217.

3 The present article builds on my dissertation work on the history of citizenship and civil society in Romania. My research has resulted to date in several publications on various

tion of citizenship in Romania, on the main features of Romanian citizenship legislation, and on the relationship between citizenship and issues of state formation, construction of national identity, and the structuring of the private and public spheres. Special attention is devoted to social, ethnic, religious and gender groups excluded from Romanian citizenship, to their strategies of emancipation and their relation with the dominant national ideology.

A comprehensive study of citizenship poses great theoretical and methodological challenges. The concept of citizen can be used to refer to a wide range of issues, such as a collection of rights and duties, membership in a national community, a philosophical idea, or a moral ideal. Each of these definitions of citizenship encompasses a number of rival concepts, none of which can be accepted as its true meaning. Citizenship can be consequently regarded as an “essentially contested concept,” whose meaning is never settled but changes as a function of wider socio-political phenomena in society.⁴ In coping with this problem, this article employs Charles Tilly’s relational, cultural, historical and contingent definition of citizenship. In Tilly’s view, citizenship is concomitantly (1) *a category* which designates “a set of actors – citizens – distinguished by their shared privileged position vis-à-vis some particular state”; (2) *a tie*, which designates “an enforceable mutual relation between an actor and state agents”; (3) *a role* which includes “all of an actor’s relations to others that depend on the actor’s relation to a particular state”; and (4) *an identity* which refers “to the experience and public representation of category, tie or role.”⁵ This instrumental definition of citizenship regards the state as a set of specialized and even divergent agencies, and not as a unitary and indivisible actor; and traces the impact of citizenship on various social categories, roles and identities. The definition thus accounts for a multitude of

aspects of the making of Romanian citizenship in the 19th and the 20th centuries. See Constantin Iordachi: *Citizenship, Nation and State-Building: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea in Romania, 1878–1913*. Carl Back Papers in Russian and East European Studies, No. 1607. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002; “A nemzet újrajazolt határai: A magyar ‘státustörvény’ és Románia politikája a kettős állampolgárságra vonatkozóan a Moldovai köztársaságban”. In Zoltán Kántor (ed.): *A státustörvény: előzmények és következmények*. Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2002, 88–112; and “The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship: The Emancipation of ‘Non-Citizens’ in Romania, 1866–1918”. *European Review of History*, 8 (August 2001) 2, 157–186.

4 W. B. Gallie: “Essentially Contested Concepts”. In Max Black (ed.): *The Importance of Language*. New Jersey, 1962, 121–46.

5 Charles Tilly: “Citizenship, Identity and Social History”. In Tilly (ed.): *Citizenship, Identity and Social History*, 8.

actors, relations and domains pertaining to citizenship, and redirects the research focus from the formal-legal aspect of citizenship to issues of “state practices and state citizen interactions.”⁶ Consequently, instead of a universal and pre-given status, citizenship is viewed as a continuum series of transactions, “a set of mutual, contested claims between agents of states and members of socially-constructed categories: gender, races, nationality and other.”⁷ On this basis, one can distinguish between multiple and hierarchical forms of citizenship, and the function of actors’ specific social position and kind of tie to the state they are involved in.

I. CITIZENSHIP AND NATION AND STATE BUILDING IN ROMANIA, 1866–1918

After a century of unprecedented socio-political isolation, in the first half of the nineteenth century the Principalities of Moldova and Wallachia experienced a period of intense socio-political development. A central component of the process of “Westernisation” was the introduction of modern citizenship legislation. This entailed the consolidation of the countries’ internal autonomy in relation to the Ottoman Empire, the development and further centralisation of the administration, and the formal legal delimitation between citizens and foreigners. In a first stage, the first modern civil codes in the Principalities, the *Legiuirea Caragea* in Wallachia and the *Codul Calimach* in Moldova, attempted to homogenise the body of subjects. Later, *The Organic Regulations* (1831), the first constitution of the Principalities (adopted under Russian military occupation), established the foundations of modern citizenship legislation. The Regulations instituted a genuine legal Commonwealth between Moldova and Wallachia, the inhabitants of the two principalities enjoying a quasi-common citizenship. In addition, they introduced a strict control of naturalisation, and excluded Jewish communities from political rights and certain civil rights. In addition, the Organic Regulation defined two types of naturalisation: a “narrow naturalisation” (*naturalizarea mică*) which granted residence rights, transforming all permanent inhabitants of the country into virtual Romanian subjects; and a “broad naturalisation” (*naturalizarea mare*) which conferred full political rights. Finally, the establishment of the Romanian nation-state in 1859 through the union between Moldova and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 9.

Wallachia brought significant changes to the citizenship doctrine, as defined by the 1865 Romanian Civic Code and the 1866 Constitution of Romania. Modelled on the 1804 French Civil Code and, respectively, on the 1831 Constitution of Belgium, citizenship legislation in Romania converged for the first time in a single legal status several distinct aspects of citizenship, namely citizenship as state membership, citizenship as political participation, and citizenship as civil equality. The following section concentrates on these major components of citizenship legislation in Romania.

I. 1 Citizenship as State-Membership in the Romanian Citizenship Doctrine

In regard to citizenship as state-membership, the Romanian citizenship doctrine was balanced initially between a political and an ethno-cultural definition of nationhood. Thus, the programme of the 1848 revolution in Wallachia followed the French liberal political model, based on the “dominance of political citizenship over nationality.”⁸ It aimed at establishing a modern parliamentary republic, based on the sovereignty of the people, equality before the law, and civil rights and liberties. In addition, the programme also stipulated the political emancipation of Jews, and the liberation of Gypsies from enslavement. This predominantly political concept of citizenship was later challenged by a *risorgimento* type of nationalism, and by an organicist reaction to modernisation. In the long term, this generated an ethno-cultural understanding of nationhood that was later consecrated by Romanian citizenship legislation. Thus, the 1865 Romanian Civil Code, adopted under the rule of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859–66), automatically ascribed Romanian citizenship to a child born from the marriage of a Romanian man, and to a foreign woman married to a Romanian man, upon request and providing that she renounced her previous citizenship.⁹ The principle of *jus sanguinis* thus served as the basis of ascribing Romanian citizenship. The rule of *jus soli* had no bearing on ascribing Romanian citizenship at birth. The only exception admitted was the case of abandoned newly born babies, who, since found on Romanian territory, were assumed to have Romanian parents and ascribed Romanian citizenship. However, in emulating the assimilationist French citizenship model, the Romanian Civil Code em-

⁸ Rogers W. Brubaker: *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, 49.

⁹ Constantin Hamangiu: *Codul Civil Adnotat*. Bucureşti, 1899, Vol. I., art. 6–20, 60–82.

ployed the *jus soli* principle as a criterion of naturalisation of Christian residents born in the country, at the time of their adulthood (article 8). This opportunity was not open to non-Christian inhabitants, who were considered foreigners and could naturalise only in certain conditions and following a residence period of ten years (article 16).

Adopted in 1866, a short time after the forced abdication of Prince Cuza, the Constitution of Romania amended the citizenship policy put forward by the Civil Code in several aspects. First, the Constitution instituted an active ethnic policy by granting ethnic Romanians from neighbouring countries (*români de origină*) instant access to Romanian citizenship without being subject to a naturalisation process. Article 9 read that “an [ethnic] Romanian from any state, regardless of his place of birth, upon renouncing his foreign subjection, can immediately acquire political rights, through a vote of the Parliament.”¹⁰ This later stipulation expressed the incomplete ethnic boundaries of the Romanian nation-state and legitimised an irredentist policy directed towards absorbing Romanians from Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Balkans. Second, and most importantly, the Constitution abrogated article 16 of the Civil Code, denying the access of non-Christian foreigners to Romanian citizenship: “Only foreigners of Christian rite can acquire naturalisation” (Art. 7).

This significant change in Romanian citizenship legislation had important practical consequences. The absence of the principle of *jus solis* in ascribing Romanian citizenship at birth, coupled with the exclusion of Jews from naturalisation, resulted in a significant numerical difference between the overall resident population of the country and the more limited category of citizens: in 1876, out of a total population of 4,800,000, there were circa 700,000 non-citizen residents, representing 14% of the inhabitants.¹¹ This difference was further aggravated toward the end of the century, when Romania became an immigration country: according to unofficial estimates, at that time the alien resident population of the country grew on average by approximately 20,000 immigrants a year, or 4–5 persons for every 1,000 inhabi-

10 “Constituția din 1866”. In I. Muraru et. al. (eds.): *Constituțiile Române*. București, 1995, 32. All translations from the original text are mine.

11 Data on the total Romanian population are usually arbitrary since general demographic surveys were conducted only in 1859–60 and 1899. For estimates on non-citizen residents, I used M. G. Obedenaru, in *La Roumanie économique d'après les données les plus récentes*. Paris, 1876, 402.; and I. Ghica: “Industria”. In *Insemnări economice*, Vol. I, București, 1937.

ants.¹² As Roger Brubaker suggested in his authoritative comparative analysis of citizenship and immigration in France and Germany, this situation is generally caused by the political utilisation of citizenship as an instrument of “domestic closure” for satisfying material interests.¹³ This closure was carried out by the Romanian citizenship legislation in two major ways. First, the 1866 Constitution was based on the commonly accepted principle that excludes foreigners from the exercise of political rights (Art. 6).¹⁴ Moreover, in Romania political rights accounted for an extensive range of privileges, such as rights to land tenure and access to positions in the state bureaucratic apparatus (Art. 10). Second, the Romanian political elite went beyond this “routine” closure of political rights, and, through specific state policies, established a direct relationship between citizenship and the exercise of certain civil rights and economic activities. In doing so, the state used its quality of being concomitantly a membership *and* territorial organisation: while participation in the political community was reserved for ethnic Romanians, the state nevertheless exercised territorial authority over all its resident population.

The laws concerning military draft are a relevant example. Successive conscription laws from 1876 and 1882 stipulated the obligation for military draft of all foreigners in the Romanian territory “who are not subjects of a foreign country”, and, respectively, of all “inhabitants of the country”. Nonetheless, conscription of non-citizen residents had no bearing on their legal status, except for cases of participation in major military conflicts. In 1879, 883 Jewish soldiers were granted citizenship for fighting in the Romanian army in the War of Independence (1877–78). However, Jewish soldiers participating in Romania’s military campaign in Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War (1913) had to wait until 1918 to be granted citizenship.¹⁵ Furthermore, the possibilities of upward social mobility provided by the army were specifically denied to non-citizen soldiers: Laws of 1875 and 1911 forbade their accession to the rank of officer.¹⁶

12 See M. G. Obedenaru: *La Roumanie économique*. 400–401.

13 Brubaker: *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 32.

14 Far from being a specificity of the Romanian legislation, the exclusion of non-citizens from political rights is in fact the most salient universal characteristic of nation-state citizenship. As Brubaker pointed out, this is an underlying feature of ‘the routine, ordinary, taken-for-granted nationalism.’ *Ibid.*, 28.

15 This collective naturalisation was admitted on the basis of a special 1879 amendment to the Constitution: See Art. 7/II/c.

16 see Carol Iancu: *Emanciparea Evreilor din România (1913–1919)*. București, 1998, 51.

I. 2 *The Practice of Being a Citizen: Rights and Duties of Citizenship*

Romanian citizenship legislation attached a significant number of rights and duties to citizenship status. First and foremost, in regard to political participation, the 1866 Constitution established a constitutional monarchy, with a parliamentary political regime. It provided for the separation of powers between the bi-cameral Parliament and the prince as the legislative power (Art. 33 and 113); the government and the prince as the executive power (Art. 35); and an independent system of courts as the judicial power (Art. 36 and 104). The Constitution also guaranteed civic rights and liberties, such as sovereignty of the people, representative government, freedom of the press, freedom of association and of conscience, and the right to state-sponsored education, etc., while private property was declared sacred and inviolable (see Articles 5, 21, 23, 24, 26, and 31).

In spite of its liberal ideological commitments, in practice the system of parliamentary representation in Romania was based on an underlying electoral inequality. The Constitution granted political participation only to propertied and educated adult males. In addition, the electorate for the Chamber of Deputies – the lower house of Parliament – was divided into four colleges which assured the dominant representation of great and middle landowners (Colleges I and II, representing 1.5% of the total voters, but electing 41% of the deputies), and of the urban middle class and professional categories (College III, representing 3.5% of the voters, but electing 38% of the deputies). At the same time, the remaining 95% of the electorate were confined to a single college (IV), which elected only 21% of the deputies; within it, the illiterate voters without a standard level of income (91% of the electorate) elected only an electoral representative for every 50 voters, who afterward exercised a direct vote in a second ballot.¹⁷ The electorate for the Senate was even more limited, consisting of only 2% of the voting body, solely great landowners and high professional categories.

In regard to political participation, the 1866 Constitution of Romania thus inherited what Jürgen Habermas (1989) has called the *ambivalence* of bourgeois-democratic ideology. In theory, the constitution was formally com-

¹⁷ I am relying on data provided by Philip G. Eidelberg in *The Great Rumanian Peasant Revolt of 1907. Origins of a Modern Jacquerie*. Leiden, 1974, 15–16. For additional data, see also *Istoria parlamentului și a vieții parlamentare din România pînă la 1918*. București, 1983, 252–255.

mitted to a universalistic definition of citizenship, open to everybody. In practice, instead of a unified and universal-equalitarian citizenship status, the constitution implemented a hierarchical and multi-layered citizenship. According to the system of parliamentary representation, there was a virtual distinction between active and passive political participation: great landowners disposed of two votes (one for the Senate and other for the Chamber of Deputies), while peasants disposed of one indirect vote. Furthermore, at the margins of society there were the excluded others: in the period 1866–1919, women, non-Christian inhabitants (mainly Jews), and starting with 1878, the inhabitants of the newly-annexed Ottoman province of Dobrogea were denied significant civic and political rights. The following section devotes attention to the legal status of the social, ethno-religious, and gender categories excluded from Romanian citizenship, to their strategies of emancipation, and to their relationship with the dominant national ideology.

I. 3 The Right of Belonging: The Emancipation of non-Citizens in Romania, 1866–1919

Jews were the first major ethno-religious category excluded from Romanian citizenship. Initially, Romanian legislation in the eighteenth century favoured the socio-political integration of Jews born in the country, denying it only to Jews recently immigrated. In 1831, however, *The Organic Regulations* denied Jews rights to political participation.¹⁸ Later, the modernisation of Romanian legislation during 1859–1866 following the French example favoured the political emancipation of Jews. As previously shown, the 1864 Romanian Civil Code (Articles 8, 9 and 16), as well as an early draft of the 1866 Constitution (Article 7) stipulated the full political emancipation of native Jews. However, due to an effective lobby of Moldovan boyars, coupled with anti-Semitic riots in Bucharest during the constitutional debates in early 1866, the final text of Article 7 of the Constitution excluded non-Christians from naturalisation. Furthermore, in September 1866, a decision of the Romanian government blurred yet again the distinction between native and for-

¹⁸ According to Joseph Berkowitz, in *La question des Israélites en Roumanie. Étude de son histoire et des divers problèmes de droit qu'elle soulève*. Paris, 1923, the 1831 anti-Semitic legislation in Romania was adopted under Russian influence. Carol Iancu also adopted the same argument in *Les Juifs en Roumanie (1866–1919). De l'exclusion à l'emancipation*. Provence, 1978.

eign Jews, a principle that became subsequently the cornerstone of its naturalisation policy. Consequently, the entire resident Jewish population was excluded from citizenship, even if born and raised in Romania for generations.

How can one account for this illiberal turn in the legal status of Jews? Surely, anti-Semitic legislation in Romania was triggered by a peculiar combination of economic and religious motives. Nevertheless, the compelling reasons behind the exclusion of Jews from citizenship were concomitantly demographic and economic.¹⁹ Beginning with the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a massive influx of Yiddish speaking *Ashkenazi* Jews from the Tsarist “Pale of Settlement” into northern Moldova raised the proportion of Jews to 10.5% of the entire population of Moldova in 1899, and 51% of the population of the Jassy capital city.²⁰ In addition, the Jewish population acquired an important economic role: in 1899, Jews encompassed 4.4% of Romania’s total population, but represented 21% of the total number of merchants, 39% of commercial agents, and possessed about 19.5% of the capital invested in large scale industry.²¹

This situation resulted in ethnic segregation and competition for resources in northern Moldova and generated widespread anti-Semitic prejudices, skilfully instrumentalised by Romanian political elites. Romanian political elites portrayed Jewish dominance of significant sectors of the economy as being detrimental to Romanian national interests. In order to curtail competition from Jewish economic elites, between 1866 and 1918 the Romanian government issued over 200 administrative regulations that denied Jews the right to settle in the countryside, to own rural property, and to practice certain professions and economic activities, such as law (1864 and 1884), pharmacy (1910), inn-keeping, tobacco and spirits dealer (1873 and 1887), lottery organizer, etc.²² These were to remain the privilege of either the Romanian state itself or of Romanian nationals.

The inferior legal status of Jews shaped their social composition and influenced their emancipation strategies. Facing the intransigence of Roma-

19 See parliamentary speeches by Liberal politicians Mihail Kogălniceanu and I. Brătianu.

20 As a result, during 1860–1899, while the population of Romania grew by 50%, the Jewish population grew by 98.7%. See Colescu: *Analiza rezultatelor recensământului general*. 82–82.

21 See G. Bogdan-Duică: *Românii și Evreii*. București, 1913, 223. For statistics on the industrial capital, see L. Colescu: *Ancheta industrială din anii 1901–1902*. București, 1904, 126.

22 For comprehensive analyses of this legislation, see Joseph Berkowitz: *La question des Israélites en Roumanie*; and Carol Iancu: *Les Juifs en Roumanie*.

nian political elites, Jewish associations tried to take advantage of the powerless international status of Romania in order to impose an external solution to their emancipation. Due to their intense political lobbying, Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty (July 1878) conditioned diplomatic recognition of Romania's independence upon granting citizenship to non-Christian subjects. In 1879 the Romanian constitution was finally amended to comply with the Berlin Treaty. Article 7, which excluded non-Christians from naturalisation was revised as follows: "In Romania, the difference of religious belief and confession can prevent neither the accession to civil and political rights, nor the exercise of these rights."²³ This was, however, only an apparent liberalisation: instead of *collective* emancipation, the amendment offered Jews only *individual* access to naturalisation. The procedure of naturalisation was very restrictive, being granted "exclusively by the legislative power", with a majority of at least two-thirds of the votes (Art. 8). Far from being simple formalities, decisions on individual cases of naturalisation were debated by Parliament at great length, and the number of favourable decisions was very limited: only 183 in the period 1878–1911, out of an estimated many thousands of requests.²⁴ Thus, until World War One, Romanian political leaders refused to grant them full civic and political emancipation. Romanian Jews thus remained confined to the legally inferior status of "denizens" – they lived in Romanian territory, paid taxes and performed military service, but were denied significant civil and political rights. In 1912, there were only 4,668 Jewish citizens in Romania, representing 1.9% of the country's total Jewish population, as compared to 228,430 Jewish subjects or 95.8% of the total, and 7,987 Jews under foreign protection, or 3.3% of the total.²⁵ Facing the intransigent attitude of Romanian authorities, numerous Jews chose to emigrate to the United States or western Europe, with the result that their ratio within the Romanian population decreased from 4.5% in 1899 to 3.3% in 1912.²⁶

23 Muraru: *Constituțiile României*, 34.

24 Iancu: *Les Juifs en Roumanie*, 186–7.

25 Iancu: *Emancîparea evreilor*, 210.

26 In real terms, given the natural demographic growth, the number of Jews increased from 239,016 in 1899 to 269,015 in 1912. *Ibid.*, 37.

Citizenship and Assimilation: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania

The second major legal category excluded from Romanian citizenship were the inhabitants of Northern Dobrogea, a former Ottoman province granted to Romania by the European Congress in Berlin in compensation for the loss of Southern Bessarabia to the Tsarist Empire. The annexation of Dobrogea was a major challenge for Romania's ethnic and religious policy. As a frontier zone at the borderland of the Ottoman empire, Dobrogea carried a specific imperial demographic legacy, being inhabited by 21 ethnic groups, among which were Turks and Tartars, Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Germans, and Italians. In addition, the province was a "micro-cosmos of all religions."²⁷ Together with the predominant Muslim Turks and Tartars, there were also Romanians, Bulgarians and Greeks of Eastern Orthodox Christian denomination, Jews, Russian Ancient Orthodox Believers (Lipovans), Catholics and Protestants. While numerous Romanian politicians pleaded for religious tolerance toward other Christian denominations, in the view of many nationalists, a "Romanian Jew" or a "Romanian Muslim" represented an inherent contradiction, which undermined the legally consecrated doctrine of the Romanian Christian state.²⁸ For these reasons, a majority of Romanian political elites initially rejected the annexation of Dobrogea as "a fatal gift", whose acquisition would disrupt the "homogeneity of Romania's Latinity" and deteriorate Romania's diplomatic relations with neighbouring Balkan states.²⁹ However, since resistance to the irrevocable decision of the Berlin Treaty was considered "political suicide", Northern Dobrogea was later almost unanimously re-evaluated as an ancient Romanian land, and the country's main asset in becoming a western (anti-Russian) military bastion, a guarantor of political stability in eastern Europe and an essential link in the commercial transit between Occident and the Orient.³⁰ As a result, the integration of Northern

27 Mihail Kogălniceanu: *Opere*. București, 1968, Vol. V, Part. I, 287.

28 This legal contradiction was partially liquidated just one year after the annexation of Dobrogea: the revision of article 7 of the Romanian Constitution provided for individual naturalisation of non-Christians (1879).

29 For the prevailing resentments against the annexation of Dobrogea, see the *Resolution of the Romanian Senate*, 26 January 1878; the memoir of the Foreign Minister of Romania, M. Kogălniceanu: "Memoriu în chestiunea Basarabiei". February 25/March 9, 1878; and the brochure of N. B. Locusteanu: *Dobrogea*. București, 1878.

30 Kogălniceanu: *Opere*, 620.

Dobrogea into Romania was framed by an underlying dichotomy of symbolic inclusion and administrative exclusion: despite its formal territorial incorporation into Romania, Northern Dobrogea was subject to a *separate administrative regime* between 1878 and 1913. Under this status, from 1878 to 1909, the inhabitants of Dobrogea thus enjoyed only a local-type citizenship; since (1) They were denied political representation in the Romanian Parliament and the right to enrol in political parties. Instead, once a year, two representatives of the province would raise issues of specific Dobrogean interest with the prince; and (2) Once they crossed the Danube into Romania, they were treated as virtual foreigners, being denied political participation and the right to acquire immovable property.³¹

This restraining citizenship legislation facilitated the integration of Northern Dobrogea with Romania at the following levels: (1) the colonisation of Dobrogea with ethnic Romanians; (2) the nationalisation of the landed property in the province; (3) cultural homogenisation in the province; (4) the implementation of a highly centralised political regime, which promoted the interests of the Bucharest-based political elites and weakened regional political resistance; and, finally (5) the exclusion of Dobrogea's non-Romanian economic elites from political rights. Thus, under the impact of the state-sponsored ethnic colonisation of Dobrogea, the overall population of the province experienced a dramatic increase – from approximately 100,000 inhabitants in 1878 to 261,490 in 1900 and 368,189 inhabitants in 1912.³² Most importantly, ethnic colonisation substantially altered the relationship between the three major ethnic groups in the province, Romanians, Bulgarians, and Turks and Tartars. In only 25 years the ratio of ethnic Romanians in Northern Dobrogea grew from a relative to an absolute majority (from 36.3% in 1880 to 52.5% in 1905 and to 56.9% in 1913). These demographic changes affected land ownership in the province, as well – by 1905 Romanians managed to acquire approximately two-thirds of Dobrogea's landed property. Finally, after the turn of the century, Romanian political elites appreciated almost unanimously that the assimilation of Dobrogea produced satisfactory results. Consequently, a series of laws regu-

31 For a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms of the assimilation of Northern Dobrogea to Romania, see Cf. Iordachi, *Citizenship: Nation and State-building: The Integration of Northern Dobrudja into Romania, 1878–1913*.

32 M. D. Ionescu: *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea*. București, 1904; for 1912, Sabin Manuilă: "La population du Dobroudja" In *La Dobroudja Roumaine*. București, 1938, 456.

lating the judicial system (1909, modified 1911, 1912, 1913), political rights (1909, 1910, 1919) and local administration (1913), homogenised Dobrogea's legislation with that in Romania proper. The law granted citizenship to Dobrogea's former Ottoman inhabitants, and to post-1878 rural colonists in Dobrogea. Nevertheless, in a dissimilationist spirit, the law still excluded from political rights foreign immigrants residing in urban areas, including numerous Jewish, Armenian and Greek merchants who settled in Dobrogea after 1878.

Women and Citizenship in Romania, 1866–1918

Last, but not least, the 1866 Romanian Constitution and the 1864 Romanian Civil Code were based on an underlying gender inequality, denying women political participation and depriving married women of nationality, property and legal capacity. As such, the new bourgeois-democratic political order was essentially dominated by males, who secluded women to the “private sphere” and monopolised forms of representation and allocation of resources in the public sphere. Until World War I, debates on “the woman question” continued uninterrupted in parliament and media, occasioned by discussions over electoral rights, property or professional laws. These debates were framed by three main ways of conceiving gender roles in society: 1) a liberal view, supported by few politicians, which insisted on the essential sameness of women and men as rational human beings and argued for equal civic and political rights for women; 2) a traditionalist-conservative view – supported, among others, by the Orthodox Church – which valued the differences between men and women as complementary parts of the social body and advocated the total seclusion of women to the private sphere;³³ and 3) the dominant gender ideology of the new bourgeois-democratic political order. Citizenship legislation set the dividing line between a universal and rational public sphere, which was monopolised by men, and a particular and intimate private sphere, where bourgeois notions of domesticity and intimacy conferred an important role to women as mothers, wives and housekeepers. The symbolic inclusion of Romanian women into the national body was not based on their nationality, but on women's role in the reproduction of the na-

³³ See “Educațiunea sexului feminin”. In *Biserica*, September 1862, 164–165, apud Paraschiva Căncea: *Mișcarea pentru emanciparea femeii în România, 1848–1948*. București, 1976, 21.

tion and in educating the future generation. The emancipation of women was therefore: 1) conceived in a gradual manner, in order to minimise its impact on the established political order; 2) confined solely to limited domains of participation in the public sphere – such as elementary or vocational education – which would strengthen the bourgeois family and reinforce women’s specific social roles; and finally 3) accepted only for special categories of women, such as widows or unmarried women, whose emancipation would not disrupt the unity of the bourgeois family.

In summary, the 1866 Constitution of Romania implemented “from above” a passive, formal and hierarchical definition of citizenship, which excluded from participation in the public sphere numerous ethnic and socio-political categories. As such, Romanian citizenship legislation also served as an effective instrument of social closure. Membership in the political community was reserved for ethnic Romanians who had exclusive access to land tenure, bureaucratic positions and political participation. At the same time, the absence of a *jus soli* component in ascribing citizenship degraded a substantial part of the resident population to the legally inferior status of Romanian subjects, which encompassed their obligation for taxation and military service, but denied their exercise of political rights and of certain economic activities. Furthermore, the highly bureaucratised procedure of naturalisation reserved to the bureaucracy full control over access to citizenship, a situation that favoured abuses and corruption.

In spite of these multiple barriers to citizenship, the 1866 Constitution nevertheless encompassed a promise of the gradual emancipation of non-citizens, in the spirit of bourgeois-democratic ideology. Accordingly, in the period 1866–1918, the legally subordinated groups conducted an intense campaign for their civic and political emancipation. Their simultaneous campaign for enlarged political participation did not result, however, in collaboration. Jewish associations, Dobrogean regionalists and feminist societies employed divergent and even contradictory emancipation strategies, which further diminished their impact on the existing political order. Furthermore, the political system established by the constitution proved, by and large, unresponsive to a gradual enlargement of the public sphere: claims of political participation were perceived by Romanian political elites as a generalised attack by “minorities” on the reigning bourgeois-nationalist ideology. The emancipation of non-citizen subjects in Romania thus occurred only under the im-

part of major geo-political events – such as the Great War – and not through the development of a pluralist political discourse.

II. CITIZENSHIP IN INTER-WAR ROMANIA: BETWEEN NATIONALIST CONSENSUS AND IDEOLOGICAL COMPETITION

The socio-political upheaval of World War One brought significant changes to the Romanian citizenship doctrine. First and foremost, the events of the war generated an unprecedented liberalisation of access to Romanian state citizenship. Following the defection of the Russian Army on the eastern front, in May 1918 Romania was compelled to sign a separate peace treaty with the Central Powers. In its articles 27 and 28, the treaty provided for the naturalisation of Romanian Jews who either fought in the Romanian army, or were descended from parents settled in the country, and had never been subjects to a foreign power. These stipulations were soon consecrated by “The Law for the Naturalisation of Foreigners Born in the County”, adopted by the Romanian Parliament on 25 August 1918. The law functioned only for several weeks and had no practical consequences. On 10 November 1918, Romania rejoined the *Entente*, declared war on Germany, and abolished all laws adopted by the former “collaborationist” parliament. The emancipation of Romanian Jews remained, however, an urgent diplomatic problem. Determined to provide a domestic legislative solution to Jewish emancipation prior to the Paris Peace Conference, the Romanian Prime Minister, Ion Brătianu, issued, on 28 December 1918 and in May 1919, two successive decrees that granted accession to instant naturalisation to those Jews descendant from Romanian subjects. Although steps in the right direction, Brătianu’s decrees were, however, “too little and too late”. The Paris Peace Conference took the final political decision on Jewish emancipation in Romania. As part of the new international political order, the Peace Conference designed an international regime for protecting ethnic minorities in east-central Europe. As a result, the Minority Convention – which was incorporated in the treaty between Romania and Austria concluded by the Supreme Council of the Great Powers on 10 September 1919 at Saint Germain – took the last steps toward the civic and political emancipation of Jews in Romania. The Convention also granted international protection to ethnic minorities in Greater Romania. The specific conditions and procedure under which

these ethnic groups were granted citizenship were nevertheless established by Romanian domestic regulation, namely “The Law on Acquiring and Losing Romanian Citizenship” of 23 February 1924. By and large, the 1924 law preserved the underlying features of Romanian citizenship doctrine by stipulating three main ways of acquiring state citizenship: (1) by descent, according to the principle of *jus sanguinis*; (2) by marrying a Romanian man; and (3) by naturalisation. In addition, article 56 of the law granted Romanian citizenship to: (1) all inhabitants of the historical provinces of Bukovina, Transylvania, Banat, Crişana, Maramureş and Bessarabia who were either born there from parents that had their domicile in one of these provinces, or had settled their administrative domicile in those provinces by 1 December 1918, respectively by 9 April 1918 in Bessarabia; (2) all inhabitants of southern Dobrogea who were granted citizenship under laws of 1914 and 1921; (3) all inhabitants of the Old Kingdom that were granted citizenship under article 133 of the 1923 Constitution; and (4) to Romanians from neighbouring countries who decided to renounce their foreign citizenship and opt for the Romanian one. Compared with previous citizenship regulations, this law introduced several liberal innovations in naturalisation policy. First, decisions on naturalisation were to be taken by the Romanian government, as the executive power, and not as previously by the Romanian parliament, as the legislative power. More significantly, together with ethnic Romanians from neighbouring countries, the law also exempted from the mandatory naturalisation stage of 10 years foreigners born and raised in Romanian territory, provided that they specifically requested naturalisation upon reaching maturity (21 years old).

The liberalisation of access to state-citizenship was accompanied by a major socio-political reorganisation of the country. Comprehensive reforms such as universal male suffrage (1918), massive land redistribution (1921) and a new liberal constitution (1923) remodelled Romania into a modern parliamentary democracy. A single but notable restriction still applied to the principle of universal suffrage in inter-war Greater Romania – gender. In spite of the intense campaign for women’s emancipation conducted during the First World War, the 1923 Constitution accepted women’s enfranchisement only in principle: article 6 stipulated that “Special laws, voted with a majority of two-thirds, will determine the conditions under which women can exercise

political rights.”³⁴ However, in the future period, the parliament failed to pass any law on women’s political emancipation. Consequently, between 1918 and 1929–1932, Romanian women were still subject to civil inequality, and were denied political rights in local administration and national elections. The civic and partial political emancipation of women in Romania occurred only later, as part of the general process of legislative homogenisation in inter-war Greater Romania: in 1929, women were granted the right to vote in local elections, while in 1932, a new Romanian Civil Code finally granted women full civic rights.

The dispositions of the 1923 Constitution and of the 1924 Law thus completed the long process of emancipation of non-citizens in Romania and transformed the citizenship body into a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional community. In spite of the unprecedented enlargement of the political public sphere, the civil society of the nineteenth century failed, however, to develop into a lasting democracy. Ethno-religious diversity in Greater Romania made imperative the adoption of a new understanding of citizenship as a political contract between state and citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin, an understanding that would be supported by forms of “constitutional patriotism”.³⁵ In fact, the opposite occurred: inter-war political life was dominated by radical definitions of national identity that discriminated between Romanian citizens “by blood” and “by papers”, and attempted to exclude the latter from substantive socio-political rights.

Several reasons may account for this development. First, the historical provinces of Transylvania, Banat, Bessarabia and Bukovina that were incorporated into Greater Romania after 1918 had been shaped by radically different socio-political systems. As a result, Greater Romania was a mosaic of various civil codes, political cultures and levels of economic development. Second, the task of fostering administrative integration, legislative unification and cultural homogenisation in Greater Romania proved particularly difficult. Although ethnically dominated by Romanians, Greater Romania encompassed a relatively high ratio of ethnic minorities: 28% of the total population, including 8.4% Hungarians, 4.3 % Germans, 5 % Jews, 3.3 % Russians,

34 See Articol 6, Title II, “Despre Drepturile Românilor” In *Constituțiunea promulgată cu decretul regal No. 1360 din 28 Martie*. 1923, 611.

35 On the concept of “constitutional patriotism” see Jürgen Habermas: “Citizenship and National Identity. Some reflections on the Future of Europe”. *Praxis International*, 1992, No. 1., 1–19.

3.3% Ruthenians, 1.5% Bulgarians, 1% Turks and Tartars, etc.³⁶ Many ethnic groups, such as Jews, Hungarians and Germans, were perceived as “high-status minorities”, advantaged by the former imperial order, as dominating urban residence, liberal professions and state bureaucracy. Romanian political elites regarded the high proportion of national minorities and their dominance of urban social-economic life as major stumbling blocks in their effort of national consolidation.³⁷ As a result, social discrepancies between ethnic minorities and the Romanian majority brought the “nationalising nationalism” of the latter to the forefront of the political arena.³⁸ For this combination of reasons, debates over citizenship remained at the top of the political agenda in inter-war Romania. Nevertheless, compared with the previous period, the nature and function of these debates changes significantly. In the pre-war period, debates over citizenship focused on the exclusion of ethno-religious minorities from state citizenship. After the war, the generalised access of ethnic minorities to Romanian citizenship generated a symbolic differentiation between formal state citizenship and membership in the Romanian national ethnic community. Right-wing political organisations blamed international organisation for the “forceful” and “premature” emancipation of non-citizens in Romania, accused them for the slow pace of nationalising the state promoted by traditional Romanian political elites, and agitated for the implementation of a policy of *numerus clausus* in education, economy, and politics.

In the first post-war decade, right-wing political activists proved unable to dismantle the political order established by the 1923 Constitution and agitated therefore primarily on the cultural field. Rightist ideologues took an active part in debates concerning Romanian national identity (*specificul național*) and the path of development, by trying to develop a symbolic-ideological control over the nation, aimed at symbolically excluding the “foreigners”. The most representative phenomenon in this respect was the birth of *Orthodoxism*, a school of ideas centred on the magazine *Gândirea* (*Thought*). Orthodoxism re-evaluated the relationship between religion and nationality in Romanian national ideology in the form of religious nationalism, defined

36 Joseph S. Roucek: *Contemporary Roumania and its Problems*. New York, 1971, 187.

37 See Irina Livezeanu: *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building, Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930*. Ithaca, 1995.

38 Rogers W. Brubaker: *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge, 1996.

the Orthodox church as the national spiritual leader, the main repository of Romanian traditional values, and thus transformed Orthodoxy into an *ism*, an ideology. In this way there appeared one of the most authoritative constructs of integral nationalism developed in inter-war Romania: “We are Orthodox because we are Romanians, and we are Romanians because we are Orthodox.”³⁹ Ionescu’s formula united in a very penetrating synthesis two of the most fundamental elements of Romanian national ideology: the theme of the Romanian peasant as repository and promoter of ethnic purity and traditional national values, and the theme of Orthodox religion as a fundamental, characteristic element of Romanian spirituality. Furthermore, Ionescu’s definition of Romanian identity operated, on a line inaugurated by a radical romantic tradition, a syncretism between religion and nationality, which, given the multi-confessional reality of Romanian society, excluded a significant part of Romanians from the national community.

Later, the progressive crisis of the political system established by the Constitution, coupled with the social effects of the 1929–33 economic crisis and with the establishment of fascist regimes in Italy and Germany, favoured the political rise of right-wing political parties in Romania. Under the impact of integral nationalism, the Romanian citizenship doctrine suffered significant changes on the eve and during the Second World War. Thus, in 1938 the right-wing government led by Octavian Goga – which emerged from the 1937 political crisis generated by the undecided results of the last free elections in inter-war Romania – initiated the revision of Romanian citizenship for Jews. According to a decree adopted on 21 January 1938, Jewish inhabitants had to prove with legal documents, within an interval of 50 days, that they had acquired Romanian citizenship in full accordance with the stipulations of the 1924 Citizenship Law. The decree did not abolish the emancipatory stipulations of the 1919 Minority Convention, but was aimed primarily against the numerous Jews who immigrated into Romania after 1918, mostly from the Ukrainian lands. According to official estimates, as a result of the 1938 decree, 225,222 persons, or 36.30% of Romania’s Jewish population lost their Romanian citizenship and became stateless persons (*Heimatlos*).⁴⁰ Although the Goga government fell after only forty days of existence, the anti-Jewish policy that it inaugurated continued during the royal

39 Nae Ionescu: *Roza Viiturilor*. București, 1937, 201.

40 See *Evreii din România între anii 1940–1944*, Vol. I, *Legislația antievreiască*. București, 1993; and Radu Ioanid: *Evreii sub regimul Antonescu*. București, 1997.

dictatorship of King Carol II (1938–40). On 8 August 1940, Decrees No. 2560 and 2651 annulled the post-World War One emancipation of Jews in Romania and reactivated the anti-Semitic regulations from the late nineteenth century. The decrees had a double discriminating nature. First, they stripped the entire Jewish population of substantive political and civic rights, such as the right to settle in the countryside and buy rural properties, access to state positions, as well as the right to marry Christians. Second, the decrees differentiated among several legal categories of Jews. Their stipulations favoured those Jews who were emancipated by the Romanian Parliament – either individually or collectively for fighting in the Romanian army – but discriminated against Jews who achieved emancipation under the stipulation of the 1919 Minority Convention.

The establishment of the National-Legionary state (September 1940–January 1941) and the subsequent military dictatorship of Ion Antonescu (1941–44) aggravated anti-Semitic legislation and raised it to the level of a systematic state policy. Especially in the period 1940–42, the new regime implemented a set of fully-fledged anti-Jewish laws, ministerial decisions, ordinances and circulars meant to exclude Jews from the social and economic life of the country. Thus, anti-Semitic decrees dispossessed Jews of rural properties (Decrees of 5 October 1940 and 5 December 1940) and urban properties (Decree of 28 March 1941), excluded them from military service, subjected them to mandatory forced labour (5 December 1940), denied them access to education (14 October 1940) and restructured their religious and community organisation (9 September 1940 and, respectively, 30 October 1941). In addition, following Romania's military participation in the anti-Soviet war in the summer of 1941, a special regime of occupation was established in the liberated territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina, and in the occupied territories under Romanian jurisdiction on the eastern front. Romanian troops organised mass repression of Jews, their concentration in ghettos and their mass deportation in Transnistria. After 1942, however, a major turn occurred in the anti-Jewish policy of the Romanian state: in spite of a previous declaration of intention and of several preparatory secret orders, the regime fell short of adhering to the German "final solution" regarding the Jewish question and even allowed repatriation on Romanian territory of certain categories of deported Jews. Overall, the anti-Semitic policy of the Romanian military regime thus exhibited an underlying paradox: on the eastern front the Romanian war administration conducted anti-Semitic atroci-

ties. On the territory of Romania, however, a population of circa 300,000 Romanian Jews survived the Second World War.⁴¹ Many students of anti-Semitism in Romania noted this paradox. This feature made William O. Oldson, for example, to define anti-Semitism in Romania as a “providential anti-Semitism,” a “tertium quid” or a particular “mixture of ethnic bravado and defensiveness.”

III. NATIONAL COMMUNISM AND ROMANIAN CITIZENSHIP DOCTRINE

The Romanian communist regime applied significant changes to the citizenship doctrine. In order to gain political legitimacy and stability, the regime combined three main forms of societal control: remunerative, coercive and symbolic-ideological.⁴² Based on a specific combination among these forms of control, one can distinguish three main stages in the development of the communist regime in Romania: 1946–58, 1958–80 and the 1980’s. In all of these periods, citizenship legislation served as an effective “ruling class strategy” of political domination and was therefore subject to many revisions, in 1948, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1956, 1965 and 1971.⁴³

In the first phase of the communist regime, that of the “primitive accumulation of legitimacy” (1946–58), citizenship legislation had an underlying repressive function.⁴⁴ The communist regime’s main political support came from the Red Army, and it engaged in a process of “breakthrough”, meant to subvert the legacy of “bourgeois nationalism” and to disrupt alternative centres of power in society.⁴⁵ In this context, citizenship legislation contained a strong ideological component. The 1948 Constitution proclaimed Romania a popular democracy and assigned to the working class a leading political role. In addition, the Constitution granted the state the right of expropriation of private property and emphasised citizens’ duties of allegiance to the new re-

41 William O. Oldson: *A Providential Anti-Semitism. Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth-Century Romania*. Philadelphia, 1991, 9.

42 For the most authoritative conceptualisation of these forms of control under the communist regime in Romania, see Verdery, Katherine: *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu’s Romania*. Stanford, 1991.

43 For citizenship as a “ruling class strategy”, see Michael Mann: “Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship”. *Sociology*, 1988, No. 2., 339–354.

44 See Michael Shafir: *Romania. Politics, Economy and Society*. Boulder, 1985.

45 On the concept of “breakthrough” see Kenneth Jowitt: *Revolutionary breakthroughs and national development: the case of Romania, 1944–1965*. Berkeley, 1971, 7.

gime and defence of socialist property. Most importantly, the regime engaged in a brutal war against internal “class enemies”: article 18 of the Constitution denied “undignified persons” – arbitrarily declared as such by juridical bodies of the new political regime – significant civic and political rights. The underlying ideological dimension of the new citizenship legislation also reshaped the traditional relationship between Romanian national community and the *diaspora*: although under the 1948 Constitution repatriation of ethnic Romanians was still possible, in practice this was granted only selectively and was based on political criteria. In addition, Decree No. 563 of 5 November 1956 stripped numerous politically undesirable persons of Romanian state citizenship.

A major innovation of the citizenship legislation in this period was granting full citizenship rights for women. The 1948 Constitution of Romania, in its articles 16, 17 and 18, granted women political rights, equal access to state functions and equal salary with men. In addition, article 21 stipulated specifically that “the woman had equal rights with the man in all the economic, social, cultural domains of state activity, as well as in the private domain. At equal work the woman is entitled to equal payment.” Gender equality was later extended to other spheres of social life as well. Decree 130 of 2 April 1949 provided for official investigations over the paternity of illegitimate children, while Decree No. 33 of 24 January 1952 accepted the transmission of Romanian citizenship on maternal line. Initially, this transmission of nationality was not automatic: according to the 1952 decree, in the case where a Romanian woman married a foreigner, the citizenship of her child was to be chosen by parental accord, between the nationality of either the mother or the father. On 22 September 1960, however, the Romanian State Council ratified the *Convention on the Status of Married Women*, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1957. As a result, article 24 of *Law No. 24 on Romanian Citizenship* of December 1971 stipulated that descendants of a Romanian woman were automatically ascribed Romanian citizenship, regardless of the father’s citizenship. The granting of full civic, political and citizenship rights for women thus completed a long and arduous process of emancipation, which started in 1866. Under the communist regime, most of the newly achieved rights were, however, quite formal: women in Romania were emancipated precisely at a time when political rights became meaningless, while citizenship obligations increased substantially.

After 1958, in the second phase of the development of the communist regime in Romania, the diplomatic divergence from Moscow and the move of political leaders in Bucharest towards increasing political independence generated significant changes in the official socialist ideology. The communist regime renounced its previous external sources of legitimisation and attempted to gain broader domestic support: political prisoners were released from prison and the official state propaganda changed its focus from “inside” to “outside” enemies. Furthermore, in order to strengthen its symbolic-ideological control in society, the communist regime underwent a nationalist turn. Especially after 1965, the official propaganda of the regime recuperated and aggravated several themes of the Romanian national ideology, such as the continuity of the Romanian people in the same territory, the predestined, “manifest destiny” of the Romanian nation, the emphasis on the autochthonous Dacian roots and traditional ethno-centrist myths.⁴⁶ The result was a specific syncretism between nationalism and a decayed Marxism, under the form of national-communism. According to Nicolae Ceaușescu, the nation, rather than the proletariat, became the ideological basis of the communist regime. Citizenship legislation reflected this incorporation of traditional elements of Romanian national ideology into the official state ideology: the 1971 *Law on Romanian Citizenship* valued the principle of *jus sanguinis* as the very foundation of a homogeneous national community, and attached to it even stronger nationalist significance. Article 5 of the Law read that “As an expression of the relationship between parents and children, of the uninterrupted continuity on the fatherland of previous generations that fought for social and national freedom, children born from Romanian parents on the territory of the Socialist Republic of Romania are Romanian citizens.”⁴⁷

The political liberalisation of the communist regime was, however, very limited, and citizenship legislation preserved its important function of repression and control. The regime implemented strict observation of the population, rigorously controlled internal migration – such as settlement in big cities – and drastically restricted the right of Romanian citizens to travel abroad. In addition, the regime observed strict control of foreigners in Romania terri-

46 See Vladimir Tismăneanu and Dan Pavel: “Romania’s Mystical Revolutionaries: The Generation of *Angst* and Adventure Revised”. *East European Politics and Society*, 1994, No. 3., 404.

47 Article 5, The Law on Citizenship no. 24 in *Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Socialiste România*, Partea I, No. 157, 17 December 1971.

tory: according to decrees from 1969, and 1982, foreigners had to register with the authorities, had to obtain a special permission to settle in certain areas, and every contact they had with Romanian citizens had to be reported.⁴⁸ Last but not least, access to Romanian state citizenship was severely controlled: according to the 1971 Citizenship Law, the president of the republic alone, as representative of the executive power, could grant or withdrew Romanian citizenship.

Finally, in the third phase of the communist regime in Romania, in the 1980s, the generalised economic and socio-political crisis of the regime generated an acute crisis in inter-ethnic relations. Nicolae Ceauşescu tried to overcome the acute lack of legitimisation and popular support for his rule by increasing repressive measures, a situation that transformed Romania into a veritable *Polizeistaat*; and by an exacerbation of national-communist propaganda. Consequently, the traditional ethnic understanding of the nation merged with authoritarian socialism and resulted into a monolithic nationalism. The main characteristics of the official propaganda in this period were xenophobia, autarchy, isolationism, anti-intellectualism and protochronism.⁴⁹ The main target of communist propaganda became an alleged “Hungarian danger” to the integrity of Romania. In addition, the turn of the political regime in Romania towards extreme nationalism coincided with a gradual process of transforming the minority concern into a fundamental principle of Hungarian diplomacy: from János Kádár’s theory of “minorities as bridges” between countries, Hungarian diplomacy moved to the “double-bound responsibility” thesis, launched by Mátyás Szűrös, the leading figure of Hungarian diplomacy in the late 1980s. Ultimately, these developments generated an acute ideological and diplomatic conflict between Romania and Hungary over the status of the Hungarian minority in Romania, which reached its peak in late 1980s.

The main Romanian-Hungarian ideological controversy has concerned contrasting and ultimately overlapping definitions of the nation. The Romanian part has employed a *statist* definition of the nation, as a territorial political

⁴⁸ *Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Socialiste România*, Partea I, No. 146, December 17, 1969.

⁴⁹ See Tismăneanu and Pavel: “Romania’s Mystical Revolutionaries.” Protochronism was an intellectual trend that tried to prove that numerous major achievements of the European culture were in fact invented by Romanians. For the most comprehensive analysis, see Katherine Verdery: *National ideology under socialism: identity and cultural politics in Ceausescu’s Romania*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 167–214.

unit. Since ethnic consciousness is defined as a cultural phenomenon, Hungarians from Transylvania are seen as an “ethnic minority”, which shares only a common culture with Hungarians in Hungary. On the other side, the Hungarian part has employed an *ethnacist* definition of the nation, as a large, politicised ethnic group, defined by common culture and alleged descent.⁵⁰ From this different perspective, national consciousness is seen as a political phenomenon, expressed primarily by an identification with a common government. Consequently, Hungarians in Transylvania are defined by the Hungarians in Transylvania as a “national” minority.

These contrasting definitions of the nation had important political consequences. The Hungarian government decided to monitor the treatment of the Hungarian minority in neighbouring states. In 1985, Szűrös argued that “the Hungarians living outside our borders, but mainly within the Carpathian Basin, constitute a part of the Hungarian nation. They have every right to expect Hungary to feel responsibility for their fate and to speak up for them when they are objects of discrimination.”⁵¹ In contrast, the Romanian side deeply contested this principle, considering it a self-appointed right. The Romanian communist leader Nicolae Ceauşescu did not recognise minorities as belonging to other nations. He argued that, because a nation is created by centuries of “living together”, the Hungarians and other ethnic groups are part of the Romanian nation.⁵² The controversy reached a new stage in 1990, when the obligation of the Hungarian state to protect the interests of ethnic Hungarians abroad was embodied in article six of the Hungarian Constitution. Furthermore, Hungarian diplomacy tried to legitimate juridically the international relevance of this principle, by emphasising the importance of national minorities’ ties with the “mother nation” and claiming that the nationality question was not exclusively an internal affair, since it encompassed human rights and international aspects, as well. This position led to a further escalation of Romanian-Hungarian diplomatic polemics. In 1991, the new Hungarian Prime Minister, József Antal, declared that he considers himself, “in spirit”, the Prime Minister of 15 million Hungarians – including, hence, ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries. In reaction, Adrian Năstase, the Romanian Foreign Minister, was quick in pointing out

⁵⁰ For a theoretical perspective of these citizenship models, see Anthony Smith: *Theories of Nationalism*. London, 1971, 176.

⁵¹ *Radio Free Europe Background Report*, Romanian SR/3, 22 April 1985, 3.

⁵² *Radio Free Europe Background Report*, Romanian SR/3, 22 April 1987, 12.

that, as a political leader, József Antal received a mandate only from Hungarian citizens. As for the Romanian citizens of Hungarian ethnic origin, they elected their own political leaders who represent them in the Romanian Parliament.

The controversy acquired new domestic and diplomatic significance with the creation, in December 1989, of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, as the main political representative of the interests of the ethnic Hungarian population. On the one hand, DAHR has considered the Hungarian national minority in Romania as an integral part of the Hungarian nation, and defines itself as a “co-nation,” or a “state-building nation”. On the other hand, at the international level, DAHR has demanded to be considered as the official representative of the Hungarian community in Romania, and to be part of every bilateral negotiation between Romania and Hungary over the status of the Hungarian minority. This request has been considered legitimate by the Hungarian part. In order to provide an institutionalised framework for permanent political consultation with representatives of the Hungarian national minorities in neighbouring countries, the Hungarian Parliament set up a special commission for consultations entitled *The Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad*. In addition, the Hungarian government advocated the right of the DAHR to be consulted during the negotiation process between Romania and Hungary toward the completion of a bilateral friendship treaty (1994–96): “The Hungarian government cannot formally represent the citizens of other countries who belong to a Hungarian national minority, but it considers it an essential requirement that the representatives of the minorities concerned should be able to present their views during the process [of Romanian-Hungarian negotiations] and on the agreements reached.”⁵³ The Romanian side rejected this claim, arguing that the DAHR is a political party, while the issues between Hungary and Romania should be solved between the two governments: “The bilateral treaty is a treaty between Romania and Hungary, and it deals with the relationship between the two countries. The persons belonging to the Hungarian minority are citizens of Romania and their relation with the Romanian state is solved in the same way as the relation of all the other citizens with the Romanian state. The rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania are not guaranteed by the

⁵³ *Concluding Document of the Inaugural Conference for a Pact on Stability in Europe*, Interpretative Statement, point 1.5.

Romanian-Hungarian Treaty, but by the Constitution of Romania, the laws of the country and the international agreements signed by Romania.”⁵⁴

IV. DEFINING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NATION: CONTROVERSIES OVER DUAL CITIZENSHIP IN POST-1989 ROMANIA

After 1989, the democratisation of the political system had a powerful impact on the Romanian citizenship doctrine, contributing to the redefinition of the criteria of membership in the Romanian national community. At the same time, the interaction between the citizenship policies of Romania, Hungary and Moldova generated numerous diplomatic tensions over issues of dual citizenship.

Traditionally, Romanian citizenship doctrine considered simultaneous legal membership in two national communities as a juridical “anomaly” and it therefore forbade dual citizenship. This feature of Romanian citizenship legislation was preserved during the communist period. In order to eliminate cases of dual citizenship generated by border changes after World War II and to solve the resulting juridical controversies, Romania signed several international conventions on dual citizenship with Hungary (1949), the USSR (1957) and Bulgaria (1959). In contrast, the *Law on Romanian Citizenship* of March 1991 introduced a major innovation in the citizenship doctrine: the law allowed Romanian citizens to hold dual citizenship. Article 4 of the law stipulated that Romanian citizenship can be acquired in the following ways: a) birth from a Romanian parent; b) adoption by Romanian citizen; c) repatriation; and d) naturalisation. In regard to repatriation, articles 8 and 37 stipulated that “persons who lost Romanian citizenship”, as well as their descendants, can reacquire Romanian citizenship by request “*even if they have another citizenship and they do not settle their domicile in Romania.*”⁵⁵ The law thus stipulated the right of former Romanian citizens to repatriation. The law went, however, far beyond this original purpose, since it allowed former Romanian citizens to also retain their current citizenship, and their domicile abroad.

According to the authors of the 1991 law, the motivation behind these liberal stipulations was democratic, since they allowed former Romanian citi-

54 Traian Chebeleu, the Spokesman of the Romanian President, In *Evenimentul Zilei*, 27 May 1997.

55 My emphasis.

zens to reacquire, upon request, their lost rights.⁵⁶ The law was animated, nevertheless, by an underlying nationalist motivation, as well, being aimed specifically at enabling the inhabitants of Bukovina and Bessarabia to retrieve their Romanian citizenship. These former provinces of Greater Romania were lost to the Soviet Union in 1940. In 1991, upon the dismemberment of the USSR, Romania was the first country to recognise the state independence of the Republic of Moldova, but it also inaugurated a policy of special partnership and gradual integration between the two countries. In this context, a potential if undeclared aim of the 1991 Citizenship Law was that dual citizenship would succeed in unifying ethnic Romanians into a single political community, across dividing state frontiers, and as such would constitute a step towards a possible future reunification of Romania and Moldova.

These stipulations on dual citizenship of the 1991 law had, however, unpredictable domestic and international consequences. First, the adoption of the law was followed by massive requests for Romanian citizenship. According to Romanian statistics, after 1991, from the Republic of Moldova alone, the Romanian government granted citizenship to 250–300,000 persons belonging to various ethnic groups in the province.⁵⁷ This massive influx of new citizens raised the question of their socio-political and electoral impact in Romania.⁵⁸ Second, and most important, dual citizenship undermined, rather than strengthened, the cause of “union” between Romania and Moldova. In fact, dual citizenship offered the Moldovan intelligentsia an “exit option” in the case of economic crisis. Instead of activating as agents of “Romanianness” in the republic, pro-unionist Moldovan intellectuals preferred generally to emigrate to Romania. Third, since the internal legislation of the Republic of Moldova has expressly forbidden Moldovan citizens to hold dual citizenship, the Romanian 1991 law generated diplomatic tensions between the two countries. Moldovan ruling politicians feared that for Romania dual citizenship was a strategy meant to increase its control over Moldova. Consequently, they accused Romania of deliberately undermining Moldova’s state sovereignty and stability. The tensions over dual citizenship thus reinforced disagreements over how connected the two states should be.

56 See statement of M. Ionescu-Quintus, *Evenimentul Zilei*, 24 February 2000.

57 This estimate was made by the former Moldovan Prime Minister, Mircea Druc, *Evenimentul Zilei*, 20 May 2000.

58 See article “Unde se duce votul basarabenilor”. *Evenimentul Zilei*, 28 May 2000.

Finally, and most important, the stipulation about dual citizenship in the 1991 law also had an impact on the status of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. The discussions over mandatory visas between Romania and Hungary generated by Hungary's better prospects of joining the European Union stirred the vigorous reaction of the Hungarian community in Romania, which requested concrete guarantees that its relations with the 'mother country' would not be rigorously severed. In this context, on 26 August 1997, Ádám Katona, the president of the "The Hungarian Initiative from Transylvania", asked the DAHR leadership to introduce among its objectives the granting of Hungarian citizenship to Romanian citizens of Hungarian ethnic origin, as a way of guaranteeing their free movement.⁵⁹ Hungarian diplomacy reacted very cautiously to this proposal. Both Ferenc Szócs, the ambassador of Hungary in Romania and the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Kovács László, acknowledged the overwhelming juridical and socio-political complications of the issue, and denied that the Hungarian government was preparing a bill on granting dual citizenship to ethnic Hungarians in Romania. More significantly, the president of DAHR, Béla Marko, specifically refused to officially endorse the proposal. This was a clear indication that the proposal over granting dual citizenship to Romania's ethnic Hungarians was directly linked to the political competition between opposing factions within the DAHR, being launched by the radical political wing of the DAHR – led by its Honorary president, László Tőkés – and utilised as an effective way of pressuring the leadership of DAHR.

With the change of government in May 1998, however, there were many indications that the new Hungarian government led by Viktor Orbán might reconsider the issue of granting Hungarian citizenship to ethnic Hungarians in Romania. During his first official visit to Romania in July 1998, Prime Minister Orbán indicated that Hungarian diplomacy was seeking alternative solutions to granting Hungarian citizenship to Romania's ethnic Hungarians. However, Orbán did not openly reject the possibility of dual citizenship, but promised unequivocally that "if asked [by the DAHR], Hungary will grant dual citizenship."⁶⁰ This statement triggered a prompt reaction from the Romanian authorities. A leading counsellor of Romania's President portrayed granting dual citizenship to Romania's ethnic Hungarians as a "desperate solution", which would "create two categories of citizens in a single coun-

⁵⁹ *Evenimentul Zilei*, 27 August 1997.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 21 July 1998.

try” and would consequently “deteriorate the relationship between minority and majority in Romania.”⁶¹ Opposition parties in Romania were also prompt in rejecting the solution of dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians in Romania. The former ruling Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PSDR) considered the proposal as meant to “subvert the authority of the Romanian state towards its citizens and to compromise the concept of nation-state” and warned that Romanian citizens who “yearn for another citizenship will lose their Romanian one”. Moreover, the PSDR rejected any alternative, compromise solution meant to guarantee the free movement of ethnic Hungarians in Romania, cautioning that the very idea of Hungary’s special visa treatment toward Romanian Hungarians would provoke “grave national tensions”. The demand for dual citizenship thus stirred passionate reactions from Romanian and Hungarian politicians, generating a new diplomatic controversy and threatening to endanger the recently and arduously achieved reconciliation between the two countries. Furthermore, the arguments employed by the two parties greatly exceeded the limits of a simple juridical controversy. Instead, the deep nationalist overtones of the polemics demonstrated that the debate over granting dual citizenship to the Hungarian minority in Romania is linked with a historical Romanian-Hungarian ideological controversy over contrasting and overlapping definitions of the nation. Last but not least, the debates over dual citizenship have also highlighted an underlying inconsistency of the Romanian policy makers, who rejected dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians, but promoted it in the case of Moldovan citizens. Using Rogers Brubaker’s triple concepts of “the nationalising state,” “the national minority” and “the external national homeland”, this contradiction can be explained by the fact that Romania acted simultaneously in a double role: as a “nationalising state” in regard to the Hungarian minority in Transylvania and as an “external homeland” in relation to ethnic Romanians in Moldova and Bukovina.⁶²

61 Ibid, 27 July.

62 See Cf. Brubaker, Rogers: *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge, 1996.

V. CONCLUSIONS: ROMANIAN CITIZENSHIP DOCTRINE AND THE THIRD 'TIME ZONE' OF EUROPE

Arguing for the necessity of a "high culture" as a precondition for nation building, Ernst Gellner identified four main distinct time zones in the making of citizenship and nation states in Europe. The first one, composed of regions along the Atlantic Sea coast in the early modern process of national building, was based mainly on "forgetting" rather than on reawakening ethnic identities. The second time zone, corresponding with the territories of the former Holy Roman Empire, was characterised by the existence of viable high cultures, a feature that favoured the political unification of Germany and Italy at the end of the nineteenth century. In contrast, in the third time zone of east-central Europe, both political units and dominant high cultures were missing; instead, "a patchwork of folk cultures and cultural diversities separating social strata" and "adjoining territories" transformed the inter-war national building process into a more "arduous" and "brutal" process. Finally, the fourth time zone of Europe was contained within the imperial borderlands of the lasting Tsarist/Soviet Empire, which considerably delayed the nation-building process of many peoples.⁶³

Although criticised for its oversimplification and its tendency to essentialise the difference in the historical development of eastern and western Europe, Gellner's framework has the merit of introducing a cultural element – "high culture" – in the study of patterns of national development. Building on the distinction between *Bürgerschaft* or substantial citizenship – in the "Marshallian" sense of social citizenship – and *Staatsangehörigkeit*, or formal citizenship, Gellner's typology also highlights the different timing and the specificity of citizenship in east-central Europe, as compared to western Europe.⁶⁴ If in the west substantial citizenship was used as a form of social integration, in contrast, in east-central Europe, it was rather the formal citizenship that prevailed.

The evolution of citizenship in Romania has exhibited a close similarity with patterns of national developments in the third "time zone of citizenship," that of east-central Europe. First, Romanian national ideology pro-

63 Ernst Gellner: *The Condition of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals*. New York, 1994, 115–117.

64 See T. H. Marshall: *Citizenship and Social Class*. Cambridge, 1950.

moted a “thick” and “primordial” definition of citizenship,⁶⁵ since (1) it attached to citizenship status substantive rights and duties; and (2) defined membership in the national “imagined community” on the basis of the myth of common origin and historical destiny. Second, the concept of citizenship in Romania evolved as a “competition” between two contrasting understandings of citizenship: a liberal one, which was “state-centred, secular and assimilationist” and an opposing Romanticist one which was “Volk-centred, and dissimilationist”, a distinction that is usually presented as a French/German contrasting understanding of citizenship.⁶⁶ However, as the present article has attempted to point out, citizenship legislation in Romania was not shaped exclusively by these ideological commitments, but exhibited specific characteristics, modelled by Romania’s geo-political position, state policies and interests, as well as features of socio-political development.

65 On the distinction between “thick” versus “thin” and “primordial” versus “learned” definitions of citizenship, see Tilly: “Citizenship, Identity and Social History”. In Tilly (ed.): *Citizenship, Identity and Social History*.

66 See Brubaker: “Immigration, Citizenship, and the Nation State in France and Germany. A Comparative Historical Analysis”. *International Sociology*, 1990, No. 4., 379–407; and Brubaker: *Citizenship and Nationhood*; for a similar conceptualisation of a ‘German versus French’ dichotomy of political ideologies, see also Liah Greenfeld: *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge, 1977, 278, 358.

GERHARD BAUMGARTNER

Distant Relatives

On the Austrian Perception of Hungarian History

"You are Hungarian, therefore Austrian!"

Heimitto von Doderer

This paradoxical statement, with which the undisputed head of Austria's literary elite Heimitto von Doderer allegedly greeted his colleague, the Hungarian refugee György Sebestyén, pointedly describes the Austrians' view of Hungary in the second half of the 20th century.

Austrians view Hungarians (the only neighbouring nation about which they did not indulge in derogatory or demeaning jokes) sympathetically, as their relatives. Our Hungarian cousins, uncles and aunts "actually" belong to us, only that nobody can really remember any more how exactly we are supposed to be related to each other. We see them as our poor relatives, who once were better off, when we still had more to do with each other.

We "really" do have a common history, which means that our history is also theirs, but not vice-versa. That is probably why Austrians hardly wrote anything about Hungarian history and why not a single edition of any history of Hungary was published in Austria during the 20th century.

Poor Relatives

In the Vienna City Library I tried to research how and what Austrians had written about Hungarian history, and which among these texts the Austrian public used to read most frequently. After stating my intention that I wanted to read about Hungarian history, the friendly librarian of my favourite branch library in the 17th district of Vienna guided me to the shelves of history books. His hand self-assuredly darted out towards a book, hesitated,

started to roam along the shelves and finally he said: “Well now, it has to be somewhere around here!” Murmuring apologies he disappeared. Since I know that my librarian is a very responsible person, a fanatical librarian and a real lover of books, I also knew that he would not desert me but had returned to his computer to sort out the problem. In the meantime I went through the shelves of the generally very well stocked library of Vienna’s 17th district (dominated by Social Democrats) on my own and resigned myself to the fact, that I probably would have to go to the main library in the 9th district or to some other branch in one of the intellectual-bourgeois districts of the inner city or the western suburbs of Vienna.

“Well, this really is embarrassing!” proclaimed my librarian somewhat broken hearted, after he had returned. “We do have two histories of Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, and even one about China. It’s just about Hungary that I couldn’t find anything. And in our other branches you will have no more luck either.” With these words he handed me a computer printout of all titles from the Vienna City Library under the heading “Hungarian History”.

Theoretically my thirst for knowledge might have been quenched by Holger Fischer’s *Eine kleine Geschichte Ungarns* (*A Short History of Hungary*, 1 copy extant) or by Thomas von Bogyai’s *Grundzüge der Geschichte Ungarns* (*Basics of Hungarian History*, 9 copies extant), but since these books were written by Germans they would not enlighten me about the current Austrian perception of Hungarian history. The same goes for Hans Miksch’s *Der Kampf der Kaiser und Kalifen – Ungarn zwischen Kreuz und Halbmond* (*The Struggle Between Kaisers and Caliphs – Hungary Between the Cross and the Stickle*, 1 copy extant). That was the total of books on offer from the 20th century. Of course there was also Paul Lendvay’s book, written for the Frankfurt Book Fair, *Die Ungarn – Ein Jahrtausend – Sieger in Niederlagen* (*The Hungarians – A Millennium – Victors in Defeat*, 50 copies extant) but this book was a) written by a Hungarian, b) published in Germany and c) at the time only to be found on the computer printout but not yet on the library shelves, since they had not yet been bought and distributed.

My librarian’s printout listed two further titles. Ludwig Kuppelwieser’s *Die Kämpfe der Ungarn mit den Osmanen bis zur Schlacht von Mohács 1526* (*The Hungarians’ Battles with the Ottomans up to the Battle of Mohács 1526*, 1 copy extant) did not sound too promising. And the two volumes of Jenő Csuday’s *Die Geschichte der Ungarn* (*History of the Hungarians*), published in 1900, could hardly be expected to be on top of current events and trends.

In itself, this list constitutes a document of cultural history. It illuminates Austrian interest – or rather disinterest – towards the history of its Siamese twin, neighbouring Hungary.

Hungarian history? Oh yes, some long time ago they came here on their horses and until 1918 they belonged to Austria. They liked the empress Maria Theresa and empress Sissy – her they actually loved. Under the Habsburgs, as long as they belonged to us, things did not go too badly for those Hungarians. But of course they had to have their own state, quite stubbornly insisted on it, always having been so proud and temperamental and a little bit unrealistic dreamers, those Hungarians. And when after the First World War the region of Burgenland was taken away from them and annexed to Austria, they were of course a little bit annoyed with us. And then they tried to go it on their own, but when the Russians came in 1956 they of course again fled to us. Their best times were under the two “K. u. K” periods, under our common emperor, the “Kaiser und König” and under Kreisky and Kádár. They have never again had it as good as then. These *topoi* constitute the consensual Austrian discourse on Hungarian history, which has held its place in everyday life as well as in countless Austrian historical publications for decades.

This is not to say that in Austria there is nothing interesting to be read about Hungarian history or that Austrian historians do not reflect the current discussions of their Hungarian colleagues. Austrian academic publications are of course on the cutting edge of current theoretical and scientific debate.

Among the best-known publications are the works of the leading historians of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with clear emphasis on the history of the Habsburg Empire. After the Second World War this historical discourse became one of the dominant themes of Austrian historiography. As an heir to Cold War traditions Austrian historiography on the Habsburg Monarchy has presented Central Europe, i.e. the region of the successor states of the monarchy, as a cultural, social and to some extent political unity. Within the framework of such enormous projects as – the since 1973 published – *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918* (*The Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1918*) the Austrian Academy of Sciences has tried to integrate the leading historians of the successor states into the discourse about this culturally and historically defined region. Although some parts of this series were written by such famous Hungarian historians as László Katus or Béla Sarlós, there remains a linger-

ing impression that the history of these states is being treated on the level of the history of Austrian provinces, of provinces we have lost. The central role of the period of the Habsburg Monarchy in the reception of Hungarian historiography is evident. The books by Péter Hanák, Emil Niederhauser, István Diószegi and Imre Gonda on this theme have all been translated into German.

Outside of this thematical framework, the reception of Hungarian historiography is limited to the involvement of Hungarian colleagues in specific projects, if their field of work touches upon relevant topics of Austrian history. As in the case of Falko Daim's catalogue for the historical exhibition *Reitervölker aus dem Osten – Hunnen und Awaren (Equestrian Peoples from the East – Huns and Avars)* or in the excellent volume by Ernst Bruckmüller, Ulrike Döcker, Hannes Steckl and Peter Urbanitsch, *Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie (The Bourgeoisie in the Habsburg Monarchy)*, the articles concerning Hungary are always written by Hungarian colleagues. This on first sight positive co-operation distorts our view and helps to blind us to the fact that nobody in Austria is engaged in systematic research on the history of Hungary.

Although in recent years some journals have published articles by Hungarian historians on themes from social history, cultural history or from women's studies, continuous research concerning Hungarian history is nowhere in sight. The different trends of Hungarian historiography, its different schools and its original interpretations of central issues of European history are mostly ignored. Jenő Szűcs's book of 1981 on the *Three Historical Regions of Europe*, for example, was virtually ignored in Austria until 1990, when Eric Hobsbawm in the introduction to his book *Nations and Nationalism since 1789* ranked it among the seven most important books on this topic. The fate of Szűcs's book is typical. Most Hungarian historical works only come to the attention of their Austrian colleagues after the book has gained international fame. Christof Nyiri's book *Am Rande Europas (At the Fringe of Europe)* is another case in point.

The researchers: old relatives

There are nevertheless some areas that intensively deal with Hungarian history and historiography, and where Austrian historians sometimes tackle Hungarian problems and topics. Host Haselsteiner, Friedrich Gottas, Gustav Reingrabner and Peter Haslinger are some of the noteworthy exceptions. Host Haselsteiner was born in Voivodina and besides German speaks

Hungarian and Serbo-Croat on a mother-tongue level. It is typical for most Austrian historians dealing with Hungarian topics that they come from families with strong ties to the region, be it that their families have at one time or another been expelled from eastern Europe, be it that they are Hungarians living abroad or that they are members of Hungarian ethnic minorities and thus came into contact with Hungarian history. Hungarian history was, so to say, “sung at their cradle”. Friedrich Gottas from Salzburg belongs to a second, quite untypical, group of Austrian historians that deals with Hungarian history. Gottas is one of the acknowledged historians of the small religious minority of Austrian Protestants, amounting to roughly four per cent of the country’s population. The majority of Austria’s Protestants live in Vienna and Burgenland, and they closely follow the events around the Hungarian Protestant congregations, which have played such a big role in their own history. If there somewhere is a systematic reception of Hungarian historiography in Austria, it is among the historians of the Protestant churches. The example of Gustav Reingrabner, a professor of ecclesiastical law and a leading church historian at the Protestant Faculty of the University of Vienna, demonstrates that, in spite of language barriers, the reception of Hungarian historical discourses is quite possible. That Reingrabner should occupy himself with Hungarian history is by no means coincidental. He was born in Burgenland, was a parson there and superintendent of the province’s Protestant church, and has more or less single-handedly created the 20th century Protestant church historiography of the region.

Cousins from Burgenland

The third area of Austrian historiography that exhibits a constant reception of Hungarian history and its literature is the history of the province of Burgenland. Here again we meet with the overall Austrian tradition, that problems and topics of Hungarian history are being left to be dealt with by colleagues from regional archives from western Hungary or by historians from Budapest. Burgenland’s once quite pan-German and *revanchiste* vein of historical discourse concerning Hungarian historiography and Hungarian policy has more or less dissolved during the 1970s. This has probably been due to the results of an exceptionally fruitful cooperation between Hungarian and Burgenland historians within the framework of the *Mogersdorf Symposium on Cultural History*, which has been going on for more than three de-

cares, and in which Slovene and Croatian historians have also participated. In their discussions of themes and problems of the region of Pannonia – which all participants perceive as a historically developed entity – historians from Burgenland and Steiermark have entered into an intensive dialogue with their colleagues from the neighbouring states. This cooperation, which has always been taken very seriously by all participants (the participating states and provinces sending official delegations with officially nominated leaders, the sessions being headed by boards with rotating presidents, all papers being translated into all four languages) has resulted in a serious reception of Hungarian historiography in Burgenland. During recent decades all chapters of historical works from Burgenland concerning topics of Hungarian history have been written by Hungarian specialists. Chapters on the early settlement of the region by Huns were written by Péter Tomka, those on Avars by Bálint Csanád, and articles on the development of Hungary's western border system by Endre Tóth, István Fodor and Géza Erszegi. To this day Vera Zimányi is regarded as the grand old lady of the late medieval and early modern political and socio-economic history of Burgenland. Another example of this cooperation among historians from Croatia, Hungary and Burgenland is represented by the *Schlaininger Gespräche (Schlaining Consultations)*, a conference on economic and social history, which has been going on for more than twenty years. These meetings are not for parrying arguments, but serve the discussion and evaluation of scientific literature of the different countries and regions across existing borders.

Within this cooperative framework the once hotly debated issues of the so-called “Burgenland Question”, i.e. the annexation of Burgenland to Austria in 1921, in Austrian and Hungarian discourses have acquired the status of a consensual historical perspective long overdue. The reception of the literature on the plebiscite of Sopron/Ödenburg of 1921 in Burgenland may here serve as a good example. The history of this allegedly faked, unjust and manipulated plebiscite, which left the town of Sopron/Ödenburg in Hungary, was a central element of Burgenland historiography in the inter-war period. When, in 1990, Mária Ormos published her book *Civitas Fidelissima. Népszavazás Sopronban 1921 (Civitas Fidelissima. Plebiscite in Sopron, 1921)*, in which she presented the circumstances of this plebiscite and its accompanying secret negotiations and protocols in quite a different light, no storm of indignation swept over Burgenland any longer. In the beginning some Austrian historians, who spoke Hungarian and knew the book, discreetly failed

to mention it, for example Peter Haslinger in his *Der ungarische Revisionismus und das Burgenland 1922–1923* (*Hungarian Revisionism and Burgenland 1922–1923*). Peter Haslinger's depiction of the plebiscite illustrates that in those areas of Austrian historiography where the reception of the relevant Hungarian literature did not take place, the old historical discourses of Austrian historiography still dominate the field.

Burgenland's historiography has by now without further ado accepted Mária Ormos's analysis, namely that Austria's position vis-à-vis the plebiscite was from the beginning a very weak one and first and foremost served to conceal the fact that Austria had practically already given up the town. In exchange for this, Hungary accepted Austria's annexation of the rest of Burgenland and withdrew its support for the Hungarian nationalist partisan groups still operating in the region. By 1991 the Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft (*Burgenland Research Society*) had already published a book on the history and current situation of the region, *Hart an der Grenze* (*Close to the Border*), in which two Hungarian historians, Katalin Soós und József Tirnitz, in their chapters on the Burgenland Question completely followed Mária Ormos's analysis and argumentation, which thus had been received into the official historical discourse of Burgenland.

Estrangements

Since we have always belonged together, Hungary cannot really have been that different from Austria, and Hungarians today cannot be that much different from us. Instead of closely following Hungarian events and developments, Austrian historians thus often tend to simply project Austrian circumstances onto the Hungarian situation. A good example of this was a discussion among young Austrian historians in 1991. In *ÖZG-Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* (*Austrian Journal for Historical Sciences*) a group around Franz Delapina published an article on recent developments in Hungary under the title *Die Reform frißt ihre Kinder* (*The Reform Devours its Children*). As the starting point of their analysis the authors defined "a form of social partnership called 'Kádárism'", which they characterised in the following way.

"'Kádárism' was the name of the post-1956 era, when social peace was to be established by new means. 'Who is not against us, is with us' was the slogan with the help of which one took leave from severe ideological terror, and

with the help of which, in exchange for material satisfaction, the population's renunciation of political participation was bought according to the motto: 'We rule, you buy dachas and Ladas'.¹

This depiction of a Hungarian variant of Austrian social partnership – the K. u. K., Kreisky and Kádár theme – was soon corrected by Béla Rásky, an Austrian historian from a family of Hungarian refugees of 1956.

"To call these developments a reform is as erroneous as the comparison of Kádárism with social partnership. Hungarian historiography depicts the period after 1956 (to roughly 1959) as a time of revenge and retribution (that it would later develop into Kádárism, was by no means clear). As for social partnership, it lacked the most vital element of partnership, namely autonomous social bodies. In addition, under Kádár the leading role of the Party was a must. Even after 1965 Kádárism was nothing more than a dictatorship. The real problem is, why this dictatorship was accepted by Hungarian society so quickly – and how easily Hungarian society tends to forget this today."²

Scapegoats or the Black Sheep of the Family

The characteristics of this typically Austrian view of Hungarian history are most clearly depicted in popular historical presentations. What does the Austrian reader interested in Hungary and Hungarian history find, when turning to historical handbooks and standard histories? Manfred Scheuch's *Historischer Atlas Österreich (Historical Atlas Austria)* is undoubtedly such a representative standard work. From the 1970s Scheuch had, as editor of the Social Democrat daily *Arbeiterzeitung (Workers' Newspaper)*, regularly published historical maps concerning central questions of Austrian history, which soon became used in schools. From his collected materials the author of several schoolbooks edited first a small collection and finally the first and only available historical atlas of Austria. In this volume we first encounter the Hungarians on page 23 under the heading of "Hungarian Invasions". The reader is informed that the Hungarians – a people related to the Finns – originate from the Ural regions, fled from the Petchenegs, first attacked Vienna in 881 and

1 Franz Delapina, Hannes Hofbauer, Andrea Komlosy, Gerhard Melinz, Susan Zimmerman: Ungarn: Die Reform frißt ihre Kinder. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 1991, No. 1., 110.

2 Béla Rásky: Verschwörungstheorien. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*. 1991, No. 3., 107–108.

swept across Europe in plundering and pillaging hordes, in the course of which these “barbarians” took many Christian hostages. They only held the eastern part of Austria “up to the river Enns” from 907 to 955, until the battle of Regensburg. The reader is twice assured, on page 23 and again page 26, that “The half century of Hungarian rule in Lower Austria has left hardly any traces whatsoever!”. After their conversion to Christianity and the crowning of King Stephen in 1001 the Hungarians disappear for half a millennium, only to reappear as occupying foes under their king Matthias Corvinus. “Austria’s lord for eight years: Hungary’s King Matthias Corvinus” reads the caption under his picture. Although the author mentions that after the successful siege of Vienna the king did not allow his troops to plunder the city, the government of this Renaissance prince *sans pareil* does not meet with any praise.

“The court of Matthias Corvinus was under the influence of Humanism and many Italian artists and scientist were called to Vienna. The taxation of the centralist administration was, of course, much more effective than under the messy administration of Friedrich, which the burghers did not really appreciate, just like his Hungarian followers, into whose hands Corvinus now placed the most important positions.” Austrians are hard to satisfy, even with a benevolent Corvinus and his effective administration. Therefore, as we can read further on, “after his unexpected death in 1490 his reign collapsed like a house of cards and the Habsburgs were effortlessly able to take over their hereditary lands again.” Hereditary lands obviously cannot be simply replaced by a mere house of cards.

After this the Hungarians lose the Battle of Mohács and prince Eugene of Savoy has to regain Hungary from the Turks. After 1806, the only thing to be found on the maps of the Austria historical atlas is an empire, which is not further explained. The Revolution of 1848 appears as a somewhat muddled uprising of the population of Vienna, and although there is another map showing the more important uprisings of the 1848 Revolution within the Habsburg Monarchy, no explanation is given for these. Once we reach the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, we immediately learn that this was the beginning of the end. The last sentences of the chapter, which is, incidentally, headed by a portrait of Austria’s minister president Count Beust, perfectly illustrate the dominant perception of Hungary’s role within Austrian history, even among the educated classes of Austria.

The rejection of reforms, which aimed at an equality of all nationalities, by the ruling classes of Hungary very much contributed to the destabilisation of the empire and the

*estrangement of the Southern Slavs from the Monarchy. The special status, which Hungary had attained by the Compromise of 1867, turned after the lost World War into a disadvantage, in as far as Hungary was now, in contrast to all other non-German peoples of the monarchy, regarded as a defeated nation and reduced to a small state, which had to leave millions of its co-nationals outside of its borders. This opened the door for Hungary's revisionist policy in the inter-war years that finally let the country become one of Hitler's allies.*³

That is thus the lesson, which a real Austrian learns from the Compromise of 1867. The tendency to claim that really others were responsible for the many political mistakes of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy runs like a red thread through all of Austria's popular historiography. Problematic periods, like the Revolutions of 1848, Austrian historiography either has tended to keep quiet about completely or just mentioned in passing. Austria's most popular historical handbook, Walter Kleindl's *Daten zur Geschichte und Kultur (Dates in History and Culture)* summarises the events of 1848 under the heading *Revolution in Austria* in just 24 lines.

The internal political situation in Austria actually suffered from Metternich's overwrought conservatism. The strict "Metternich System" necessarily led to circumstances rightly regarded as suppression. To the socially and economically deteriorating situation of the peasants was added the growing dissatisfaction of the bourgeoisie and the "intelligentsia", who no longer wanted to bear the intellectual limitations. This in reality "bourgeois revolution" did not seek the fall of the House of Habsburg (as in France or in the non-German speaking crown lands) but the abolition of absolutism. Personal freedom and a democratic constitution were the aims. Even Karl Marx, who in 1848 several times came to Vienna, declared, that these events had nothing to do with the "social revolution" he represented.

The supporters of the revolution were the students, the Trades Association of Lower Austria, the Juridical-Political Reading Society and the booksellers together with the printers and typesetters.

During the revolution there was no close connection between Vienna and the provinces.

Only from Styria did Vienna receive some support. In Upper Austria, Styria and the Tyrol only the regional assemblies were active. New local legislation and the land taxes were the problems.

3 Manfred Scheuch: *Historischer Atlas Österreich*. Wien, 1994, 103.

The climax and the end of the October Revolution in Vienna witnessed the most victims (about 2000 people fell during the fighting).

Since foreign elements had taken over the revolutionary radicalism, the bourgeois liberal classes and the farmers had, step by step, distanced themselves.

One success of the revolution was the so-called liberation of the farmers. Kudlich, a representative of Silesia, through the Grundentlastungspatent (abolition of hereditary serfdom) achieved the liberation of all peasants. Farmers became the free owners of their land. On the other hand, the revolution paved the way for a revision of the constitution, which, after a period of neo-absolutism, was put into effect in 1867.⁴

In my Viennese library I looked in vain for an Austrian book on the Revolution of 1848. I finally found a German edition of Emil Niederhauser's *1848 – Sturm im Habsburgerreich (1848 – Storm in the Habsburg Empire)*. The role of dissatisfied rebels in Austrian history, of the so-called "foreign elements of revolutionary radicalism", we still like to leave to others, preferably to the Hungarians.

Anecdotes

This depiction of Hungarians in popular handbooks and standard reference books can also be encountered in historical biographies. In her new biographical novel (published in Graz in 1998) *Queen Mary of Hungary* Elisabeth Tamussion fantasizes about the behaviour of the Hungarian nobles in face of the Turkish threats in 1521.

Accompanied by Andrea de Burgo she appeared in the field camp at Adony in order to visit the king and the troops. She sat on a fiery horse, which she managed superbly, a fact that naturally caused a lot of admiration among the Hungarians. Shouts of "Éljen" were to be heard, trumpets sounded, their blood and life they wanted to give for the queen, vitam et sanguinem. But as so often, the enthusiasm did not last for long. When news reached the camp that the Turkish troops were retreating, a feeling of relief pervaded, the country had been "saved" – but for how long? It was decided to turn the camp into a national assembly in order to finally vote on the necessary decisions for the country's defence. But in this as well, all that remained were good intentions.

With such opponents, of course, the Turks later had an easy day at Mohács. Ludwig dies as a hero, Zápolya – in this version of Hungarian history – becomes an "unsentimental pragmatist" and the Hungarians are once

4 Walter Kleindel: *Österreich. Daten zur Geschichte und Kultur*. Wien, 1996, 239.

again depicted as “respectable dandies”, full of good intentions and hot air, in the way we know them so well from Lehár’s operettas.

Old family pictures in new frames

Austrian historical science still has a perception of the common Austro-Hungarian history characterised by a string of interpretations that have dominated the field since the 19th century. It was mainly German liberal positions of the 19th century which had influenced Josef Redlich’s magnum opus *Das Österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem. Geschichtliche Darstellung der inneren Politik der habsburgischen Monarchie von 1848 bis zum Untergang des Reiches 1918* (*The Problem of the Austrian State and Reich. Historical Presentation of the Domestic Politics of the Habsburg Monarchy from 1848 to the Downfall of the Reich in 1918*). Many of these positions were after the Second World War – via the works of Robert A. Kann, a historian expelled from Austria in 1938 – to find their way back into Austrian historiography. This becomes especially clear in the contexts of the so-called nationality question and of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. The tone was set by the Austrian edition of Robert A. Kann’s *Das Nationalitätenproblem der Habsburgermonarchie, Geschichte und Ideengehalt der nationalen Bestrebungen vom Vormärz bis zur Auflösung des Reiches im Jahre 1918* (*The Nationality Problem of the Habsburg Monarchy, History and Ideas of National Movements from the Vormärz Period to the Dissolution of the Empire in the Year 1918*).

How these analyses of the late 19th century stubbornly persist in Austrian historiography, I would like to illustrate with two examples from recently published standard works on the history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Completely Austro-centrist in its evaluation of developments is Manfred Rauchensteiner’s *Der Tod des Doppeladlers, Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg* (*The Death of the Double-Eagle, Austro-Hungary and the First World War*). In this detailed work on the course of the First World War, the evaluation of the political background lags far behind the presentation of military aspects. To qualify Mihály Károlyi’s government as one of “radicals and pacifists”⁵ is in itself questionable, but to present a book about the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy without even mentioning one of the major works – if

⁵ Manfred Rauchensteiner’s *Der Tod des Doppeladlers, Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg*. Graz, 1994, 619.

not *the* major work – on this topic, namely Oszkár Jászi's *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago 1929) seems very strange indeed. Or did Austro-Hungary really lose the war because Hungary's war minister Béla Lindern ordered all Hungarians on the front to put down their arms?⁶ And was he really allowed to do that? It is not the unqualified historical research, which is to be criticised here, nor the unprofessional handling of historical sources, but the largely uncritical adoption of patterns of interpretation regarding these sources – interpretations that often come dangerously close to the platitudes of popular historiography.

These traditional representations determine how – apart from all historical knowledge – the Hungarian nation, the Hungarian state and the Hungarian people are being perceived by Austrians. *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa, Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie* (*A Chance for Central Europe, Bourgeois Emancipation and the Disintegration of the State in the Habsburg Monarchy*) is the title of a book by Helmut Rumpler on the 19th century, published in 1997 as part of a new, ten-volume History of Austria. In spite of a broad reception of Hungarian literature, the presentation of a number of central events (e.g. the Revolution of 1848) still remains within well-worn tracks. Right at the beginning of the chapter “Hungarian State and Hungarian Nationalism” on page 169 we find the lapidary statement “Hungary was no state and had few chances of becoming one. The Magyars had in relation to other nationalities during the course of history become a minority...”. These fundamentals and their reasons having been clarified, it will be much easier for the reader to accept many of the quite strange things to follow. On page 296 we are told that the Revolution of 1848 was actually nothing like we imagine a normal revolution to be. “The revolution of the Hungarians was a revolution of noblemen. Therein lay its grandeur and its limitations. The Hungarian nobility acted as representatives of an almost non-existent national bourgeoisie.” The events of the autumn of 1848 and the situation in Hungary are described as follows.

Batthyány withdrew from politics. Széchenyi went crazy and was put away in a mental hospital in Vienna. Esterházy sided with the Viennese Court. Eötvös went abroad. In this situation Kossuth put everything on one card and ordered the Hungarian Army to march on Vienna, in order to support the October rising there and to bring the revolution, which for Hungary he thought secured, to a successful end in Vienna as well.

⁶ Manfred Rauchensteiner's *Der Tod des Doppeladlers, Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg*. Graz, 1994, 619.

*At Schwechat, east of Vienna, the Hungarian troops were repelled by Jellačić and the commander of the imperial army ... could on the 31st of October recapture Vienna. With that the revolution in Austria was over.*⁷

Helmut Rumpler is by no means a short-sighted proponent of an Austrian position. He is one of the most original and most qualified Austrian historians, who in his evaluation of historical events is never afraid to call things by their proper name. On page 318 he characterises the “Blood Court Martial of Arad” as “brutal”, Haynau he calls a “butcher” and the death sentence for Batthyány he qualifies as an “expression of blind revenge”. Nevertheless, he remains within the traditional pattern of interpretation when he divides the Hungarian politicians into “pragmatists”, those who do not want a cessation from the monarchy, on the one hand, and “demagogues” on the other.⁸ What is blinding the latter in their judgement we learn from the author’s caption to a painting by Mihály Zichy which reads: “The Great Myth: the Hungarian Nation”.⁹

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7 Helmut Rumpler: *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa. Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie*. Wien, 1997., 303–304.

8 Helmut, Rumpler: *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa. Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie*. Wien, 1997, 520.

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PÉTER BENCSIK

Documents of Passage, Travel Opportunities and Border Traffic in 20th Century Hungary¹

Passable borders is a term that has been often used in recent years. Its significance, however, is important not only for the present and the future (cf. EU accession, Schengen, etc.), it also played an important role in everyday life in the past. People crossed borders for different reasons in certain eras and naturally the number of those crossing a border was different. Mass border crossing appeared in Hungary in modern times. Traditional agricultural societies generally have a low level of geographical mobility. Before the development of the railway system masses of people did not have the opportunity (except for military reasons) to travel a long distance outside the country. Consequently, there was no need for a large number of standard-issue passports. A reference written on a sheet of paper was widely accepted in the 1870s and that is where the Hungarian word for passport, *útlevel* (literally ‘travel letter’)² comes from.² These traditional travel

¹ This study was prepared with the financial support of OTKA Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. Project No.: D 38488.

² Originally a travel letter, i.e. a letter which one takes along when travelling. Such travel letters can be found in the Hungarian National Archives (further: HNA) R212–1. (packet 1) The travel document called passport for the first time must have been issued in 1856. It contained two sheets (four pages) in Hungarian and German. Simola, Ferenc: “Az első magyar úti okmány” (*The first Hungarian travel document*). *Országhatár*, 1996, No. 18., 43. See the history of passports of earlier times by the same author: “Az első úti tanúsítványtól az útlevelig” (*From the first travel document to the passport*). *Országhatár*, 1996, No. 7., 32–33.

letters were later replaced by small books consisting of several pages,³ which contained a personal description and, unlike previous documents, were valid not just for a single journey but several. It is worth mentioning that a passport was not necessarily related to foreign travel in the middle of the 19th century but was used inside the country.⁴ Bourgeois development established the right of free movement within the country and thus passports then became connected with foreign travel. However, it is important to note that a passport was not always needed even for going abroad at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The period of sporadic regulation, which ended in 1903, can be characterised by the fact that rules relating to travel passes were based on common law, no detailed written regulations existed; or where they did, they did not represent acts of parliament but rather regulations, which referred to practical problems.

The modern Hungarian passport first appeared in 1903. Law No. VI of 1903⁵ on the passport matter was adopted that year, and it was valid not only until the break-up of the Monarchy but was also in force during the Horthy era. Moreover it was theoretically annulled only in 1961.⁶ Beside the law on passports other important measures were adopted in 1903. Law No. VIII of 1903 on the border police⁷ and Law No. IV of 1903 on emigration.⁸ The latter was replaced by another act in 1909 (Law No. II of 1909),⁹ which was also theoretically in force until 1961. Thus issues concerning passports were first regulated in 1903. The period since then, the time of modern passports, will be discussed in the following.

Five significant periods, disregarding the years of war, can be identified in the 20th century history of Hungarian passport administration. Each pe-

3 The exercise-book format was ordered by the minister of the interior in 1877. Dienes, István: "Az útleivel hazai története" (*The story of passports in Hungary*). *Rubicon*, 1993, No.3., 26.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 23., where a photograph from a passport valid from Szamosújvár to Kolozsvár in 1856 and several more documents can be found in: HNA R212-1. (packet 1.). Ferenc Simola refers to it in an already mentioned article "Az első úti tanúsítványtól az útlevegőig", 32-33.

5 Law No. VI of 1903 on passports. (Further: law on passports) In Márkus, Dezső (ed.): *1903. évi törvénygyűjtemek*. (Laws of 1903) Corpus Juris Hungarici. Magyar Törvénytár (*Hungarian Laws*). (Further: HL.) Budapest: Franklin társulat. 1904, 78-84.

6 Decree No. 10/1961 (III.31.) of the Government. In: *Törvények és Rendeletek Hivatalos Gyűjteménye* (*Official Collection of Laws and Decrees*) (further: OCLD), 1961, p. 207.

7 Law No. VIII of 1903 on border police. HL. 1903.... op. cit., 89-94.

8 Law No. IV of 1903 on emigration. HL. 1903.... op. cit., 45-69.

9 Law No. II of 1909 on emigration HL. 1909.... op. cit., 4-29.

riod has at least one characteristic feature, which makes any one period special as compared to the others. The periods were the following:

1. 1903–1914: the first attempt to regulate the passport issue; a period of travel without a passport and of mass emigration.
2. 1914–1948: passports and visas generally become necessary; the period of short-distance close border travel.
3. 1948–1961: secret measures, almost complete closure of borders; the period of official trips and political emigration.
4. 1961–1987: the period of duality of ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ passports.
5. 1988–today: the period of world-wide passports.

What follows is a summary of the most important features of the first four periods. The aim is not to be comprehensive, rather to highlight the principle characteristics of each period.

The period of travelling abroad ‘without a passport’, 1903–1914

The first paragraph of the 1903 law on passports stated that a passport was not usually required for travelling abroad. However, the minister of the interior had the right to make passports compulsory if necessary for certain countries or even as a general requirement. Up to 1914 a partial passport obligation was in force for Romania and Serbia (on the order of the Hungarian government)¹⁰ and for Russia and the Ottoman Empire (whose governments demanded a visa, which of course was only available with a passport). Hungarian citizens could enter any other state without passports. This favourable picture seems idyllic today. However, the fact that Hungary was part of the Monarchy at the time puts it in a different light. Hungary had borders with foreign states only with Romania and Serbia, i.e. she had common borders with these states where travel was only possible with a passport. At that time the vast majority of Hungarians travelling abroad went to neighbouring countries, but Croatia,

¹⁰ The introduction of passports to be used for travel to Romania and Serbia was first mentioned by Decree No. 117.121/1898 of the Minister of the Interior. In *Magyarországi Rendeletek Tára (Collection of Decrees in Hungary)* (further CDH.), 1899. I., 1–13. After the adoption of the law on passports, this measure was reinforced by two further measures: Decree No. 3.456/1904 of the Prime Minister (CDH 1904, 604.) and Decree No. 71.500/1904 of the Minister of the Interior. (CDH. 1904, 716–729.) Passports were not obligatory for Serbia temporarily between 1910 and 1912. See Decree No. 5.380/1910 of the Prime Minister. (CDH. 1910, 603.), and Decree No. 5.951/1912 of the Prime Minister. *Belsőügyi Közlöny (Journal of Interior Affairs)* (further JIA), 1912, 429.

Austria and Galicia, which were part of the Monarchy, were not considered foreign countries. Travelling further distances, except for emigration, was still rare and only the social elite were able to afford it.

Contrary to the above, the 1903 law on emigration (passed on the same day as the law on passports) made a passport compulsory for crossing the border and in that sense it regarded the Hungarian-Austrian border (moreover the Hungarian-Croatian border line, too) as a state border.¹¹ There was obviously an irresolvable contradiction between these two laws. The traveller who was able to pretend that he was not crossing the border in order to emigrate could leave without a passport. Many took advantage and evading the measures of the law on emigration left the country illegally (i.e. without passports). The vast majority of emigrants left for the United States.

The Hungarian government did not want to limit emigration before 1914, it only wanted to have control over it, and in the interest of the emigrants themselves. However, the attempt failed because the government's action interfered with the market relations of trans-Atlantic shipping, whereby the mainly German shipping lines (Norddeutscher Lloyd, HAPAG), whose interests were violated, responded adversely.¹² In reality, factors outside the country (US immigration policy and the interests of shipping companies) largely influenced the regulations on emigration. The Hungarian government fought a strong battle with foreign companies who illegally recruited emigrants between 1903 and 1914. The state was to lose the battle from the very beginning, since it did not have the means to prevent illegal emigration. Border security was not effective, although, due to the illegal emigration, it was significantly developed before 1914, primarily by the establishment of the border police in 1903.¹³

11 2§ Law No. IV of 1903 and 2§ Decree No. 40.000/1904 of the Minister of the Interior (CDH 1904, 670.) reinforced the view that Austria was also considered abroad in terms of emigration. See Decree No. 33.926/1906 of the Minister of the Interior, op. cit. Homér, Imre: *A kivándorlásra vonatkozó törvényes jogszabályok kézikönyve (Handbook of laws with reference to emigration)*. Second enlarged edition, Budapest, 1910, 342–343.

12 The best source summarising the issue: HNA K150-1928-V-20.t. (packet 3610.), 96-page study on the history of the case of Hungarian emigration (1879–1909), without reference number.

13 See Parádi, József (ed.): *A magyar rendvédelem története. (The history of the protection of order in Hungary)*, Budapest, 1996, 79–86, and the same author: "A magyar királyi határrendőrség, a magyar határőrizet szakmai vezető testülete" (*The Hungarian royal border police, the professional leading board of Hungarian border protection*) In *A dualista Magyarország rendvédelme (The protection of order in dualistic Hungary, Scientific Conference)*. ORFK OKK, Budapest, 1992, 21–50.

Between 1903 and 1914 Hungarian emigration reached the peak of its history. The number of emigrants amounted to an annual one hundred thousand and a significant part of those left the country illegally. If only the legal emigrants are taken into account, it can be stated that the vast majority of passports were applied for by them. No wonder, contemporary public opinion practically considered emigration and passport issues as going together. This is also supported by the fact that most legal measures concerning passports adopted in that period were connected to emigration. Emigration did not, however, mean what it does today. Staying abroad for the purpose of employment for longer than a year was considered emigration in every case.¹⁴ Thus the present notion of ‘guest worker’ was included in this category. This interpretation was unchanged up to 1945 and 1948.

However, emigrants even then made up only a fraction of those who crossed the border. Traffic near the border accounted for the largest part of border crossings on the borders with Romania and Serbia. Although more people applied for passports to emigrate, these passports were (theoretically) valid for a single crossing only. Bearers of near border certificates crossed the border several times a day and thus a far larger traffic was conducted in total in this way as compared with emigration.¹⁵ Close border traffic was usually made possible by international agreements concluded by the concerned neighbouring countries.

Passports and visas become generally compulsory, 1914–48

This period is far more heterogeneous than the previous, since it is divided into several sub-periods with major differences among them,¹⁶ despite that fact that they share common features which justifies their discussing them together.

- Travel opportunities became difficult, but except for the war years, were not absolutely impossible. Travelling without a passport was no longer possible; moreover visas became generally necessary.

¹⁴ The two laws on emigration stipulated what an emigrant meant.

¹⁵ See Bencsik, Péter: “Határforgalom Magyarország és a Balkán között. 1. rész (*Border traffic between Hungary and the Balkans. Part 1*) (1903–1914)”, *Limes*, 2000, No 1., tables on p. 80–81.

¹⁶ The two world wars are included, when due to military operations temporary restrictions and special regulations were enforced. Significant differences are seen between the 1920s and 1930s as well as from 1945 to 1948, which is considered as a sub-period.

- Opportunities for emigration were restricted and by the end of the period emigration with the purpose of work ended completely. At the same time political emigration (later called defection) appeared, although it was not dominant. After 1948 the notion of emigration was limited to defection, which was insignificant in the beginning, having had a secondary significance between the two world wars.
- Close border traffic with an economic purpose made up the dominant cause for crossing the border in this period.

During and after World War I drastic restrictions came into effect and passports and visas became entirely compulsory.¹⁷ The outdated passport law was amended by several measures, but the county, area and local authorities which implemented the passport regulations were unable to follow their quick changes and the measures had to be constantly repeated. The League of Nations played an important role in solving the passport issue. International conferences on passport and emigration matters were held under its auspices from 1920 with the aim of making border crossings easier and standardising the format of passports. The attempts were crowned with some success – an international type of passport was produced, an attempt was made to introduce uniform visa regulations, etc.¹⁸

In the inter-war period the general political atmosphere exerted the decisive influence on border crossings with a non-emigration purpose. Smaller states born after the dissolution of the Monarchy wanted to prevent border crossings in the interest of their territorial stability (also for political reasons).

¹⁷ Compulsory use of passports was enforced by Decree No. 285/1915 of the Prime Minister (CDH. 1915. I., 38–40.). Visas were introduced on the basis of reciprocity with a separate measure for each country. Measures were reinforced following a war or a revolution see Decree No. 8.720/1922 of the Prime Minister (CDH. 1922, 187–188.); see HNA K72-circular and interior measures-1922 (packet 146.).

¹⁸ Bencsik, Péter: “A határátkelés szabályozása hazánkban és környező államokban (1903–1941)” (*Regulation of border crossing in our country and the neighbouring states*), In: Szemere Bertalan: *Az 1000 éves magyar rendvédelem (1000 years of protection of order in Hungary)*. Budapest: Magyar Rendvédelem-történelmi Tudományos Társaság, forthcoming. (conference lecture 8 November 2000). Original documents see HNA K72-1926 Geneva international conferences on passports (packets 143–144.) See special international conferences on emigration *ibid.* and HNA K60-1926-I/1. (packet 1.) and HNA K60-1928-I/1. (packet 14.). Contemporary information: *Magyarország és az 1924. évben Rómában tartott “Első Nemzetközi Kivándorlás- és Bevándorlásiügyi Értekezlet” határozatai. (Hungary and the Decisions of the “First International Conference on Emigration and Immigration” in Rome, 1924)* (Foreword: Count János Hadik). Budapest: Kivándorlási Tanács (Emigration Council), 1928, 74–75, and 91.

The best way was the introduction of a very strict visa policy, with which the Little Entente states tried to discourage people from travelling. Their goal was to reduce the relations between the Hungarian minority and the motherland to a minimum, thus reducing the danger of revision.¹⁹ The Hungarian government applied or tried to apply a more liberal visa policy than any of the neighbouring states. However, the reason behind this was that the Hungarian side could lose more with the restrictions than the neighbouring countries. Owing to this Hungary was obviously more vulnerable and could not always apply strict responses because those would have only helped the neighbouring countries, which, referring to Hungarian counter-measures, could have introduced further restrictions. The Hungarian authorities immediately realised this and acted accordingly. This shows that the domestic political set-up of a country did not affect (or hardly affected) the practical application of passport policy. Czechoslovakia with a more democratic domestic set-up had a Balkan-type visa policy for example in the 1920s.²⁰

Political consolidation achieved encouraging results by the 1930s; due to the interim stability neighbouring countries established a more liberal visa regime and close-border policy. The necessity of visas began to be lifted between certain states.²¹ These alleviations, however, only lasted as long as the political stability. With the appearance of another crisis restrictions were again introduced and by the beginning of World War II passport and visa obligations were again in place.²²

Concerning emigration, the largest 'pull country', the USA, began to strongly restrict immigration from 1921, introducing strict quotas for every

19 See in detail Bencsik, Péter: "A határátkelés szabályozása..." op. cit.

20 *ibid.* and HNA K72 – Our passport and visa connection with Austria, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia (packets 141.-142.)

21 Bencsik, Péter: "A határátkelés szabályozása ..." (*Regulating border crossing*) op. cit. The following measures abolished visas: Italy: Decree No. 1.730/1930 of the Prime Minister (CDH 1930, 370.); Germany: Decree No. 1.731/1930. of the Prime Minister (*ibid.*, 370–371.); Austria: Decree No. 1.732/1930 of the Prime Minister (*ibid.*, 371–373.); Switzerland and Liechtenstein: Decree No. 2.260/1930 of the Prime Minister (*ibid.*, 374–375.); Spain: Decree No. 3.980/1930 of the Prime Minister (*ibid.*, 462.)

22 HNA K72-1939. res. (packet 196.) – Decree No. 286/1939 of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Re-endorsement was enforced with all the states on 15 September. The decision was explained by the international political situation, namely with the outbreak of the war on the one hand, and on the other with reciprocity, since the other states also started to reintroduce a comprehensive visa obligation.

country.²³ During World War I emigration stopped and owing to the American quota did not approach pre-1914 quantities later. Moreover, the world economic crisis and general unemployment reduced it to zero after 1929; every state introduced protective measures in the interest of its own labour force.²⁴ It is interesting to note that the state paid disproportionately larger attention to the post-1918, far smaller emigration as compared with that of the pre-1914 era. Emigrants enjoyed appropriate state protection and supervision (i.e. via the Office for the Protection of Hungarian Emigrants and Returnees,²⁵ in contrast with attempts before World War I.

Before 1914 close border traffic took place only on the borders with Romania and Serbia. Following the Trianon Treaty, however, traffic began on the entire borders of Hungary. Unlike the pre-1914 situation when the depth of the close border amounted to 40 km, in the Horthy era only those who lived in a 10–15 km vicinity of the border were able to take advantage of this border crossing opportunity. After the war local agreements between the close border areas were concluded in the beginning, but later a government decree regulated the traffic.²⁶ Close border traffic was significant because the new border cut estates in two in many cases, but the original owners continued to have the opportunity to cultivate their land over the border. It was also

²³ Commager, Henry Steele (ed.): *Documents of American History*. Fifth edition. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, 316. and 372–374. The preparation and contents of the law are presented by HNA K71-1924-I/1.-79.533. (packet 3.). The full English text is also issued (ibid. Decree No. 64.125/1924 of the Minister of Foreign Affairs). The 1921 American legislation on immigration essentially stated that the annual number of new immigrants from any one nationality cannot exceed 3% of their compatriots already living in the USA in 1910. This was reduced to 2% in 1924 with the intention to relate the quota as compared to 1890 instead of 1910 so as to restrict further the number leaving from Central and Eastern Europe.

²⁴ In 1929, still before the economic crisis, nearly all the European countries stipulated that an official employment contract was required as a precondition of being granted a passport, which entitled the person to work (i.e. to employment) and the Hungarian representation abroad had to endorse it. Decree No. 287.823/1929 of the Minister of the Interior (JIA 1929, 732.) In addition, several measures were issued for the protection of the labour market in certain European countries.

²⁵ The earlier name was Congregational Foreign Employment Office (between 1930–1935). HNA K150-1937-V-20 (packet 3611.) - Decrees No. 114.079/1937 and 173.368/1935 of the Minister of the Interior. See also HNA P1256, its history: ibid. packet 1, lot 1.

²⁶ Decree No. 5.300/1923 of the Prime Minister. (CDH 1923, 260–273.) This was a temporary regulation. It was valid as long as inter-state agreements managed to regulate close border traffic.

important for Hungary that these so-called double landowners were mostly Hungarians, thus close border traffic played an important role in maintaining relations between Hungarians over the border and the motherland. Thus the Hungarian government was politically interested in keeping close border traffic as strong as possible. Close border traffic was regulated primarily by inter-state treaties beside various measures.²⁷ The Hungarian state did its best to ensure that borders were passable both before 1941 and after 1945. Neighbouring states (with the exception of Austria) hindered economic and passenger traffic even with close border traffic for political reasons. In many cases their goal was to force mainly Hungarian owners to sell their estates on the other side of the border. Hungary had an international dispute with Yugoslavia, which was the most determined to do away with the double-ownership system. The dispute was won by Hungary in 1934, following a decision of the League of Nations.²⁸

Hungary managed to conclude a number of new agreements despite the fact that her borders were modified several times or that several neighbouring countries bordering Hungary ceased to exist and thus new neighbours appeared on the other side of the border (Germany, Poland, Slovakia, the Soviet Union, etc.).²⁹ After World War II local agreements were first made on the basis of earlier unrepaled inter-state treaties. The locations for border crossing were fixed in every case. Dual owners continued to be allowed to cross in order to cultivate their land.³⁰

The anti-liberal shift in passport legislation in the second decade of the 20th century was clearly the consequence of World War I and the dissolution and change of central European states. Thus nationalism defeated liberalism in the matter of passports, too. Hungarian governments (at least regarding their declarations) tried to do away with restrictions but neighbouring states

27 It is impossible to list all the international agreements. See Bencsik, Péter: *A kisebb határszéli forgalom Magyarország és a szomszédos államok közt, 1898–1941, (Close border traffic between Hungary and neighbouring countries)*. *Magyar Kisebbség* (Kolozsvár), 1999, No. 2–3. (V. year., Nr. 16–17.), 357–372.

28 Bencsik, Péter: “Határforgalom Magyarország és a Balkán között. 2. rész (1914–1941)” (*Border traffic between Hungary and the Balkans. Part 2., Limes*, 2000, No. 2–3, 311–312., and by the same author: *A kisebb határszéli forgalom... (Close border traffic...)* op. cit.

29 *ibid.*

30 Sallai, János: “The Schengen system and close border traffic”, In *Schengen. Hungarian-Hungarian relations in the shadow of EU visa obligations*. Budapest: Lucidus Kiadó, 2000, 56–57. Agreements on close border traffic: see HNA XIX-B-10-VI.-1945 and 1946 (boxes 1.-2.).

were not partners to that and thus on the principle of reciprocity Hungary also introduced restrictive regulations. The difference in the passport policy between Hungary and the neighbouring countries was not, however, determined by their liberalism or anti-liberalism but by their political-nationalistic interests (the maintenance of earlier intensive relations between the parts of the Carpathian basin on the Hungarian side and its thorough obstruction on the neighbours' part). Of course Hungary cannot be said to have pursued a liberal passport policy in every respect. Among the contemporary secret measures, regulations referring to the obstruction of 'undesirable persons' travelling into the country grew as early as the 1920s. These concerned Jews in word or by implication, and following the Nazi assumption of power in Germany openly anti-Jewish passport regulations already appeared.³¹

The period of secret regulations and closed borders, 1948–1961

The period of the Rákosi dictatorship and the post-1956 Kádár reprisals is characterised by the complete lack of known passport regulations. The passport office was moved from the Ministry of the Interior to the ÁVH (*Authority of State Defence*) in September 1948 and from then on its documents are actually irretraceable. If legal measures were taken referring to passports at all, they were not published, the files of interior orders disappeared or possibly even perished. That is the reason why research into the period is so difficult and it can only be hoped that so-far shelved documents will sometime be found.

Therefore it is possible to characterise this period only briefly. The borders were tightly closed and it was practically impossible to cross into Austria via the Iron Curtain except for 1956. A broad border zone was set up towards Austria and Yugoslavia, and permission was required to enter the zone from inside Hungary. The movement of the population living in the border zone was also made rather difficult. The guarding of the borders was very strong everywhere. The opportunity for legal travel abroad reached an unprecedented low. Crossing the border from both directions was extremely difficult. Hardly 40,000 foreigners came to Hungary annually up to 1955 and fewer than 25,000 Hungarians were able to travel abroad. Official trips accounted for a significant proportion of travel and it was extremely difficult to obtain a passport for private purposes. There was no marked difference

³¹ Bencsik, Péter: "A határátkelés szabályozása ..." (*Regulating border crossing*), op. cit. Original measures can be found: HNA K72 reserved documents (packets 188–197.)

whether one wanted to go to a socialist or a western country; even 'friendly' countries demanded visas.

Close border traffic died out completely and neighbouring countries closed areas along their borders hermetically. Dual ownership of land completely ceased, the population of villages streamed into industry and Hungarians living near the border moved to towns further away. Due to the sharp political differences, close border traffic with Austria and Yugoslavia was out of the question and the same was true for the Soviet Union due to the different political culture. Even so, during the period no agreement was concluded with Romania either³² and the only exception was Czechoslovakia with which an agreement was signed in 1952.³³

In late 1956 and early 1957, with the disintegration of the ÁVH border guarding activities, more than 200,000 Hungarians fled abroad (primarily to Austria) across the unguarded borders. The Kádár regime interpreted this as illegal departure, but for political reasons it promised impunity to those who left illegally before 31 January 1957 but announced their intention to return before 31 March. During the time of reprisals no public measures were passed about passports, while at the same time the border traffic significantly rose. Exploration of these few years is also still ahead.

The period of two types of passports, 1961–1987

During this period legal measures concerning passports became public again. Unlike before 1948, tiny modifications of current regulations were relatively rare although passport rights were regularly re-regulated every few years. These new regulations were mostly passed as new edicts³⁴, government and/or Interior Ministry Decrees³⁵ in a uniform structure. Thus this period differs from that of before 1948 when the theoretically unchanged law

32 Sallai, *op. cit.*, 57.

33 Decree No. 01730/1955 of the National Commander of the Border Guard, HNA XIX-B-10-1955-VI-22 (packet 23)

34 Edict, or 'legislative measure' (Hungarian "törvényerejű rendelet", literally a 'decree with a force of a law' was used from 1949. It was issued by the Presidium of the Hungarian People's Republic instead of the Parliament and filled the role of laws.

35 Decree is a legal measure issued by a minister or the Council of Ministers. It can be 'circular decree' (körrendelet), 'implementing decree' (végrehajtási rendelet), a direction (utasítás) etc. (Further I mention it as 'decree', regardless of its type). The terms 'edict' and 'decree' are used by Sólyom-Fekete, William: *Travel Abroad and Emigration under New Rules adopted by the Government of Hungary*. Washington D.C., Library of Congress, 1979.

on passports was constantly amended by modifying measures. Getting a passport was gradually becoming less difficult and travelling abroad again became possible for large masses of people. From then on the majority of trips had no economic purpose, i.e. crossing the border to work in another country stopped nearly completely. Up to 1948 both emigration and close border traffic were motivated by economic considerations. Emigration meant permanent employment abroad, and close border traffic meant that dual landowners commuted over the border daily. From 1961 the majority of those crossing the border were tourists or travellers with the purpose of visiting friends and relatives. Close border traffic appeared again under a slightly modified name. That also had an economic aspect so far as it meant shopping tourism for many.

However, the most characteristic feature of the period was the existence of two different passports according to the destination of the trip. The 'eastern' (red) passport for socialist countries was easier to obtain and had fewer limitations than the (blue) passport valid for the rest of the world. At the beginning (until 1972) there was only one type of private passport, which was valid for both directions for a year only and allowed a single journey. Visas were needed for socialist countries just like for trips to the west.³⁶ However, in practice it was already easier to travel to socialist countries due to collective passports and passport sheets valid with identity cards. Both were either on a reciprocity basis or due to international agreements, and although they were valid for a single journey only, they made travelling to European socialist countries significantly easier.³⁷

In 1964 applying for a passport was made easier (primarily when one wanted to travel to certain socialist countries), passports and passport sheets valid with identity cards could be applied for at the area, town and district police stations and not only at the county police office. The validity of passports was extended to two years, however they were still only for a single journey a new exit visa had to be applied for any further trips.³⁸

36 Visas to socialist countries were abolished in the 1960s; for example, to Yugoslavia in 1966. See Romsics, Ignác: *Magyarország története a XX. században. (The 20th century history of Hungary)* Budapest: Osiris, 1999, 422.

37 Decree No. 1/1961 (III. 31.) of the Minister of the Interior OCLD 1961, 425–426.

38 Decree No. 6/1963 (XII. 21.) of the Minister of the Interior OCLD 1963, 206–207.

Passport matters were regulated by an edict in 1970.³⁹ Its most important statement, Par.(1) §3, stipulates that every Hungarian citizen has a right to a passport and travel abroad provided he or she satisfied the conditions determined by legal measures. Details, however, were regulated by government and ministry of interior decrees.

The validity of passports was extended to five years, trips to five socialist countries were possible several times a year (with a passport sheet valid with the identity card on the basis of bilateral agreements). However, to other countries it was possible to travel with the purpose of visiting bi-annually and with the purpose of tourism once every three years. The restriction that passport applications had to be judged by employers (the educational institution in the case of students and the interest representative organisation in the case of a self-employed person) was very important. So-called private passports could be issued for business trips, travel with the purpose of visiting (provided the inviting person ensured the financial conditions), for organised package tours, individual tourist trips with the hard currency exchange permission of the currency authority or for study trips, and employment or medical treatment.⁴⁰ Area, town and district police stations were able to issue passport sheets and collective passports for five socialist countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the German Democratic Republic and Romania). Passports could only be used for a single trip without a special permission; for a new journey a repeated exit visa had to be applied for (even to the listed five countries).⁴¹

Separate passports valid for socialist countries appeared from 1 January 1972. At the same time, passport sheets valid with identity cards filling that function before were withdrawn. The 'eastern' private passport could be valid for all the five listed countries or only for one of them; this was shown by the exit visa stamped in the passport. Several trips could be made with this passport. However, its territorial validity could not be extended to any other country. Area, town and district police stations could issue these passports.⁴²

39 Edict No. 4 of 1970 on passports OCLD 1970, 53–55. It was indicated by the fact that the increased demand to travel abroad was connected to the political, social and economic development of the country and with the advance of inter-state relations; agreements concluded especially with European socialist countries enabled large masses of people to travel abroad. Therefore it became necessary to regulate the issue at a higher level, i.e. by an edict.

40 Decree No. 4/1970 (III. 3.) of the Government on passports. OCLD 1970, 184–186.

41 Decree No. 2/1970 (III. 3.) of the Minister of the Interior. OCLD 1970, 315–318.

42 Decree No. 6/1971 (XII. 30.) of the Minister of the Interior. OCLD. 1971, 604.

From 1 January 1977 Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were added to the above-mentioned five countries and thus the eastern passport was valid for all the European socialist countries except Albania.⁴³

Regulations referring to passports were comprehensively revised for the third time in 1978 (after 1961 and 1970).⁴⁴ Passports continued to enable one to cross the border only with an exit visa; the regulations did not change concerning western countries, i.e. one trip with the purpose of visiting bi-yearly and with the purpose of tourism once every three years, but only one private trip was allowed annually irrespective of the purpose of the trip.⁴⁵ That did not refer to the passport to the seven socialist countries; several trips a year could be made. It was new that exit visas could be obtained for several trips primarily in passports for socialist countries. Other above-mentioned rules did not change, rather the earlier modifications were summarised in a uniform structure and stipulated in detail.⁴⁶

The possibility of an annual trip to the west from 1982 meant a further liberalisation.⁴⁷ It also became possible for those with a hard currency account to be entitled to travel to the west without having to have a separate hard currency allowance.⁴⁸ Collective passports were withdrawn in 1984.⁴⁹ Edict No 25. of 1987 was the next change to follow, which came into force in 1988 and introduced the world passport, i.e. withdrew the two types of passport.

During this period, legal emigration lost its significance completely. Earlier, the main reason for emigration was getting a job abroad but the free

43 Decree No. 7/1976 (XII. 11.) of the Minister of the Interior. OCLD. 1976, p. 405–406.

44 Edict No. 20 of 1978 on travelling abroad and passports. OCLD 1978, 327. The new regulations came into force on 1 January 1979.

45 Decree No. 53/1978 (XI. 10.) of the Council of Ministers on travelling abroad and passports. OCLD 1978, 476–477.

46 Decree No. 6/1978 (XI. 10.) of the Minister of the Interior. OCLD 1978, 580–583.

47 Decree No. 60/1981 (XI. 27.) of the Council of Ministers. OCLD 1981, 297. Until then, as we saw, it was possible to travel every other year for the purpose of visiting and once every three years for the purpose of tourism, on one occasion a year. Thus in a six-year period a maximum of five trips were allowed, i.e. three times with the purpose of visiting and twice as a tourist. However, from 1982 we could travel every year and did not even need an invitation letter to prove the purpose of visiting.

48 Decree No. 4/1981 (XI. 27.) of the Minister of the Interior. OCLD 1981, 435–436. Tightly regulated hard currency caused the greatest restriction on travelling to the West. The annual limit was only \$70 a year for a long time.

49 Edict No. 19 of 1982 on modification of Edict No. 20 of 1978 on travelling abroad and passports. OCLD. 1982, 219; Decree No. 38/1982 (VIII. 26.) of the Council of Ministers, *ibid.*, 353–354; and Decree No. 8/1982 (VIII. 26.) of the Minister of the Interior *ibid.*, 625–627. Despite their 1982 issue they were introduced only on 1 January 1984.

choice of employment was not ensured entirely even within the country after 1948. There were, of course, people who left the country illegally. After 1961 illegal emigration did not amount to a significant number, while in a surprising way legal measures regulated the possibilities for legal emigration. However, the theoretical possibilities most probably remained on paper only, for one thing is sure – legal emigration took place only to a negligible degree. A pre-visa from the receiving country was required for an emigration passport, while the actual emigration required a separate border crossing certificate in addition to the emigration passport.⁵⁰ Later on emigration was allowed only for those who were over 55 and were to live with a direct relative abroad and did not have any liability to maintain someone; in addition to a preliminary visa an invitation by the relative living abroad had to be attached to the passport application.⁵¹ The emigration passport was withdrawn in 1978; in its place an emigration licence or a private passport for emigration could be applied for.⁵²

Concerning close border traffic there continued to be no agreement with Austria. However, agreements were concluded with Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. A rather complicated institution, albeit entitled ‘simplified border crossing’, was introduced between Hungary and the Soviet Union. The agreements referred to the population living within a 10–15 km border zone. Crossing the border was only possible at designated border crossings (unlike the pre-1948 dual landowners’ close border traffic) and it was strongly restricted by allowing only 4–12 trips a year. Close border traffic was significant mainly to Yugoslavia, due to shopping trips and the possibility of leaving for the west.⁵³

50 Decree No. 1/1961 (III. 31.) of the Minister of the Interior OCLD 1961, 425–426. A border crossing certificate was granted provided the person did not have any public liabilities.

51 Decree No. 4/1970 (III. 3.) of the Government on passports OCLD 1970, 184–186.; and Decree No. 2/1970 (III. 3.) of the Minister of the Interior OCLD 1970, 315–318. An emigration passport was granted to those who gave up their Hungarian citizenship. If a person left Hungary for a long time while keeping citizenship a consul’s passport was granted. A border crossing certificate was still required.

52 Decree No. 6/1978 (XI. 10.) of the Minister of the Interior OCLD 1978, 580–583. Certificates specified by earlier conditions had to be acquired for both documents. The emigration licence required the person to give up Hungarian citizenship. Settlement abroad was possible while keeping Hungarian citizenship. From 1984 a travel document with a new name, a passport for living abroad, had to be applied for.

53 Agreements were concluded with Czechoslovakia in 1962, Yugoslavia in 1965 and 1967, Romania in 1969 and the Soviet Union in 1965 and 1969. Sallai, *op. cit.*, 57–58.

Border traffic expressed in figures between 1903 and 1989

How did the rapidly changing conditions and regulations effect the number of border crossings? The question can be answered with the help of statistical data. Unfortunately, however, during the long, nearly 100-year period there was not always a great care paid to the proper collection of data and they were processed from different points of view in each period. In addition, several unpublished documents must have perished during the stormy events of the 20th century, the two world wars, dictatorships and then the 1956 Revolution. Therefore a complete picture of the size of border traffic cannot be drawn.

Interestingly, the first and the last of the four periods reviewed above provide a relatively complete picture; all data characterising the periods before 1914 and after 1960 are available. For the period between 1914 and 1941 the available data concern emigration only, data from the 1940s are completely absent and from the 1950s only the number of border crossings is available, although this is for each border section.

Problems concerning pre-1914 data concern the fact that passports were compulsory only for Serbia and Romania and therefore data were collected for these border crossings. Only emigration was measured at the other borders, but the number of emigrants leaving without passports was so significant that those data cannot be considered representative. However, this is the only period whereby data on the number of issued passports are at our disposal. The number of non-emigration passports approximately amounted to an annual 50,000 and the number of emigration passports strongly fluctuated between 40 and 180 thousand, the annual average being 100,000.⁵⁴ The number of those entitled to travel was somewhat higher, since a whole family was able to travel on one passport at the time. An annual average of 80,000 was entitled to cross the border with non-emigration passports, while an average of 125,000 had the opportunity to emigrate. The majority of non-emigration passports concentrated on the borders with Serbia and Romania, while emigration passports were more scattered. The real number of emigrants always lagged behind the number of those who were issued passports; only 70–80% emigrated on average. Considering the volume of illegal emigra-

⁵⁴ Data do not include Croatia. The source for pre-1914 data if no other source is indicated: *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv. Új folyam (Hungarian Statistical Yearbook. New series) IX.-XXIII. year (1901–1915)*. Budapest: KSH (*Royal Hungarian Central Statistics Office*), 1902–1918.

tion, a comparison between overseas emigration statistics of Hungarians and the data of European ports is significant. Between 1903 and 1913, during 11 years an annual average of 95,000 Hungarians left the country legally for other continents. However, 126,000 Hungarians a year were registered in west European ports during the same period of time.⁵⁵ That is, illegal emigration accounted for about 25% of the total.

Between 1902 and 1914 the turnover at the Hungarian-Romanian and the Hungarian-Serbian borders was the following: the number of border crossings in total exceeded 11 million in 12 and a half years, i.e. it amounted to 907,000 a year. More than half of this number was attributable to Hungarians crossing the border (an average of half a million people a year). The number of Romanian citizens reached 138,000, the number of Serbs was 128,000, the rest was accounted for by citizens of other Balkan states and citizens of other states equally. Naturally there are significant differences between annual averages. The turnover evenly increased until 1910, then due to the temporary lifting of compulsory passports with Serbia and the Balkan war there was a significant drop. Zimony and Predeal were the busiest border crossing points.⁵⁶

From 1914 emigration and some of the close border traffic stopped and as a consequence statistical data were not recorded. Unfortunately this was not reversed after the war. Emigration data are again at our disposal from 1921. From then on the number of emigrants slowly increased from 1,500 a year to 10,000 (until 1929) and then fell to approximately 1,000 a year again. The majority emigrated overseas and in the 1920s in addition to the USA, Canada and partly South America were also important objectives.⁵⁷ Illegal emigration in the 1920s must have been quite significant according to the

55 Mitchell, B. R.: *International Historical Statistics*. Europe 1750–1988. New York: Stockton Press, 1992 (Third edition), 130.

56 *Statisztikai Havi Közlemények (Monthly Statistical Reports)* VI.–XVIII. Years (1902–1914). Budapest: KSH (Royal Hungarian Central Statistics Office). The 1914 data refer to the period between January and July, therefore this period covers 12 and a half years. The data are somewhat distorted since passports to Serbia were not compulsory for two years. Thus no statistical data were registered on this section between 1910 and 1912. Calculating the average by 10.5 years, Serbian citizens made 152,000 border crossings, i.e. they exceed those of Romanian citizens.

57 Thirring, G.: “Hungarian Migration of Modern Times”, In Willcox, Walter F. (ed.): *International Migrations. National Bureau of Economic Research*, New York, 1931, Vol. II., 435.; *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv. Új folyam (Hungarian Statistical Yearbook)* New series. XXVI.–L. year. (1928–1942). Budapest: KSH (Royal Hungarian Central Statistics Office), 1929–1943; HNA K60–1928–I/1.-20.457 asz. (packet 14) – Decree No. 17.101/1926 of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

data of European ports, since the number of registered Hungarians was 2–3 times as many as that of the official data.⁵⁸

Apart from the above, only the number of passports issued in Budapest between the two world wars is known. Before 1914, 5–7,000 passports were issued annually in the capital and emigration passports made up the majority. From 1919 the number of issued passports increased to 100,000 in 2–3 years and then it gradually fell to 22,000 until 1936. It is also true that passports could be extended from 1929, which meant 50–70,000 a year. Thus the number of valid passports was always above 70,000 in Budapest until 1939 (except for 1927–28). Then, owing to the consequences of restriction because of the war, it started to drop sharply.⁵⁹ Naturally, from the municipal data far-reaching conclusions cannot be drawn for the whole country, especially if we take into account that most border crossings were effected by close border traffic, which Budapest's population could not take advantage of.

Statistical data on border traffic are available again from 1951 and they are at our disposal ever since.⁶⁰ Since earlier data go back to pre-1914, when passports were not compulsory at all the Hungarian borders, and also the borders changed entirely, the two sets of data can only be compared with utmost care. After 1951 the available data are only partial because they register Hungarians travelling abroad and foreigners coming to or crossing into Hungary. That is another reason why the pre-1914 and post-1951 data cannot be compared.⁶¹

The number of foreigners entering Hungary in 1951 totalled a mere 37,000 and remained thus for a few years. Then it increased to 100,000 in 1955 and 200,000 in 1956. Between 1958 and 1963 it increased by about 100,000 annually (921,000 in 1963) and from then on it dramatically grew. 1.8 million in 1964, 4.3 million in 1967 and more than 6 million visitors entered Hungary annually between 1969 and 1972. There was another significant increase between 1973 and 1978, when the number of foreigners enter-

58 Mitchell: op. cit., 130. The proportion of illegal emigrants dropped to 20–30% in the 1930s.

59 *Budapest Székesfőváros Statisztikai Haviüzetei (Budapest Municipal Statistical Monthlies)*. XXV.-LIX. years. (1907–1941). It is noticeable how few owned a passport in the inter-war period in Budapest's more than 1 million inhabitants.

60 All further data can be found in the volumes published between 1958 and 1989 of the *Statisztikai Évkönyv (Statistical Yearbook)*. Budapest: KSH (Central Statistics Office), 1960–1990.

61 The entry by Hungarians and the exit of foreigners would be included in the whole border traffic. No such data exist, therefore it is only possible to estimate that the number of Hungarians equals those returning and also that foreigners who entered Hungary also left. (Data registered before 1914 included Hungarians who returned and foreigners who left.)

ing Hungary reached 16 million. Then it fluctuated between 10 and 16 million when it started to grow again (19 million) in 1987.

Except for 1956, the number of Hungarians travelling abroad was always smaller than that of foreign visitors. Between 1951 and 1954 it was between 18 and 25 thousand while in 1955 it was 100,000 and in 1956 it sharply increased to 270,000 (partly due to emigration). Following a temporary fall-back it amounted to 570,000 by 1963 and then in 1964 the number suddenly jumped to 1.4 million. Then there was a dramatic fall and it reached one million again only in 1970. The figures show a dynamic growth until 1978 (then 5.4 million Hungarians travelled abroad), followed by a stagnating period until 1985. A steady increase began in 1986 (7.2 million in 1987 and 10.8 million in 1988 – that was the year when the world passport was introduced).

From 1958 data are available on whether foreigners arrived from socialist or other countries and also whether Hungarians travelled to socialist countries or others. Until 1981 socialist countries accounted for 80% in both respects. Moreover, concerning Hungarians travelling abroad, the proportion going to socialist countries fell under 80% only in 1988 (then, however, it fell under 70%, which was also the result of the introduction of the world passport). Since 1956 data have been registered on the number of travellers from and to more important countries. Data show the monthly border traffic since 1957 and the number of tourists within the total of travellers since 1966. 30% of foreigners entering Hungary arrived from Czechoslovakia on average. It is striking that citizens of the Soviet Union and Romania representing over 10% from among citizens of other socialist countries earlier reached a decreasing proportion from 1964; for decades their share was 3–5%. The proportion represented by Yugoslavia sharply fluctuated between 1.6% and 30%, but it was around 10% on average. From the 1970s, citizens of the GDR and Poland reached a proportion of over 10%. Until 1970 most visitors arrived from Austria from among western countries, following that year a turn was made in favour of citizens coming from the FRG. These two countries took up the first two places among visitors arriving from the west.

More than 30% of Hungarians going abroad travelled to Czechoslovakia for decades. No other country reached a proportion higher than 10% continuously, only for some time (i.e. Yugoslavia from 1966 to 1980, Romania between 1981 and 1987, and Poland and the GDR for shorter periods of time). Austria's share of 25% in 1988 is striking (the beginning of Hungarian shopping trips). Political effects can be seen in certain cases; i.e. more than half

a million Hungarians travelled to Poland in 1980, but only 180,000 in 1981 and 50,000 in 1982. This was obviously the result of the state of emergency there and the political crisis.

In summary, it can be stated that the general political situation has influenced border traffic more than regulations concerning passports in the narrow sense. Between 1903 and 1948 external effects were the most important factors – in the beginning the American immigration laws and the emigration publicity of the western shipping lines, later the discriminative visa policy of the Little Entente countries afraid of revision. After 1948 the restrictive factors were partly exterior and partly domestic – the dictatorship did not allow the movement of large masses across the border. During the soft dictatorship factors restricting travel abroad gradually disappeared and that led to a rapid growth in border traffic. Of course, other reasons played a role in all this: society has completely changed and modernised, and international tourism gained great importance from the 1960s, something which would have been unimaginable in the Monarchy and also during the Horthy era.

ABBREVIATIONS

- HNA – Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Országos Levéltár, MOL)
 HL – Hungarian Laws (Magyar Törvénytár)
 CDH – Collection of Decrees in Hungary (Magyarországi Rendeletek Tára)
 JIA – Journal of Interior Affairs (Belügyi Közlöny)
 OCLD – Official Collection of Laws and Decrees (Törvények és Rendeletek Hivatalos Gyűjteménye)
 HOP – National Commander of the Border-Guard (Határőrség Országos Parancsnoka)
 KSH – Central Statistics Office (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal)

MIKLÓS ZEIDLER

Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Inter-war Period

The Trianon Peace Treaty was a central issue in public life in Hungary in the inter-war period. Pain over the loss and a desire for revenge permeated political, economic and social discourse. The most important institutions, which defined and controlled public speech, were government bodies and social organisations of the right and extreme right. Of course, the population's spontaneous reactions should not be underestimated, but in an age witnessing the formation of modern mass society, the broad public was considered as a recipient rather than a directing medium. The public's typical attitude and reaction was seen in its degree of acceptance or refusal of political declarations –taking the initiative did not characterise it.

The inter-war irredentist public atmosphere was a factor, which the official politics had the opportunity to utilise, neglect or stifle. The controllers of public life grasped the first, instinctively and consciously at the same time and thus the content and tone of the dominant anti-Trianon emotions were defined by domestic propaganda with the government's approval or even exactly to its liking. In this way, general public opinion actually became a projection of the propaganda, and voices pointing to moderation seemed to be dissonant.

Under these circumstances public thinking was basically defined by simplifying voices, which, on the one hand, provided an understandable, comforting and self-absolving explanation for the break-up of historical Hungary and, on the other, they offered a tempting programme for a triumphant and deserved territorial revision. The formula of a honest victim and a cruel enemy was suitable for demonising opponents and at the same time it, so to say,

“tamed down” the problem (the partition of the country) insofar as it put it on a moral level, away from the world of political realities.

Instead of realistically exploring the causes and consequences, the mythical concept aimed at a national self-therapy and mobilisation, made public thinking schematic and public opinion more uniform. As a result of the latter, the verbal symbols and symbols of images and objects, *toposes*, which were able to have a lasting effect with their disarming commonplaces, strength and repetition, appeared in everyday life, too.

The symbol stock of Hungarian irredentism can be divided into three types. The simplification of Christ’s sufferings was the first and most general: according to this Hungary gets in the hands of false judges and the unfaithful, goes through the Way of the Cross, is crucified, is humiliated and remains alone, but will soon resurrect gloriously.¹

Fictitious parallels with the 1848–49 Revolution and War Of Independence dominated the second type: Hungarians unite in an exemplary, sublime national independence movement, which gains the whole world’s respect and many great personalities independently of their nationality stand by the Hungarian cause. The basis of the third type was making the twin symbols of the conquest-home-defence relevant: the hero conquering the homeland defends it audaciously against the enemy and robbers, then protects the Idea from faithless hordes threatening the country, which had become Christian; he does not mind his own fate and this self-sacrifice makes him suitable for eternal rebirth.² It can be seen that these symbols supplemented each other at

1 Worth noting is how closely related to this is, on the one hand, the preaching tradition of the early modern age, and, on the other, the passion parallel of the Hungarian *National Anthem* written in the Reform Age about a hundred years before: “God punishes his chosen people most severely → because he wants to try them → thus we must bear our suffering with patience → for if we are found sincere → God has great plans for us, his chosen people”. See Hankiss, Elemér: *Társadalmi csapdák. Diagnózisok. (Social Traps. Diagnoses)*. 2nd Ed. Budapest: Magvető, 1983, 350.

2 There was another symbol based on the darkness-light dichotomy offered by Manicheism; however, it is such a characteristic symbol of every conflict situation that connecting it specifically to revisionism would be a mistake. About the whole issue see Pallós, Lajos: *Területvédő propaganda Magyarországon, 1918–1920. (Territory protection propaganda in Hungary 1918–1920)*. PhD thesis at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 1995. chapter “A területvédő propaganda érvrendszere” (*Arguments for territory protection propaganda*), also Zeidler, Miklós: “A Magyar Revíziós Liga” (*The Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League*). *Századok*, 1997, No. 2., 30–31. Cf. the so-called religions of complaint analysed by Canetti, Elias: *Tömeg és hatalom (Mass and Power)*. Budapest: Európa, 1991, 145–148.

certain cross-points, moreover they amalgamated. It was even more important, however, that all three symbol systems were absolutely suitable for being romanticised, since extremities met in all of them when the real hero is bleeding under the attack of the cruel enemy, but does not fail for ever. Moreover, he rises with greater glory than before.

*

Commemorating Trianon on certain state holidays and at semi-official meetings started to become a practice from the beginning of the 1920s. The ceremonial occasions were provided by Saint Stephen's day on 20 August, the Commemoration of Heroes on the last Sunday in May (a state holiday from 1926), 4 June (anniversary of the signing of the Trianon Peace Treaty), middle of November (withdrawal of the Romanian army from Budapest and the entry of the National Army, and the ratification of the Peace Treaty) and 6 December (Regent Miklós Horthy's name day).

The cult of irredentism aimed to "seize" public places in varied ways. Monuments relating to the revenge policy already began to appear in the beginning of the 1920s. The so-called irredentist statues symbolising the broken off parts of the country were erected in a central square of Budapest, Szabadság tér, in January 1921. These allegories of *West*, *North*, *East* and *South* were dominated by heroic and romantic images and historical symbols laid on thick. The figure tumbling on the holy crown in the statue entitled *West* was holding the coats of arms of the lost counties in his right and a shield with the double cross in his left hand. A turul bird was resting at his feet. On the three-figure composition of *North* a Slovak boy seeking protection was leaning on a crucified Hungaria and a well-built Kuruc soldier was protecting both with his sword. The allegory of *East* depicted chieftain Csaba in a heroic pose as he was liberating the symbolic figure holding Transylvania's coat of arms. On the statue entitled *South* there was a strong-muscled Hungarian man embracing and protecting a Swabian girl, who symbolised the southern region. A wheat sheaf was lying at their feet, symbolising the rich land of Bácska and Bánság counties.

The statues formed a semi-circle and in the middle was placed the Nation's Flag with pro-Hungarian quotations from the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and the British press magnate Viscount Rothermere, which was unveiled on 20 August 1928. It recalled the conquest, territorial integrity and the glorious and painful events of Hungarian history. (*picture 1*)



Picture 1
Picture card of the
National Flag
(1928)

Hungarian National
Museum, Contemporary
Section, Picture Card
Collection, No. 96.100

It was also on Szabadság tér that the *Statue of Hungarian Grief* (the work of French sculptor Émile Guillaume), a nude bronze figure of a mother, who radiated despair and unprotectedness, mourning for her children was unveiled on 6 October 1932 (on the national day of mourning commemorating the execution of 1848–49 Hungarian leaders). Then the statue of General Harry Hill Bandholtz, who in 1919 as the commander of the American military mission in Budapest prevented a corps of the Romanian army from taking art objects from the National Museum, was unveiled in 1936. With their complex system of symbols and indirect references, the monuments of the “irredentist pantheon” in Szabadság Square not only intended to express the bereave-

ment of the Hungarian nation, but also aimed at showing the sympathy for Hungary of the world's leading powers' (Great Britain, Italy, France and the USA – but not Germany).³

Monuments in a similar spirit were also set up in other parts of the capital. *The well of Hungarian Justice* in honour of Lord Rothermere was erected at the end of 1928. It depicted a young woman symbolising Hungary as she, looking for help, was leaning on Justitia, the goddess of justice, who held a sword in one hand and scales in the other. Rothermere himself had a statue in memory of Jenő Rákosi, a prolific revisionist journalist, erected two years later.

In addition to the above, several irredentist monuments were erected in the suburbs of Budapest and in the provinces. As a result of the movement led by the Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League among others, Flags of the Nation as reminders of Hungary's territorial integrity had been set up in approximately every fifth settlement of the country (more than 700) by the end of the 1930s, and the League erected so-called Trianon crosses in several villages by the border from autumn 1932. Sopron, which was returned to Hungary as a result of a referendum in December 1921, unveiled a Rothermere statue, the only one in the country, in December 1929.

The irredentist theme likewise appeared in the names of public places. From the 1920s, many streets and squares in Budapest and its suburbs were named after places and regions of pre-Trianon Hungary. Although there was a regulation which stipulated that a public place in Budapest could be named after someone only ten years following his or her death, the vanguardists of territorial revision were often treated as exceptions. Public places were named after Regent Horthy, the prime minister István Bethlen, the peace delegate Albert Apponyi and others while they were still living. Soon streets and squares received the names of Mussolini, Hitler and Rothermere, who supported the cause of Hungarian revision.

Huge events with great publicity, which provided consolation and a programme for public opinion through emphasising national virtues and showing intellectual and spiritual strength, played an important role in maintaining and strengthening the irredentist cult in Hungary. These were often

3 Pótó, János: *Emlékművek, politika, közgondolkodás (Monuments, Politics, Public Thinking)*. Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 1989, 26–28, 31–33, 36–38 and Zeidler, Miklós: *A magyar irredenta kultusz a két világháború között (The Hungarian Irredentist Cult in the Inter-war Period)*. Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2002, 16–26.

aimed, either directly or indirectly, at gaining the attention and sympathy of foreign countries.

After Lord Rothermere had published his article *Hungary's Place in the Sun*, which suggested the ethnic readjustment of borders in favour of Hungary, and had begun his pro-Hungarian press campaign, an organised popular movement started in Hungary to celebrate the lord. It had to be calmed by the government so that it would not create a counter-reaction from France and the Little Entente.

The first Hungarian trans-Atlantic flight stood out from among several events intended to be spectacular, such as stately receptions, wreath-laying and other ceremonies, and the publication of grandiose revisionist albums and their dispatch to influential politicians. Having broken several world records, pilot György Endresz and navigator Sándor Magyar successfully flew across the Atlantic in July 1931. Their aeroplane was called *Justice for Hungary* so that their performance would call the world's attention to Hungary's cause.⁴

Besides direct political actions, Hungarian irredentism also employed other tricks. Using the results achieved by Hungarian science, arts and sport for propaganda aims was characteristic. Literature and art proved to be more awkward due to the difficulty of comparison and the lack of international prizes, but scientific inventions and Albert Szent-Györgyi's Nobel prize, and Hungarian sporting victories at world championships, especially at the Olympic Games, provided plenty of "evidence" for the outstanding nature of the Hungarians. For example, the Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League had separate sports sections in its foreign language propaganda journals and published all the considerable Hungarian sports achievements from water-polo through football and fencing to chess. The success of double gold medallist at the Athens Olympic Games, Alfréd Hajós, who came first in his category with his architectural design entitled *The Ideal Stadium* at the intellectual Olympic Games in Paris in 1924, provided similar evidence of Hungarian physical and intellectual excellence.⁵ Further good results at other international competitions and especially the ten gold medals at the Olympic Games in Berlin 1936 and the third place achieved in the international rank-

⁴ Their story is reported in detail in Magyar, Sándor: *Álmodni mertünk. (We Dared Dream)* Budapest: Révai [1941], and Vásárhelyi, Miklós: *A lord és a korona (The Lord and the Crown)*. Budapest: Kossuth, 1977.

⁵ Hajós actually received only second prize, but since no first prize was awarded he won anyway. Contemporaries explained the discrimination with reference to the jealousies of the French.

ing after the Germans and Americans raised Hungarian sport to nearly heroic heights – at least in propaganda publications.

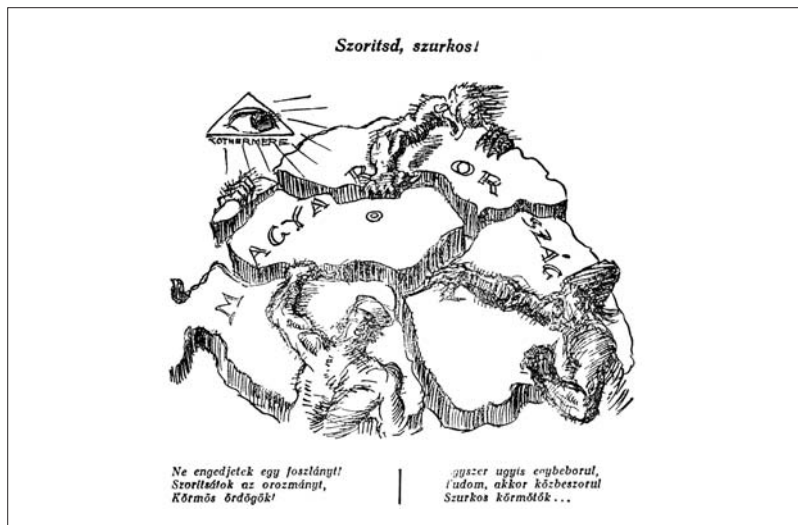
The mythical and cultic components of irredentism reached the general public in a less individual and ceremonial form. The first slogans, such as “That’s how it was; that’s how it will be” and “No! No! Never!” appeared already between 1918 and 1920. Later others proclaiming „Everything back”, „Hungarian justice”, „Hungarian resurrection”, „Broken Hungary is no country; whole Hungary is heaven”, the „Hungarian Credo” and others joined them, and these received an official character.

However, Zoltán Várady, a Catholic priest who experienced his being Hungarian intensively, had a completely individual initiative. He developed a new form of greeting to deepen patriotic feelings, which he published in a special booklet in 1938. The detailed description, the adjoining poems and the included photograph tell us that in order to greet someone in an irredentist way the person must make a small step forward with his right foot, lift his right hand with the open palm turned inwards and with a friendly look say “Resurrection!” or “Justice!”, to which the other person will answer with similar motions “May God grant it!”. With this Várady wanted the irredentist idea to reach every Hungarian and “the flames in the souls” to burn “the indifference in the hearts and the obstacles of new and imaginary borders. This pillar of flame with its huge strength, the flame of Hungarian irredentist greeting will light the dark Hungarian night until the day of ‘Justice’ and ‘Resurrection’ comes.”⁶ (picture 2)



Picture 2. Father Zoltán Várady displays his irredentist greeting (1938) *Várady* 1938. 1.

⁶ Várady, Zoltán: *Irredenta (revíziós) magyar köszönés (Irredentist or revisionist Hungarian greeting)*. Kaposvár, 1938, 6–7.



Picture 3. Szorítsd, szurkos! (Seize it, brigands!) – caricature (1927)
Magyarság August 29, 1927. 9.

Linking the idea of Christianity, primarily Catholicism, and that of revision was characteristic besides applying these slogans. The parallels were often used in newspaper articles, at services and political functions, and they increased in number especially during the Rothermere campaign at the end of the 1920s. For example, former prime minister and Christian-socialist politician Károly Huszár compared Rothermere to Simon of Cyrene carrying Christ's cross, by which he forced the British lord and Hungary into the passion story. With the help of similar imagery, journalists began with the “ten commandments of revision” and via Rothermere’s “first step of apostolic strength” arrived at the statement that the lord “blew the trumpet of the modern day of judgement” and “wrote of the salvation on the Hungarian sky in blazing letters”.⁷ There was even a cartoonist who depicted Rothermere as God.⁸ (picture 3)

⁷ For example, *Budapesti Hírlap*, 28 June 1927, 17 July 1927, Rákosi, Jenő (ed.): *Trianontól Rothermereig. A magyar hit könyve* (From Trianon to Rothermere. The Book of Hungarian Belief). Budapest: Horizont, 1928, 6.

⁸ *Magyarság*, 29 August 1927, 9.

Linking the idea of irredentism with Christianity could be best seen in the construction of the Catholic church in Ferdinánd (today Lehel) tér. With the help of first János Csernoch, then Jusztinián Serédi, as Esztergom Primate, the parish of Blessed Margaret of the Árpád dynasty, founded in 1925, was promised its own church. The final decision was made at the height of the Rothermere campaign in 1928 and already then, the idea was raised of theoretically connecting “the construction of the church with the thought of Revision; thus the church to be built would be the church of the idea of Revision as a practical result”. The church construction committee led by Archbishop Serédi wanted to represent the link in a visible form and after an exchange of letters with Rothermere decided that the “Catholic church will be decorated by the coat of arms of the Scottish lord, who belonged to the Church of England, thus making it a monument of the national idea”.⁹ Hymns at the consecration of the church on 15 October 1933 would be “offered to the benevolent God”. An ornamented stained glass window was placed in the northern aisle of the church in honour of Lord Rothermere, who himself was one of the church’s benefactors. The window with the inscription “Viscount Rothermere 1933” and the lord’s coat of arms and motto (“Bene qui sedulo” – “He who works diligently does well”) can still be seen.¹⁰

Schools just like churches also spread the idea of irredentism. The spirit of territorial integrity impregnated all levels of education in the inter-war period, which was accompanied by the idea of counter-revolution, an emphasis on the Christian-national ideal and the idealisation of historic Hungary. Educational policy considered the irredentist idea as an important part of not only history teaching but of the whole school education and the syllabus transformed the slogans of propaganda into historical arguments, especially in junior classes.¹¹ As a leading politician of education, Gyula Kornis said on

9 Aladár Pirovits: “A fogadalmi magyar revíziós templom”. (*The Hungarian revisionist votive church*) *Vállalkozók Lapja*, 10 October 1928, 6.

10 It may have been deliberate that the window was placed near those stations of Christ which could be clearly connected to Rothermere. At the 5th station Simon of Cyrene takes the cross of suffering from Christ at the Roman soldier’s command, while the 7th station depicts Veronica as she is trying to ease the pain and offering a soothing cloth to the Messiah.

11 Unger, Máttyás: *A történelmi tudat alakulása középiskolai történelemkönyveinkben a századfordulótól a felszabadulásig*. 2. kiadás. (*Perspectives on historical knowledge in secondary school history textbooks from the turn of the century to 1945*). 2nd edition, Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1979, 87–99., 185.

behalf of the National Association of Hungarian Secondary School Teachers in 1921: “All the national subjects (Hungarian language, history, geography and economic studies) in the curriculum of our schools must focus on one axis: on a whole Hungary. We must create *the most effective education of irredentism*”.¹²

These educational goals were implemented in schools and textbooks were also written in the same spirit. One of the most popular secondary school textbooks of the period specified four great national catastrophes preceding Trianon: the battles of Augsburg (955), Muhi (1241) and Mohács (1526), and the surrender at Világos in 1849. “The nation was threatened with final destruction by each, but it experienced a resurrection after all of them.”¹³ Parallels could be found for the providential remedy of unjust situations in European history, such as the expulsion of the Turks, the rebirth of Poland and, indirectly, even the example of Alsace-Lorraine. The last mentioned served as a pattern for Hungarian textbook publishing in as much as *revanche* was a separate chapter in French school textbooks for forty years before World War I.¹⁴

The Treaty of Trianon, revision and irredentism were regularly raised in school tests, essays and themes for the matriculation examinations. Nearly one third of written matriculation essays on history (and partly on literature) are likely to have been concerned with the issue, either directly or indirectly, during the Horthy era.¹⁵

In schools special functions were devoted to various revisionist organisations, which were also supported by fund raising. The programmes of school ceremonies regularly included the most well-known irredentist poems. At the beginning and the end of a school day pupils had to recite the *Hungarian Credo*, which won the first prize of a patriotic poetry competition organised by a Hungarian revisionist organisation in 1920.

12 Kornis, Gyula: “Kultúrpolitikánk irányelvei. I–II.” (*Directives for Cultural Policy I–II*) *Új Magyar Szemle*, March 1921, 285–310. and April 1921, 12–28., 303. (Emphasis in the original) Quoted by Unger, op. cit., 93–94.

13 Madai, Pál–Koch, István–Németh, József: *Világtörténet IV. A legújabb kor története a középiskolák VII. osztálya számára.* (*World History IV. The History of the Modern Age for grammar school class VII*). Budapest: Franklin, 1930, 80. Quoted by Unger, op. cit. 186.

14 Unger, op. cit., 185–186.

15 Cf. Jáki, László (ed.): *Érettségi tételek történelemből, 1851–1949* (*Matriculation Themes in History, 1851–1949*). Budapest: Országos Pedagógiai Könyvtár és Múzeum, 2000, 27–57.

*I believe in one God,
I believe in one Homeland,
I believe in one divine eternal justice,
I believe in the resurrection of Hungary.
Amen.*

With various measures the minister of culture called the attention of educational institutions from time to time to the publication and purchase of items “which are very suitable for awakening, developing and strengthening the patriotic spirit” (volumes of poetry, shorts stories, books of songs, films and maps).

The authors of these literary pieces included everyone from self-appointed amateurs to representatives of high culture. Thus irredentist literature was present in works of very different standards. The majority comprised unambitious and unwitty works (plays, poems, odes, songs, short stories and fables!), but outstanding poets and writers of the period also published writings expressing the pain arising over the loss of historic Hungary. The latter not only raised the artistic level of “Trianon literature” but also provided it with a content that was more suitable for treating the trauma of Trianon than the negative and complaint-based irredentism experienced in mass literature. Common tradition, language, culture and history as nation-forming and maintaining forces received a great emphasis between the two world wars since they involved a primary cohesive factor, whereas previously in the multi-national historic Hungary national consciousness for Hungarians was strengthened by belonging to the state, the country and the power unit. Following the break-up, intellectual-cultural factors, which were outside the direct power and administrative network and stretched over political borders, necessarily received a greater role in maintaining national unity. The government itself was in the lead in an operative way, since it provided financial and political support for Hungarians over the borders and their organisations. However, literature also contributed to maintaining the (spiritual and intellectual) unity of the nation through the means of culture. The trend of “Trianon literature”, which represented a patriotism open to the outside and strengthened the idea of a central European togetherness, was significant not only from the perspective of literary history, but also from that of political thinking.¹⁶

¹⁶ Cf. Pomogáts, Béla (ed.): *Querela Hungariae. Trianon és a magyar irodalom (Trianon and Hungarian literature)*. Budapest: Széphialom, 1996, 13–14.



Picture 4

Lord Rothermere azt üzen-
te... (Lord Rothermere sent
the message...) Budapest,
Zipser és König, 1928 – cover
of the sheet music (1928)

Irredentism infiltrated the world of music, too. There were plays, which were performed with irredentist songs, and the number of songs composed and written in that spirit amounted to hundreds. They were usually march-like or sad pieces, but revision as a topic appeared even in popular dance music. Alongside fashionable foreign hits, love, frivolous or pub songs, the sounds of “patriotic foxtrot” also filtered through from bars.¹⁷

Among the curiosities were Lajos Krajcsi’s and Imre Koltay’s Transylvanian march entitled *Despite it All*, which the composers instrumented for a jazz orchestra (!) and József Radó’s and Irén Sass’s *Lord Rothermere Sent the Message...* (an obvious reference to the *Kossuth song* hailing the great Hungarian revolutionary leader of 1848–49). The latter was especially glamorous for its striking colourful cover, which depicted Rothermere, who in reality was stocky and nearing 60, as a heroic knight in full armour, protecting a Hungarian warrior with a broken sword and lying on the ground with his shield depicting a lion and a flag of the Virgin Mary tied to the apostolic cross. (picture 4)

¹⁷ The expression was used in a TV interview by the popular comedian László Kazal, who himself performed irredentist songs in the 1930s and 1940s.

The irredentist theme, however, became part of everyday life not only through cultural productions but also in the culture of objects. Various irredentist products appeared already in the early 1920s and by the end of the decade their number and range increased. The characteristic motifs soon appeared not only on souvenirs but also on consumer goods. These objects bearing various symbols and brand-names of irredentism also helped to maintain the anti-Trianon atmosphere and transformed the most banal everyday duties into a patriotic gesture.¹⁸ Both individual high quality and mass produced articles with the irredentist “message” were sold and were available for those who desired them. The head of a family with irredentist feelings, if he felt like it, could pour soda water in his wine from a soda bottle with the inscription “No, No, Never!” (*picture 5*), use an irredentist ashtray and keep his valuables in a decorative box with the outline of historic Hungary. There was an irredentist candleholder on his table, he presented his children with a puzzle depicting historic Hungary and when the school year started he bought them “No, No, Never!” pencils (*picture 6*) and irredentist exercise books. He had a neck chain with a locket containing soil from the lost territories, and placed an irredentist placard on his front door proclaiming the “No! No! Never!” of the Hungarian National Alliance and which he secured with “National drawing pins”. He sent his foreign acquaintances illustrated cards showing the lost territories and the face of his table clock was



Picture 5. Irredentist soda bottle (1932)

Hungarian National Museum,
Contemporary Section, Glass and
Ceramics Collection, No. 80.1.1.

¹⁸ The word “revision” itself became a brand name. Márton Kneisl launched his new copier under this name. An advertisement of the Hungarian Airlines Share Co. (MALERT) carried a similar content, something approximating “May Again Look Easily Round Transylvania”, such that the first letters of the words corresponded to the abbreviated name of the company. (Éva Kovács drew my attention to the above example, for which I am grateful.)



Picture 6. „No! No! Never!” pencil (1940s). Hungarian National Museum, Contemporary Section, Single Objects Collection, Nos 83.94.1 and 94.29.1.



Picture 7. Irredentist wall hanging (1940)

National Széchényi Library, Small Prints Collection

decorated with the *Hungarian Credo*. At commemorations on 4 June he pinned a Trianon mourning badge on his lapel, irredentist wall hangings decorated his flat (picture 7) and if he could afford it he purchased apprentice school teacher Rezső Vértés's eosin statuette entitled *Hungary's Bouquet*, which at first sight was an ordinary flower composition but if suitably lit it cast the shadow of historic Hungary on the surface below. (picture 8)



Dressing in a Hungarian way became fashionable in the inter-war period. A specific Hungarian national costume developed from the end of the 16th century. It flourished in the 17th century then lost its significance at the time of consolidation in the 18th century. It revived in the 19th century and expressed an anti-Habsburg stand. The style, which was surprisingly long-lived, became old-fashioned by the end of the 19th century. However, it reappeared in the inter-war period since defeat in the war and “bereavement over Trianon again called forth the demand to express patriotism with suitable apparel”.¹⁹

Picture 8. Rezső Vértés: Magyarország csokra (Bouquet of Hungary)

A movement aimed at promoting the fashion of dressing in a Hungarian way first appeared in the summer of 1920 then reappeared with a much stron-

19 Dózsa, Katalin F.: “A Muskátli című kézimunkaujság és a magyaros öltözködési mozgalom az 1930-as években” (*The handicraft magazine called Muskátli and the movement of dressing in a Hungarian way in the 1930s*). *Ethnographia*, 1989, No. 1–4., 332.



Picture 9. Hungarian dresses – Catalogue of the Reich brothers (November 1934)

Hungarian National Museum, Contemporary Section, Dress Collection, No. 1973. 219.

costumes were worn in everyday life. There is a photograph from the 1930s that was taken at a fancy dress party or a fashion show in the town of Csongrád. The lady wearing the “Mourning Hungaria” outfit has a stylised holy crown on her head and is holding a small coat of arms with the crown in her hand. Five daggers protrude from a huge heart on the black dress, symbolising Christ’s five wounds and territories lost by Hungary in the west, north, east, south and by the Adriatic Sea. (picture 10)

With time “irredentism” and “revision” became so much part of everyday life that it even grew particularly fashionable, moreover sellable in a com-

ger force in 1933.²⁰ In that spirit the Association of Social Organisations, which integrated patriotic associations in Hungary, held a competition in the autumn of 1933 for designs “in the Hungarian national spirit”, after which Hungarian fashion shows and exhibitions were organised annually. Several fashion magazines published pictures of the models and the designs appeared in shows and shop-windows, too. (picture 9) The most popular fashion designer, Klára Tüdős opened a Hungarian fashion shop with the name “Pántlika” (*Ribbon*) in the city centre.

Dressing in a Hungarian way characterised the whole country, though this did not necessarily mean that the cos-

20 Dózsa, Katalin F., op cit. and Sedlmayr, Krisztina: *Magyaros ruhahozzámó az 1930-as években* (*The dressing in a Hungarian way movement in the 1930s*). PhD thesis at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 1996.

mercial sense. The market success of irredentist mass products showed both the strength of the cult behind them and the success of indoctrination. By purchasing the irredentist articles a buyer not only obtained consumer goods but also expressed himself by responding to a more or less open requirement.

Revisionist games were especially interesting. These included patriotic historic packs of cards, irredentist and “know your homeland” quizzes and others. An irredentist board game entitled “Let’s Get Greater Hungary Back!” was the most popular. The map of Greater Hungary with the counties and eighty largest towns was mounted on a wooden board. The instructions proclaimed: “80 printed cards of 85 by 50 mm are included, each with a famous sight of



Picture 10. “Mourning Hungaria” jelmez (1930s) Hungarian National Museum, Historic Photo Collection, No. 85.57.

a town and brief geographical information. Players conquer each lost territory by picking a picture card and when they gain one back they pin the flag of national colours in the appropriate place. When the last lost territory is conquered the colours being at half mast on the metal Flag of the Nation included in the game will regain their rightful place”.²¹

²¹ Zsigmond Liebner’s toyshop catalogue 1942. Budapest Történelmi Múzeum, Kiscelli Múzeum, Játékgyűjtemény. (Budapest History Museum, Kiscelli Museum, Toy Collection.)

Social organisations were active in the distribution of badges, picture cards and posters. The National Association of Women had the famous Piatnik company produce its Trianon postcard, which it distributed with the intention that by sending them abroad people would draw their relatives' and friends' attention to the injustice that had happened to Hungary. Besides pre- and post-Trianon territorial and demographic data, the postcard showed historic Hungary. At the side there was a small disk and by turning it the lost territories seemed to break off the lame country.

The distribution of these products (badges, posters, maps, plaques for doors, decoratively printed poems and postcards) provided a considerable income for private distributors and nationalist social organisations in the more intensive periods of irredentism such as the period immediately following the signature of the Peace Treaty in 1920, during the time of the Rothermere campaign (around 1927–1929) and in the period of territorial revision (from the second half of the 1930s).

Entrepreneurs who were primarily interested in irredentism for financial reasons were greatly attracted to the idea and its slogans becoming fashion goods in an unprecedented way, and they became the toll-collectors of the Hungarians' anti-Trianon feelings. Ferenc Herczeg, a writer and the president of the Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League, was so shocked by the arrogance of those who saw business for themselves in revision that in one presidential speech he bitterly attacked "the parasites of revisionism who make up a hundred reasons to gain profit from the national cause and who compromise the movement. ... With reference to these people, I declare that the Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League does not have travelling salesmen, does not collect subscribers, sell books, or postcards, or stamps or any badges. Those who peddle these and refer to the Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League are swindlers".²²

²² *Magyar Külpolitika*, 4 January 1936.

METAMORPHOSES

ÉVA KOVÁCS

What's New in East-Central European Sociology?¹

“(…) three powers used to exist in Eastern Europe: the Soviet Army, Hungarian political economy and Polish sociology.”

Antoni Sulek

“The increasing diversity of sociology on the one hand, its success in the media, civil society and the state, its institutionalisation throughout the world, the quantitative increase of the sociological community on the other, means that sociology looks more solid and is certainly socially more visible now than in the heroic era of the pioneers. However, it is at the same time intellectually Balkanised.”

Raymond Boudon

Hypotheses, historical background

It is nearly three years ago that the question in the title rose so sharply. We did not necessarily regard the idea of taking stock of the last ten years of sociological thinking in the region original or extraordinary – although we looked for similar approaches in both the Hungarian and the international literature in vain. Some kind of summary was found for economics, but that involved individual and methodologically different approaches concentrating only on Hungarian developments.² But our own points of

1 This summary is the English version of the introduction and concluding study in the book with an identical title Éva Kovács: *Mi újság a Kelet-Közép-Európai szociológiában? A lengyelországi, a magyarországi, a romániai, a szerbiai és a szlovákiai szociológia a kilencvenes években*. Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány (Regio Books), 2002. Other authors of the book are: Gyula Gombos, László Gyurgyík, György Horváth, Tamás Kiss, Árpád Kollár, József D. Lőrincz, Attila Z. Papp and Andrea Sólyom.

2 See Kovács, János Mátyás: “Örökség-utánzás-felfedezés. Közgazdasági gondolkodás Magyarországon 1989 után” (*Legacy-imitation-invention. Economic thinking in Hungary after 1989*). *Közgazdasági Szemle*, April 1996, 321–362.

view are still due to the latter initiative, since the triple interpretation *legacy-imitation-invention* first appeared there. The continuation of national, primarily post-1945 sociological thinking was called *legacy*, copying and adapting “western” sociology *imitation* and the creative use of our own scientific sources *invention*.

When planning our own research, besides the economic debate we also considered the then dying-down “*colonisation*” discussion, which had flared up in Hungarian sociology and which, although a Slovak sociologist took part in it, still did not spread to the countries of the former Eastern bloc.³ Visiting former socialist countries and meeting East-Central European sociologists at international conferences we had the experience that while big changes had taken place everywhere since the fall of the iron curtain, there could be common features which would be worth looking into. In these meetings we realised how little we knew about *non-west* European (and *non-North American*) sociology. Slowly we formed an image of East European sociologists standing next to each other without looking at or even noticing one another, each separately contemplating the West on the far away horizon.

We would like to make what we have said more exact in three ways: we have used the terms Eastern Bloc or iron curtain while our own experiences suggest that scientific and political discourse did not necessarily change simultaneously. One of the goals of our research is to question the presumption of simultaneity. Hungarian sociology can be suspected to have faced the dilemma of imitation or invention in the 1980s, whereas the same happened to Romanian sociology only after the collapse of communism. Therefore we tried to maintain a broad time scale during the analysis.

Is it possible or worth talking about East-Central European sociology? Isn't it merely our common adoration of the West that creates an empty shell: East-Central Europe? Don't we simply want to fill in the white spots on our cognitive map with colours? And if this is not so, what makes Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak or Serbian sociology East-Central European? Do the shared socialist past and the consequent social similarities bind sociologies quizzing social phenomena? Or does the similarity of sociologists' roles create an East-Central Europeanness? Or does it show that our situation, com-

³ See issues of *Replika* No. 9–10. and No. 33–34. For decency's sake we must add that the debate was first published in English (*Replika*, special issue 1996). However, Polish, Czech, Serbian etc. sociologists did not react for reasons unknown to us or they may have not known about it.

pared to the mainstream, is identically peripheral – and from a bird's eye view our eastern Europeanness is related to Indian, Chinese and South American, etc. sociology? Or perhaps – and here we are getting into stormy waters – our theory-creating and methodology-developing skills are absent or international discourse (and market) is not receptive to them.⁴

The third weak point (and probably not the last) of our concept is that it not only concerns East-Central European sociologies but also national ones – what else could it do? That is, it studies certain countries' native language sociological discourse and draws such conclusions as, for example, “unlike east European sociologies Polish sociology went its own way and was freer than the others”. Can we, however, talk about a national sociology?⁵ Besides the paradox that universal sociology as a science can be approached via only one national language, English (a maximum of three if we include German and perhaps French), those defending the fame of the discipline will protest: science is universal; hence “national” sociology becomes worthy in so far as it overcomes its particularism. There are some who are for making peace and connecting the universal and particular, and some would say that while mankind lives in nation states social phenomena are manifested as particular in the sense that they are explored and described primarily in a national language and the results are utilised by the given society (and the state).

Our research covered five countries in the region (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia). The Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia are absent from the list – financial and personnel conditions did not allow these three countries to be researched. At the start of the project three perspectives governed us. Primarily, unlike previous discussions, instead of exploring essay writing and medium-level models we wanted to make detailed lists of sociological discourses in the neighbouring countries. In order to do that we had to find the most important participants and institutions of the respective countries' sociologies. We started from the fact that universities and journals 'produce' and control the scientific discourse of sociology and thus main trends and changes can be seen in the curricula, the themes of thesis and PhD dissertations and in professional journals. (The following professional journals were put under scrutiny: Hungary: *Replika*, *Szociológiai Szemle*, Poland:

4 Saád, József: “Tíz széléjgyezet Némedi Dénes tanulmányához és recenziójához”, (*Ten footnotes to Dénes Némedi's study and review*). *Szociológiai Szemle*, 2001, No. 1., 65.

5 Némedi, Dénes: “Reflexiók a társadalomelméletről”, (*Reflections on social theory*). *Szociológiai Szemle*, 2000, No. 4., 117–124, and Saád op. cit.

Kultura i Spoločnosť, *Studia Sociologiczne*, Romania: *Altera*, *Revista de Cercetări Sociale*, Slovakia: *Sociológia*, Serbia: *Sociologija*.) The focus was on the change of sociology as a science, so the market and public opinion research institutes using the methods of applied sociology did not enter our sample, even though leading sociologists manage them (their scientific work – provided there was or is any – is available at universities and in journals). Thirdly, although we know that the state of our science is most often raised as an identity problem (where is sociology and the sociologist's place at the turn of the millennium in East-Central Europe?), we did not want to approach the question directly. However, we thought that we might be able to offer alternative answers to it by the end of our research.

As a first step, we reviewed the post-1945 history of the respective sociological discourses in order to check the validity of our interpretation scheme (legacy-imitation-invention) for further research.⁶ As a second step, the selected journals were analysed according to simple quantitative elements. (These included the article's theme, author, its inter- or multi-disciplinary tendency and the structure of references, etc.) The quantitative analysis provided the features of sociological discourses in the respective countries important for us. As a third step, the debates published in the journals were closely examined: our purpose was to show what was happening in sociology in the past ten years, which themes stimulated discussion or at least generated thought in the journals. Professional literature on discourse analysis helped us to work out the methodology of qualitative analysis.⁷

The research was unorthodox from many points of view. It was not experts in the history of science and the sociology of knowledge who wrote the country studies, rather we ourselves set up a team whose members, albeit sociologists, had not conducted any research of this nature. Our intention was for these young scientists to look at the subject of the research with fresh and 'innocent' eyes. Thus, they should not be members of professional lobbies of their country, their pens should not be directed by their knowledge, interests and judgements, but they would be able submit themselves to the methodol-

⁶ Studies containing the hypotheses were published in *Regio*, 2000, No. 1.

⁷ Here only the latest are referred to: Schiffrin, D. – Hamilton, H. E. (eds.): *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, Wodak, R. (ed.): *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, Stamenov, M. (ed.): *Language Structure, Discourse and the Access to Consciousness*, Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1998., van Dijk, T. A. (ed.): *Discourse Studies*, London: Sage, 1997.

ogy of our research. Their young age also provided a guarantee that they would be willing to read through and work on the selected journals carefully. However, it is clear that as a result of this choice certain contexts and informal knowledge were sacrificed on the altar of meticulous work. That the authors would thoroughly know the sociology of the researched country was another point in choosing our researchers: either that they were native to the country and did their university studies there or as undergraduates or PhD students chose to study sociology at a university of a respective country. Thus the authors of the volume are graduate sociologists, PhD students or recent doctors of sociology. The principle of “two heads are better than one” became our third point of orientation. Country studies were made in small group meetings or workshops. Those in charge of a country held several consultations and interviews with heads of departments there, as well as with noted sociologists.

Legacy stock-taking – or past heritage in the sociology of the present

The studies in our volume show in one sentence that sociology has changed in very different ways in the examined countries during the past decade. To look for the cause in the different legacies is unavoidable in the first instance. Antoni Sulek's ironic remark may not be far from reality: with the exception of Poland and Hungary sociology either got stuck in a lay-by or became significantly overpoliticised in the decades of socialism. Romanian sociology had its Sleeping Beauty dream till 1975 than, it measured its professionalism by its “good” relationship with the power establishment. Similar processes took place in Yugoslavia and Slovakia at the beginning of the 1970s. The 1960s and 1970s did not represent sociology's glory in Poland or Hungary either. However, there are basic differences between them and the other examined East-Central European countries. In Poland sociology could develop not only as a discipline but also as an author of social reform to arrive at its ‘golden age’ by 1980, and later, after the repression of Solidarity, at its moral dilemmas. In Hungary, after political economy praised by Sulek had lost its force of forming “public debate” by the beginning of the 1970s, sociology became the discipline that made it possible to postulate social problems in a language independent of power structures. Thus, while Romania's legacy contained the insistence on originality on the one hand and political competence on the other, Slovakia's tradition can be characterised by a consolidating inferiority feeling towards the Czechs and a sociology ideologically

changing into scientific socialism. While Serbia witnessed the transformation of the profession into a political monopoly, Poland's legacy featured the memory of western (emigrant) sociology of several decades. Hungary's tradition also included the discourse-making activity power elite.

Our analyses show that systemic change in sociology partly preceded political changes, partly it is still lagging behind. Already in the middle of the 1980s the influx of western methods and theories into the East-Central European region became stronger, which can be traced in 'imitation' and the more marked presence of quantitative and qualitative schools. (See Appendix Table 1.) Yet the region's sociologies still seem to be tackling their own legacies: the majority of the studies in the surveyed journals are digesting this legacy, trying to incorporate it into the *mainstream* and only a few original approaches could be identified. (See Appendix Table 2.) Perhaps only the Romanian journals provide an exception since, due to the peculiar position of the discipline under socialism, they are trying to make up for the shortages of the past by 'imitating' western methods and approaches. The proportion of studies that can be listed in the category of „invention” is strikingly low in all the examined journals. Looking at the matter from here, East-Central European sociologies all seem to be dissolved in the sociological discourses of the western world; more critically, they subordinate themselves to theories and methods appointed by the Grand Schools. If this is so, perhaps the large presence of legacy should not be denounced too much since – unlike copying – the characteristic sociological problems of the given societies may live on in those legacies.

From another perspective, the legacy is also shown by the thematic order of the articles published in the journals. (See Appendix Table 3.) The table also reveals that the journals have some kind of division of labour in the countries where two journals were considered worthy of analysis: while the old ones continue publishing traditional themes and open up to the *mainstream* only carefully and gradually, the new ones have become the mediators and followers of western fashions in full force. Our results, however, are consonant with the criticism, according to which the sociology of East-Central Europe is not famous for its theory-producing and innovative creativity.

If for a moment we accept Ken Kyle's hypothesis⁸ concerning where the sociology of the (western) world is going, it is worth examining what the results show in the examined countries. According to Kyle, the majority of soci-

⁸ See Kyle, K.: "Commentary: The Fate of Critical Sociology in the 21st Century", 2001. <http://tic.utk.edu/sssp/newsletter/32-2/kenkyle.html>

ologists have submerged into the nostalgic past and/or eternal future. He thinks that sociology can choose between two kinds of future: between a *distopian* (i.e. anti-utopian) and a *eutopian* future. Critical sociology comes to an end in the former; it will be replaced by neo-liberalism, corporatism and professionalism. In the latter, eutopian image promoted by him, the discipline will continue to be able to pursue critical sociology and respond with the help of communitarianism, feminism, socialism and environmentalism to the challenges of society. If we cast an eye on the themes of articles published in the examined journals again, it can be seen that the sociology of the region is proceeding towards an anti-utopian future described by Kyle, although the topic of *gender* is not negligible in Polish and Hungarian publications.

Discourses and identities – or is there a common feature in the sociological thinking of the region?

In analysing the discourses in the journals we wanted to learn, on the one hand, whether “national” trends of sociology exist and, on the other, what specific social problems their trends represent.

Polish journals have shown that the political change in 1989 did not mean an essential breaking point in the sociological public debate. That is, Polish researchers are trying to make visible a several decade continuity of sociology. It also turns out that Polish sociology is not centralised, rather it is multi-centred, and furthermore, unlike in the other countries, anthropology and culture research became strong already in the 1960s, providing a suitable basis for new trends to emerge after the change of system. Poland seems to be the country where the struggle between quantitative and qualitative methods has sharpened the most; and for the time being qualitative methods look like having won the battle.

Four discourses have stood out to define the characteristics of the journals. Sociological research into regionalism is the first, which has managed with an interdisciplinary approach to reinterpret minority issues, religion and ethnicity. Concerning regionalism, the issues of interior colonisation and ethno-politics have been discussed in Poland, as also in Romania.

It is characteristically Polish that the new topic of *gender*, which was taboo before the political changes or there was no sociological research into it, has been included in public thinking by enlightened Catholic intellectuals. Opposing doctrinaire Catholic trends, they have started to be concerned with

the position of women, and secular sociologists have also joined the discourse. In the beginning they were strongly tied to western patterns and trends (extreme feminist views have also been present); however, by now *gender* studies might be said to have its own Polish trend.

Unlike in other East-Central European countries Polish sociologists have been divided by the prospects of EU accession. While sociologists in Hungary do not express EU scepticism, this is presentable in Poland and makes it possible to postulate a Polish 'originality'.

In 2000 the issues of modernisation and the marketisation of social science divided Polish sociologists, similarly to their colleagues in other East-Central European countries. The debate about so-called 'trivialisation', which unfolded in 2000, made "sociospeech", the spread of science becoming political, the object of criticism and a fierce attack was launched against media power and public opinion surveys. In this debate sociologists following either quantitative or qualitative methods are also confronted. Polish sociologists appear to be re-stipulating their professional identities in the trivialisation debate.

In the 1990s *Hungarian* sociology moved, on the one hand, towards a new type of institutionalisation (new journals and departments came into being, opportunities to participate in international projects rose), while, on the other, it had to face a fall in its social prestige achieved in earlier decades. On the basis of the few examined journals it can be stated that the main trend of publications involves technicality and methodological strictness, i.e. professionalism. Although this produced an important change in the profession, it also meant that while its public role was decreasing sociology withdrew from the broader public eye. Withdrawal was not without 'pain', its traces can be seen in the professional debates of the past decade. Hungarian sociology has remained centralised and 'top heavy': journals primarily publish research by sociologists in Budapest.

The debate, which first raised the question whether there was a chance in sociology to preserve some kind of central Europeanness and the role of interpreter between the east and west, lasted from 1991 to the end of the decade. Later this turned into a dialogue about methodology, i.e. it deliberated on the legitimacy of using quantitative and qualitative approaches in Hungarian sociology. Another aspect of the debate involved the role of sociologists and intellectuals, and yet another was concerned about the 'colonisation' of science, i.e. the existence of an asymmetric contrast between East and West.

These aspects naturally intertwined and the fibre of discourse was pointing at, sometimes covering, the problem of whether Hungarian sociology can be competitive under the changed Hungarian and international conditions, and if so to what degree. On the one hand, the question of competitiveness produced the challenge of adjusting to international standards and the prominence of quantitative statistical analyses. On the other, it brought about the pressure to be evaluated on the international scientific market: the mobilisation of knowledge capital, changing scientific achievements into products and establishing networks of connections. Some Hungarian sociologists experienced joining international research projects and sociological discourses as a type of colonisation. However, in a short while the alternative, promoting some kind of Central Europeanness implying the preservation of a special sociological language, turned out to gain a limited acceptance in the West, and that had an impact on how the competence of Hungarian sociology was judged.

The change of system meant a real change for *Romanian* sociology. It had to interpret itself in a world where it earlier had no place, at least in a formal and institutional way. Under the new conditions it primarily had to recreate its own tradition. Its main task was to rehabilitate the *Gusti* school defining its continuation – and this work is still going on. After the earlier decades, in which it was impossible for sociology to exist, the intelligentsia sensitive to sociology and political sciences engaged in a lively debate on the problems of transition, the roles of the elite and intellectuals, not only or not primarily in professional circles, which partly resulted in the reassessment of sociologists' roles and thus sociological knowledge became sellable on the political and media markets.

It may be due to this late comeback that, unlike in other East-Central European countries, interdisciplinary connection could become the topic of a debate and the specialisation or 'red taping' of sociology is characteristic only to a smaller degree. Moreover, it became an important theme of discourse. This is indicated by the fact that sociological debates are of an interdisciplinary character and the participants, the representatives of branch sciences and even a noted journal all attempt to be interdisciplinary (*Altera*).

Another feature of the Romanian discourse is its regional division and special regional networks, which only to an extent overlap with ethnic differences. Thus the Transylvanian professional discourse in Romanian joins sociological knowledge 'produced' in Bucharest, while Transylvanian Hungar-

ian sociologists work in their own professional workshops and partly with their own themes.

Romanian sociology, at least for the time being, does not seem to have been able to make its legacy a paradigm and has not been successful in adopting western methods either. It continues to insist on its methodological collectivism and “national” character.

For the 1990s Romanian sociological discourse can be summarised under the themes of centralisation/decentralisation/nation state, besides the relationship to tradition and opportunity of being interdisciplinary. These themes have been written about not only by local but also east and west European authors in the journals, and the debate has also had some direct political connotations. However, some contributors have included broader theories of civilisation and development in their ideas – thus signalling the transfer of a western scientific approach. The scientific public debate about centralisation and decentralisation also includes the themes of West and East, politics and ethnicity.

The war inflicted a severe blow on *Serbian* sociology. While in some neighbouring countries the process of redefining scientific abstractions and the roles of scientists had already started at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, in Serbia only their rediscovery took place. For a long time even the conditions of the science became questionable due to the crisis in research financing and research teams (there were no large-scale sociological surveys, social structure and strata analyses, migration research, etc.). Because of the war it is not surprising that sociological public debate is dominated by political sociology: issues of totalitarianism, democracy and nationalism are being discussed. The debate has concentrated on defining notions: can the Oxford Dictionary be used for the ex-Yugoslav phenomena or must a specific “Balkan Dictionary” be created?

The break-up of Yugoslavia is still a theme that has not been explored in sociological discourse. Researchers usually say no when asked whether they had seen it coming, and their explanations lead back to the economic crisis, ethnic conflicts and criticism of the earlier federal structure. Several authors also raised the narrow-mindedness, indifference to social conflicts and static social view of trivial sociology. Later, after 1995, sociologists made an attempt to interpret social conflicts, in a socio-psychological way (trauma and catharsis).

In Serbian sociology an entirely new phenomenon is presented by a *Marxizmusstreit*, which cannot only be interpreted as a debate between left

and right and the redivision of the Serbian political sphere, since the sociologist's role is also being re-examined. This is reflected in the fact that Russia and China remain important orientation points in the debate instead of the Central European regional concepts. The renaissance of Marxism and Titoism does not seem to be due only to the compulsion of looking for valid explanations but as if it represented a generation conflict and an identity crisis in Serbian sociology.

The most visible characteristic feature of *Slovak* sociology is the lack of reflection and debate: we could hardly find any articles connected to one another or reacting to another in noted sociology journals. This is recognised by Slovak sociologists themselves, who explain it by the small size of the profession, its specialisation and financial ebb. A significant number of sociological debates are conducted with broad publicity and not in professional circles, primarily with political arguments, but also with an orientation to Czech sociology. Thus discourses appear in chronological order and not in thematic stages.

In the three years following the political changes, facing the communist legacy was a determining factor and in parallel the old taboos were touched upon (primarily the one concerning 1968) with joint Czecho-Slovak efforts. How can the legacy be interpreted? How can Marxism be negated? What role should a sociologist take?

In the second phase between 1993 and 1998 the separation of the Czecho-Slovak state and 'Mečiarism' provided the main themes for Slovak sociologists and voices referring to the crisis of the profession became stronger. However, strictly professional approaches were also present in interpreting the separation, which supported the one-state-two-societies concept with survey results. These, just like the discourse on taboos, were published in Czech journals.

The third, post-1998 period can be regarded as the years of slow revival, the liberation from the Mečiar censorship and political pressure. Nevertheless, Slovak sociology does not seem to have woken up from its stagnation following the separation and does not seem to be able to accommodate professional debate: the more noted researchers do not publish in Slovak papers and do not conduct debates in the scientific circles at home but partly in the West and partly in opinion survey institutes.

The dominant discourses of the examined five countries take their own road. This means that, although we can identify the sociologies of individual countries, no sociology of the region exists. Country-specific discourses very rarely connect with a similar discourse in other East European countries. The virtual space occupied by them is penetrated rather by Western science than that of East Europe: and we sociologists listen to the West if not to ourselves.

Our analysis also shows that the profession partly has withdrawn itself from the publication fora of the discipline and the debates are conducted in the public or abroad. Disregarding a few exceptions, the reviewed journals primarily serve professional promotion, do not encourage professional debate and show a more static and conservative image of local sociologies than they are in reality.

The burden of transition is carried differently in each country. Perhaps two common features can be seen in the different professional debates: dealing with the socialist legacy and searching for new identities and ways of expression. These debates show a large degree of inertia: sociologists in east European countries have to clarify their relationship not only to their own past and Western science, but also to the political transition.

Meanwhile, it is as if they were not looking at the wider horizon and therefore they cannot explain their own “crisis” and “search for identity” in terms of the world-wide “crisis” of sociology as such.⁹ Finding our own place and role in the enclosed world of East-Central Europe requires such an enormous effort that we do not see that *mainstream* science is also crying out for help.

9 In Western sociology the first danger signals were sounded already at the end of the 1980s, and a mass of professional literature was written about the present and future of the profession. Here only three significant critical texts are referred to: Boudon, R.: “European Sociology: The Identity Lost?” In Nedelmann, B. – Sztompka, P. (eds.): *Sociology in Europe – In Search of Identity*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993, 27–46., Wallerstein, I.: “The Heritage of Sociology, The Promise of Social Science. Presidential Address, XIVth World Congress of Sociology, Montreal, 26 July 1998”. *Current Sociology*. 1999, Vol. 47(1): 1–37., Bauman, Z.: “A parvenü és a pária, azaz a modernség hőse és áldozata” (*The Parvenu and the Pariah – the hero and victim of modernity*). 2000, 2001, July–August, 3–10.

APPENDIX 1¹⁰

Table 1. The methodology of the article

Country	Hungary		Poland		Romania		Slova kia	Ser- bia
Methodology (%)	<i>Szociológiai Szemle</i>	<i>Replika</i>	<i>Kultura i Społeczeństwo</i>	<i>Studia Socjologiczne</i>	<i>Alterra</i>	<i>RCS</i>	<i>Sociologia</i>	<i>Sociologija</i>
Quantitative	48.9	–	8	6.2	5.5	39.6	15.2	21.2
Qualitative	39.8	100*	71	53.8	90.4	55.7	52.5	73.6
Both	11.3	–	21	40	4.1	4.7	32.2	5.2

* We did not measure as a separate variant, but during the examined period no studies based on statistical procedures were published in the journal.

10 The tables were made by Attila Z. Papp, to whom I express my gratitude.

Table 2. The “trend” of articles

Country	Hungary		Poland		Romania		Slova- kia	Serbia
Trend (%)	<i>Szociológiai Szemle</i>	<i>Replika</i>	<i>Kultura i Społeczństwo</i>	<i>Studia Socjologiczne</i>	<i>Altera</i>	<i>RCS</i>	<i>Sociológia</i>	<i>Sociologija</i>
Legacy	17.7	6.6	8.33	0	1.4	3.3	25.4	25.5
Imitation	15.2	39.5	24.31	29.2	97.3	88.4	11.2	46
Invention	7.6	5.3	4.17	1.5	–	–	7.2	14.4
Legacy+ Invention	17.7	5.3	8.33	6.2	–	–	7.6	–
Imitation+ Invention	18.2	11.8	27.78	30.8	–	3.3	10.1	–
Legacy+ Imitation	23.2	27.6	4.17	1.5	1.4	3.3	30.8	–
Legacy+ Imitation+ Invention	0.5	3.9	22.92	20	–	–	4	0.4
Could not be determined	–	–	3.47	9.2	–	1.7	–	13.7

Table 3. The themes of articles

Country	Hungary		Poland		Romania		Slova- kia	Serbia
Topic (%)	<i>Szociológiai Szemle</i>	<i>Replika</i>	<i>Kultura i Spoleczeństwo</i>	<i>Studia Sociologiczne</i>	<i>Altera</i>	<i>RCS</i>	<i>Sociológia</i>	<i>Sociologija</i>
Theory	23.7	5.1	0.69	16.9	0	9.6	9.1	7.7
Methodology	15.2	5.1	18.75	20	0	6.8	13.9	3.9
Structure, stratification	14.1	30.8	10.42	9.2	0	5.6	19.2	16.8
Political Sociology	8.6	33.3	4.17	6.2	9.6	10.7	11.5	6.5
Sociology of Science	7.6	0	4.86	12.3	2.7	22	17.3	14.8
Economic sociology	7.6	0	13.19	1.5	0	11.9	12	5.5
Sociology of Agriculture	5.1	5.1	0.69	1.5	0	1.7	0.5	4.8
Gender	5.1	2.6	0	0	78.1	10.2	0	7.4
Lifestyle, cul- ture, religion	5.1	3.8	13.19	4.6	9.6	13.1	4.3	20.3
Social policy, Poverty	3.5	3.8	12.5	3.1	0	2.3	1	3.9
Social psychology	2	0	2.08	12.3	0	0	0.5	3.2
Sociolinguistics, disourse- analysis	1	9	3.47	4.6	0	0	2.4	2.9
Ethnicity	1	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education	0.5	1.3	5.56	7.7	0	2.3	6.7	2.3
Other	0	1.3	10.42	0	0	0	1.4	0

Table 4. The gender of the main author

Country	Hungary		Poland		Romania		Slova- kia	Serbia
Trend (%)	<i>Szociológiai Szemle</i>	<i>Replika</i>	<i>Kultura i Spoleczeństwo</i>	<i>Studia Sociologiczne</i>	<i>Altera</i>	<i>RCS</i>	<i>Sociológia</i>	<i>Sociologija</i>
Female	34.3	23.1	43.8	32.3	16.4	25	35.1	34.5
Male	65.7	76.9	56.3	67.7	83.6	75	64.9	65.5

APPENDIX 2.

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PÉTER ERDŐSI

Attempts to Define Cultural Heritage in Hungary

Why does a historian begin thinking about a phenomenon called “cultural heritage”? Perhaps it is best distinguished from its synonyms of “tradition” and “memory” because it derives from legal terminology, i.e. it emphasises the mutual relationship between inheritor and devisor, rather than the inheritance and its treatment. The inheritance, even if it does not change in its physical appearance significantly, may acquire new meanings with the passing of time. As a historian I would like to know what the same thing meant/means to the devisor and the inheritor: the two must be considered of equal rank. A historian is obviously interested in changes in time. It is all right if he can describe a condition, but he really fulfils his task if he can also tell a story: from where do we get to where? Is there a middle way between the two approaches to the past? One only regards the past as merely a concept of the present, the other sees ourselves as inheritors of a past without reservations.

The cultural-historical comparison cannot be exactly right, but “cultural heritage” reminds us of the Renaissance court *Kunstkammer* or *Wunderkammer* compiling objects for their rarity or speciality, or we recall the time when national museums were established, which gathered various collections to show them to the public. The notion of “heritage” is challenging because it can bring together scientific fields involved with objects of memory (archaeology, museology, library and archive studies, etc.). At the same time it also advances from objects to the intellect, thus involving literary scholarship, ethnography or cultural anthropology.

This study attempts to review how the notion of heritage appeared during the Horn government and what scope it had achieved during the follow-

ing Orbán cabinet¹ by the time of writing. The period under review stretches from 1997, when the law on culture was passed, to 2000. It will not go into the Law LXIV on heritage protection of 2001. At least four levels of the theme can be highlighted: theory, legislation, policy and social reception. How do they include the term “heritage”? Does it have a definite image? The basic question, as with researching contemporary history, is where the sources of material can be found and whether they can be considered sources according to history’s professional criteria.² Of course, such normative texts cannot be expected necessarily to define an expression that needs to be debated; however, such experiments should take place. Analysis of the texts at our disposal can at least show the current meaning of the notion, cast a light on the conscious or loose use of the word and the legislators’ conscious or spontaneous assumptions.³

A decisive reason for the appearance of the notion in its present form in Hungary could have been the position of the European Union. Inter-governmental cooperation initiated by the Council of Europe has been concerned with outstanding historical monuments since the 1960s; later this was extended more generally to the built heritage. In 1992 it was replaced by the notion of cultural heritage, which for the time being highlighted built environment, although some new components were included (the agricultural, technological and industrial environment, landscapes of cultural value, and certain elements of moveable effects and urban structures forming a heritage for future generations were also considered). In 1993 cooperation was extended to include east-central European countries and four years later the currently valid concept was outlined, which intends to show the common European heritage and the differences simultaneously on local, regional, national and international levels. It is regarded as an important to economic development,

1 The government led by Viktor Orbán, 1998–2002, formed by the Alliance of Young Democrats-Hungarian Civic Party (AYD-HCP) (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége-Magyar Polgári Párt – FIDESZ-MPP), the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) (Magyar Demokrata Fórum – MDF), and the Independent Smallholders Party (ISHP) (Független Kisgazda Párt – FKgP).

2 The use of websites as sources is problematical. However, a significant part of the information can only be found here. The website of an institution increasingly has more information than appears in its printed publications. For example, the website (<http://www.nkom.hu>) of the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage (Nemzeti Kulturális Örökség Minisztériuma – NKÖM) provides much more material than its paper *Krónikás*.

3 In the future and with the inclusion of further sources, the question of how representative this analysis is, can be answered.

and the significance of cultural tourism is emphasised. Cooperation between the state and the private sector is being urged. It is proposed that the state should restrict its role to supervision, making initiatives and harmonisation in the process of decentralisation and reorganisation being conducted in several countries, but at the same time it should not give up its responsibility for protecting the cultural heritage. The “message” of cultural heritage is intended to be publicised via science and education, and interested professionals are expected to coordinate their work via a European information network.⁴

The word “heritage” has been more emphasised in political public speech in Hungary since the new cultural ministry included it in its name in 1998 and used it as a brand name of its character. However, the notion was already used during the previous government’s term of office, which is not surprising if we think of the EU proposals at the time. The then Ministry of Culture and Education had a Department of Cultural Heritage; that was the time when the Hungarian National Committee of World Heritage and the Cultural Heritage Directorate were set up.⁵ The law on protected monuments adopted in June 1997 launched the notion in its introduction as a reference. The law aims to protect “those architectural, technical and related artistic objects, which manifest our history’s irreplaceable mementos and promote cultural heritage as special value for society, as part of the national assets.” These are “defining marks of the country’s and each place’s image, carriers of cultural traditions, and they form part of the historical and national consciousness.”⁶ Thus it can be seen that “heritage” involves the social and national context of the older notions of “historical records”, “tradition”

4 *Compendium of basic texts of the Council of Europe in the field of cultural heritage*. Strasbourg, 1998, 10–17., 23–25., 61–67. My thanks to Ildikó Deák (NKÖM), for putting the material at my disposal.

5 The Department of Public Collections in the Ministry of Culture and Education was renamed as the Department of Cultural Heritage in 1996 following an agreement with the Dutch ministry. (I thank Katalin Wollák [Cultural Heritage Directorate] for this information and for her remarks about my study.) In February 1998 it invited applications from libraries and public collections: *Művelődési Közlöny*, 1998, No. 27., 3180–3182; Hungarian National Committee of World Heritage: 44/1997. (XII. 29.) KTM-measure; the founding document of the Cultural Heritage Directorate, which refers to Law 1997. CXL.: 29/1998. (VI. 11) MKM-measure, *Művelődési Közlöny*, 1998, No. 19. Vol. II. (10 July), 2476–2477; its modification by the Orbán cabinet: 13/2000 (VII. 11.) NKÖM-measure, *Kulturális Közlöny*, 2000, No. 15. (24 August), 569–570. The Cultural Heritage Directorate was set up by the decision of the previous government but began its work following the general election.

6 Law 1997. LIV. On monument protection

and “identity”; the text does not use it again but turns to the special terminology applied in the field of monument protection.

The law on “the protection of cultural assets and museums, public libraries and general education” was adopted in December 1997.⁷ The title itself shows that it is rather heterogeneous. Paradoxically, its scope is potentially wider considering what it does not extend to: it does not concern issues included in the law on archives of 1995, environment protection of 1996, on the formation and protection of the built environment and monument protection. However, their enumeration suggests that all this belongs to the same field.⁸ Does the law make an attempt to describe these fields in a common way? The expressions “assets belonging to cultural heritage” and “assets of cultural heritage” are synonyms of cultural assets. They play a role in “how history is shaped and how national, nationality and ethnic minority self-knowledge is being formed: learning about them is a citizen’s right and their protection is a social responsibility”. Here we see again that old notions are used in a new context, as in the law on monument protection. The textual structure shows that “land of archaeological significance and moveable assets of listed buildings” are to be included in the notion of cultural heritage. However, it does not state or deny the same with respect to documents in libraries. At the same time, “irreplaceable assets of outstanding significance not kept in public collections or museums” but declared protected are included in the law. As a summary we can say that the law, which was prepared taking EU regulations into account and developed as a source for ministerial measures, treated cultural heritage as a reference or a loose collective notion. It did not make any attempt to define it, even in the supplement, which explained the notions used in the law. It is worth pondering whether this is a weakness or virtue, giving priority to practice. This law stipulated the tasks of the Cultural Heritage Directorate; the founding document of the new institution was published a year later in summer 1998.⁹ The two measures, besides giving the name of cultural heritage to the Board, do not use the expression any more. Nor do they specify cultural assets. This lack of definition may be balanced by the fact that the task of the new administrative authority is nothing

⁷ Law 1997. LIV. On monument protection

⁸ The ministry then might as well have continued the logic of legislation according to fields; perhaps it made steps to unite these fields in order to increase state support. (In this respect it may have preceded the next government’s policy.)

⁹ *Művelődési Közlöny*, 1998, No.19. Vol. II., 2476–2477; modification: *Kulturális Közlöny*, 2000, No. 15., 569–570.

else but to define what practically belongs to cultural assets as far as it supervises the matter continuously. It decides whether assets are declared as protected, whether protection is completed, archaeological explorations are permitted, and it also keeps records of stolen cultural treasures, etc.

The election programme of the FIDESZ – Hungarian Civic Party objected to the Horn government’s cultural policy in saying that the “protection and renewal of the built and objective part of the national cultural heritage” was being lost. It referred to the financing system of the National Cultural Fund being unable to sponsor investments. It tried to resolve the problem with a centralisation procedure: “only the concentration and increase of exclusively central state means, established to protect national heritage, can help in this field”. It promised to establish an independent government body to unite culture, monument protection and tourism, which belonged to three ministries, with reference to foreign, especially British, examples, and it also stipulated that it would serve the protection of national heritage. The programme did not say that it would involve division of the Ministry of Culture and Education, although it was not difficult to guess this from the sentence which said that “when setting up the new structure, we will not forget the important connection between culture and education”, since the market for cultural treasures presumes education. Mapping heritage did not take place in this text: the concept relating to monument protection was worked out in detail, but it remained unclear what was included in actual heritage. At the same time, with reference to monuments, it was stipulated that they had a potential to advance the economy and tourism and their integrated protection contributed to regional rehabilitation. It was here where a more general idea appeared, i.e. “cultural heritage can also mean a source of development for the country during the time of EU accession”. On the one hand the programme intended to concentrate the state means of culture financing, while on the other it called for generating a condition of self-financing in “integrated protection”, stating that “common heritage requires concerted and joint activity with the participation of citizens, non-governmental organisations and the state”. According to this the “community” is able to maintain and increase the demand on the “market” of cultural treasures. Although it promised temperance in state intervention, with reference to the geo-political position and the desired long-term successes of the country, it stipulated that cultural policy, considered as strategically important, “should enable citizens to respond to the challenges expected in a world becoming interna-

tional by making historical-cultural identity conscious and at the same time enable them to accommodate positive effects successfully”.¹⁰ Between these goals it is easy to see the influence of the EU 1997 concept.

During the elections the FIDESZ – Hungarian Civic Party already stated *expressis verbis* that if it won it would divide the Ministry of Culture and Education into two separate ministries.¹¹ In the month of negotiating the coalition and forming the government the press referred to the new government office as the ministry of culture and it was possible to guess and then know whom the minister and his deputies would be before the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage had been actually established.¹² During the coalition negotiations other ministries were being debated and obviously the negotiations had to finish before the new name was made public. This took place four days before the government programme was announced. At that time what the new ministry would be in charge of was unclear: would ecclesiastical matters belong to the new ministry or remain with the Office of the Prime Minister, where they had belonged during the previous administration? When Parliament debated the government programme the opposition suggested that the new ministry should be simply called “Ministry of Culture”, because with the inclusion of the expression “national heritage” the name would not express the many and colourful sides of culture, and would turn towards the past.¹³ The fact that the objection was raised refers to the contradiction in the use of the notion: if you like it can involve national value conservatism, but it is also able to express a varied cultural community as indicated by the EU.

Public attention did not focus on any attempts to define what heritage was in the first year of the ministry. The construction of the National Thea-

10 Szabadság és jövő. A polgári jövő programja. FIDESZ-Magyar Polgári Párt 1998. (*Freedom and Future. The Programme of the Civic Future. FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Party. 1998*). Chapters “Protection of Built Environmental Treasures, Financing Culture and Cultural Policy” cover the problem, pp. 54–56, 121–125. Law 1997. CXL. aimed to “establish a public fund for the protection of cultural heritage” (point d. Article 52.) The FIDESZ-Magyar Polgári Párt’s manifesto says that “after forming the government we will immediately establish the National Heritage Fund, which could then start working”, 122.

11 *Magyar Hírlap*, 18 May 1998.

12 *Magyar Hírlap*, 26 May 1998; *Népszabadság*, 3 June 1998.; 13 June 1998; 16 June 1998; 17 June 1998; 18 June 1998; 25 June 1998.

13 Protocol of Parliamentary debates 25 and 30 June 1998. <http://www.mkogy.hu>; cf. *Népszabadság*. 1 July 1998.

tre, the change in its location, the call for the plans, Hermann Nitsch's shocking exhibition, the Frankfurt Book Fair were discussed. It was also a subject of debate that the National Cultural Fund, which had had a separate budget to finance culture, became financially dependent on the new ministry's central budget.¹⁴ In an interview, deputy minister Gergely Pröhle considered as a shortcoming of the ministry's first year, when it was busy with reorganisation, that it did not manage to make "secular public opinion" accept the "activity of the churches". "When we included church matters in the activity of the cultural ministry, our goal was to make their value creating and preserving role clear in as wide a circle as possible... This idea is difficult to be accepted since we are either accused of wanting to "clericalise" culture or make the churches »secular«".¹⁵ The issue may also be regarded as a dilemma of how to define heritage.

How clear is the role of heritage in the ministry's policy and in the coordination of the different professions for the public, and what areas are covered? A government measure on the tasks and authority of the minister of national cultural heritage was adopted on 16 September 1998.¹⁶ Following the introduction, it stipulates monument protection, connections with the churches, caring for the culture of national and ethnic minorities and international cultural connections in separate paragraphs. How does the expression "heritage" appear? The minister works for the implementation of the government's cultural policy "in the interest of the freedom of artistic life, securing freedom of conscience and religion, the development of national culture and the protection of cultural heritage and monuments". If we look into it, cultural heritage *and* monuments are co-ordinate expressions, and it can be perceived as if the latter was not part of the former or it can also be seen as if the field of monument protection was clear-cut, whereas the notion of heritage was not to be defined there and then. The expression "cultural assets" does not disappear either: the minister administers their protection "primarily via the Cultural Heritage Directorate and manages his tasks concerning monu-

14 Attila Tasnádi (ed.): *A Nemzeti Kulturális Alapprogram Évkönyve 1999. (The National Cultural Fundamental Programme Yearbook 1999)*. Budapest, 2000, 9–14., 15–19.

15 *Magyar Nemzet*, 17 July 1999. Several interviews were published with the ministers of National Cultural Heritage about the ministry's goals and operation. With József Hámori: *Magyar Hírlap*, 10 July 1999, *Magyar Napló*, September 1998, 3–6., *Magyar Napló*, December 1999, 5–8.; with Zoltán Rockenbauer entering office: *Magyar Nemzet*, 24 December 1999.

16 *Művelődési Közlöny*, 1998, No. 32. Vol. I (10 Nov.), 3293–3295.

ment protection via the National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments". Both cases show that the text involves an unconscious difference between protected monuments and cultural assets or heritage *excluding monuments*; the former are not described exactly. The same division can be seen here as in the programme of FIDESZ-HCP, which specified the built and objective parts of heritage. Cultural heritage can be divided into national and universal parts, and tasks related to them are summarised in a list of three: protection, scientific exploration and making them a public treasure. (These three can be seen in later texts, too.)

It has already been mentioned that the law of 1997 was prepared with reference to EU measures; despite this fact the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage remained in charge of legal harmonisation concerning the illegal trade in cultural assets, their export and intellectual ownership. The *Raphael Programme* of the Commission of Europe ended in 1999. Hungary could have applied to as an associate member together with two EU member countries for the protection and use of moveable cultural assets, professional exchange and the promotion of gaining access to fixed cultural assets.¹⁷ The Culture 2000 programme was a continuation, interpreting heritage in a wider sense. Participation in international festivals such as *Europalia '99* in Brussels or at the events of "Krakow, capital of culture" was included in the above. The "Heritage Campaign" organised by the Council of Europe tried to promote the ideal of common heritage by introducing the historical treasures of religious places, crossroads along historical highways, universities and associations of towns. The Cultural Heritage Days had a similar goal, although aimed at the local or national identity, when they opened to the public for a weekend buildings which are known by only certain groups of people or are always closed – this year medieval churches and church ruins, next year educational institutions opened their gates.

We can gain further ideas as to what may be involved in the field of heritage if we look at the ministry's relevant measures, decisions prepared for the government and tenders. Three can be found among measures and decisions that are important for our theme: one is about the supervision of cultural institutions (museums, libraries and monument protection), another is about an agreement with the churches and religious communities and the third makes arrangements for the Millenary celebrations.¹⁸ The measure

¹⁷ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 2., 46.

¹⁸ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 1., 4–5., 2000, No 1., 1–2.; No. 2., 49–51.

adopted in 1999 by the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage on “archaeological explorations and their authorisation procedure” is the most interesting for us.¹⁹ The expression “archaeological heritage” appears in it. “Any exploration moving the soil which uncovers the elements of archaeological heritage” is regarded as excavation. According to this, heritage exists in an invisible way, even when we do not know about it; that is how we vindicate future findings. Beside this “explored archaeological heritage” exists, which must be protected. “Natural scientific cultural assets” are also mentioned with the above, though they do not really belong to the same category.

The peculiar approach, which adds culture as a general category to areas that can be more easily defined, still existed in 1999: a tender we can read about organisations “protecting artistic, educational, built or cultural heritage or being active in this field” (author’s emphasis).²⁰ The idea is rarely associated with institutions or organisations except for the “treasures of ecclesiastic cultural heritage”. The Kunó Klebelsberg scholarship is publicised for the “support of the exploration, protection and issue of objects and written findings of our cultural heritage abroad”; another version of the text omits the notion and easily replaces it with the more traditional phrase, i.e. “objects and written finds of Hungarian language and culture”.²¹ A government decision of 2000 stipulates the duties of establishing contacts and promotion of the Hungarian cultural centres abroad in this spirit.²² Thus here we can see over the border, a virtual spread of latent heritage.

The tender entitled “Our heritage and treasures” expects villages and towns to promote “so far unknown national cultural treasures, which the relevant village and the whole country can be proud of, to the general public as a result of research, exploration and analytical work”.²³ Here the levels of what is known cause the problem: what is known at a local level should also be known nationally.

In March 1999 a tender was issued for museum, libraries and archives in order to “make digital those information assets important for Hungarian cultural heritage”.²⁴ The difference in word usage is also interesting whereby

¹⁹ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 19., 633–636.

²⁰ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 4., 95.

²¹ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No.12., 379; No. 15., 457.

²² *Kulturális Közlöny*, 2000, No.5., 137–138.

²³ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 7., 178–179.

²⁴ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 6., 132–137.

museums and libraries are invited to explore and publicise collections that are valuable from the viewpoint of intellectual heritage, the word “material” is used in case of archives. In these cases heritage is located in the semantics of *something that had already existed and what is still to be explored*, while digitalisation carries the meaning of *a modern reshaping of what exists and distribution*.

Work undertaken with the support of the National Heritage Programme was part of the preparations for the Millennium.²⁵ The programme began in order to “protect, maintain and restore the built and archaeological cultural heritage” and besides royal towns, castles, small churches from the age of Árpád dynasty and ecclesiastical monuments, it provided resources for villages which otherwise would not have received them. Moreover, it made explorations outside Hungary possible, so it searched for the locations of heritage vertically in Hungarian society as well as horizontally the geographical sense. Tenders “to protect intellectual heritage” could also be entered within the scope of the programme. An account made in county Nógrád shows that the above received approximately one quarter of the sum that was spent on monument protection projects. Besides the county archives, libraries and museums were the successful bidders and the topics included local history and ethnographic research, publications and exhibitions.²⁶ Neither did the separately advertised Intellectual Heritage Programme invite direct analysis or assessment of intellectual traditions, as the name suggests, but rather for exploration and preservation, while calling for museums, libraries and archives to participate.

A theme of future research could concern the different contexts in which “heritage” is used by social organisations, cultural foundations, associations, the press and exhibitions, i.e. outside political decision making. Here I only mention two examples. An explanation at the exhibition “In the Centre of Europe”, which presented an extensive and reflective view on history and which was otherwise excellent in its collection of objects, describes the turn in central European history when the countries in the region adopted Christianity and joined the then Europe as “new heritage”. The other example is the Hungarian Heritage prize. It was set up by the Foundation for Hungary and during the 1990s it awarded the prize to bequeath posterity with the names of personalities who, despite the negative events of half a century, created something lasting. Thus “Hungarian heritage” cannot be grasped as an

²⁵ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 7., 181–186.

²⁶ *Kulturális Közlöny*, 2000, No. 3., 116–118.

object, neither is it intellectual but relates rather to names or the value of individual efforts symbolised by names. The gesture, on the one hand, indicates that heritage had survived despite the inimical conditions of bequeathing, while on the other it proposes itself as the legator.²⁷

The above perhaps shows that in those years the practical use of the notion manifested a search for the nature and whereabouts of heritage. Things included in heritage were in movement from many points of view. The protection of new monuments was arranged (care for folk and industrial monuments, and sometimes monuments of the socialist era, is striking), while others ceased to be protected; and meanwhile the concepts of the profession changed.²⁸ In order to recover art treasures appropriated during World War II, museums and the national archives were checked and a list of art treasures demanded back by the Hungarian state was prepared.²⁹ The “demolished, damaged and unprepared” monuments in public places were renewed. Among them there were some, which used to be considered as a memento or symbol in a certain political-ideological era, and became this again after a long time.³⁰ Social events took place to celebrate restored monuments and also “mobilise heritage”, while “publishing archive materials prepares diffusion”. The programme with the telling title *The Last Minute* restarted the collection of folk music, which stopped with World War II, and was complemented by the issue of a record series called *New Motherland*. A National Piety Commission was set up, which assigned cemeteries and locations for burials as part of a “National Pantheon”.³¹ For some time the Digital Literature Academy, publishing contemporary authors, was intended to be called the Association of Digital Immortals.³²

It is not only the material structure of heritage, which was flexible, but so was the notion of heritage. Built heritage seemed to be the only fixed point.

27 *Népszabadság*, 22 June 1998.

28 Lővei, Pál: “A műemlékvédelem táguló körei” (*Expanding Circles of Monument Protection*), and by the same author: “Gyorsjelentések a kilencvenes évekről” (*Fast reports on the 1990s*). *Műemléklap. Az Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal tájékoztatója*, 2000, No. 3–4., 21, 28.

29 “Itt a műtárgy, ott az igény” (*The art object is here, the demand is there*). Tamás Szőnyi’s interview with Zsolt Visy, deputy state secretary of NKÖM. *Magyar Narancs*, 1998. (http://www.net.hu/mancs/1_9/globusz4.html)

30 *Kulturális Közlöny*, 2000, No. 5., 142. A few “national-flag monuments” are also included in the monuments to be restored. They were erected during the time of irredentist politics in the inter-war period.

31 *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 23., 897–898.

32 *Népszabadság*, 3 June 1998.

This is not by chance, since the meaning began there. Whatever was an outside received addition like moveable or cultural assets, or each profession tried to define its own meaning. “Intellectual heritage” was the most difficult to define and was manifested mainly in materials and objects. To what degree branches of science and professions were connected to the heritage discourse in international forums and how much they profit from their theoretical and practical consequences was a grey area for the general public at that moment. New scientific discourse would provide an opportunity for the interested professions to see how or whether at all the notion of heritage could be used in their fields. Does a particular profession gain by that, or is its status in scientific life adversely modified and lumped in with others? Certain professions (such as monument protection, archaeology and museology) seem to face serious conceptual, technical and financial problems concerning the issue of what to regard as part of heritage, whereas professions concerned with objects only indirectly or hardly at all can use heritage more easily.

The system of applications could serve the idea of community and difference represented by the EU, its adaptation in Hungary or even the idea of post-socialist nation building, whereby the components of heritage were bricks. Within the outlined concept the system included only a few restrictions, therefore it attempted to mobilise different social levels although it did not really give a theoretical definition of heritage. What heritage really was, was endorsed by practice. However, it must be added that an “integrated heritage protection law” was being prepared, which promised “modern and uniform regulation” on behalf of “both the authority and science”.³³

Concerning the above, a cultural political dilemma must be mentioned. The government put forward a programme to concentrate the financing of culture, then made local communities interested in the joint protection and utilisation of heritage with a tender system. Did this represent a transitional period in the process outlined by the EU and adopted in Hungary, which points at the local and regional self-financing of culture, or did this consolidate the position of the state in the end?³⁴

33 The law intended to set up an Office for the Protection of Cultural heritage, which would be formed as a legal successor to the National Monument Protection Inspectorate and would amalgamate with the Cultural Heritage Directorate.

34 It must be added that, although the EU agreements provide general proposals in the field of heritage protection, it still depends on the individual member-states what licences they grant, for example, in the rather problematic issue of the free movement over borders of

Let us make a detour to the theme of the Millennium in Hungary. The year 2000 had extra significance in Hungary, since it marked the 1000th anniversary of the coronation of King Stephen, the country's first monarch. Although there were many points, which connected the discourse on heritage and the Millenary celebrations, it is worth separating the two. As I see it, the occasion to celebrate realised the opportunities hidden in the notion of forming identity. The previous government had already expressed the intention. The government decision of 1996 on the "celebration of one thousand years of the Hungarian state" aimed at celebrating the Millennium so that it "would contribute to strengthening our national self-knowledge, self-appreciation and our international standing", and it promoted the acceleration of restoring the "built heritage representing the thousand years of the Hungarian state" (meaning mainly memorial places to kings and queens) and the reconstruction of the "national institutions of cultural heritage".

The Orbán government in its decision on the Millenary activities proposed a "new cultural paradigm". Looking at it closely, the respective passage did not specify a structural or intellectual change in culture but referred to the *purpose* of change and defines this in the following: "Hungarian citizens, gaining strength in their trust in themselves and the country, may become able to face the global challenges of the world and create new cultural assets, which will enrich the culture of the world and Europe".³⁵ Let us recall that the idea of being strong against the negative challenges of globalisation and the reception of its positive values could already be found in the FIDESZ-HCP manifesto. The general introduction to the seven tenders advertised jointly for the Millennium added "the country is preparing for the celebration with a series of programmes at home and abroad, with strengthening and renewing our national heritage".³⁶

What can be said about the long-term effects of these events? Restored buildings and published historical material are undoubtedly lasting results of the Millenary period.³⁷ But how does cultural heritage, which has been connected to the Millennium in recent years, really affect the much mentioned identity?

cultural assets or the role of the state. However, it may happen that the EU will have some demands in the case of projects implemented with EU funds.

35 *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 1., 4–5.

36 *Kulturális Közlöny*, 1999, No. 7., 174–177.

37 See for example: "Oszlopokat emeltünk, hogy beszéljék a múltakat" (*We have erected columns to speak of the past*). Tamási, Judit (ed.): *A millenniumi műemlékhelyreállítások lexikona*. (*Encyclopaedia of Millenary restorations of monuments*), Budapest: NKÖM-OMvH, 2000.

A well-known principle of cultural-historical research is that “down there” in the receiving medium things are not necessarily the same as is thought “up there”, where the message is formulated.³⁸ A museum exhibition or a celebration is the “message” made by local and national politicians and experts, but how do the restored monuments find their place in the weekdays when the celebrations are over? How does the memory of functions remain in the individual and “collective” (if there is such a thing) consciousness? Paraphrasing it: where is heritage in the line of factors that affect the consciousness of an individual or a community? The Millenary programme intended to represent many colours and differences, but it conceived them in a large national framework: since it was about a national celebration, the emphasis was inevitably on not looking at the different colours separately but realising how the total image is made up. What kind of result do we get if such theoretical categories like “civic”, “community” and “heritage” are replaced by “a village” “its population” or “objects of remembrance”? This could be the theme of historical, cultural and anthropological research in the coming years.

Besides the rather paternalistic “patrimonium”, several metaphors and models describe and interpret culture emphasising different aspects. It would be wrong to think that a single notion, despite its universal attempts, totally defines culture: there are no “eyes” that could see through it in its entirety and depth. It is difficult to get rid of the feeling that the state-authority invitation calling society to some cultural activity hides some kind of demand, while some cultural trends and products will remain without the patrimonial blessing. What is the connection between cultural heritage and modernity? How is cultural heritage connected to a present or future oriented cultural quest in literature or the arts (to what used to be called the *avant-garde*)? Can cultural policy support this in the name of heritage without making the contemporary artist a prisoner of eternity’s imperative, while breathing life, correctly, into museum pieces? What do national, regional and local institutions think about the “society” which calls for the protection of heritage? Can this society interpret and value heritage? It appears as if the discourse all over the world aims to counterbalance and eliminate the effects of

38 Moreover, it is also possible that the “occasional history” of functions as seen on a communal level does not bind those celebrating to the actual past but to a “communal experience projected to the future”. Horváth, Zsolt K.: “Elképzelte múlt, felidézett jövő. Három séta az „örökség” erdejében” (*Imagined Past, Recalled Future. Three Walks in the Woods of “Heritage”*). *Múltunk*, 2000, No. 3., 199.

social and economic modernisation. Might this not cause a schizophrenic condition? Culture may become encapsulated if it does not manage to be part of modern life.

We take the notion of heritage seriously now we have been presented with it by the international political constellation. We can say generally that the real intellectual venture is not the mere “stocktaking” of past culture in itself, although this requires a great effort and must also be acknowledged. Do we learn something more about ourselves, which combines acceptance and self-criticism or do we repeat ourselves? The notion of “heritage” involves the question of succession: who wants to have a right to it? We are talking about national cultural heritage, but what does “national” mean?³⁹ The government decree about celebrating the Hungarian Millennium said that the series of celebrations are “shared by every member of the Hungarian nation, and of national and ethnic minorities living in Hungary with no regard to gender, religion or origin”. Let us not forget that the heritage we are talking about was created in a historical age, which preceded the appearance of the concept of nation in the 19th century. That was first latched onto by the 19th century – but how much do we keep and what do we think belongs to the national heritage today? This must be considered, otherwise we may end up thinking that heritage is not a somewhat continuous creation and that we can just receive it ready-made.⁴⁰ How is it acquired? Once the collections and items of remembrance exist, how do they come to life? The heritage notion proposed by the EU expects the medium using, enjoying and receiving culture to have a new approach, one that regards cultural assets dynamically and not statically. Another question is how much it contributes to the formation of identity. However, it can result in a more creative relation to cultural assets. Thinking about heritage has no broad traditions in Hungary yet, although its components, which can become of current usage according to the new logic, had already existed and the new notion is beginning to spread in professional circles. It is a political intention to try to launch this new approach. In this reversed situation it is still difficult to know what cir-

³⁹ In a country on the threshold of accession to the EU, it is a peculiar paradox that the country, in the period of post-socialist nation building, wants to adopt a cultural discourse which was developed in countries with a loosening concept of nation.

⁴⁰ Cf. François Hartog’s remarks on the relation of heritage and time, especially on “presentism”, *Örökség és történelem: az örökség ideje. (Heritage and history: the time of heritage) Regio*, 2000, No. 4., 3–25.

cles will speak the language or perhaps dialect of heritage in culture, and to what degree they really understand it. Will it be merely a basis for reference or a brand-name, which can be used when entering for a tender or will it provide a real intellectual direction? A static and motionless national image differs from the above mentioned intellectual vivacity very much. Can or does a historian, who is not interested in the motionless past but in processes and their schisms, participate in the formation of heritage? It may be more useful if he or she demonstrates what other milestones exist in the country's history beyond the political "state biography", instead of unifying and covering history with the notion of heritage.⁴¹

Once change has been demonstrated in the issue, the question must be also raised as to what will happen to the discourse and practice connected to it. Will it survive the present period of European unification? At the moment of the attempt to transfer it to Hungary, the Western heritage industry might be reaching the maximum of its performance as consumers or at least sceptic observers could have had enough of nearly everything becoming heritage.⁴²

41 "Millennium és társadalomtörténet" (*Millennium and social history*). Éva Kovács és Attila Melegh talk to Gyula Benda, social historian. *Regio*, 2000, No. 2., 35–36. Social and economic processes "do not at all coincide with the time of important political decisions and dates, which became symbolic. It is another question what is left for the social historian if he wants to participate in this celebratory game in some way. [...] I do not want to rhyme with "a thousand years" and write about the social history of the thousand years, because probably we must think in different stages". In his lecture *History and Heritage*, held on 6 November 2000 at the Central European University, Keith Thomas (the author of *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, and *Man and the Natural World. Changing Attitudes in England*, and who at present also participates in British heritage protection) discussed whether a heritage-type thinking, which reconstructs the past according to the requirements of the present, conformed to history writing, which theoretically studies it for its own sake. In the end his answer was affirmative but with the condition that "heritage" cannot avoid the unpleasant conflicts and cataclysms in history, while "history" can utilise the popularity of heritage while insisting on its own professional criteria.

42 At a conference of Collegium Budapest, held in January 2000, several lecturers referred to the problem, which was already an empirical fact in western countries. Erdősi, Péter: "Feljegyzések az örökség diskurzusáról. Két konferencia tanulságai" (*Notes on the discourse of heritage. The lessons of two conferences*), *Regio*, 2000, No. 1., 269, 273. Papers are published in Szegegy-Maszák, Mihály (ed.): *National Heritage – National Canon*. Budapest: Collegium Budapest, 2001. On her thoughts emerging from a talk with Sally Humphrey, who organised the conference, see the article by Babarczy, Eszter: "Vidámabb múltat tessék vágni! A nemzeti örökségről". (*Make a happier past, please. On national heritage*) *Magyar Narancs*, (<http://manco.hu/legfrissebb.idp?azon=0008publ>). The author thinks that "the heritage industry does not face a real hedonistic consumer culture in Hungary", and asks about "what we should add to this whole inherited Hungarian culture history to make it

For the time being we cannot say at all that total “museumification” has taken place in practice in Hungary, but theoretical confusion may result in that. Will “heritage” in Hungary be a component or framework of phenomena, which exist independently of trends like country image, cultural tourism and identity making? Or may another notion take over the role of “heritage”, which arranges cultural life in another way, which cannot yet be seen? Will there be a new paradigm that we will start to adopt again? If there will be, how will we use our experience gained in the name of “heritage”?

into national heritage”. She regards the lack of “consensus on continuity” as the obstacle to the formation of national heritage. Concerning continuity, cf. the works of Hartog, who recognises the schism between present and past as a precondition of heritage formation. Zsolt K. Horváth explains “the national memory’s change into patrimonial self-consciousness” in the French case with three schisms (the failure of the official history of opposition after De Gaulle’s resignation; the effect of modernisation on the agricultural society; the sobering of the French Left): “Elképzelt múlt, felidézett jövő. Három séta az „örökség” erdejében” (*Imagined Past, Recalled Future. Three Walks in the Woods of “Heritage”*), op. cit., 181–187. It would be worth analysing the roots of the heritage movement in each country.

NATIONAL MINORITIES

JUDIT TÓTH

Pulling the Wool over Hungarains' Eyes

Facts and aspects

The complexity of issues and debates concerning the implementation of provisions of the Act on Hungarians Living in the Neighbouring States (No. 62 of 2001, hereinafter: the Act) can be approached in numerous ways.

One of the possible lines of analysis would follow the *potential legal development in diaspora law* or in a wider circle of domestic law in Hungary due to the fact that about 150 various legal sources have regulated in recent decades, in a hidden or in an obvious way, the benefits and distribution of support for ethnic Hungarians across the borders. This new stratum of law, namely diaspora law aims to draw further consequences for state administration, public management and legislation in contemporary Hungary.¹

Another analysis may investigate how the Act and its preparation as well as its practice influence *domestic policy*. For instance, which is more relevant – the competition for voters in the continuous electoral campaign for ruling power or its effect on nation building in the post-communist period. This approach has to be inserted into the process of how *diaspora policy* has become an organic part of domestic politics,² including the oscillating level of prejudices

1 Tóth, Judit: “Diaspora in Legal Regulations: 1989–1999”. In Kiss, I. – McGovern, C. (eds.): *New Diasporas in Hungary, Russia and Ukraine: Legal Regulations and Current Politics*. Budapest: Open Society Institute/COLPI, 2000, 42–95.

2 Tóth, Judit: “Diaspora Politics: Programs and Prospects”. In Kiss, I. – McGovern, C. (eds.): *New Diasporas in Hungary, Russia and Ukraine: Legal Regulations and Current Politics*. Budapest: Open Society Institute/COLPI, 2000, 96–141. Csigó, Péter – Kovács, Éva: “The Hungarian – Romanian Basic Agreement: Positions and Issues in the Debate”. In Kiss, I. – McGovern, C. (eds.): *New Diasporas in Hungary, Russia and Ukraine: Legal Regulations and Current Politics*. Budapest: Open Society Institute/COLPI, 2000, 142–190.

in Hungary toward ethnic Hungarians living in neighbouring countries or farther abroad (Figure 1),³ and whether the existing cleavages in ethnic cross-border politics have become greater or smaller.⁴

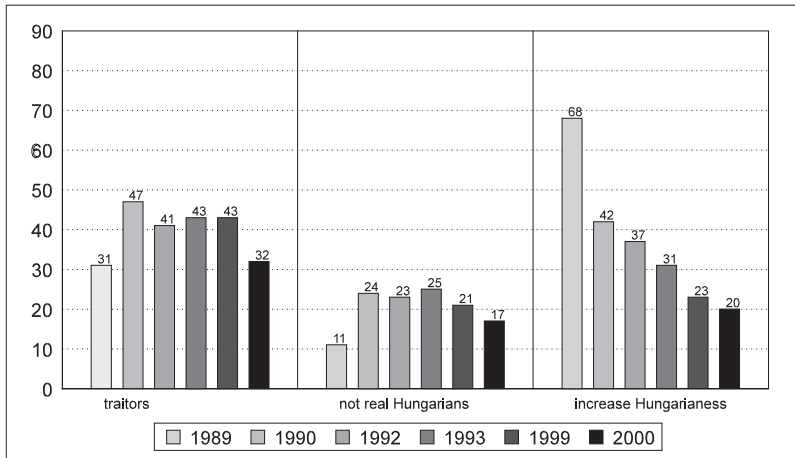


Figure 1. Attitudes toward ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania (1989–2000) (%)

Taking into account the context of the Act, the *external relations and European integration of Hungary* must be inserted into the structure of issues. From this perspective the Act will be evaluated as part of the compensatory measures of the changing time-frame of accession of the states from the region. Certain

Varga, György: “Diaspora Policy of the Hungarian Government: Means and Institutions”. In Kiss, I. – McGovern, C. (eds.): *New Diasporas in Hungary, Russia and Ukraine: Legal Regulations and Current Politics*. Budapest: Open Society Institute/COLPI, 2000, 191–202.

3 Tóth, Judit – Sik, Endre: “Joining to the EU identity – integration of Hungary or the Hungarians?” Manuscript, 2002 (forthcoming). Source of data: Csepeli, György and Sik, Endre: “Changing Content of Political Xenophobia in Hungary – Is the Growth of Xenophobia Inevitable?” In Fullerton, Maryellen – Sik, Endre – Tóth, Judit (eds.): *Refugees and Migrants: Hungary at a Crossroads*, Budapest: MTA PTI, 1995, 121–128., further TÁRKI Omnibus 1999 and 2000.

4 Bárdi, Nándor: “Cleavages in Cross-Border Magyar Minority Politics 1989–1998”. *Regio*, 2000, 3–36.

governmental efforts intend to eliminate the isolation of neighbouring people, in particular of ethnic Hungarians. The new walls of visa restrictions, border and migration control introduced in part as elements of the *acquis communautaire*⁵ will destroy regional trust, co-operation and communication precisely in the region with permeable borders and newborn *migratory movements*.⁶ For this reason, the multiplier effect of the Act on migration to Hungary, including the impact on the labour market, informal economy, social insurance, public utilities and services can form an important part of criticism.

Finally, the Act will be systematically described from the *perspective of diaspora* and Hungarian communities. It may affirm or deny whether the Act has contributed to the full emancipation and integration of an ethnic minority into the local society, or how support from the kin-state may assist the self-definition, national identity and institution building of Hungarian communities abroad – in other words, how the diaspora can become a definitive partner and actor in political discourse and in debates at local as well as state and regional level.

Such holistic research requires team work and a relatively long time scale, not only for analytical description but also for time-series of social, legal and political effects and practices. Due to these difficulties the author may highlight from the whole package in an ad hoc way some elements inspiring further analysis.

The genesis

The Governing Programme of the ruling party (1998–2002)⁷ projected the possible creation of the Act, although it was not definitive. Under the sub-title of “*Integration policy expressing national interests*” the Programme refers to the close relation between EU accession and implementation of the Community rules on visas and immigration (of third country nationals) and the re-

5 Tóth, Judit: “The Impact of the EU Migration Policies on Central-Eastern European Countries”. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No.2, 2001, 102–114. Tóth, Judit: “Security of Residence and Expulsion: Protection of Aliens in Hungary”. In Guild, E. – Minderhoud, P. (Eds.): *Security of Residence and Expulsion – Protection of Aliens in Europe. Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy in Europe Vol.1*) The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2001, 165–174.

6 Hárs, Á. -Sik, E.-Tóth, J.: “Hungary”. In Wallace, C. – Stola, D. (Eds.): *Patterns of Migration in Central Europe*. Palgrave, 2001, 252–276.

7 The whole text in Hungarian can be found on www.htmh.hu/kormanyprogram.htm

lations with neighbours. “For this reason the Government is making efforts to prepare and have accepted by the EU *special solutions* that can ensure an uninterrupted relationship with the population of neighbouring countries, in particular with Hungarians living there, and that cannot diminish the attained level of Hungary’s good neighbourhood policies.” Integration policy based on (partly) national interests also includes assistance for the EU accession of neighbouring states as well as respect for bilateral agreements on friendship and co-operation (Basic Agreements) with neighbours that “shall be made more substantial and supplemented by further agreements on details and practical issues.” It is not clear whether one-sided regulation is an immanent element of “special solutions” or rather diplomatic measures and instruments are implied.

The Programme refers to legislation more unequivocally under the sub-title of *National policy*. Ethnic Hungarians living across the borders are mentioned as participants in the unification of Europe, as subjects who shall be growing in, and as people who are to remain in, the homeland (across the borders). “For these purposes the relations of Hungarians across the borders with Hungary shall be determined within a *legislative* and administrative framework which will be able to ensure an organic relationship of Hungarian communities to the kin-state even after EU accession.”

Citations can prove that the governing power has considered ethnic minorities beyond the borders as “historical obstacles” to politically smooth European integration and friendship with neighbours. This is the foreign affairs context. On the other hand, the ethnic communities are said to belong also to the fragmented nation that intends to be unified (at least spiritually) again. This dichotomy is reflected in the programme as well as the three priorities in foreign affairs doctrine followed since 1989 in Hungary. Accordingly, the major and equally important goals of external policy are as follows: accession to NATO and the EU; maintaining good relations with all neighbours; taking responsibility for ethnic Hungarians outside Hungary as a kin-state cherishing wide contacts with Hungarians living across the borders. Instead of the promised hard negotiations with the EU, there were noisy debates on the Bill inside parliament and in media political discourses about national interests, special solutions and compensatory measures for restrictions on movement. The closing of chapters of the *acquis* on movement, and justice and home affairs without any derogation (as a possible element of “special solutions”), but with the acceptance of temporary limitations for Hungarian na-

tionals concerning mobility in the EU, the adoption of the new, rigid Act on entry and residence of all kind of foreigners in Hungary, and the loud voting process on the Act all followed each other within a month in 2001.⁸

The Government started to outline the Act only in its third year in power. During the previous years it basically followed the existing diaspora policy and regulations, recruiting its own staff, clients and representatives of Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin. Then the Bill's preparation was upgraded in 2000. The Standing Conference of Hungarians as a forum for political negotiations was playing a declining role in this process. Although it was established by Parliament in 1999 and its tasks were defined and co-ordinated by the Government, the Conference could not democratically and publicly debate the substance of the Bill while forming a national consensus. The Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad (inserted into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in a rather conspiratorial way managed the preparation and negotiated some principles with arbitrarily selected partners behind closed doors. In parallel, the media as actor in the eternal election campaign, was publishing controversial news about the Bill and its changing elements. Due to the wide range of promised and desired rights for Hungarians (i.e. double citizenship, Hungarian passport) the regulation was referred to as "Bill on the Act on Status of Hungarians", "Act on Status" or briefly "Status law". Finally, the majority of the Conference adopted the regulatory principles as the only option, but without consensus. Economic, budgetary, labour, legal or public management analyses were not made about the preconditions or consequences of the regulation and its benefits for ethnic Hungarians. In this way, alternative proposals could not be submitted.

Substantial and public discussion of the Bill started only inside Parliament in early 2001. At that time its title changed to "Bill on the Benefits for Hungarians Living Across the Borders". The Hungarian Socialist Party, as the major opposition party, submitted a lot of motions expressing its willingness to formulate an admissible common minimum in national policy and diaspora law. The Alliance of Free Democrats attacked both the principles and the legal provisions of the Bill. The overwhelming majority of the submitted amendments were rejected and despite dramatic arguments the Act under the simplified titles "on Hungarians Living Across the Borders" was passed

⁸ The Act was passed by parliament on 19 June 2001, the Act on entry of foreigners and residence in Hungary (No. 39 of 2001) was adopted on 29 May 2001. The closure of the mentioned chapters was announced in late June 2001.

by 90 per cent of MPs under the pressure of public opinion and with the heightened expectations of Hungarian communities beyond the borders.

The Act entering into force on 1st January 2002 contains the following benefits for a “Hungarian Certificate” holder as well as for his/her minor and spouse:

<i>Area of</i>	<i>How</i>	<i>Benefits and support</i>
<i>Cultural rights</i>		
	As nationals	Services in public institutes (i.e. in archives)
		Membership in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
	Free of charge	Public libraries, public collections, museums
	As nationals	Competition for state scholarships
	Upon request	Regular training in Hungary for Hungarian teachers within the yearly quota
	Upon request	Contribution to training in home country for Hungarian teachers
	As nationals	Teacher card that provides some commercial discounts (i.e. buying books)
	Later defined by law	Undefined further benefits for Hungarian teachers and lecturers
	As nationals	State Awards
<i>Schooling</i>		
	As nationals	Studies at university, college, PhD and post-secondary courses
		Regular state scholarship at university or college within yearly quota
	Upon request	Contribution to fees in non-state studies
	As nationals	Student card that provides commercial discount (i.e. for public transport)
	Upon request	Contribution to setting up new department of university/college in co-operation with founding university/college in Hungary
	Upon request	Family care and education contribution for bringing up at least two minors attending public school in Hungarian language

<i>Area of</i>	<i>How</i>	<i>Benefits and support</i>
	Upon request	Contribution to study costs of attending university/college
<i>Social rights</i>		
	As ensured persons	Social insurance including pension and medical care if insurance contribution is paid in Hungary
	As bilateral agreement defined (free of charge)	Medical care in case of emergency
<i>Public transport</i>		
	Free of charge	Minor below 6 or over 65 on local and national public transport
	For 10 percent of the regular price	Persons aged 7–64 on public transport 4 times yearly
		Group travel (at least 10 minors)
<i>Employment in Hungary</i>		
	As privileged foreigners	Yearly a three month period of employment in possession of labour visa and permit within yearly quota
	Upon request	Contribution to fees and charges in labour authorisation
<i>Publicly financed media</i>		
	Ex officio	Broadcasting news about and programmes for Hungarians beyond the borders
	Ex officio	Contribution to costs of establishing and operation of editorial offices and studios for Hungarians beyond the borders
<i>Community building</i>		
	Upon request	Contribution to operational costs and programmes of civil organisations of Hungarians beyond the borders

A “Hungarian Certificate” shall be issued to persons declaring themselves to be of ethnic Hungarian who:

- (1) are not Hungarian citizens, and

- (2) have their residence in the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Romania, the Republic of Slovenia, the Slovak Republic or the Ukraine, and
- (3) have lost their Hungarian citizenship for reasons other than voluntary renunciation, and
- (4) are not in possession of a “green card for permanent stay” in Hungary, and
- (5) have submitted a formal application to the appropriate Hungarian authority, and
- (6) have a clean criminal record in Hungary (“no criminal proceedings have been instituted against the applicant in Hungary for any intentionally committed offence”), and
- (7) have not been put on the list of unwanted foreigners (“neither expulsion order nor a prohibition of entry or stay, issued by the relevant Hungarian authorities on the basis of grounds determined in a separate Act, is in effect against the applicant in Hungary”).

A “Certificate for Dependant” shall be issued to persons who

- (1) (meet the above requirements, regardless of ethnic origin, and
- (2) (as spouse or minor child is living together with a “Hungarian Certificate” holder in his/her common household, and
- (3) (has submitted a formal application to the relevant Hungarian authority (if a minor, his/her statutory representative).

The most disputed issues

Ever since the inception of the idea, and then when the principles of the Bill and the text of the Act were made public, political opponents and various experts in differing geographical circles have discussed certain aspects of the regulation.⁹ These can be divided into the following domains.

⁹ Due to the large number of publications and media the MPs’ opinions can be read; see www.mkogy.hu/naplo and periodicals covering negotiations on the Act, such as *Beszélő* (i.e. May 2001), *Élet és Irodalom* (since 16 November) or *Magyar Kisebbség* (2002, No. 1.). Proceedings of a conference on the Act held by the Teleki László Institute and the Institute of 21st Century (Budapest, 30 November 2001). The articles were published in Kántor, Zoltán (ed.): *A státustörvény előzmények és következmények*. Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2002. A conference on the Act held by the Institute for Legal Sciences (H.A.S.) (19 July 2001) also generated deep discussion.

The basic question has been whether a *framework act is necessary or not*. For legal reasons the existing scattered legal provisions concerning Hungarians across the borders would have required a certain tidying and screening, but not through a new act lacking comprehensive principles. Such an act might have been necessary for non-legal reasons. Since those in power did not manage to generate broad political agreement within public opinion about the special motives or need for a symbolic bond between the kin-state and parts of the nation beyond the border in a globalised world, the sceptical voices have been more authentic. Due to the lack of consensus, criticism was sharp concerning how the Act was prepared. The absence of substantial consultations with Hungarian communities, home states and social partners in Hungary, and of social surveys about the impact of the Act were most frequently cited. The budgetary expenditures were not projected carefully or publicly. In the end, the spiritual and emotional unification of the truncated nation remained the most pressing argument for the Act. The Act only covers Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin (originally the Bill included Austria, but it was deleted due to a motion submitted by the ruling party), while the Hungarian diaspora has spread to other European countries and indeed world-wide. The Act thus makes second class Hungarians of the millions of excluded persons.

People arguing about the regulatory principles often raise the *benefits provided in Hungary* as pulling factors for migration to the kin-state in transition. Hungary is surrounded by depressed regions with a high unemployment rate, low incomes, poor health care and an undeveloped schooling system in terms of ethnic requirements. These factors cannot be balanced by the diaspora policy principle of keeping minorities in their home state as a heroic, living patriotic symbol of the continuity of Hungarian culture and history. It could cause severe frustration that a major part of benefits can be enjoyed in Hungary while free travel and residence in the kin-state is strongly limited. Moreover, the benefits are not based on individual rights and the growing discretionary power of Hungarian authorities including public foundations, representatives of state agencies and arbitrarily selected organisations of Hungarian communities in certificate proceedings altogether makes the *paternal connections* of the kin-state alive and strong toward members of the national communities beyond the borders. This rather intentional consequence would hinder their integration and emancipation in local society in the home state.

In addition to the above-mentioned criticism, the *personal scope of the Act* is also legally problematic. The overwhelming majority of Hungarians living in surrounding countries had never had Hungarian citizenship, and those persons who had ever been Hungarian citizens could have lost it in different ways (renunciation, removal, deprivation, optional decision from multiple citizenship, due to international treaty) between 1920 and 1994. In brief, the fair implementation of the Act could cover some thousands of elderly persons. Although citizenship law experts warned about it, the law-making mistake remained in the text. The regulations probably intended to cover not only persons who have ever had Hungarian citizenship but also their descendants, but in a state governed by the rule of law written provisions should be applied instead of instructions, circular letters or government intentions.

The benefits beyond the area of cultural heritage have generalised the *fear of a mass influx* of ethnic Hungarians into Hungary. The three-months labour and related social insurance have been forcefully targeted. *Challenging labour market and medical care* benefits has led trade unions and social organisations to obtain guarantees concerning the control mechanism for implementation of the Act. The Government, which had neglected employer-employee interest reconciliation for years, had to suddenly confer with social partners on the Act and its economic ramifications, in particular in the light of reactions of neighbouring states. As the Protocol in connection with the Extraordinary Meeting of the National Labour Council¹⁰ proved, the social partners were totally uninformed. Thus they required full information about negotiations with the Romanian government about labour migration. They also demanded participation in the necessary modification of the rules on employment of foreigners in Hungary, as well as up-to-date statistics on labour movements. The Government promised to involve the social partners in the preparation of the executive rules of the Act in the realm of labour. In order to make the labour market controllable (in principle), an annual quota of foreign workers was established – something that had never existed before. Similarly, the Public Health Committee of Parliament was urgently convened¹¹ to discuss the endangered medical care due to the influx of migrants. According to the relevant minister, the sum of social insurance contributions would be higher than the costs of appli-

10 *Official Gazette* (17 January 2002) published the Protocol of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Labour Council (4 January 2002) Tájékoztató az Országos Munkaügyi Tanács üléséről.

11 *Népszabadság*, 11 January 2002. “Ki fizet a külföldiek után?”

cable services. Not surprisingly, the arguments could not convince opposition MPs how the net income would be ensured.

Echoes from international bodies

As the Act in its unofficial English translation was available for an international audience, the legal and political reactions were born. In October and November 2001 the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Commissioner for Minority Issues of the OSCE gave their own opinion.

The Venice Commission, as the expert body of constitutional (and international public) law under the umbrella of the Council of Europe, put the Act on its agenda. The paper submitted by the *Hungarian government explained how and why* the goals and principles of the Act were in harmony with international standards on minority protection.¹² Respecting diversity as a value in Europe, as the Council of Europe has recognised many times in various documents, and taking into account the beneficial treatment of ethnic minorities on the basis of minority protection standards, the accusation of discrimination by the Act was rejected. Moreover, the Framework Agreement on the Protection of National Minorities (1995) in the CE allows for each party state to stand up for its own ethnic minorities including support provided for them. The Act is in accordance with the Framework Agreement because its compensatory measures are based on lawful, legitimate and objectively defined aims that are proportional to disadvantages related to being a minority. The Government strongly referred to legislation on national minorities issued by the neighbouring kin-states as a point of case law. Their legal practice and regulation have been criticised neither by Hungary nor by European forums. This may confirm the tacit consensus of states regarding the interpretation of co-operation between a kin-state and members of ethnic minorities living in neighbouring states. It can allow that organisations of minorities in the home state make suggestions to issue the Certificate as a basic requirement for benefits provided by the kin-state. This direct co-operation with the authorities of the kin-state means no authoritative power of organisations or communities of independent organisations. Finally, the personal scope of preferential treatment is opened up. A spouse or minor can enjoy it regardless of ethnic origin as the rules on the “Certificate for Dependand” prove.

¹² *Position Paper of the Hungarian Government in relation to the Act on the Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001. Unpublished.

Thus a discriminative approach is far from the entire spirit of the regulation. The Hungarian government maintained a strongly defensive opinion instead of a progressive view concerning the framework and substance of international public law concerning the relations of the kin-state – home state – kin-minority triangle. An appendix enumerated the inter-governmental “consultations” (meetings, information supply) with neighbouring countries, rebutting the charge of unilateral decision-making and absence of dialogue.

The *Venice Commission’s advisory opinion*¹³ considers the recently spreading tendency of one-sided, domestic regulation of kin-states towards kin-minorities (i.e. in Constitution or in special law) as a non-desirable manifestation. This legislation reveals the failure of established co-operation and consent between the kin-state and home state. The correct legal policy should be based on bilateral regulation formed by the mutual interaction and dialogue of the states in question. This would involve either multilateral convention or bilateral treaty. Although the basic agreements (on friendship and co-operation) concluded by numerous European countries with each other provide only a general framework of interstate connections without special provisions on kin-minority issues, they should be supplemented by specific rules on interests, mechanisms and guarantees in favour of national minorities, and for kin-state and home state co-operation. These framework agreements would be subjected to prevailing international control and mediator mechanisms in case of disputes or violation of obligations by a party state. In addition, their provisions should be implemented directly through the courts in the home state. Moreover, there are no independent forums that could be entitled to interpret later rules in framework agreements or to reconcile the parties. Due to these limitations, governments have definitive power to execute the framework agreements while other democratic organs, including the representative organisations of kin-minorities, are excluded from the dialogue, from law-making and from implementation of the provisions (i.e. kin-minorities have no right of veto). The existing bilateral agreements on interstate relations and national minority issues shall be approached in a complementary way together with numerous international mediatory agencies (OSCE, its Commissioner, UN Human Rights Commissioner), good offices and missions, as well as soft-law orienting minority policy. Briefly, the

¹³ European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) 168/2001 CDL-Inf (2001)19. Report on the preferential treatment of national minorities by their kin-state adopted by the 48th Plenary Meeting (Venice, 19/20 October 2001).

unilateral, domestic regulation of a kin-state cannot supersede bilateral or multilateral dialogue, mutual trust and interstate co-operation. If one-sided regulation were needed concerning national minority issues in a kin-state, it should have respect for principles of international law (*pacta sunt servanda*, respect for sovereignty of the home state, principle of good neighbourliness, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the prohibition of discrimination,) while preparations are made for the implementation of bilateral and/or international agreements.

“Responsibility for minority protection lays primarily with the home states. The Commission notes that kin-states also play a role in the protection and preservation of their kin-minorities, aiming at ensuring that their genuine linguistic and cultural links remain strong. [...] In fields other than education and culture, the Commission considers that preferential treatment might be granted only in exceptional cases, and when it is shown to pursue the genuine aim of maintaining the links with the kin-states and to be proportionate to that aim (for example, when the preference concerns access to benefits which are at any rate available to other foreign citizens who do not have the national background of the kin-state).”

The *OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities* drew the attention of kin-states to the same. The protection of minority rights as an obligation belongs to the state in whose territory national minorities are living, as he emphasised.¹⁴ “History shows that when states take unilateral steps on the basis of national minorities living beyond the jurisdiction of the state, this sometimes leads to tensions and frictions, even violent conflict. I am therefore obliged to focus special attention on situations where similar steps, without the consent of the state of residence, are contemplated.” Visiting Bratislava in late January 2002,¹⁵ he was less diplomatic, stating that the Act had extraterritorial effect and discriminatory elements. Thus it would establish a detrimental precedent.

The *EU Commission's Report*¹⁶ criticised the Act in the context of foreign and security policy. While Hungary has continued to develop good-neighbourly relations, the Act adopted without consultation raised controversies

14 Ekéus, Rolf: “Statement on Sovereignty, Responsibility and Minorities”. 26 October 2001. See www.osce.org/news/generate.php3

15 *Népszabadság*, 26 January 2002.

16 Commission of the European Communities: 2001 Regular Report on Hungary's Progress Towards Accession. Brussels, 13.11.2001 SEC(2001)1748

with some neighbouring states. While the objective of the Act is to support Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries and to maintain their cultural heritage, some of the provisions laid down in the Act “apparently *conflict with the prevailing European standards of minority protection*” as determined in the Venice Commission’s Report. “Also, as foreseen in its Article 27 (2) the Law¹⁷ will need to be *aligned with the acquis upon accession at the latest, since it is currently not in line with the principle of non-discrimination* laid down in the EC Treaty (Article 6,7,12 and 13). As the Law itself represents framework legislation, it will not be applicable without the adoption of implementing decrees. Hungary will therefore need to comply with the above principles and hold the necessary *consultations in order to agree with its neighbours* also as regards implementing legislation in the future. Consultations with the Romanian and Slovak governments started in summer 2001, so far without concrete results. Following the adoption of the Venice Commission’s Report (including by Hungary itself), Hungary has, however, committed itself to complying with the report’s findings.”

Discourses with neighbouring home states

The top leaders of Romania were the first to send clear messages about rejection of the implementation of the Act in the territory of Romania. Their determination was well-founded in view of the statements of the Council of Europe, OSCE and EU. The position of the Hungarian government involved a kind of blackmail – it wanted to implement the Act on 1st January 2002 at any price. Thus a *Memorandum of Understanding*¹⁸ was put under the Christmas tree of Hungarians. It was signed on 22nd December 2001.

The direct impact of the international climate can be proved both formally and substantially. The text was written exclusively in English for international consumption, although all existing bilateral treaties were drawn up in the official languages. The Memorandum as an instrument of *soft law* is far from the public law traditions of Hungary. The Memo in spirit of consensus

17 Article 27 (2) of the Act said: “From the date of accession of the Republic of Hungary to the European Union, the provisions of this Act shall be applied in accordance with the treaty of accession of the Republic of Hungary and with the European Community law.”

18 Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of Romania concerning the Law on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries and issues of bilateral co-operation. Budapest, 22 December 2001

wanted to be in harmony with (1) the Venice Commission's opinion, (2) the statement of the OSCE High Commissioner, (3) the EU Report, (4) the "Treaty on understanding, co-operation and good-neighbourliness between the Republic of Hungary and Romania", in particular the provisions concerning the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, acknowledging that providing effective equality in rights and opportunities for the national minorities living in their respective countries and creating conditions for them to prosper in their land of birth, constitute an indispensable contribution to the stability of the region and to the creation of a future Europe, based on values such as cultural and linguistic diversity, and tolerance, (5) "the rhythm of development of bilateral economic relations and [...] commercial exchanges between their states", and (6) the "progress of Romania in meeting the accession criteria". The Hungarian party offered to support the proposal that Romania become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

This political document appears as an international binding treaty with substantial modification of the Act, although Parliament had given no authority to conclude it, and it was neither ratified nor published. "The present Agreement sets forth conditions of implementing the Law on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries with regard to Romanian citizens." Accordingly: (1) All Romanian citizens, notwithstanding their ethnic origin, will enjoy the same conditions and treatment in the field of employment on the basis of a work permit on the territory of the Republic of Hungary. (2) Romanian citizens of non-Hungarian ethnic identity shall not be granted any certificate (for Dependant) and shall not be entitled to any benefits set forth by the Act. (3) The entire procedure of granting the Certificate (receiving of applications, issue, forwarding) shall primarily take place on the territory of the Republic of Hungary (through county public administration offices, Ministry of Interior) and at the Hungarian diplomatic missions. This excludes the organisations of Hungarian communities being actors that could issue a binding document as attachment to an application. (4) The Certificate shall contain only the strictly necessary personal data and the entitlement to benefits (name, forename, citizenship, country of residence, etc.) and shall include no reference to ethnic origin/identity. (5) The compulsory criteria on which certificates are granted shall be based on the free declaration of the person belonging to the Hungarian minority in the state of citizenship, knowledge of the Hungarian language or Hungarian ethnic identity, or

optionally, membership of a Hungarian representative organisation or of a (Hungarian) church. (6) Hungary shall not grant any kind of support to Hungarian political organisations in Romania unless previously informing the Romanian authorities and obtaining their consent. (7) The Parties shall start negotiations on an Agreement on the preferential treatment of the Romanian minority on the territory of Hungary and of the Hungarian minority on the territory of Romania, in order to preserve their cultural identity in accordance with the provisions of international documents, the Venice Commission's report, and the guidelines of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Both the legality and the legitimacy of the unpublished pact were severely criticised by the opposition parties, as well as diplomatic and legal experts.¹⁹ The kin-minority, as hostage of the disputed situation, had to be pleased, though members of the Hungarian community could obtain information only in part through the press. Elderly Hungarians and perhaps people of the middle generation could sigh with satisfaction, keeping in their hands the Certificate as an exhibit of his/her challenged Hungarian identity in the home state.

Bad things always come in threes. The Act having extraterritorial effects on Slovakia, the *Slovak parliament* discussed blocking implementation of the Act in Slovakia in early February 2002. While state secretaries and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were commuting between Bratislava and Budapest in order to outline a solution, the Slovak parliament was intending to adopt a negative position regarding MPs who requested a "Hungarian Certificate". According to the latest news the foreign minister of Slovakia announced the possibility of an accord with Budapest: it would be formed in a Memorandum of Understanding following the Romanian pattern.²⁰ It will refer to a Basic Agreement between the two states providing proper manoeuvring room for support of kin-minorities and monitoring their conditions. The Memorandum will invite the Hungarian parliament to harmonize the Act with the Report of the Venice Commission, looking for bilateral agreement in all kinds of benefits outside the cultural heritage.

¹⁹ See the set of articles in daily and weekly newspapers, such as Nagy, Boldizsár: "A szándék-buborék". *Élet és Irodalom*, 25 January 2002, Eörsi, István: "A visszavonulás pancseréi". *Népszabadság*, 12 January 2002.

²⁰ *Népszabadság*, 9 February 2002. Interview with Eduard Kukan minister.

In view of the experiences of neighbours, diplomats of *Ukraine* announced the requirement for “compensation” if the Act is intended to be implemented in its territory. In order to respect the non-discrimination requirement, the entire population of the Trans-Carpathian district would be covered by a bilateral agreement on labour, regardless of the ethnic origin of any potential labour migrant. As a Ukrainian proposal articulated in 2000, an annual quota for labourers in Hungary would be agreed.²¹ Being a poor region with high unemployment, cultural identity and related challenges vary in priority given the economic situation. The first reaction of Budapest was negative: the labour agreement had no connection with the Act. Furthermore, Hungary would maintain the visa-free regime toward Ukraine up to accession. What compensation, therefore, do they want?

This indicates that the exchange of views, interstate co-operation and dialogue cannot be substituted by unilateral, one-sided regulation. The opinion and the climate formed by international organisations is coercive enough to force the Hungarian government and perhaps the parliament to amend prior principles. However, they are ready to re-shape the regulation and relations with kin-minorities *if it involves no loss of prestige of each actor*. The modification of rules is partial, making more confusing the legal provisions in question, while the negative reactions of home states have increased not only the Government's power in confrontation, but also the ethnic cohesion and feeling of endangered national identity of Hungarians across the borders. The leaders of Hungarian communities were interviewed non-stop, so publicity about the alleged subjects of benefits was grew strongly, which improved their legitimacy and positions, playing a political role in home state and kin-state alike. Moreover, the opponents of the Act (at least in this form) are satisfied in seeing the similar arguments of neighbouring states against the one-sided regulation. Finally, neighbours may also feel victory over the discriminatory rules of the kin-state in the international debates about the Act.

²¹ *Népszabadság*, 9 February 2002. Orest Klempus ambassador gave information on a press conference in Budapest, 8 February 2002.

Impact on the diaspora law

Since 1989 the Act has been the first legal instrument, which manifestly relates to the constitutional clause about guardianship of kin-state over ethnic minorities,²² yet all Hungarians not living in the enumerated six states became discriminated-against stepchildren. From the perspective of excluded Hungarians living in Siberia, the Czech Republic, in the Baltic area or even in overseas countries, the Act and its executive rules have remained *irrelevant as possible instruments in the protection of identity or keeping alive the relationship* between the kin-state and its “wards”. In brief, the distinctions made by the Act between Hungarians across the borders mean neither development in diaspora law nor minority protection, due to unilateral and biased regulation.

On the other hand, diaspora law is extended by the *growing circle of executive rules*. While the prior provisions have been deregulated by chance the new decrees involved issues rapidly ensuring an *unconstitutionally short time* for authorities and law practitioners to prepare, at least formally, for implementation. No public or expert discussions were possible in late December, when the major procedural rules about the Certificate and benefits were finalised and immediately published. This constrained regulation produced *unconstitutional* outcomes for further reasons. For instance, the Government *delegated its entitlement to designate* the NGOs representing each kin-minority as distributors of information about benefits, of forms for application and as those able to confirm the kin-membership of applicants. On behalf of the Government it is the foreign minister who can designate such partner organisations, without any public (legal, political, expert) control. Although the Government has no right to delegate this entitlement by law, it has been decided in a half-secret resolution without any substantial or formal criteria of designation.²³

At the same time, the Government substantially derogated some provisions of the Act. Considering the Memorandum of Understanding as an international treaty, the Certificate can be rejected on grounds additional to those defined in the Act. Beside its conditions, an applicant can be furnished with a Certificate if he/she “can speak in Hungarian or he/she is registered as an ethnic Hungarian at the local church or organisations of the Hungarian commu-

²² Art 6 (3) of the Constitution due to the amendment of the Constitution No. 31 of 1989.

²³ Resolution No. 2379 of 2001, 18 December (A 2001. évi LXII törvényben foglalt elismerési jog gyakorlására való felhatalmazásról). It was published in *Határozatok Tára* available only for high level state administrators.

nity in the home state, and if any international treaty does not exclude issuance of the Certificate".²⁴ Designated NGOs are defined as "contributor" organisations in the home state in co-operation with the relevant authorities. The charge of extraterritorial effect is intended to be countered by the appointment of competent authorities: the consular offices and Central Office for Data, Register and Elections (Ministry of the Interior) of the kin-state. Moreover, the county public administration office is responsible for the delivery of certificates, i.e. the office in Debrecen shall deliver the certificates for applicants living in Romania. Regulations about the technical issues of the Certificate²⁵ cut across discussions about its emotional, symbolic or legal relevance. The Certificate is an official document meeting legal security requirements, and this booklet, adorned with the gold images of the Hungarian crown and Parliament and citations from acts, is valid for five years. Decrees define organisations and agencies that can make notes in the booklet about how its holder applied for various benefits. The management and protection of personal data is not surrounded with genuine guarantees during the entire process, which involves several actors. Anyway, there is no obligation to request the certificate and an applicant voluntarily provides personal data.

By early 2002, the executive rules relating to *three major areas of benefits* had been published. They are as follows: (1) schooling benefits applicable in the kin-state (such as student card²⁶ or teacher card²⁷ providing discount prices on public transport and in trade, state financed scholarships and pedagogical training in Hungary within the annual quota, distance learning); (2) benefits in cultural areas (e.g. benefits concerning visits to museums, public libraries as defined originally in Government decrees are extended to certificate holders by a ministerial decree);²⁸ (3) employment in Hungary; sharp debates about foreign labour provoked the introduction of a more bureaucratic labour authorisation and defensive regulation in general, not only concerning ethnic Hungarians. The annual quota of labour permits, including the number of permits issued in the framework of treaties on mutual labour exchange, was at first articulated as an "achievement" of conciliation with social

24 Government Decree No. 318 of 2001, 29 December.

25 Joint Decree of Ministers of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, No. 49 of 2001, 29 December.

26 Government Decree No. 319 of 2001, 29 December.

27 Decree of Minister of Public Education No. 47 of 2001, 29 December .

28 Decree of Minister of Cultural Heritage No. 23 of 2001, 29 December.

partners. According to the new provision,²⁹ its number shall not exceed the average of registered vacancies in the previous year. For instance, in 2002 the quota is 81,000 persons, as the responsible minister defined³⁰ in a note instead of decree.³¹ Due to consideration of the Memorandum of Understanding as an international treaty, not only Certificate holders but all Romanian citizens can be employed in Hungary for 90 days annually if the labour authority issues the permit without scrutiny of the local labour force in stock (and without modification of the Act).

This list of *unconstitutional actions* can be extended. While the Government and ministers without lawful entitlement have derogated existing provisions including the Act, the prevailing contradictions inside regulations are being increased by new rules. For instance, the Act on entry and residence of foreigners in Hungary shall be implemented vis-à-vis ethnic Hungarians on the same footing as other aliens, but free movement would be facilitated for benefits that are applicable basically in Hungary. In order to deter ethnic Hungarians giving up residence in their home state, a mixture of obstacles and exceptions is inserted into the provisions. Thus minimal exceptions are indirectly defined in favour of ethnic Hungarians: (1) an application for settlement permit can be issued without a three-year long residence preceding the submission if the applicant or his/her ancestor ever had Hungarian citizenship, not including years of study (involving many foreign students coming across the borders); (2) family unification is benefited to the extent that it is more frequent among ethnic Hungarians who have family members in the kin-state. At the same time, new police and labour inspectors' sanctions against unlawful employment were introduced³² that would be implemented against numerous black labourers coming from the surrounding countries and Hungarian communities.

The rules on the *state budget relating to the introduction of the Certificate, its proceedings and the costs of benefits* have remained unpublished or published only in part. Submitting the Bill to Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made

29 Joint Decree of Minister of Economy, of Foreign Affairs, of Youth and Sport No. 2 of 2002, 29 January

30 A gazdasági miniszter közleménye a 2002-ben, Magyarországon engedéllyel foglalkoztatható külföldiek legmagasabb számáról. *Magyar Közlöny*, 2002, No. 13.

31 See the Act on Facilitation of Employment and Unemployment Care No. 4 of 1991, Art 7 (6).

32 Government Decree No.170 of 2001, 26 September Art.103 and Act No. 39 of 2001, Art 32, Act No.4 of 1991, Art 7 (4)

a summary of the possible costs of implementation on the basis of the annual budget for 2001–2002.³³ Accordingly, the Government can pay through the ministries and public foundations altogether 30.5 million Euro. Due to the Memorandum of late December and the supposed high number of applicants for certificate, the Government decided to add extra contributions for consular services, computerisation and certificate administration. These costs were up to 10.7 million Euro.³⁴ The total sum, together with the procedure for preparing the certificates, accounted for 19.6 million Euro by late January 2002, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁵ Randomly surveying the official publications, one can find further decisions about the procedural or marginal costs of the Act decided by various state agencies. For instance, the Governing Body of the Labour Force Foundation financed research on the labour migration of Hungarians and its possible control (it's cost was only 464.000 Euro).³⁶ Perhaps they can show that the government has money to burn, since it spends public money like water without previous estimates or projections, and sometimes without approval of Parliament.

Summary

The idea of organically reunifying the truncated elements of the Hungarian nation across the borders with Hungary as a kin-state could play a constructive role in terms of our challenged culture and identity in the era of globalisation. Through the mass media, free travel and easy personal communication, the circulation of opinions, views and thought can be in harmony with the different patterns of socialisation of Hungarian communities living in home states as well as of the diversity of population in the kin-state. However, neither nation building nor minority protection has been developed by the Act, its preparation and implementation. This unilateral regulation deepens the cleavages within public opinion and within the home states of disintegrating Hungarian communities. Internal political and regional tensions are

33 Act on State Budget of Hungarian Republic to the year of 2001 and 2002 No.139 of 2000. The summary was published i.e. in *Beszélő*, May 2001, 29.

34 Resolution of the Government on executive costs of the Act on Hungarians Living in the Neighbouring States No. 2002 of 2002, 11 January.

35 *Népszabadság*, 25 January 2002. "Státusrajt öt és fél milliárdért"

36 Resolution No. 50 of 2001, 1 August (MAT határozat, *Gazdasági és Foglalkoztatási Közlöny*, 2001/15) a határon túli magyarság munkaerő-piaci migrációjával kapcsolatos kutatás AFC-ből történő támogatására vonatkozó javaslat véleményezéséről.

stronger due to the absence of genuine dialogue and partnership between the governments and minorities. Although the Act is intended to compensate for the fact that Hungary can be a member of the EU, but not all Hungarians can, the compensatory measures have been selected regardless of the impact on external relations and the social, financial, minority or legal consequences. The political aspects of the Act have been obvious in the Government side recruiting more and more voters, clients and contributors, while pulling the wool over Hungarian's eyes. Furthermore, Hungarians not living in the six Carpathian basin states are definitively excluded from benefits and national (re)unification, while implementation of the rules discriminates against non-Hungarian people in possession of the same citizenship as kin-minorities. For these reasons the effects of the benefit/policy might be dismissed by the majority of Hungarians as well as the majoritarian societies in the short term.

In the longer term, the Act may have an influence on non-verbal, spiritual cohesion, addressing the needs also of symbolic policy. Is there a symbolic law or does a symbolic connection exist between the kin-state and the diaspora? We have to study further the lessons about the admissible framework of connections between a kin-state and home state in the fields of minority protection, nation building, regional policy and integration in the new European architecture.

Budapest, February 2002

ATTILA Z. PAPP

The Concept of Civil Society in the Romanian Press after 1990

1. Introduction: The emergence of the notion of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe

In Romanian public opinion, ideas and conceptions of civil society cannot be separated from all the civil society-related notions and activities witnessed in Central and Eastern Europe during the past two decades. It is not an aim of this essay to analyse the notion of civil society reaching back to John Locke and the philosophers of the Scottish, French and German Enlightenment,¹ but in order for us to understand the analysis of the Romanian press in the past decade from the point of view of treating the notion of civil society, it is necessary to unearth the “hidden” dimensions of the concept with special reference to the tribulations that have surrounded it during the past twenty years.

Today all analysts agree that at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s this notion experienced a real renaissance, was re-discovered and put on the banner of the fight for demolishing state socialism. It is a question, however, if the then advocates of civil society were using, and the theoreticians of the present are using, the notion in the same sense. As we can guess, the answer to this question is “no”, because, as Seligman points out, the concept during its history assumed newer and newer content. In the 18th century it indicated the dimension of social reciprocity, in the 19th century it indicated the dimension outside the sphere of the state, and in the 20th century it followed an “asymptotic” path: west European and North American philoso-

¹ For such an analysis of civil society see the first three chapters of Adam B. Seligman: A civil társadalom eszméje (*The idea of civil society*). *Korunk*, 1992, No. 9., 40–49.

phers abandoned it, while left-wing intellectual circles kept it constantly on the agenda. In the wake of the changes in Eastern Europe which led to the falling apart of communist-type state structures, the concept became not only a political slogan but also the subject of scientific analysis.²

Although the concept of civil society has been enhanced with newer and newer interpretations during the past two and a half centuries, its core meaning has not basically changed. We may venture the opinion that placed into any new context, its vitality is always justified and implied by the dichotomous separation of the public and the private spheres. No civil society could exist without the existence of these dialectic, dichotomous spheres of life. In Central and East European countries, the reason why the idea of civil society could become one of the driving forces of politics and organising movements was that oppressive, totalitarian state structures wanted to destroy the private sphere. If no legally provided and practically feasible separation of the private and public sphere exists, neither a civil society nor 'openness' can exist. The initiatives of intellectuals in Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s were focused on creating the very institutions of openness and on acknowledging the responsible (private and public) member of society. As Havel put it, the secret of a man hides in his responsibility.³ To this demand naturally belonged observation of human rights, acknowledgement of minorities and of being different, protection of the environment, justification of alternative behaviours and a visceral rejection of any intention to make things uniform. It is no accident that the analysts of the period after 1990, such as András Arató, in interpreting civil society placed special emphasis on the role of openness: "... modern civil society is to be interpreted as the sphere of social interaction between the economy and the state; this sphere primarily comprises openness and various free associations."⁴ The goal of these free associations safeguarded by civil law is not to seize power but to influence and put limitations on it. This was also recognised by the dissidents of that time when they emphasised a non-violent reconstruction of civil society. It is true that emphasising the non-violent approach was based on a rational evaluation of the communist systems built on oppression, i.e. on the acknowledgement of the fact that it was impossible to overthrow these violent systems, which

2 Seligman, op. cit.

3 Havel, Václav: *Letters to Olga*. New York: Knopf, 1988., 65.

4 Arató, András: *Civil társadalom, forradalom és alkotmány (Civil society, revolution and constitution)*. Budapest: Új Mandátum, 1999., 54.

were absolutely superior in strength, in a violent way. Since “we (meaning the representatives of civil society) have no tanks”,⁵ it is reasonable to take the moral position of non-violence and demand a dialogue from there.

Charta 77 in Czechoslovakia, the KOR and the Solidarnosc movement in Poland, the samizdat publications in Hungary, different colleges, flying universities and clubs all aimed at eliminating the authoritarian and hierarchical social structures and the strategy of their operators was to behave in such a way as if the rights of assembly, association and communication had already been granted to them, hoping that this behaviour would render an impetus to the future institutionalisation of these rights.⁶ There are three consequences of this strategy. Firstly, it suggests that the concept of civil society in Eastern Europe is often a synonym of democracy. Secondly, the manifestation of civil society in behaviour underlines the importance of “civil religion” described by Bellah (with reference to America) or of “civil culture” in the sense used by Dahrendorf.⁷ Thirdly, it emphasises the responsibility of the individual again as opposed to the “irresponsibility” of the system.

Thus, civil society comprises the freedom and ability of association of responsible individuals, spontaneous, grass-root, non-governmental initiatives,⁸ and the rights for having a unique personality and the rights for communication.⁹ In order to implement all these elements, confidence between people and in institutions is necessary. According to Giddens, confidence can bridge the space-time complex, thereby eliminating existential anxiety which, as social interactions become ever more abstract, can cause unbearable torment and behavioural disturbances.¹⁰ The presence of confidence is also important because it can lead to the understanding of the significance of civility, which is always present even in the embryonic stage of a civil society.

It can be seen that in the 1980s civil society indicated democratism against a tyrannical state and a re-discovery of politics (Tismaneanu), but also anti-politics (Konrád) and it meant the influencing and the limiting of power for the sake of “living in truth and justice” (Havel). In the 1990s the concept

5 Michnik, Adam: *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985., 28.

6 Arató, op. cit.

7 Dahrendorf, op. cit.

8 Tismaneanu, Vladimir: *Reinventarea politicului. Europa Răsăriteana de la Stalin la Havel*. Iași: Polirom, 1997.

9 Arató, op. cit.

10 Giddens, Anthony: *The Consequences of Modernity*. Polity Press, 1990

gradually lost its mobilising nature and gave its place to NGOs, i.e. non-governmental organisations. Parallel to this process, the term of civil society was gradually replaced by the terms of civil sphere, non-governmental organisations and non-profit sector. There was more to this metamorphosis than a simple change of name: “the success of new organisations (NGOs) depends at least as much on their professionalism, the successful management of their budget, their PR activities and the organising of their sponsors, etc., than on their social attractiveness”.¹¹

The appearance of this institutional level of civil society cannot by far mean that the problems of social participation and self-organisation have been solved. Although in Central and Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s a transition to democratic, pluralistic systems made it possible for the institutions and organisations of the civil sphere to unfold, this process was termed by experts as creating “only statistically strong civil societies”: “the increase in the number of organisations (...) did not necessarily mean an increase of the ratio of civil society participating in significant decision-making, nor an increasing ratio, proportional to the number of institutions, of control and influencability of the mechanisms of political decision making by the society”.¹² The appearance of non-governmental organisation is often encouraged by the political sphere in order to increase its voting base, but we can also find pseudo-organisations that do not necessarily carry out socially useful activities.¹³

The NGOs that came into being in the 1990s had to realise that even their mere existence could become questionable, if they relied on state resources only, thus it seemed reasonable to search for international resources. This attitude intensified the process of the civil sphere’s going international and made these organisations aware of the fact that only those could be viable

11 Kaldor, Mary: “Transznacionális civil társadalom” (*Transnational civil society*). In: Miszlivetz, Ferenc (ed.): *Közép-Európai változások. Társadalmi folyamatok és stratégiák*. Szombathely: Savaria University Press, 1998, 126.

12 Miszlivetz-Jensen, op. cit., 143.

13 Therefore, it is not easy to distinguish between real, quasi and pseudo NGOs. In the literature, there is a growing spread of ironic abbreviations used to describe the groups of such NGOs. For example: quasi NGO: QUANGO; NGO directed by donors: DONGO; money-oriented NGO: MONGO; NGO directed by the mafia: MANGO; fake NGO: FANGO, etc. See Miszlivetz, Ferenc -Jensen, Jody: “A civil társadalom metamorfózisa: 1988–1999 (The metamorphosis of civil society: 1988–1999)”. In Miszlivetz Ferenc (ed.): *Közép-Európai változások. Társadalmi folyamatok és stratégiák*. Szombathely: Savaria University Press, 1998, 141–169.

in a globalising world which, in addition to the local and national financial channels, were also familiar with the international ones. According to Mary Kaldor, the transnational civil society, which has developed in this manner, can be regarded as a political plan crossing the global/local border. The significance of the supranational civil society was becoming ever stronger during the political events of the 1990s (wars in ex-Yugoslavia, the goal of EU enlargement) and as a political plan had to have a message for both autonomous individuals and individuals in power. "For independently thinking individuals the concept implies that local activities and campaigns must have links to a network of sponsors reaching over the borders and that they must have free entrance to a series of institutions. For those in power, the concept contains the responsibility and (self-interest) of providing genuine help to those who fight for keeping civil values alive in local life."¹⁴

Kaldor's slightly programmatic concept of a transnational civil society can perhaps resolve the conflict between the idea of civil society and the insistence on national identity, so frequently experienced in Central Europe: "the conservation of the significance of national identity and belonging to a nation hinders us from working out, for civil existence and participation in matters of the national state, a model conceived in the spirit of a liberal-individualistic ideology."¹⁵ This view of Seligman seems perhaps too determined, but the argument behind it is that as long as the civil behaviour characteristic of a private individual has not developed in the countries of the region, we cannot speak of a civil society. The history of Central and Eastern Europe has continuously proved that a permanent clinging to national bonds did not make it possible for Western-type social structures to develop.

The reason why we have considered it necessary to give an – albeit sketchy – account of the development of the ideas of civil society is to make the reader sense the uniqueness of the thoughts published in Romania about this theme. This brief introduction to the international literature will serve as a basis of reference for further discussion and will help in identifying the *differentia specifica* of the Romanian discourse on civil society.

¹⁴ Kaldor, op. cit.

¹⁵ Seligman, op. cit., 160.

2. *The notion of civil society in the Romanian press*

This study is not concerned with the present situation of civil society in Romania, but how the notion of civil society appeared in the Romanian press after the events of December 1989. Our question is not about the possibilities for the civil society in Romania to unfold, but about the problems and themes arising in a certain section of the Romanian press by the concept of civil society and its getting into discourse. This well-distinguishable section of the Romanian press includes periodicals in Romanian and in Hungarian mainly publishing articles of sociology and political science. Evidently, the monitoring of this discourse will also touch upon the civil society of Romania as it was in the 1990s, but the scope of our attention will not cover the empirical aspects of its unfolding. We are interested only in cases when the possibilities of this appear as part of a reality-creating act of the discourse.

As a preliminary, we have to accept the fact that the public presence of the idea of civil society is a precursor of the actual development of the civilian sphere. This thematic examination of such openness serves us to “locate” the underlying *systems* of arguments of a developing civil society (the use of the plural is important here, because the very basic idea of civil society already embraces pluralism). With this we have not stated, however, that a shaping civil society is the direct consequence of the operationalisation of ideas, because values set as goals cannot be institutionalised without regard to perturbations coming from the everyday world. The wider social environment and the existing mentality feed the dimensions of the resisting media of reality. In other words, an intellectual discourse cannot be institutionalised without obstacles; in fact, if certain values of a civil society take institutional forms, this does not mean that the created construction unambiguously fulfils the function for which it was created. As we have already indicated in the introduction, since the middle of the 1990s it has been often stated that not every NGO is what it seems to be (see footnote 2).

Our study is the result of a survey of the press. This survey included an analysis of essays and articles discussing some form of civil society in a number of Romanian and Hungarian-language periodicals and the comparison of writings published in these languages.¹⁶ Our key question is what sources of the existing professional literature were used by these writings published

¹⁶ Periodicals in Romanian: *Sfera Politicii*, *Revista de cercetări sociale*, *Polis*, *Sociologia Românească*, 22; periodicals in Hungarian: *A Hét*, *Korunk*, *Európai Idő*, *Amenetek*.

in different languages but in the same country and on the same issue, and what cross-communication and conceptual correspondence existed between the two written media of these languages. In short: if the actors of openness speak of civil society, do they phrase their statements on the basis of the same sphere of concept and the same complex of phenomena? Using a fashionable term: does a “fault line” of ethnic or other nature exist in the Romanian discourse on civil society?

The talk about civil society in itself can be regarded as a form of its own institutionalisation, and we can also state that the forums making this discourse possible were established after the turn of December 1989. This is chiefly valid for the Romanian-language press, because the periodicals involved in our survey all came into existence after January 1990. A good part of the Hungarian-language periodicals (*A Hét* and *Korunk*) already existed in the years of dictatorship, thus here we can refer to the manifestation of the earlier “grey” openness within a formal framework. Two conclusions can be drawn from this brief comparison. On the one hand, it is evident that the Romanian-language press openness experienced a more dynamic renewal process after 1990 than its Hungarian language counterpart. On the other hand, this difference might also mean that the distance between the former informal and formal Hungarian-language openness was perhaps not so great to result in such a structural boom as the one that took place in the Romanian press. This can be also explained by the fact that in the Hungarian press already in 1990 a debate developed about civil society and the roots of this debate can be traced back to 1986.¹⁷

2.1 Ideas about civil society in Hungarian-language publications

The ideas of civil society have “flowed into” the Hungarian-language press of Romania since 1990 from three directions: the first can be called autochthonous dimension, the second channel has been the one coming from Hungary transporting the ideas of being Central European, and the third can be interpreted as the channel for Romanian-language import.

¹⁷ The volume Zoltán Bíró, József Gagyi, and János Péntek (eds.): *Népi hagyományok új környezetben. Tanulmányok a folklorizmus köréből (Folk traditions in a new environment. Essays on folklorism)*. 1986. In this we can read a sharp criticism of the endeavours of intellectuals to recreate the traditional folk culture. As a key issue it emerged whether folklore studies or anthropology was a better way to acquire knowledge of social reality.

The channel we call the autochthonous dimension is primarily represented by KAM¹⁸ in Csíkszereda. In the first issue in 1990 of the periodical *Átmenetek* (*Transitions*), of which only a few issues ever came out, Zoltán A. Biró published an essay with the title *Intézmény – képviselet – civil társadalom* (*Institution – representation – civil society*) and then some reputed Hungarian social scientists living in Romania made their remarks on and contributions to the article. We cannot find a distinct definition of civil society in the article, the concept is rather used by the author in a descriptive, factual way. His basic statement is that the Ceausescu dictatorship (at least in Székelyföld, which is an area chiefly inhabited by Hungarian Szeklers) did not lead to the destruction of civil society, but just the opposite: civil society became stronger. Intellectuals might have become isolated, but in the world referred to by the author as “down there”, an intensification of human relations and a strengthening of the network of relations could be observed. The society “down there” seemed to be stabilised, and the organisation of representation that appeared after the turn of 1989 put an end to this very process of stabilisation, because intellectuals tried to project and force their uniform image of the people upon the people itself. As one of the contributors to the debate (József D. Lőrincz) pointed out: this process “did not mean that the community had delegated the intellectuals to represent their interests before the power structure, but it meant just the opposite, the power elite had delegated the intellectuals to represent its interests towards the people.”

Comparing this train of thought to the literature of civil society briefly described above, we can say that this conception of civil society is rather negative and defensive in its nature. It is true that in this essay the existence of civil society is linked to some self-organisation, but the self-organisation started in the lack or in the “absence” of the “up there”. The communist power was no longer able to show a realistic image of the future, therefore rank-and-file people came together. We must, however, understand that this coming together had a somewhat forced nature and was not part of an organising or – let alone – movement aimed at influencing power. These small communities tried to mitigate everyday the problems of individuals, but the bulk of these problems was caused by the power elite and therefore the world of “up there” was not so far away. It can also be debated that these hidden relations resembling the features of a civil society disintegrated at the beginning of 1990

18 KAM: Kommunikációs Antropológiai Munkacsoport (*Workshop for Anthropology of Communication – WAC*)

due to the appearance of interest-representing organisations. The symbolic policy making of interest-representing organisations facilitated the weakening of the coherence of small communities (because it promoted values that fell far outside the actual dimensions of everyday life), but the long drawn-out transition of the economy also contributed to it to a great extent.

As we can see, the need to clarify the concept of civil society did not yet emphatically emerge in this debate. A little later, however, this need was addressed in the Hungarian-language press. In issue 1990, No. 26. of *A Hét* a debate-provoking essay by László Nándor Magyarai with the title *Civil társadalom: utópia vagy realitás?* (*Civil society: Utopia or reality?*)¹⁹ was published. In this essay we can already identify the second source of ideas concerning civil society for the Hungarian press in Romania: here the analysed civil society placed in a Central European context primarily appears through channels (authors and/or publications) coming from Hungary. The authors quoted include István Bibó, András Arató, Ervin Csizmadia and Vesna Pešić. The author of the essay seems to side with the ideas of Csizmadia published in issue 1989/5 of *Kritika*,²⁰ which postulated that there are three distinguishable levels of civil society. “If we speak of some synthesis of the civil sphere, then this [*everyday civil society* – author’s note] can mean the *first* level, or the base or, in other words, the “core”. The existence of this level can ensure a healthy *second* level, the sphere of the civil society of movements and the *third* level, the possibility of an *institutional-corporative* civil society.”²¹ According to Csizmadia, the main question in Hungary is why the level interpreted as the

19 Magyarai, Nándor László: “Civil társadalom: utópia vagy realitás?” (*Civil society: Utopia or reality?*). *A Hét*, 1990, No. 26., 11.

20 In this article the Hungarian political scientist reacts to an essay by Fricz, Tamás: “Van vagy nincs civil társadalom Magyarországon?” (*Is there or is there not a civil society in Hungary?*). *Kritika*, 1989, No. 2, 2–3. Fricz claims that one must distinguish between civic and civil society: while the former puts the emphasis on the existence of the bourgeois, the latter emphasises that of the citizen. The concept of civil society is narrower, but it assumes a certain level of institutionalisation: “These institutions of interest-representation and of influencing state decisions are the necessary bases for the democratic functioning of the state and for a civic society to become a civil society, i.e. for the bourgeois to become a citizen, thereby also preserving his civic existence”. As a reflection on this division, Csizmadia points out that it is not enough to indicate that civil society has a state-level interest representation, but the different levels of civil society must also be distinguished.

21 Csizmadia, Ervin: “Milyen civil társadalom van és milyen nincs Magyarországon?” (*What kind of civil society is there and is there not in Hungary?*). *Kritika*, 1989, No.5., 5.

base is missing, which makes a “full turn in civil society”,²² that could also be a genuine democratic turn, impossible.

In relation to Magyari’s article, we have given a somewhat more detailed account of the ideas of Csizmadia because they always keep reoccurring in the thinking of Hungarians in Romania. Magyari replants these ideas into the Romanian environment in the following way: “If everyday civil society can be the base of the implementation of a fuller turn in civil society, these self-organising and community-generating frameworks of social existence should be rediscovered and at the same time the justification of demands, goals, common-sense knowledge, etc. of the everyday life of people should be legitimatised and made evident.”²³ From this the author draws the programme-like conclusion that the only guarantee of catching up with the rest of Europe is the “animation of society”, which is nothing else but the “facilitation of the development of the natural vitality and self-producing mechanisms of society”.

A couple of weeks later, also in *A Hét*, Károly Veress reflected on the ideas of the article described above. His somewhat philosophical statements with exclusive reference to the Hungarian minority in Transylvania partially contradict and partially support Magyari’s ideas. At the beginning of his essay, Veress considers it a false idea that a turn in civil society could serve as a “conserving force” for the purpose of the “future preservation of our minority existence” because it “assumes that some dimension of existence has a favoured role in the whole of existence. The preference of either economic, or moral, or cultural factors over other conditions of existence and their re-qualification as conserving forces will lead to distortions harming the totality of existence.”²⁴ Around the end of his essay, however, the author claims, “for improving the quality of the content of minority existence” the “sole base can be the creation of a functional, self-regulating, ev-

22 As we will see later, the term “turn in civil society” will often and without any criticism return in writings in Hungarian. Without criticism, because if we accept the fact that a civil society is (also) manifested in everyday behaviour, then we cannot speak of such a turn, such a sudden fundamental change (laden with physical and philosophical connotations). According to Dahrendorf, the gradual creation of “civil culture” takes at least a generation’s time, or at least 60 years. See Dahrendorf, Ralf: *Reflections on the revolution in Europe*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1990.

23 Magyari, op. cit.

24 Veress, Károly: “Kisebbségi lét és civil társadalom” (*Minority existence and civil society*). *A Hét*, 1990, No. 30.

eryday minority civil society". In relation to this self-contradictory argumentation, we can establish three facts: 1) presumably, even the quoted sections suggest the author's intention of reaching over into the domain of philosophical discourse, but it remains a question if this approach is justified in this context; 2) from the argumentation and the use of words, the presence of a kind of Transylvanian view becomes evident, linking the ideas of civil society with the problems of "our minority existence"; 3) perhaps in harmony with the above, we can also establish that from this contribution references to authors whose works belong to the "canon" of the literature on civil society are completely missing. This is noticeable because, as we saw, an attempt was made to use sources from Hungary.

We can regard as the continuation of the above (germ of a) debate the discussion on civil society that took place on 29 September 1990 in Csíkszereda and about which Károly Veress wrote an account in issues 1990, No. 38 and No. 39 of *Európai Idő*.²⁵ At the level of the use of concepts and references, this discussion is very similar to the content of the essays discussed so far, therefore we will not go into detail, but only point out that here the issues of the definition of civil society (with references to new authors such as Szélényi, Hankiss, Michnik and Zinovjev) and of the development and animation of minority civil society are still on the agenda. A brief contribution, however, touched upon a question that we will later return to in more detail: *where* is civil society? In Zoltán Rostás's view: "civil societies can function and are actually functioning in modern, urbanised enclaves. Thus a Szekler village keeping order in its own community should not be mistaken for a civil society." The opinions about developing a civil society were again on the pessimistic side, but the necessity to think together was acknowledged by all: "At the end of the discussion the participants agreed that the fact that the discussion took place could be regarded as a genuine result."

Chronologically between these essays by Magyari and Veress, another work with reference to civil society appeared in *A Hét*. Its author, Dan Pavel, explains the post-Second World War period of Romania with the categories of a tacit agreement between civil society and the actual power establishment.²⁶ He claims that the power elite after 1948, although making all possi-

25 Veress, Károly: "Beszélgetés a civil társadalomról" (*A conversation on civil society*). *Európai Idő*, 1990, No. 38–39.

26 Pavel, Dan: "Civil társadalom és társadalmi szerződés" (*Civil society and social contract*). *A Hét*, 1990, No. 27., 11.

ble efforts to eliminate any embryonic start of a civil society, offered a “deal” to the Romanian people. The author mentions two examples. In 1964 Gh. Gheorghiu Dej offered the following: if political power remains in the hands of the party bureaucracy, in return the people will have the right to be openly anti-Soviet, to continue to work slowly and can count on an improvement in the standard of living. Ceausescu continued these terms of trade in 1965, but he later replaced the anti-Soviet attitude with nationalistic demagoguery, which led to the accumulation of tensions between Romanians forming the majority and national minorities. (From this power game, the Hungarian minority emerged as a double loser, because while remaining the subject of the dictatorship, it was also left out of the tacit agreement between the Romanian majority and the dictatorship.) According to the author, this agreement was terminated in 1989 through the fault of the “beloved leader”, because he did not notice that while being left totally alone, he committed a severe breach of the contract: he did not provide the people with “bread and circuses”. Dan Pavel also claims that at the beginning of 1990 Iliescu offered a new contract to the people, or at least to the majority of the people, because in addition to the “privileges” of the previous decades (guaranteed employment, housing) he offered new values (land, improved supply, prolonged “free” TV, etc.). Therefore, it was no surprise that in the elections of 1990 Iliescu achieved a sweeping victory. Nevertheless, the “beloved leader” will probably be unable to keep the contract, wrote Pavel, and it will be decided by “the existence of certain structures of civil society” who will be the one to succeed him. It can be seen that in this train of thought the concept of civil society primarily signifies democratic structures. Although the author does not state it explicitly, nor does he refer to known works or authors, here civil society appears as a means of influencing power.

This essay of Dan Pavel can be justly considered as part of the third channel, the channel of Romanian-language import of ideas. To the same dimension belong a series of articles taken over from the periodical 22; authors most frequently translated into Hungarian include Vladimir Tismaneanu, Dan Pavel, Dan Oprescu and Horia-Roman Patapievici. We leave the detailed analysis of these authors to the section dealing with the analysis of the Romanian-language press; here we only note that in their cases the recognition of the necessity of civil society is often associated with a belief in the impossibility of its implementation.

We can read more in Hungarian about this in a series of essays by Dan Oprescu published in *A Hét*.²⁷ Since these did not originally appear in 22, we will describe their ideas in more detail below. After claiming that the creation of civil society is the only correct strategy of developing democratic structures in Romania, the author also makes it clear that there is no civil society in Romania: “For the time being, in Romania there is nothing which could be called an independent civil society; the (re-)building of a civil society in Romania must be the main strategic guideline of the next (in fact, the present) period. Privatisation (involving small, medium and large companies), the elimination of central planning, the creation of economic and public administrative units of local authorities, a politically neutral army and police, the separation of powers in the state, genuine trade unions, the revitalisation of (Orthodox, Greek catholic, etc.) church organisations, and an independent press all form a part of the (re-)building of a civil society and this is a criterion on the basis of which it can be judged what is good or what is bad for the country.” Perhaps this is the first occurrence in the Hungarian-language press of an operational definition of civil society. While at the very beginning of the 1990s the concept of civil society appeared as an ideal-typical norm and a political slogan, towards the middle of the 1990s the concept started to appear in a more “decomposed” way expressed in concrete terms. Oprescu not only gave such a definition but described those factors as well which, in his view, hindered the rebuilding of a civil society in Romania. These are the following: surviving centralisms, excessive industrialisation, the characteristic features of agriculture, financial and tax systems, bureaucracy, the system of monopolies, the mentality of Romanian intellectuals (based on state benefits), an occasional union of Bessarabia with Romania and international factors (i.e. general recession). Therefore, what Romania needs is not a benevolent father figure, who could relieve the people from the burden and responsibility of decisions, but strategically considered actions, the building of a civil society. In this context, as the author sees it, the endeavours for autonomy of the Hungarian minority do not endanger Romania, in fact, economic regions of this kind, although initially with an ethnic character, could be beneficial.

In the essays of Romanian authors also published in Hungarian we can witness a Romanian paradox concerning civil society: a civil society is a de-

²⁷ Oprescu, Dan: “Értékes útmutatások 1–4” (*Valuable guidances 1–4*). *A Hét*, 1993, No. 35, 36, 37, 38.

sired, hope-raising dimension, but its implementation in Romania is a mere illusion. Therefore, the implementation of a civil society became a cause for intellectuals, because this is the only stratum of society that recognised its necessity and assumed a role in promoting this recognition.

The presence of doubts concerning civil society is also an underlying feature of essays published in Hungarian. The title of the 1992, No. 9. thematic issue of *Korunk* is: *Civil társadalom Romániában (Civil society in Romania)*. In this issue we can read the essays of two internationally acknowledged authors (Arató and Seligman), but also two “indigenous” articles. Liviu Matei, the author of one of the two articles, while making a reference to the violent demonstrations of miners transported from the mining regions of the country to Bucharest, mulls over the following: “The question may be raised: Does any civil society exist in Romania today? And the answer can perhaps be a *no*. But then this would give rise to a beautiful paradox: the non-existent civil society turns against the state undermining the chances of the former.”²⁸ The other indigenous writing carries a doubt about civil society already in its title: *A civil társadalom esélye – aknatűzben (The fate of civil society – under mortar fire)*.²⁹ The author’s argumentation reads as follows: “The experience of mortar fire is, indeed, real. In the hell of the current history of the Balkans, real shells are flying towards real people. Towards people who ended up facing the barren destruction of civil war instead of the affluence of civil society and who may never enjoy the liberating joy of autonomous social thinking and action.”

Not only in *Korunk* but also in *A Hét* there appeared an essay of political science with similar pessimistic overtones: according to Miklós Bakk, the “rise and fall” of civil society, to use a then fashionable expression, can be explained by the slowness of development of an elite of the post-totalitarian period and by the spread of political indifference, because the lack of personal commitment and of political identity hinders the appearance of pluralistic opinions in the public domain.³⁰

Essays on civil society published later in the Hungarian-language press all relied on one of these three sources or a mixture of them. In *A Hét* interviews were often published with Hungarian sociologists, economists and po-

28 Matei, Liviu: “A civil társadalom paradoxonai és esélyei Romániában” (*The paradoxes and the fate of civil society in Romania*). *Korunk*, 1992, No. 9., 3–4.

29 K.S.J.: “A civil társadalom esélye – aknatűzben” (*The fate of civil society – under mortar fire*). *Korunk*, 1992, No. 9., 66–67.

30 Bakk, Miklós: “A civil társadalom tündöklése és bukása” (*The rise and fall of civil society*). *A Hét*, 1992, No. 42.

litical scientists in which they discussed civil society in relation to other social phenomena, such as the relationship between the culture of book publishing, the support of culture and civil society,³¹ the differences between local society and civil society,³² and the connection between the civil sphere and conflict management,³³ etc.

The issue of the conceptual clarification of civil society still remained on the agenda until the middle of the 1990s. We can regard as a part of the Hungarian channel the well-documented, concise essay of Andorka published in *Korunk*³⁴, in which the author gives a brief account of the “canonised” thinkers of civil society (almost all significant authors are quoted, from Locke to Dahrendorf) and goes on to say that currently we must try “to build civil society with unrelenting efforts” in local authorities, at places of work and in the mass media. In his opinion, under the totalitarian systems of East-Central Europe “perhaps only church communities succeeded in preserving a little of their civil social character”.³⁵

A peculiar feature of the Hungarian-language press involves addressing the question whether a minority civil society exists or can exist. Ernő Fábíán (in addition to the authors of Csíkszereda mentioned previously) tries to give an answer to this question. He analyses the Szekler village keeping order in its own community as an autonomous form of organising society and

31 Rostás, Zoltán: “Könyvkultúra a civil társadalomban. Beszélgetés Zöld Ferencsel, a Magyar Könyvkiadók és Könyvterjesztők Egyesületének elnökével” (*Book culture in civil society. A conversation with Ferenc Zöld, the president of the Association of Hungarian Book Publishers and Distributors*). *A Hét*, 1990, No. 30.

32 Magyarai, Nándor László – Bodó, Julianna: “Helyi társadalom – helyi hatalom. Beszélgetés A. Gergely András politológussal” (*Local society – local power. A conversation with political scientist András A. Gergely*). *A Hét*, 1990, No. 41–42.

33 Bakk, Miklós: “Civil szféra, társadalmi integráció, konfliktuskezelés. Beszélgetés Bognár László közgazdással” (*Civil sphere, social integration, conflict management. A conversation with the economist László Bognár*). *A Hét*, 1993, No. 20.

34 Andorka, Rudolf: “A civil társadalom fogalmának definíciója és használhatósága a kelet-közép-európai társadalmak elemzésében” (*The definition and applicability of the concept of civil society in the analysis of East-Central European societies*). *Korunk*, 1995, No. 5, 14–18.

35 In Transylvania a great role is still intended for the churches. The state is still interpreted as an institution of oppression in the cause of the Hungarian-language university declared and supported by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (in Hungarian abbreviation: RMDSZ). Therefore, the task of implementing (small) islands of freedom created by the university is incumbent upon the churches representing a slice of civil society. It is another question, however, as to what extent the church is prepared for this task and if it is possible at all to create an institution of higher education compatible with European norms solely under the aegis of a church.

then, approaching the present, he states: “the individual can have a real freedom in the minority civil society, because he need not suffer from those forms of discrimination which he faces because of his minority attributes in the macro-society of the national state” and later he adds: “Nevertheless, the civil society of the minority, since it develops out of necessity, is inevitably narrowed down and like minority existence cannot be full-fledged either.”³⁶ According to this view, the civil society of a minority can be pictured as some kind of necessary evil: it is necessary because the members of the minority can feel free here, but it is “evil” at the same time because of its narrowing, limiting nature. Here, as a matter of fact, the idea of civil society covers the minority community. The emphasis on self-organisation approaches, perhaps, the concept used in Central Europe (mainly in the 1980s); nevertheless, this self-organising gains importance not only because of the oppressing nature of the state but also because of the existence of the relevant majority. The minority seems to be forced to carry out a permanent, self-limiting revolution.

The recognition of the existence of a minority civil society gives rise to the following question: Where does this sphere exist and what is to be regarded as a constituent part of civil society? The answers can be structured along two dimensions. One is built upon the antagonism between rural and urban areas and the other is based on the antagonism between the institutional sphere and non-institutional sphere. The advocates of the first pole of the first dimension are convinced that the germs of civil society mostly survived in villages during the years of dictatorship,³⁷ while the advocates of the other pole say that a civil society can only be imagined under urban conditions (see the already quoted essay of Zoltán Rostás published in *Európai Idő*). On one side of the second dimension stand those who consider the interest-representing organisations, associations, foundations, etc. established by the representatives of the Hungarian minority as a constituent part of civil society,³⁸ while on the other side stand those who claim that these institutions

36 Fábíán, Ernő: “Az autonóm társadalomszerveződés előzményei. Meditáció a pre-civil társadalomról Erdélyben 2” (*The preliminaries of autonomous organisation of society. Meditation on pre-civil society in Transylvania 2*). *A Hét*, 1993, No. 25., 4–5.

37 Nagy, Olga: “A paraszti polgárosulás erdélyi sajátosságai” (*The peculiar features of the Transylvanian peasantry’s rise into the middle class*). *Korunk*, 1992, No. 9., 77–82.

38 Horváth, István – Deák-Sala Zsolt: “A romániai magyar egyesületek és alapítványok szociológiai leírása” (*The sociological description of Hungarian associations and foundations in Romania*). *Korunk*, 1995, No. 11., 23–57. and Kötő, József: “A romániai magyar civil szervezetek működési feltételei” (*The operating conditions of Hungarian NGOs in Romania*). *A Hét*, 1999, No. 5., 3–4.

form a peculiar strategy of the intellectuals to build and defend their positions and that civil society must be looked for somewhere else.³⁹

Civil society, discovered with pathos but not without doubts at the beginning of the 1990s, generated a number of question marks concerning its implementation as time moved towards the middle of the decade. A characteristic example of this is the issue 1995/11 of *Korunk*. A question mark in the title of this thematic issue indicates the survival of doubts: *Civil társadalom?* (*Civil society?*). Not only this question mark, but also the essays in the issue express their doubts. In the introductory article Levente Salat raises the fundamental question which should be clarified by those using the concept of civil society in the Hungarian public life in Romania: does the Hungarian “civil” individual in Romania exist at all? Then he adds: “if there are such individuals, relative to what are they “civil”? Are they “civil” in opposition to the state power threatening the social existence of the minority, which power is instigated by nationalistic extremists, or in opposition to their own interest–representing organisation also organised in a state-like manner?”⁴⁰ The question is justified, because the use of the concept of civil society developed during the past decades was always turned against the oppressive, homogenising power. If the Hungarian minority in Romania phrases its endeavours against the actual Romanian state, then the concept of civil society can be used in relation to the entire Hungarian minority and it takes just one step from here to present the Hungarian minority as democratic and the majority nation as anti-democratic. If, however, civil society is conceived in opposition to the interest-representing organisation of the Hungarian minority, one must agree with the statement of KAM of Csíkszereda that the Hungarian civil society in Romania is to be looked for “down there” in everyday life (see footnote 18). It seems evident that a kind of combination of the two versions is also imaginable, i.e. Hungarian civil society in Romania can be seized there where there

39 The most characteristic representative of this standpoint is Zoltán A. Bíró. Although not in the section of openness under our investigation, in one of his books he writes: “The actual Hungarian ‘civil’ society in Romania lies somewhere outside the Hungarian system of institutions of Romania. It exists, but it is not a genuine civil society, because it displays its interests to a very minor degree in public life. As before 1989, this society ‘down there’ still has its own structures, channels of communication, organisations and models of operation. As shown by the recent municipal elections, this society ‘down there’ is getting more and more operational.” Bíró, 1998, op. cit., 186.

40 Salat, Levente: “Romániai magyar civil társadalom?” (*Hungarian civil society in Romania?*). *Korunk*, 1995, No. 11., 3–6.

are endeavours against the homogenising, unifying interest-representing organisation or against some anti-democratic manifestations of the central power and there where in the wake of the withdrawal of either the interest-representing organisation or the state there is a real social need to be satisfied. Social processes in the broader sense of the term have no ethnic character; grass-roots initiatives within these processes can rightly be considered as parts of the civil sphere. Hungarian NGOs of this kind must achieve a double integration: at local level an “inward” integration in which process they can carry ethnic features (especially, if they operate in municipalities where there is a Hungarian majority); at regional or national level an “outward” integration because this is the only way for them to obtain the resources of finance and information).

In this issue of *Korunk* some excerpts of one of the books of Michael Walzer⁴¹ were published to help in rethinking the militant discourse on civil society. The author points out that the relationship between state and civil society must be re-interpreted, but not necessarily in such a way that the once dissident writers did it. The state is not an enemy of civil society, because “if civil society is left alone, it produces unequal power relations which can only be counterbalanced by the state”. In other words, civil society needs the services of the state – even more so under the conditions of globalisation (i.e. international contracts between states can facilitate putting reasonable limitations on multinational companies or prevent environmental disasters, and these goals are also shared by certain NGOs; that is the state and the civil society depend on each other). According to Walzer, civil society is based on active and committed citizens “who partake of settling the matters of the state, the economy, the nation or even the religious congregation, the neighbourhood, or the family.” In his opinion, the programme of civil society in East-Central Europe can be successful under the following three conditions: 1) decentralising the state; 2) socialising the economy; and 3) taming nationalism in order to make historical identity pluralistic. Civil society, says the author in conclusion, assumes a new kind of sensitivity to “the local, the peculiar and the random, and the ultimate recognition that the quality of life depends on the details.”

41 Walzer, Michael: “A civil társadalom fogalma – részletek” (*The concept of civil society – excerpts*). *Korunk*, 1995, No. 11., 7–12.

In this issue, at least according to one possible interpretation, attempts were made by sociologists to capture these local and peculiar attributes.⁴² To our knowledge, these authors tried for the first time to map the institution-alised Hungarian civil sphere in Romania through questionnaires in the first half of the 1990s. With this research (and with the report on it published in *Korunk*) the discourse on civil society assumed a new dimension. The incarnation of civil society in institutions was not only the subject of philosophical speculation, but became the subject of research on the sociology of organisations. The earlier pathos faded away and made room for the professional coolness of numbers.

According to the data of Horváth and Deák-Sala, in terms of fields of activity, cultural and religious institutions account for more than 50% of the Hungarian NGOs in Romania. Around 1995, the willingness of Hungarians of Romania to establish organisations was already less intensive than in the early 1990s. This diminishing trend is the most obvious in the fields of culture, religion and education. This can also be viewed in such a way that after 1989 the civil sphere primarily strengthened the symbolic dimension closely linked to minority existence, which could be considered as a response to the retaliating politics of the preceding decades and was obviously also in harmony with the programme of the interest-representing organisation created at the end of 1989. It is no surprise that “a significant portion of the DAHR politicians accept leading roles in the organisations of the civil sphere or support the operation of the different organisations”.⁴³ However, on the list of donors and sponsors from Romania of these organisations the DAHR is in the penultimate place. In our view, this seemingly contradictory situation is resolved by the intermingling of links between the DAHR and the NGOs at a personal level. The interest-representing organisation does not give financial support to civil institutions, but is represented in them as if it performed a certain type of controlling activity. This suggests an intention of expropriation of the civil sphere, on the one hand, and a conversion of “relational capital” deriving from the position taken in the DAHR into “civil capital”, on the other hand. The complexity of the network of relations is also indicated by the fact that the NGOs are financed from donations from abroad (according to the authors’ data, 71% of their total income comes from abroad), with Hungary being the foremost donor by a great margin. This suggests that the

⁴² Horváth – Deák-Sala, op. cit.

⁴³ Horváth – Deák-Sala, op. cit., 44.

inflow of political (relational) capital into the civil sphere mainly takes place through Hungary, and that this mechanism leads to the creation of political clienteles and to the expropriation of some dimension of the civil sphere.⁴⁴

The authors of the essays did not discuss the mechanisms of operation of this type of network of relations, nor did they try to map career developments, which can cause somebody to end up in the civil sphere. In the thematic issue of *Korunk*, Nándor László Magyarai makes an attempt to identify some of these categories: 1) active political career persons; 2) intellectuals pushed out or retired from politics; 3) “second line” players playing in civil social “dress” serving the political elite; 4) beginners of a career struggling with existential problems; 5) those members of the local or national elite who have a frank commitment to the declared goal of the NGO.⁴⁵

We must highlight one more essay from issue 1995, No. 11. of *Korunk*. In summarising a period of five years, József Kötő indicated three practical things to achieve “for us who are forced to play the role of a midwife around the new cultural-educational movement”: 1) the main goal of political struggle is to achieve the status of legal entity, therefore “we must set autonomy as a condition for building our civil society”; 2) “self-organisation, the main method of our practice in organising culture and education, stems from our political goal-setting and is the only way to build civil society”; 3) achieving cultural autonomy in constitutional law.⁴⁶ From the excerpts quoted it becomes clear that in Transylvanian Hungarian public speech the frequent use of the first person plural emphasises that normative statements are phrased “for the whole community”. As already stated above, in the Hungarian-language press civil society frequently is used as a synonym of the minority community. The use of the first person plural refers to the whole of the Hungarian minority (“our community”, “our foundations”, “our associations”, etc.). Later we will see that this form of speech is also wide-spread in the Romanian-language press, but there a “we-they” antagonism is used where “we” indicates the declared civil society supporting democratic values as opposed to the power establishment (“they”) not respecting human rights.

44 Cs. Gyímesí, Éva: “Vázlatok egy szellemi kórképhez” (*Sketches on an intellectual disease*). In Cs. Gyímesí Éva: *Colloquium Transylvanicum*. Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 1998, 32–66. and Biró, op. cit.

45 Magyarai, Nándor László: “Civil társadalom, vagy amit akartok” (*Civil society or what you will*). *Korunk*, 1995, No. 11., 64.

46 Kötő, József: “Az elmúlt öt év dilemmái” (*The dilemmas of the past five years*). *Korunk*, 1995, No. 11., 13–18.

After 1995, the notion of civil society mainly appears in the Hungarian-language press in an operationalised way or as a partial topic. Thus, we can read a summary essay on the publications of the civil sphere⁴⁷ or on the opportunities of social science dealing with civil society.⁴⁸ In the latter, the author examines what is happening to those scientific issues that have been ousted from the focus of attention of official research, but which are still important from the point of view of a community, i.e. scattered Hungarian minority groups. The essay gives no answer to this; presumably the author's goal was simply to raise the issue.

A more recent essay of Kötő attempts to capture further concrete levels of civil society.⁴⁹ The author describes and uniquely interprets the effective Romanian legal framework for operating civil society and the relevant reform ideas of the then government (led by Radu Vasile). With regards to the legal framework, Kötő points out that although freedom of association is provided by law in Romania and establishing associations and foundations is regulated by Act 1924/21, this Act contains several centralistic elements putting obstacles in the way. One such element is the provision that a foundation or an association is inaugurated on behalf of the state by the public authority on the basis of prior licences granted by the relevant ministry; or the provision that at least 21 founding members are required for a foundation or association (whereas in western Europe registration is normally a formality and 2 or 3 founding members are sufficient). Among reform ideas there is a plan to modify of the system of support of civil society by the creation of a Development Fund for Civil Society to be managed by the Ministry of Finance.⁵⁰

With regards to the existence of a Hungarian civil society in Romania, the author thinks that "our intellectual elite created the germs of a civil society, but due to the fundamentally contradictory nature of political life and the

47 Magyarai, Tivadar: "Civil média. A romániai magyar szervezetek időszakos kiadványai" (*Civil media. Periodical publications of Hungarian organisations in Romania*). *Korunk*, 1996, No. 1., 106–115.

48 Bodó, Barna: "Civil tudomány" (*Civil science*). *A Hét*, 1999, No. 7.

49 [#] The essay is not completely "recent": we can find paragraphs in it which are (almost literally identical) with parts of the author's earlier writing published in *Korunk* in 1995. See Kötő, József: "Az elmúlt öt év dilemmái" (*The dilemmas of the past five years*). *Korunk*, 1995. No. 11. 13–18.

50 An interesting paradoxical situation may develop: The Romanian state may centrally revitalise its enemy (civil society) condemned to death during the previous decades. While decentralisation is one of the basic pillars of civil society, here, it appears as if decentralisation were to be achieved with democratic centralisation.

delay of the basic social reforms, we still cannot speak of a complex civil society which is able to influence the decisions of those in power in the spirit of public interest. This remains the goal of future struggles.” In this statement we can identify the two basic characteristic features of the idea of civil society in Romania: the relevant discourse has a very strong intellectual character and is very pessimistic.

By appearance of the idea of civil society as a partial topic as indicated above, we mean pathos-free references to its importance in relation to certain topics and events. For example, Miklós Bakk in his theoretical essay points out that the fight between secular and church powers in the history of western Europe made it possible for civil society to become politically stronger and richer through business and industry.⁵¹ Civil society also appears as a partial topic in the essay analysing the situation of the Hungarian minority by the authors Bakk-Horváth-Salat on the occasion of the 6th Congress of the DAHR. The authors express their arguments for distinguishing between political and social strategies and emphasise the role of organising society. As one of the factors decisively influencing the future of the Hungarian minority in Romania, they name the ability of civil society to “create viable local communities which act and make people act in a creative, future-oriented way”.⁵² A couple of weeks later a reaction to their essay came from Béla Bíró. Though not agreeing with several statements of the three authors, in relation to their view of civil society he also confirms that “a real democracy can only be based on small communities, on a self-organising local society and on organisations of civil society (NGOs).”⁵³ It is clear that although they treated it only partially in these writings, the authors all agree that the idea of civil society is a prerequisite of democracy and they emphasise the role of local organisation.⁵⁴

51 Bakk, Miklós: “Állam és társadalom” (*State and society*). *A Hét*, 1998, No. 46.

52 Bakk, Miklós – Horváth, Andor – Salat, Levente: “A 2000. év küszöbén. Politika és kisebbségi magyar társadalom Romániában” (*At the threshold of the year 2000. Politics and minority Hungarian society in Romania*). *A Hét*, 1999, No. 19.

53 Bíró, Béla: “Képzelt és valódi közösségek” (*Imagined and real communities*). *A Hét*, 1999, No. 23.

54 In one of the Hungarian periodicals, József D. Lőrincz makes a relevant remark: “the conclusion seems to be justified that the concept of civil society is unsuitable for describing and interpreting social phenomena. (It can be used, however, as a normative or critical tool, but then we only learn ‘what is that we do not have’.) Therefore it seems reasonable to assume that certain, more common, more differentiated and more tangible concepts that may even have more theoretical connotations, such as ‘local society’,

In giving a brief summary of the treatment of the idea of civil society in the Hungarian-language press of Romania, we can say that the concept was built on three dimensions:

1) The *autochthonous dimension* covers the work of Hungarian social scientists in Romania. Civil society is interpreted in a peculiar Transylvanian context and often bears no resemblance with the East-Central European interpretation of the concept.

2) The *Hungarian channel of being Central European* means the feeding of the idea of civil society through publications coming from Hungary. Authors using this channel either quote Hungarian professionals or writings published in Hungarian periodicals.

3) *Romanian-language import* covers the writings of Romanian authors that are more or less regularly published in the Hungarian-language press. This dimension represents a kind of cross-communication between the Hungarian-language and Romanian-language public discourse, but we can establish that the interpretations of civil society are naturally different in the two. While the concept in Hungarian is often used to capture the peculiarities of minority existence only, in the case of Romanian authors, in addition to an imbeddedness in the Central European environment, there is a recurrent, parallel thought of emphatic denial of the existence or the possibilities of development of civil society.

In the Hungarian-language media, three phases of development can be identified around this concept.

1) The phase of discovering civil society laden with doubts: a period characteristic of the early 1990s. The main questions of the period included whether any civil society-like developments survived the years of dictatorship and how these could be animated after the turn of 1989. A recurrent thought of this period was that only a “turn in civil society” could contribute to the creation of pluralistic structures, but this was a mere illusion in Romania.

2) The phase of the intention of clarifying the concept of civil society – a period between 1991 and 1995 when numerous essays dealt with the actual

‘NGOs’ or ‘civic society’ would help us more in our work.” See D. Lőrincz, József: “A civil társadalom fogalma” (*The concept of civil society*). *Regio*, 1998. No. 3., 104. This remark indicates not only the approaching end of the use of civil society as a political slogan, but also its fading away from theory. In the second half of the 1990s, we should abandon the Great Idea of civil society and perhaps it is more reasonable for us to turn our attention to localities and existing institutions, in brief, to “what we have”.

definition of the concept. In these writings we can find a growing number of references to Central European theoreticians or to other fundamental books in interpreting the concept. In addition to the intention of definition, an often emerging question concerned whether or not there existed a civil society in that period, and if it did where it could be found; if it did not, what were the factors that hindered its (re-)building.

3) The phase of operationalisation of civil society and its shrinking into a partial topic: from the end of 1995, the concept appeared only in applications. Its concrete manifestations became the subject of sociological analysis. Parallel to this, the “existence” question (i.e. if civil society exists or not) fell into the background. The concept appears as a condition of development of democratic structures and its use is often narrowed down to indicate a self-organising local society.

2.2 Ideas about civil society in Romanian-language publications

After the events of December 1989, the Romania press witnessed a “boom” at least in two senses of the word. On the one hand, earlier ideological limits ceased to exist and thus the choice of content of newspapers and periodicals became richer and subtler, and on the other, it became possible to launch new publications. The Romanian-language print media investigated by our essay is represented without exception by periodicals that came into being after December 1989 upon the initiatives of the Romanian intellectual elite. Therefore it is not surprising that the concept and interpretation of civil society is much more homogenous in the Romanian-language public discourse than in the Hungarian-language one.

Before examining in detail this converging development of the concept, we must note that we can also find exceptions. Civil society was a complete “newcomer” in the space of Romanian intellectual awareness, therefore it is understandable that at the time of its emergence we can find conceptualisations that show little resemblance to the Central European notion of the concept. Here is a characteristic example: in one of the 1991 issues of the (re-)started sociological periodical of the Academy (*Sociologie Românească*) there is an article on the “civil and political society of the Romanian transition”⁵⁵ which is a good demonstration of the intention of joining the discourse on civil society. Although this discourse, as we will soon see in

⁵⁵ Hoffman, Oscar: “Societatea civilă și cea politică în procesul tranziției în România”. *Sociologie Românească*, 1991, No. 3–4., 137–146.

detail, already started at the beginning of 1990, this essay in 1991 wished to join the main line of the discourse without knowledge of the “professional canon” and without the elimination of certain attitudes characteristic of the previous decades. This intention resulted in the dry gobbledygook characteristic of the earlier propagandistic texts (with long and repeated sentence-monsters) and in conceptual inaccuracy. The author theoretically separates civil and political society: the two concepts are located along the imaginary political and non-political axes and mutually assume one another, i.e. civil society exists only relative to political society. In the author’s view, political society is provided by organisations, institutions, movements (!), social relations and norms serving the existence and the operation of power (the state), while civil society refers to the economic, professional, family, household and humanitarian sphere. Political and civil societies did not exist in the years of dictatorship, because “totalitarianism not only forces civil society into hidden⁵⁶ dimensions outside the scope of the control and the presence of the state (...), but by creating so-called parallel societies it also destroys the political society”.⁵⁷ Hoffman also claims that the state has a double function: a power and a civil function. Through its second function, political society contributes to the strengthening of civil society. From these thoughts it turns out that the author does not use the concept of civil society in the “Central European” sense. It is beyond doubt that civil society has a great number of links to political society, but the generation of civil society by political society carries with it the danger of the colonisation of civil society and the exaggerated appreciation of state control. As described earlier, until the mid-1990s, there had been a strong faith in civil society as a construction built on grass-root initiatives. This author, however, totally neglected this element.

After this detour, let us follow the main stations of the development of the concept (and praxis) of civil society in the Romanian “mainstream”. The first issue of the weekly 22, published by the Social Dialogue Group (Grupul pentru Dialog Social – GDS), came out on 20 January 1990. This first issue published a declaration of intent by the members of the group in which they confirmed that they represented the clean conscience of a society which had been humiliated and shaken. The group wished to find answers to the fundamental problems of Romanian civil society and be an open forum of debate

56 The author uses the word hidden in the Heideggerian sense: the lack of freedom means living in hiding.

57 Hoffman, *op. cit.*, 142.

composed of intellectuals and the representatives of different professions.⁵⁸ During the previous decade the group proved its coherent commitment to its intents by organising debates not only on issues of actual politics but on topics that had earlier been considered as taboo in Romanian society and public life (i.e. using the mother tongue in the education of national minorities, the concept of autonomy, the situation of women, homosexuality, etc.).

In September 1990, another group of intellectuals established the Civic Alliance (Alianta Civica). In their declaration of intent they pointed out that following Polish and Czechoslovak examples, the Alliance wished to represent an active and responsible part of society and with their activity they aimed to lay the foundations for civil society and a civil mentality so far unknown to Romanians.⁵⁹ Almost one year later, a part of the original membership left the Alliance and, in order to rise above the level of street demonstrations and to promote a different kind of civil policy making, they established the Party of Civic Alliance (Partidul Aliantei Civice – PAC).⁶⁰ In order to clarify its doctrine, the party organised a round-table discussion in Temesvár in December 1992. On this occasion, the political science-oriented periodical *Sfera Politicii* (initially published both in Romanian and English) was launched. The introductory editorial establishes that “the fall of communism caused millions of people to return to history and parallel to this they re-discovered public life, civil society and also politics. (...) The aim of this publication is to develop a form of political culture first within the Romanian political class and then also outside it.” However, the editors were aware of the difficulties of implementing this aim: “Naturally, we have enough sense of humour to understand that we will have very limited success”.⁶¹

The appearance and survival of the idea of civil society in the Romanian media were and are still provided by the forums briefly described above. The weekly 22 initially published a number of theoretical writings and later it mainly concentrated on analyses of issues of actual politics. The “Central Eu-

58 For the full text of the declaration of intent see: “Declarația de constituire a GDS”. 22, 1990, No. 1.

59 Issue 1990, No. 44. of the weekly 22 gives a detailed account of the foundation and aims of the Civic Alliance.

60 We can read more details about the creation of the party, its successes in the local and national elections in 1992 and the internal conflicts following the elections in the essay of Liana Ionescu: Ionescu, Liana: “Partidul Alianței Civice”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1994, No. 16., 8–9.

61 *Sfera Politicii*, 1992, No. 1.

ropean” character of the concept of civil society is largely thanks to Vladimir Tismaneanu, a political scientist of Romanian origin. He is permanently present in the Romanian public awareness, not only through his books but also through his various essays. One of his important writings, which is relevant from the point of view of our theme, was published in the November 1991 issue of 22.⁶² Since the author can be considered as a part of the “canon” of the discourse on civil society, it is not surprising that his findings and the authors quoted by him are in harmony with the versions of the concept developed during the past two to three decades. He also holds the view that “the simplest way to define civil society is as a collective challenge based on *grass-root initiatives* against the post-totalitarian system, as a growing self-awareness of deep social strata oppressed for long years by a bureaucratic-autocratic state machinery”.⁶³ The author analyses the transitions of the East European countries through the prism of civil society⁶⁴ and quotes Miklós Haraszti’s conception concerning the disintegration of the communist systems. According to Haraszti, this disintegration takes place in three phases: the first is the post-Stalinist phase when oppression is adjusted to the “necessary” level; the second is the post-totalitarian phase when civil society actually emerges; the third is the post-communist phase in which the party-state disintegrates and a multi-party system develops. However, this model is not valid for Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, because in these countries the development of civil society and the transition into a multi-party system happened simultaneously.

Therefore, the transition here is accompanied with many more “shocks” than in the other countries of the region. In Tismaneanu’s perception: “looking at it from a historical perspective, civil society has developed in Central Europe rather than in Southeastern Europe” and that certain analysts “even doubt that democracy is possible at all in Orthodox countries”.

Sfera Politicii, which first appeared at the end of 1992, launched a real campaign to clarify the concept of civil society. In its first issue already mentioned above, there is an essay devoted to the relationship between civil society and

62 Tismaneanu, Vladimir: “Societatea civilă, pluralism și viitorul Europei Centrale și de Est”. 22, 1991, No. 46, 47. (In Hungarian: “Civil társadalom, pluralizmus és Közép-Kelet-Európa jövője” (*Civil society, pluralism and the future of East-Central Europe*). *A Hét*, 1991, No. 51.

63 Quotations are from the Hungarian version published in *A Hét*.

64 Here we will not elaborate on this, since we have already done so in relation to his book already quoted. See Tismaneanu, Vladimir: *Reinventarea politicii. Europa Răsăriteană de la Stalin la Havel*. Iași: Polirom, 1997.

political parties.⁶⁵ The author claims that by creating movements outside parliament, political parties obtain a higher level of legitimacy, which assumes the existence of a civil society. For this very reason, political parties acting as mediators between the state and society or the people and the state need to have social roots, i.e. they should not be totally integrated into the state sphere. In Voicu's view, civil society appears as the social base of political parties: politics can gather strength, information, legitimacy from here; civil society can relay issues to the state without neutralising its movement character, i.e. staying away from the state sphere. We can accept this train of thought, but it remains a question under Romanian conditions what "resources" make civil society live, how it is created and how it can provide the political parties with information (especially, if it has not yet been created at all). If political parties create civil society, will it then be really civil or will this rather be the expropriation of the idea of civil society? The author did not answer questions of this type, although Romanian examples could have been employed to consider these problems. Was the 1990 and 1992 election success of the National Salvation Front, which was created after December 1989, not attributable to the fact that it practically "loomed over" a largely underinformed people having hardly any knowledge about multi-party systems and being familiar only with authoritarian behaviour, and that it expropriated civil society and subdued its development? (In an earlier section of our essay we have pointed out that similar structural elements can also be identified in relation to the DAHR).

The next issue included an essay of Adam Michnik written in 1976 on a new kind of evolutionism⁶⁶ to which an introduction was written by Calin Anastasiu with the title *Civil society v. state*.⁶⁷ In interpreting Michnik's thoughts on the importance of the strategy of an autonomous and mobilisable civil society, the Romanian sociologist bitterly remarks that the reason why it is not possible to speak of a transition based on negotiations in Romania is that such a strategy never existed. In an other issue of the periodical, Anastasiu further analyses the Romanian connection between civil society in the Central European sense and political institutions.⁶⁸ In his view, in

65 Voicu, George: "Societatea civilă și partidele politice". *Sfera Politicii*, 1992, No. 1., 4.

66 Michnik, Adam: "Un nou evoluționism". *Sfera Politicii*, 1993, No. 2., 23–25.

67 Anastasiu, Călin: "Societate civilă vs. stat". *Sfera Politicii*, 1993, No. 2., 23.

68 Anastasiu, Călin: "Societatea civilă și instituțiile politice". *Sfera Politicii*, 1993, No. 4., 12–13.

a post-communist context, civil society cannot be the only condition of democratisation. The author mainly emphasises the responsibility of the new political class, because the everyday implementation of changing society is the task of politicians. They have to have a vision about society, which then can be implemented through the legislature. Perhaps we may venture to say that the source of this argumentation is the fact that in Romania the emergence of structures resembling civil society was much more subdued than in the other ex-communist countries. Although Romanian intellectuals already knew the theoretical and practical attempts at implementing civil society in other countries in the early 1990s, as soon as they refer to such initiatives in Romania, they become inauthentic. It is therefore understandable that in the political-social transition, with the lack of grass-roots initiatives, a greater responsibility was attributed to the political sphere.

The question also emerged in the Romanian media as to whether civil society exists in rural or in urban areas? In the history of Romanian ideology, the village always had a mythical, redeeming character (“eternity was born in the village”),⁶⁹ because the majority of the country’s population lived in villages. As emphatically opposed to the Romania choosing and accepting modernisation, rural Romania always survived. Therefore the question is what chances civil society has in Romania, which is still considered rural today, and whether civil society can exist at all in the villages. David A. Kideckel gives a witty answer to this question by saying that Romanian village society was stillborn, because the earlier family-centredness and political indifference still live on. This means that the scope of responsibility of the rural population does not extend beyond the family and household relations, as during the Ceausescu regime, and even after 1990 a certain kind of reservation lingered on in relation to politics.⁷⁰ The anthropologist Vintila Mihailescu adds that we can encounter a kind of tribal submission, a mentality of subordination (*mentalitate tributala*) in the Romanian rural environment, which is characterised by a fear of change and a readiness for compromise with whoever is in power.⁷¹ Handling this mentality thematically, moves the issue of civil soci-

69 Perhaps this common saying is paraphrased by the title of one of the articles by Ghiță Ionescu: Civil society exists only in the city. Ionescu, Ghiță: “Societatea civilă este numai la oraș”. *Expres*, 1993, No. 20.

70 Kideckel, David A.: “Populația rurală și autoritatea în noua Românie”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1993, No. 6., 3–5.

71 We can also read about this in Hungarian. In issue 1993, No. 3. of *Antropológia Műhely* of Csikszereda and later on in the periodical 2000 published in Hungary, a relevant essay

ety away from the rural-urban context. Claude Karnooh, the famous French anthropologist, points out in an interview that the archaic mentality among Romanians is not only present in the rural population but also exists in the urban environment.⁷² The masses of people who were forced to move from villages to cities due to forced industrialisation under the communist regime lost their roots and identity. Furthermore, rural attitudes can also be witnessed in the peak of the country's leadership: "there has always been something peasant-like in the leadership of the country".⁷³

The data of a sociological survey conducted between 1990 and 1991 and published in 1993 give us a more detailed picture of the mental stereotypes and attitudes of post-totalitarian Romanian society.⁷⁴ According to the findings of the research, the following ten major attitudes are characteristic of Romania: 1) hostile feelings towards foreigners, i.e. the belief that Romanians have a difficult life because foreign forces are working against them; 2) a great confidence in official news channels; 3) a reduction of political action to the verbal level; 4) refraining from actual political activity; 5) an erroneous perception of the political spectrum (in not being able to distinguish between right-wing and left-wing political parties); 6) a belief in the provision of social equality; 7) a fear of social conflicts; 8) a lack of confidence in the market economy and fundamental social reforms; 9) a need for a paternalistic state; 10) a lack of confidence in social institutions, especially new political institutions. The results of this survey are echoed in other essays written later. Stelian Tanase, for example, speaks of three basic political cultures prevailing in Romanian society in the middle of the decade: firstly, there exists an autochthonous-traditional culture; secondly, we can find a statist culture;

appeared by Mihailescu. The Romanian anthropologist points out: "We must squeeze out our rights, everybody his or her own rights and jointly the rights of the community, from 'this other' who has the power and who is the power himself. The period of tranquillity is the one in which these bargainings preserve their status quo. Things, of course, are much more complicated, however, subordination mechanisms were more or less regenerated during the time of the several millennium-long foreign occupation and of domestic rule creating a real political habit and this is what we dared to call tribal submission or mentality of subordination." See Mihailescu, Vintila: *Hol vannak a régi barbárok? (Where are the old barbarians?)*. 2000, 1994, No. 7, 14.

72 Karnooh, Claude: "Ar trebui reconstruite elitele rurale – interviu cu Claude Karnooh". *Sfera Politicii*, 1994, No. 15.

73 Karnooh, Claude: *Românii – tipologie și mentalități*. București: Humanitas, 1994, 25.

74 Mihailescu, Ioan: "Stereotipuri mentale și atitudinale în România posttotalitară". *Sfera Politicii*, 1993, No. 7., 22–23.

thirdly, we can also identify a kind of liberal political culture.⁷⁵ According to Tănase, both in public awareness and in actual political practice the first two cultures dominate.

Is there or can there be any sense in speaking of civil society under such “basic conditions”? If we use any definition of civil society, it would become clear that with such attitudes it would be an unfounded pretension to speak of the development of civil society. It is not a mere chance that in *Polis*, a new periodical of political science launched in 1994, the idea of civil society only appeared as a utopian dream. A relevant writing gives a detailed analysis of the external and internal reasons of the “morbid mentality”⁷⁶ hindering the creation of civil society.⁷⁷ According to the author, the external reasons of the development of civil society in Romania include the rural character of the society, a strong participation of the state in social life and the vestiges of communist-type propaganda and system of education. The internal reasons embracing the mental stereotypes of the “mass” include a paternalistic, autocratic attitude, a passivity accompanied with the rejection of conflicts, an inaptitude in social participation and finally, a tendency to “magical thinking”, which can be described as a kind of primitivism.⁷⁸

From this perhaps it has already become clear what was also stated at the beginning of this section: the idea of civil society was gradually constructed in Romanian public awareness by taking the peculiarities of the actual environment into account. Civil society here, too, was a political slogan or a redeeming concept in the beginning, but Romanian intellectuals soon recognised that all that resulted from a successful transition in other Central European countries could not happen in a similar way in Romania. As in the Hungarian-language public discourses, we encounter a form of pragmatic pessimism.

Examples of the organic construction of the concept, of turning the attention to what “we have”, include the essay by József D. Lőrincz published

75 Tănase, Stelian: “Trei culturi”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1995, No. 28.

76 This expression was already used in the editorial of the already quoted paper 22 in its 1990, No. 1. issue.

77 Ștefan-Scalat, Laurențiu: “Societatea civilă românească – o utopie? “Popor” și elite intelectuale la începutul anilor ‘90”. *Polis*, 1995, No. 4., 161–182.

78 It is to be noted that the author mainly relies on the book by Alina Mungiu. See Mungiu, Alina: *Români după ‘89 – istoria unei neînțelegeri*. București: Humanitas, 1994.

in Romanian⁷⁹ and the essay by Toma Mastnak,⁸⁰ which deals with the path of Slovenian civil society from opposition to power.

As a result of the 1996 parliamentary elections, the former opposition got into power. Many celebrated this as the victory of civil society or as the victory of “us” over “them”, or as an implementation of consensus between “us” and “them”, which seemed impossible earlier.⁸¹ This euphoria, however, did not last long since it turned out that the politicians of “our” side were still politicians, that is they could err just like their predecessors. In fact, the proximity of the intellectual elite to the power establishment brought into the focus of attention the attitude of superiority of this social stratum.⁸² Scandals around the new Romanian government generated a kind of neo-pessimism in the discourse on civil society, because these events triggered off a “separation of civil society from political parties”. Civil society experienced a growing difficulty in understanding the stakes of the conflicts between the parties in the government coalition, and therefore started to fabricate conspiracy theories and explained the visible with something invisible,⁸³ whereas the parties in power started to treat civil society as a subordinate actor in need of instruction.⁸⁴ This new kind of disillusionment was simply called neo-pessimism, the justification of which we do not wish to challenge, but an important element of the argumentation must be pointed out. The ar-

79 D. Lőrincz in this essay gives an account of the debate which developed around the representation of minorities and more or less was published in the Hungarian-language media as well (we discussed it in the previous section of our essay): who can represent the Hungarian minority and those who represent it along what line of ideology construct their legitimacy? Is the Hungarian minority to be imagined as a unity or should the existence of pluralistic values be recognised? The debate naturally led to the questions of whether civil society survived more in the rural or urban environment and how civil society-like constructs can be animated or generated. Finally, the author remarks that the commitment of a minority ethnic party to liberal values is not a choice of ideology, but a direct consequence of the minority situation. See D. Lőrincz, József: “Construirea societății civile: pe baze naționale sau științifice – o polemică în cultura maghiară din România”. *Polis*, 1994, No. 1., 123–131.

80 Mastnak, Tomaz: “Societatea civilă în Slovenia: de la opoziție la putere”. *Polis*, 1994, No. 1., 102–115.

81 The antagonism between “us” and “them” also surfaced in the election campaign of 1992. For the strategy of discourse used in this campaign, see the essay Beciu, Camelia: “Reconstrucția discursivă a campaniei electorale din România ‘92. Discursul presei”. *Revista de cercetări sociale*, 1995, No. 4., 48–71.

82 Adameșteanu, Gabriela: “O trăsătură ne-europeană”. 22, 1996, No. 49.

83 Patapievic, Horia-Roman: “În căutarea motivelor crizei”. 22, 1998, No. 5.

84 Patapievic, Horia-Roman: “Partidele și societatea: un divorț”. 22, 1998, No. 7.

gumentation fully ignores the fact that a kind of civic culture is a significant accompanying feature of civil society. Here (and elsewhere in 22) references to civil society have an emphatically intellectual character (with frequent phrases like “we, the civil society”) implying that civil society means intellectuals with a Western orientation and the institutions created by them.

This emphatically intellectual character was also underlined by the Western experts of civil society of the 1990s. A comparative survey on the processes of democratisation in Central and East European countries presents two features in relation to Romania: the weakness of civil society and its intellectual character.⁸⁵ Paradoxically, in the long run, it is imaginable that this neo-pessimism and the solitude of civil society may even bear fruits. The underlined intellectual character may lose ground and political disillusionment may release an organising potential directed towards the real society. Some signs of this can be identified in relation to political events. At the time of the violent demonstration of miners transported to Bucharest in 1999, huge rallies and demonstrations were organised against the miners’ coming to the capital. With regards to these demonstrations, Stelian Tanase claimed in an interview that the whole history of Romanian civil society could be divided into two periods, the one before and the one after the demonstrations in the capital, because the demonstrations were not directed against the power elite, but took place in defence of certain abstract values: the legitimacy of power and the idea of a state governed by the rule of law.⁸⁶

In the Romanian discourse on civil society, willingness to institutionalisation can be observed together with the launching of relevant empirical research. A regular column appears in *Sfera Politicii* with the title “Civil society”, in which partial issues (relative to the idea of civil society) are discussed, such as the development of a stable democracy⁸⁷, the crisis of the Romanian university sphere⁸⁸ or the relation of intellectuals to politics.⁸⁹ In the periodical we can still find theoretical writings wishing to clarify the concept of civil society that revive the Central European concept of civil society already de-

85 Kaldor, Mary: *Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe*. 1999

86 Tănase, Stelian: “În Europa de Est democrația nu este un proces ireversibil. Interviu realizat de Raluca Mărculescu”. 22, 1999, No. 9., 12–13.

87 Aranyosi, István Albert: “Drumul către democrația stabilă”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1997, No. 53., 32–34.

88 Leahu: “Criza universității românești”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1998, No. 56., 16–18.

89 Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina: “Intelectuali ca actori politici în Europa de Est – cazul României”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1997, No. 52., 53.

scribed from several aspects in our essay⁹⁰ or analysing the possibilities of development of civil society in Romania. A relevant writing published in 1999 points out that civil society played no role whatsoever in the democratisation of the political system in Romania. It will only be able to play such a role if, within civil society, the “civic” element prevails, because a good portion of civil organisations created after 1989 not only failed to represent civic values, but were quite frequently downright anti-democratic.⁹¹ The Romanian application of the idea described in our introductory section that not all NGOs are necessarily a part of civil society emerges here (see footnote 2).

The empirical turn that took place in Hungarian-language publications at the end of 1995 (the concrete sociological examination of civil society or organisations) can be located in the Romanian-language equivalent around 1997. Two issues of *Sfera Politicii* published reports made on the basis of empirical research. One examines the support of the non-profit sector by the population⁹². According to data about 10% of the country’s population (about 1.8 million persons) were founding members of some organisation between 1989 and 1996, and 200,000 (overwhelmingly male) persons were directly involved in the creation of an NGO. It is an interesting fact, however, that the majority of persons supporting NGOs (financially and in other ways) are married women between 30 and 35 having elementary or secondary school education. Şăulean finally remarks that the support of the non-profit sector shows a close correlation with the traditional mentality prevailing in Romanian society and with the economic situation. The other essay based on empirical research deals with attitudes towards the willingness to form associations.⁹³ According to the findings of the author, members of organisations underline the importance of government factors in addition to individual life strategies, while persons not in civil organisations (NGOs) paradoxically are for a minimum state, because they do not believe in comprehensive care exercised by the state. Though not explicitly stated by the author, who is a Romanian sociologist, this paradoxical situation indicates that

90 Lăzăroiu, Andra: “De la etos la telos”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1997, No. 55., 40–43. and Mateescu, Oana: “Societatea civilă – o validare relativă?” *Sfera Politicii*, 1999, No. 68., 61–62.

91 Grecu, Răzvan: “Societatea civilă și democratizarea politică”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1999, No. 73., 74., 33–37.

92 Şăulean, Daniel: “Susținerea de către populație a sectorului nonprofit”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1997, No. 46., 20–24.

93 Şăulean, Daniel: “Filantropie și asociaționalism la români”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1997, No. 51., 25–31.

NGOs are created in Romania for the very reason of formally obtaining individual advantages and even the assistance of the government in this is an expectation.⁹⁴

In this section we have already mentioned several times that in the Romanian public discourse the development of the idea of civil society adopted a pragmatic approach. Although not a subject of our essay in a narrower sense, the discussion of civil society in alternative textbooks published in 1999 also belongs here. The definitions of civil society in these books mainly emphasise the protection of human rights and the importance of free associations and initiatives. The intellectual overtones of the definition of civil society can also be witnessed in these textbooks, because only certain well-known human rights organisations are mentioned. While in the Romanian publications the idea of civil society goes hand in hand with the idea of being Central European, this dimension is completely missing from these textbooks.⁹⁵ Treating civil society as a necessary condition for the transition into democratic social structures can be obviously interpreted as an initial positive feature. Thus, anchoring this mainly intellectual discourse (re-)discovered in the early 1990s at secondary school level may perhaps result in changes of mentality in the medium run.

In summary, we can say that the concept of civil society entered Romanian public discourse with the emphatic support of Central European authors. Initially, there were some conceptual “shots in the dark”, but the mainstream of the discourse is still identifiable and is based on the works of mainly Central European authors who, with justification, can be regarded as a part of the canon of civil society (Havel, Michnik, Kuron, Konrád, Kolakowski, Haraszti, Gellner, etc.). Perhaps it is attributable to the attempts at total oppression of the Ceausescu dictatorship that the idea of civil society suddenly started to flourish in the Romanian media after 1989. The Romanian intellectual elite, however, continually controlled this intensity, thus the discourse could not penetrate into society, not even at the level of conceptual approximations. The direct consequence of this process is the weakness of civil society and its emphatically intellectual character.

94 If we accept the “state in the state” status of the DAHR, this motif is perhaps also valid for the Hungarian minority.

95 The authors of the text-books and a different approach to the topic can be found in one of the articles by Gabriel Andreescu. See Andreescu, Gabriel: “Rezistența, drepturile omului și societatea civilă în manualele de istorie de clasa a XII-a.”, 22, 1999. No. 42., 8.

Also in this discourse, the rural/urban contrast emerged, but it intertwined with analysis of the peculiarities of the Romanian mentality. The majority of authors emphasised the traditional, rural, authoritarian nature of the Romanian mentality, which has the tendency of accepting totalitarianism and a need for paternalism. Here the question emerged if it was possible at all to speak of the building of civil society. The idea of civil society in Romanian public awareness is emphatically associated with the protection of human rights and the idea of the state governed by the rule of law, which requires an intense attention to politics. (It is not by chance that in relation to political events we can often read communiqués phrased on behalf of civil society.) We can date the empirical turn in the examination of civil society to 1997. However, this pragmatic examination did not block the intention to clarify the concept itself. We can regard the regular discussion of the theme in professional periodicals, its appearance in secondary school text-books and the creation of periodicals, publications and forums dealing with this theme⁹⁶, and last but not least the registration of nearly 10,000 NGOs,⁹⁷ as a “reification” of civil society.

3. Comparative summary

The idea of civil society in Hungarian-language publications of Romania relies on several sources. Publications from Hungary play a significant role in developing the concept. Naturally, this introduces a certain type of “Central European” approach. Yet, the idea of being Central European appears in a more unified way in the Romanian public awareness and beyond its emphatically intellectual character it mainly comprises the protection of human rights and the idea of a state governed by the rule of law. In the Hungarian public awareness in Romania, the dimension of autochthonous interpretations gained more ground, therefore the concept often simply refers to the Hungarian minority or the Hungarian community. Both Hungarian and Romanian public awareness deal with the significance of civil society from the point of view of creating democratic social structures, as well as the im-

⁹⁶ See, for example, the interactive weekly *Voluntar* which publishes the most important news about the non-profit sector or the home page of the ACCES information centre (both are accessible via the internet at <http://www.fdsc.ro/ACCES>).

⁹⁷ This data appears in the school text-book by Ioan Scurtu and his team: Scurtu, Ioan et al.: *Istoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri pâna astăzi. Manual pentru clasa a XII-a*. București: Petron, 1999.

possibility or Utopian character of the creation of civil society. There is a slight difference in the attitudes towards the latter idea. In the Hungarian-language press the recognition of this impossibility surfaced sooner than in the Romanian-language media, and the theory of the “animation of civil society” was immediately associated with it.

In Romanian public awareness, pessimism in relation to civil society was maturing gradually, which was mainly explained by the surviving rurality of Romanian society and the mentality which goes with it and which feeds it. In the Hungarian press, the village often appeared as the “hotbed” of civil society. The accumulation of pessimism in the Romanian press was broken by the 1996 election results, but after a short period of euphoria, the phenomenon called by us neo-pessimism prevailed again. The representation of civil society in the Romanian media, as seen above, is much more connected to politics than that of the Hungarian-language press. The interest-representing organisation of the Hungarian minority in Romania is also considered in relation to civil society, but actual political events do not influence reflections on the development and opportunities of civil society. A similarity at the level of the use of the concept is the use of the first person plural in both languages. However, this strategy of discourse in Hungarian indicates a unified minority- (or people- or civil society-) image of the cultural and political elite, whereas in Romanian as a counter-image of *we* there are always *they*, those in the world of power. In other words, civil society in Hungarian is phrased *for* someone or something, while in Romanian it is formulated *against* something.

In both languages of the discourse we have identified an empirical turn, the beginning of the period of the operationalisation of civil society. Besides time differences, it is an essential distinction that while Romanian research targeted the “world of associations” and examined relevant attitudes, the Hungarian studies examined institutions considered as part of the civil sphere. Naturally, it is not possible to draw far-reaching conclusions from the two research efforts, though we may still venture to say that the Romanians wanted to know “what is behind that what we have or could have”, whereas the Hungarians wanted to enumerate “what we have”, in other words, the community. Perhaps these operationalisations also echo the occasionally language-dependent interpretations of civil society (that is in Hungarian it is often used to mean the minority community only).

ZOLTÁN KÁNTOR – NÁNDOR BÁRDI

The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) in the Government of Romania from 1996 to 2000

It is an unrewarding undertaking for analysts to evaluate the activities of a political party and its participation in a coalition government. The DAHR, which since 1989 has undertaken the interest representation of ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, accepted a role in the coalition government formed by the Democratic Convention of Romania¹ between December 1996 and November 2000. In evaluating any political activity, the question of (the analyst's) *viewpoint* is inevitably raised and since the authors regard scientific objectivity a fundamental requirement, they consider it their main task to set up a system of criteria with the endeavour of remaining free from taking political stands as far as it is possible. Here we cannot survey the history of the relevant events.² Due to the proximity of events and the lack of the relevant documents, we were in no position to explore work-related debates concerning governmental activities within the governing coalition and within the DAHR itself.³ The support and popularity of a political party represent a relevant measure in judging the party's success. The DAHR is, however, an ethnic party whose voters

1 Convenția Democrată din România

2 Miklós Bakk: "1989–1999: az RMDSZ első tíz éve" (*The first ten years of the DAHR*). In Bodó, Barna (ed.): *Romániai Magyar Évkönyv 2000*, Temesvár, Kolozsvár: Szórvány Alapítvány-Polis Könyvkiadó, 2000, 19–32.; "Kronológia" (*Cronology*). In *Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség 1989–1999*, Kolozsvár, 2000.

3 In our future research, in line with a unified system of perspectives, we aim to interview 120 persons who participated in the work of the government and examine the debates of the Council of Representatives. This could provide a good basis for more detailed analysis.

are recruited from the Hungarian cultural-political community of Romania. Therefore, Hungarian voters do not cast their ballots only in accordance with their political and economic preferences, but also on the basis of their ethnic/national status.

The problems of approach to the topic under investigation are the following:

a) What can be the basis of such an evaluation? b) Who is making the evaluation? c) Is it a professional or a political issue to evaluate the activities of a political party (in a coalition government)?

In Romania the major sources of information about safeguarding the interests of the Hungarian minority are the reports of the DAHR. If we simplify the accounts of the press and the political declarations, we can see two kinds of evaluation: one being the official evaluation of the DAHR, the other being the opinion of the internal opposition of the DAHR.⁴ These are of political rather than of professional nature. There are, furthermore, analyses carried out by professionals but only in negligible number.⁵ Although the majority of analyses are political in nature, they deal with all the key issues. However, for the true analyst, political evaluations owing to their very nature, cannot serve as a basis.

Methodologically we can use various approaches: a) the experiences of the parliamentary and municipal elections, b) the findings of opinion polls, c) the comparison of the programmes of the DAHR and the government with the results achieved, d) the effect of the role in the coalition government on the development of social and political relationships, e) the effects on the development of the Romanian political system towards consocial structures and on the nation-building projects of the Hungarian minority.

4 *Mérlegen: Az RMD SZ egy koalícióban (Making a balance: The DAHR in the coalition), 1996–2000.* RMD SZ, 2000; and. Toró, Tibor T.: “Az RMD SZ koalíciós szerepvállalása: zsákutca vagy kiút egy hatékonyabb politikai érdekképviselet felé?” (*The role of the DAHR in the coalition: a dead-end or a way-out towards more efficient political interest representation?*). *Magyar Kisebbség*, 1998, No. 1., 222–251, and answers published: same publication 1998, No. 2., 3–141.; Borbély, Zsolt Attila: “Markónak mennie kell” (*Markó must go*). *Erdélyi Napló*, 1999, No. 17.

5 Bíró, Zoltán A.: “A kormánybalépés egy éve a magyar-magyar reláció szemszögéből” (*The first year after entering the government from the point of view of Hungarian-Hungarian relations*). In Bak, Miklós–Székely, István–Toró T., Tibor (eds.): *Útközben: pillanatképek az erdélyi magyar politika reformjáról (On the way: Snapshots of the reform of Hungarian politics in Transylvania)*. Csíkszereda: Pro-Print, 1999, 124–137.

The political environment in Romania

Following the events of 1989, a parliamentary democracy based on a multi-party system has slowly developed in Romania. In this study we do not deal with the evaluation of Romanian democracy. Although we cannot regard Romania as a substantial democracy (R. Dahl), beyond doubt we can consider it a formal or procedural democracy (J. A. Schumpeter). In the period from 1990 to 1996 we can speak of the prevailing politics of the Party of Social Democracy in Romania⁶ or its legal predecessors. This period was characterized by slow reform and a consolidation of the political system. The DAHR participated in Romanian political life as an opposition party, while also working on the development of a Hungarian system of institutions and moving towards internal pluralism. The parties in power up to 1996 showed little willingness to satisfy Hungarian demands and anti-Hungarian and anti-DAHR rhetoric were characteristic features of political discourse.

After November 1996 the mere fact of the DAHR's participation in the Romanian government was of great importance. With this, the party became acceptable as a political partner and at the same time it created a precedent. Cooperation between the parties in power and the DAHR became a reality when the Romanian political establishment needed a kind of legitimation abroad.

In this period, the representatives of the DAHR in the legislation tried to support those drafts of bills which pointed towards reforms and their activities were also focused on protecting the interests of Hungarians living in Romania. With developing a particular internal organisation (Council of Representatives, Executive Presidency, Council of Mediation) and with the institutionalisation of platforms, the DAHR shaped its internal structure and a movement gradually became a political party and started to behave accordingly.

The organisation of social life (and in many respects, the operation of its institutions) was gradually taken over by the DAHR or by various "ethno-civilian" organisations supported by funds controlled by the DAHR. The organisation of internal elections, the pluralisation of the political life of Hungarians through the model of local government, as approved of by the DAHR congress at Brassó⁷, were never realised and internal political discussion fell into the background.

6 Partidul Democrației Sociale din România

7 15–17 January 1993.

No evaluations have been made on the activities of the previous government yet, but we can utilise the analyses published in various professional periodicals. When the coalition led by the Democratic Convention took over government in 1996, it promised to carry out the long overdue political and economic reforms needed since 1990. The first steps justified expectations and the popularity of the coalition increased, but when the Ciorbea government stopped short facing trade union demands (in March 1997), the antagonisms within the coalition became increasingly evident and the whole process of reform came to a standstill. The process of reform, although partially under foreign pressure, accelerated again during the time of the government led by Mugur Isărescu (December 1999), nevertheless the coalition had little time left for the results to show. Thus, the fall of the coalition was practically inevitable, which fact was clearly foreshadowed by the data of opinion polls and the results of municipal elections in 2000. According to Dan Pavel, the unity of the coalition was held together by the task of carrying out the reforms.⁸ He claims that this is the only possible argument for the cooperation of three parties (Democratic Convention of Romania, Democrat Party and DAHR) so significantly differing in ideology, tradition and legitimacy. We may add that this was the only possible coalition which could prevent the previous governing parties from returning. In the same article Dan Pavel explains that the government's failure to carry out the reforms was due to the fact that the parties cared much less for the reforms than for the reinforcement of their own economic positions. The parties in the government paid more attention to their particular interests. In his opinion, one of the major reasons for the disfunctionality of the coalition was the lack of contractual regulation between the parties of the coalition. For each new emerging problem new rules had to be worked out, a process in which the parties became fully absorbed. The analyst, Dan Pavel, himself is also an intellectual who supported the coalition in principle, but looked on the functioning and effectiveness of the coalition with a critical eye. Good intentions and an (at least verbal) commitment to reforms did not lead to the building of institutions, to the making of decisions within the coalition and to the implementation of reforms. The coalition functioned effectively only in crisis situations, which in itself was not sufficient for carrying out the reforms. Therefore, in retrospect, it seems that it was inevitable for the coalition to lose the elections, and

⁸ Pavel, Dan: "Performanța Coaliției? Rămînera împreună (1)". *Sfîra Politicii*, 1998, No. 65.

we may venture the opinion that this did not happen because of the loss of its popularity due to tribulations entailed by the reforms.

From the point of view of our study, it is interesting that in the second part of his analysis Dan Pavel points out that promises made to the DAHR were not kept, either in the letter or in the spirit of the agreement.⁹ Later he mentions as a shortcoming of the DAHR that while pursuing a coherent policy to achieve its own goals, the DAHR did not notice the decline of the coalition's popularity and was not sufficiently aware of the fact that it could expect support only from the then coalition in any issue concerning the Hungarian minority in Romania. Nevertheless, in evaluating the government's activity in the year 1999, the same author points out that the DAHR was the most stable part of the coalition, which always voted according to the coalition agreements and received practically nothing in return from its coalition partners.¹⁰

After this short introduction we can start the actual analysis, which we will begin with an examination of the criteria of interpretation.

Election performance – as a possible criterion of evaluation

As far as the success of the activities of a party is concerned, the number of votes for the party and partially the data of opinion polls can be relevant. In the following sections we are going to examine the results of the municipal and general elections in 2000 and the data of opinion polls conducted in the following year. One reason why this must be done is because politicians like to use these data to support their arguments in their “coalition evaluations”.¹¹

Municipal elections 2000

In the case of an ethnic party, when examining its election results, the questions must be raised in a subtle manner. Authors in the relevant professional literature agree that the voters of an ethnic party belong almost exclu-

9 Pavel, Dan: “Performanța Coaliției? Rămînerea împreună (2)”. *Sfera Politicii*, 1999, No. 66.

10 Pavel, Dan: “De ce nu s- predat coaliția?”. *Sfera Politicii*, 2000, No. 78.

11 Előd Kincses: “Az RMDSZ választási szereplése a szavazatok tükrében” (*The election performance of the DAHR in terms of votes*). *Krónika*, 30 December 2000.

sively to that ethnic/national group and there is a very low cross-voting ratio.¹² For Hungarian voters there is a greater likelihood of staying away from the ballot box than of voting for another party. The basis of reference – based on the data of population census – is the number of Hungarians in Romania and from this figure it is possible to approximate the number of potential Hungarian voters. Another basis of reference is the ratio of DAHR voters in the previous election against which we can measure new election results. In the case of a government coalition, however, we can only have hypotheses about the effect of an earlier participation in the government on the present results of a certain party.

As has already been mentioned, the measure of success or failure of a political party is its performance in the elections. An ethnic party, however, can very rarely obtain votes from outside its own ethnic group. Its election campaign is essentially focused on convincing as many members of its own national group as possible to go and cast their ballots. Therefore, the party's performance in the elections cannot be a primary criterion of evaluation.

The government coalition consisting of the Democratic Convention of Romania, the Democrat Party¹³ and the DAHR, which replaced the government led by the Party of Social Democracy in Romania, did not rise up to expectations. (After the initial gathering of momentum, the government failed to implement the 40-article, 200-day programme called the "Contract with Romania".¹⁴) The government failed to carry out the reform of institutions, to curb inflation and had no power to change the structure of the economy.

As compared to its promises, the government under-performed, though it remains an open question as to what extent these promises could have been performed even under optimum circumstances. A drastic programme of reforms would have also turned the population against the government.

Let us examine first the results of the municipal elections in 2000.¹⁵

12 Donald L. Horowitz: *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.

13 Partidul Democrat

14 Dan Oprescu: "Care Contract? Care Românie?" *Sfera Politicii*, 1997, No. 51.

15 Miklós Bakk – István Székely: "Az RMDSZ és az önkormányzati választások" (*The DAHR and the local elections*). *Magyar Kisebbség*, 2000, No. 3, 111.

Number of votes on the county list of candidates on 4 June 2000.

<i>Party</i>	<i>Number of votes</i>	<i>%</i>
Party of Social Democracy in Romania	2,200,806	27.26%
Democrat Party	803,689	9.95%
Democratic Convention	605,541	7.50%
Alliance for Romania ¹⁶	596,846	7.39%
National Liberal Party ¹⁷	563,255	6.98%
Great Romania Party ¹⁸	533,854	6.61%
DAHR	512,413	6.35%

We can see that the governing parties in the county council elections (relevant from our point of view) collected slightly over 30 % of the votes which is roughly half the votes received in the general election in 1996. That is to say that in the 2000 municipal elections the governing parties performed far below their results in the 1996 municipal and general elections. The DAHR was the only party which received roughly the same number of votes as in the previous municipal and parliamentary elections. Its voters did not punish the DAHR. From these results we can conclude that as long as the DAHR does not commit some terrible mistake, Hungarians in Romania will continue to vote for it. We may venture the conclusion that the results achieved by the DAHR did not depend on the party's performance in the government. Consequently, these results cannot serve as an evaluation criterion.

The number of DAHR mandates received in the municipal elections¹⁹ (in parentheses: the number of representatives who won on a joint list with other parties)

<i>Officials</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>2000</i>
Representatives of local authorities	2616+(147)	2445+(1)	2451
Mayors	131+(11)	139	148
Representatives of county authorities	121+(23)	133	135

¹⁶ Alianța pentru România

¹⁷ Partidul Național Liberal

¹⁸ Partidul România Mare

¹⁹ Bakk – Székely, op. cit., 112.

This table reveals that the number of mandates obtained by the DAHR in local elections is relatively stable. Differences were due to the occasional joint nomination of candidates with other parties, the amendment of the election law and the change in the number of the active voters. This slight change cannot be attributed to the role of the DAHR in the coalition government. All we want to point out is that *even the local elections show no sign of decline in the DAHR's popularity among voters due to its participation in the government coalition.* In addition to representatives who obtained their mandates from the DAHR list, Hungarian representatives and mayors also received mandates as independent candidates, especially in the 1996 and 2000 municipal elections.

Parliamentary and presidential elections in November 2000

The parliamentary and presidential elections justified the trend forecast by the data of opinion polls and the results of municipal elections. The shift of power within the post-communist political group and the forging ahead of the Great Romania Party and its leader are of course surprises, but are of secondary importance from the point of view of our study.

Election results of the DAHR in 1996 and 2000:²⁰

	1996		2000	
	Number	%	Number	%
House of Representatives	812,628	6.64	736,863	6.8
Senate	837,760	6.82	751,310	6.9

Compared to the earlier elections, in 2000 the DAHR received less votes, but due to the lower election turnout and the amendment of electoral law, scored better percentage-wise and as a consequence obtained more seats in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. While the country-wide turnout, as compared to the 1996 elections, was 20% lower and the number of those who voted for the DAHR went down by almost 70,000, their ratio decreased only by 10%.

As compared to the other coalition parties, the DAHR succeeded in keeping its supporters. Unambiguously, the explanation lies in the fact of eth-

20 <http://www.kappa.ro/guv/bec/bec96.html/>; WWW.RMDSZ.RO

nicity-driven voting and not in an improved performance of the party. We may also add that the Hungarian voters do not hold the DAHR responsible for the economic problems of the country, because in their interpretation the DAHR primarily deals with issues related to the Hungarian minority. We might obtain a subtler picture, if we examined the election results county by county, but this picture would show the situation in local politics rather than the general judgement about the activities of the DAHR as a party in the government.

The election results can be considered as signals that can contribute to judging the DAHR, but cannot be used as an evaluation criterion. They can be at most relevant to the Romanian coalition partners. The Romanian voters punished the governing parties with their votes, but this did not happen in the case of the DAHR and the Hungarian voters.

Opinion poll data – as a possible criterion of evaluation

We must also be very careful with the data of opinion polls. We can use the data of the Barometer Opinion Poll,²¹ but these data are not representative for the Hungarian minority. Although Hungarians appear in the sample proportionally to their number in the country, we cannot be sure at all that they represent a true cross-section of the Hungarian minority. Research projects which explicitly examine the Hungarian minority in Romania either exclusively or with the increase of the Hungarian sample give rise to problems. *Today there exists no such database from which a professionally sound sample could be compiled.* Since the last population census there have been social changes which have redrawn the map of the Hungarian community in Romania.²²

According to a survey of the CCRIT²³ conducted in the spring of 2000 in which only Hungarians were questioned, 80.6% were of the opinion that the governmental activities of the DAHR had been characterised by concrete results and only 5.3% thought that nothing had been implemented from the tasks undertaken.

21 *Barometrul Opiniei Publice* – Opinion poll results published quarterly in Romania

22 Here we primarily refer to internal migration, emigration and significant changes in the stratification of society.

23 Centrul pentru Cercetări a Relațiilor Interetnice din Transilvania (*Research Centre for Inter-ethnic Relations in Transylvania*)

The political effectiveness of the DAHR was judged as follows:²⁴

	<i>Tends to agree (%)</i>	<i>Tends to disagree (%)</i>
So far the DAHR has pursued a good policy	75.2	17.5
Though slowly, the rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania can be enforced	87.8	6.9
The leaders of the DAHR should try to participate in future governments, because this is the only way for them to do anything efficiently for the Hungarian minority	82.6	9.9
DAHR politicians have often succeeded in enforcing the interests of the Hungarian minority	68.3	22
DAHR politicians have only made promises but done very little for the Hungarian minority	38.1	54.2

The results of the survey allow us to conclude that the Hungarian population of Romania tends to judge the DAHR's participation in the government coalition positively. On the basis of this, we can draw the conclusion that the results of the municipal and parliamentary elections are almost of no use and the data of opinion polls are of limited use when setting up evaluation criteria for the DAHR's role in the government coalition.

Now we can devote our attention to an analysis based on our own system of criteria.

Raising questions interpreting the effect of political decisions – as a criterion of evaluation

It is a commonplace that the participants in the public life of Hungarians in Romania and, in general, the members of the Hungarian minority in Romania have many different perspectives about the future, and place emphasis on different political priorities. For the evaluation of the DAHR's role in government role we considered the following aspects of importance from the material examined: the relations between ethnic Romanians and ethnic Hungarians, the development of inter-ethnic coexistence; the development of relations between Romania and Hungary and within this context the Euro-At-

²⁴ *Romániai magyarok 2000*. CCRIT, March 2000, 33.

lantic integration of Romania; the democratisation and stability of the Romanian political system. In addition to these issues, a central issue concerning the Hungarian minority in Romania and the DAHR is the effect of its governmental role on democracy within the DAHR as well as on the Hungarian society in Romania and on the preservation of Hungarian identity. In close connection with this are the following aspects: a) Has the support of the DAHR as a party become stronger or weaker? (Or is there any correlation between the party's participation in the government coalition and its support?) b) Have the cleavages within the DAHR become deeper or have they become less pronounced? Since there is no absolute evaluation criterion, we can set out from two bases of reference. One is constituted by *the goals identified in the programme of the DAHR*, and the other by *the underlying goals of the programme often not verbalised in politics*. The latter can be summarised as creating and operating on an ethnic basis a Hungarian society in Romania parallel with the Romanian society; this may be called: the institutionalisation process of the Hungarian minority in Romania. This would incorporate human and minority rights, some form of autonomy and an autonomous system of institutions with elected ethnic Hungarians in leading positions.

DAHR, the protagonist

One of the starting points of our analysis is the fact that the DAHR is *a party organised on an ethnic basis*. Its voters are almost exclusively ethnic Hungarians living in Romania and in its programme it represents the interests of the Hungarian minority in Romania. As is characteristic of any ethnic party, the DAHR also fulfils *a double function*. On the one hand, *as a political party*, it participates in the Romanian political life, on the other hand, it *carries out tasks of organising the Hungarian society*. In the focus of the programme and the political activities of such parties stands the representation of the interests and values of the relevant national/ethnic group/community. Like other parties, the DAHR also behaves as a party and its leaders also have their own particular interests, which do not always coincide with the interests of the group represented.

On the basis of the programme of the DAHR and the activities of its representatives in parliament, we can state that the party supported decentralisation, the development of a functioning economy and the Euro-Atlantic integration of Romania. In this sense, *from an external viewpoint*, we can classify

the party as one of the modern liberal parties.²⁵ According to some Romanian analysts, the DAHR has no programme for the whole of Romania.²⁶ This is an erroneous statement, because the DAHR has indeed developed a programme, in which it has presented its views on the desirable social transformation of Romania, although it is true that it detailed them in such a way that they should be advantageous to the Hungarian minority in Romania.

In the DAHR's view, *accession to the European Union and NATO* can create a framework for enforcing the individual and/or collective rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania. *Through decentralisation*, units with their own authority can be created in which the Hungarians can (also) participate to a greater degree in the decision making process concerning primarily their own political, cultural and economic issues. At the same time a (Hungarian) system of institutions can be developed in which Hungarian cultural reproduction can be implemented.

In general, the DAHR as a *minority party has a double priority at macro level*: a) the creation of smaller, more autonomous units characteristic of a decentralised public administration, of autonomy and of federalism, b) the creation of an autonomous system of institutions comprising the institutes of education (first of all an autonomous Hungarian university) and different professional organisations and associations.

These together signify the creation of a Hungarian parallel society, the institutionalisation of the Hungarian society in Romania.

The DAHR as a social organisation makes efforts to organise the civilian (non-governmental) sphere (or what is regarded as such) of the Hungarian community in Romania. To this end it strengthens various organisations and institutions not purely without the intention of keeping or perhaps expanding its voting base.

Due to the above-mentioned features, there will be overlaps in our study in the evaluation of the *DAHR* and the *participation of the DAHR in the government coalition*.

Since its foundation, the DAHR has undertaken the political representation of the entire Hungarian minority in Romania, but it has been constantly debated from the beginning what and how should the DAHR represent. In-

25 If we consider the part of the programme which refers to its own society, we can identify a consolidated and conservative value system.

26 Vladimir Pasti: *România în tranziție: căderea în viitor*. București: Nemira, 1995.

ternal disputes have stemmed from the differing views on the tasks and strategy of the DAHR. These disputes have always been present in the history of the DAHR to date and we must be careful not to base our analysis on the points of view of any of these schools of thought.

The origin of the problem: entering the government

As regards accepting a role in the government, two events must be highlighted. The most important was the urgent conclusion of the Romanian-Hungarian basic agreement in September 1996. The fact that the agreement was signed by the Iliescu and the Horn governments meant that during the Romanian election campaign nationalistic rhetoric fell into the background, on the one hand, and that it was a signal from the government of Hungary that these matters would be decided by the governments of the two countries, on the other. After signing the agreement and before the 1997 NATO summit in Madrid, Romania could not afford a campaign with nationalist rhetoric. It is difficult for outsiders to find the reasons (considerations and interests) on the basis of which the DAHR accepted its role in the government, but the aforementioned definitely made a contribution to it.

The other factor was the nomination of the DAHR's own candidate for the position of head of state. Sándor Balázs directly states that "the DAHR then decided on a possible participation in the coalition when it nominated a candidate for presidency".²⁷ He and Tibor T. Toró share the opinion that during the campaign the "more moderate" rhetoric of György Frunda, which at least in a "radical" sense left the programme of autonomy in the background, made the Hungarians and the DAHR acceptable as a coalition partner in the eyes of the Romanian parties, and at the same time suggested this same message to the Hungarian voters as well.²⁸

The Democratic Convention and the Democrat Party together had a 53% majority of seats in the parliament and even with the DAHR they would not have reached a two-thirds majority. We can only assume what the reasons were *why the DAHR was also co-opted into the government*. There had

27 Sándor Balázs: "A hatalomban vagy a hatalomból" (*In power or out of power*). *Magyar Kisebbség*, 1998, No. 2., 6.

28 Tibor Toró T.: "Az RMDSZ koalíciós szerepvállalása: zsákutca vagy kiút egy hatékonyabb politikai érdekképviselet felé?" (*The role of the DAHR in the coalition: a dead-end or a way-out towards more efficient political interest-representation*). *Magyar Kisebbség*, 1998, No. 1., 224.

been ample evidence before that in Romanian political life a majority with a 3% margin was very little. On the other hand, in the eyes of the West, the participation of the DAHR in the government would cast a favourable light on Romania, which, as politicians assumed, would have also been able to tip the balance in favour of Romania at the NATO summit in July 1997. As already mentioned, it was not a negligible fact that the campaign of the DAHR and György Frunda suggested the image of a reliable political party, which was not demanding too much. We may add that because of political polarisation the chance of including any other party in the coalition was very slim. From this viewpoint the DAHR might have seemed to be the “cheapest” solution.

In retrospect, it is very difficult to decide if DAHR participation in the government contributed to the poor popularity and the failure in the election of the government coalition and if it did, then to what extent. In our assumption, this aspect played no significant role. The loss of popularity was mainly attributable to the permanent disfunctionality of the governmental activities due to the internal conflicts of the coalition and the resulting poor performance of the economy. In this, naturally, the DAHR also had its own share, but it is evident – without making any attempt to absolve the DAHR from responsibility – that it had very little influence on economic processes. From the viewpoint of Hungarian voters, who were mainly ethnic voters, economic failure did not turn many voters away from the DAHR. We can justly assume that those Hungarians who did not vote in the elections of 2000 or did not vote for the DAHR, were more influenced by internal conflicts in the DAHR or local disputes rather than by the DAHR’s role in the government coalition.

From different declarations and manifestations it turned out that in the interest of and during the participation in the coalition the DAHR had to abandon certain demands.

These demands primarily referred to the concept of autonomy and to the model of local government. It seems to be likely that during the coalition negotiations the Democratic Convention and the Democrat Party made the reservation that the DAHR should go “sotto voce” on these issues.²⁹ It can be assumed that this was the minimum requirement on the part of these parties.

²⁹ This is an assumption, but this was also suggested by László Tőkés in his presentation in Temesvár entitled “*Arguments and counter-arguments*”. In Bodó, Barna (ed.): *Kisebbségi érdekvédelem: kormányból és/vagy ellenzékéből*. Temesvár, 1997, 7.

There are two possible explanations for this. On the one hand, none of these parties supported the DAHR's strive for autonomy, on the other, none of them wanted to expose itself to the attacks of the opposition.

Basically, this was a rational demand on the part of the coalition partners, but this was in contradiction with the programme and goals of the DAHR.

As a result of the coalition negotiations, the DAHR had the right to appoint two ministers in the government to lead the Ministry of Tourism and the Office for the Protection of Minorities, the latter established in January 1997. (These positions were taken by Ákos Birtalan and György Tokay, respectively.) Later in lieu of the Ministry of Tourism, the DAHR received the Ministry of Health Care and in the first two years of the coalition it received 11 state secretarial positions.³⁰

At local and county level the DAHR obtained two positions of prefect and eight positions of vice-prefect. The participation of the DAHR in the government coalition improved the position of a number of settlements chiefly inhabited by ethnic Hungarians, but since most of this took place at an informal level, we can only say that it only seems to be likely that this improved the situation of a part of the Hungarian minority in Romania.³¹

Political experts like to divide the 4-year government cycle into the periods of the Ciorbea, the Vasile and the Isărescu governments. It is a general view that the Ciorbea government was the most favourable for the Hungarian minority in Romania. At first sight this seems to be true, but we must not forget that before the 8 July 1997 NATO summit in Madrid Romania cherished hopes of joining NATO in the first round. In reality the chances were slim, but they could not be ruled out entirely.

This was the time when the DAHR positions were the most favourable, because it was a key issue for Romania to demonstrate results in the handling of national minority issues. The concluding of the basic agreement between Romania and Hungary, the participation of the DAHR in the government coalition and the decisions favourable for the Hungarian but also for the other minorities, all proved to the West that the then Romanian government had changed its orientation. The Ciorbea government went as far as modifying the Act on Education passed in the previous government cycle with a govern-

³⁰ *Mérlegen*, op. cit., 67–70.

³¹ In the government apparatus at national and local level the DAHR placed in position at least 170 persons. *Mérlegen* op. cit., 3. This group brought in several dozen Hungarian employees to positions not in the hands of party distribution.

ment decree of urgency.³² This was the period when the DAHR might have had the opportunity to squeeze out a favourable decision in the matter of a state-financed Hungarian university. After the Madrid summit the DAHR lost a lot from its foreign policy-related importance for the Romanian political establishment. This had an effect on the governmental work of the subsequent period.

The most serious problem with joining the government was the way it had happened. Beyond theoretical and practical issues, the main problem was with the decision coming from the top, which was only subsequently made legitimate by the leadership. This was a breach of the principle of internal democracy and the role of the decision-making forum became questionable. All this seem to fit in the process of shifting the influence from the Council of Representatives towards the Operative Council.³³

Arguments of the opponents of coalition

The self-evaluations of the DAHR list the successes and failures during the 4-year government cycle.³⁴ The evaluation given by the internal opposition of the DAHR puts the emphasis on the way of joining the government and on failures, and calls the DAHR to account for its debts in building the Hungarian society and observing internal democracy.

While the DAHR's own evaluations emphasise the results achieved in the legislation process and in the economic reform, the evaluations of its internal opposition make no mention of them.

We can discover two parallel lines of discourse which intensify the already existing cleavages within the DAHR. The leadership of the DAHR used the tactics of "small steps", based on the conviction that rights must be fought for step-by-step and to win this fight compromises are necessary. The opposition, however, sets out from the conviction that the Hungarian minority in Romania is entitled to have certain rights and in key issues there is no

32 A comparison of the 84/1995 Act on Education and its 1999 amendment is given in *Mérlegen*, op. cit., 14–16.

33 "The Operative Council has essentially taken over the full authority of political decision-making within the DAHR." Miklós Bakk: "Hatáskör-módosulás" (*Modification of the sphere of authority*). *Krónika*, 20 January 2001.

34 See the materials of the 1997 DAHR Congress in Csíkszereda and the publication *Mérlegen 2000*.

room even for a temporary compromise.³⁵ The standpoints are rigid and it seems to be unlikely the two camps will approach one another.

The “opponents” identify the group accepting and creating the coalition with the so-called “Neptun Group”³⁶ of 1992–93. In their opinion, this group’s joining the coalition was carried out in a coup-like way, without having any legitimacy. Joining the coalition was subsequently legitimised with the Council of Representatives. They did not reckon properly with the consequences and did not “ask a proper price for the goose”.³⁷ They entered the coalition without any or any publicly known contract. The opposition accuses the DAHR of not representing and not fulfilling the goals in its programme. In their view, the DAHR did not function efficiently in terms of public representation, interest reconciliation, identity protection, self-organisation and internal pluralism, and abandoned its original goals.³⁸

This became evident during the government cycle, but the roots of the problem lay in the period preceding it. The conclusion of the opponents of the coalition was that the leaders of the DAHR should be replaced and the DAHR should return to the principles and the programme agreed upon at its 1993 Brassó congress. In our view, this criticism refers to the activities of the DAHR, rather than its participation in the coalition. Joining the coalition was criticised as a move taken without a prior internal decision and without a contract.³⁹

On the part of the Romanians, since 1996 it became an interest of the actual power establishment in Bucharest to include the DAHR in the government, because this was the scenario in which it could best control and influence the politics of the DAHR. At the beginning the actual Romanian government needed good relations with the DAHR to strengthen its international acceptance, but with this it also had to provide the Hungarian party at least with a minimum bargaining position.

35 This view is suggested by the presentations held at the 1997 Temsevár Conference (László Tókécs, Barna Bodó, Imre Borbély). In Bodó, Barna (ed.): *Kisebbségi érdekvédelem: kormányból és/vagy ellenzékéből*. Temesvár, 1997.

36 György Frunda, László Borbély, and György Tokay.

37 This is a reference by Imre Borbély to the metaphor of Béla Markó. *Kisebbségi érdekvédelem...* op. cit.

38 Attila Borbély Zsolt: “Markónak mennie kell” (*Markó must go*). *Erdélyi Napló*, 1999, No. 17.

39 Tókécs László: “Érvek és ellenérvek” (*Arguments and counter arguments*). In *Kisebbségi érdekvédelem* op. cit. and *Magyar Kisebbség*, 1998, No. 2. by several authors: Barna Bodó, Imre Borbély – Attila Borbély Zsolt, Géza Szócs.

In the following sections we examine some high-priority areas for the DAHR.

Inter-ethnic coexistence

The primary sources of information about inter-ethnic coexistence are the data of the opinion polls. In the view of the general population and also of the Hungarian minority alone, the situation in the country is deteriorating. For the Hungarian minority (as for the Romanian majority) the greatest problems are corruption, unemployment, decreasing standards of living and inflation, and only after these follow the characteristic problems of the Hungarian minority (autonomy, use of the mother tongue, university, etc.).⁴⁰

According to the polls of Ethnobarometer in May-June 2000, the relationship between Romanians and Hungarians had improved as compared to the conditions before 1996. This view was shared both by Romanians and Hungarians, with the latter group showing a greater ratio of satisfaction.⁴¹ Since the participation of the DAHR in the government, both Romanians and Hungarians had thought that the situation of the Hungarians had improved and only a very few thought that their situation had deteriorated. Nevertheless, there was a great difference in judging the rights of national minorities. 83.1% of Hungarians thought that national minorities were in a legally disadvantageous situation.

In spite of this widespread view and of the growing segregation of "Hungarian lifeworld" in Romania, inter-ethnic relations are not tense. On the everyday level, in spite of mutual prejudices, there are few open conflicts between Romanians and Hungarians. It seems to be more likely that Hungarians are on better terms with the supporters of the coalition parties than of the opposition parties, but severe problems are seldom reported in the press.

Due to the acts and government decrees passed after 1996, institutional discrimination has probably decreased, but in a state pursuing an ethnicised policy the chances are slim that it will totally disappear in the short or medium run. The results achieved by the DAHR while in the government overwhelmingly belong to the sphere of anti-discriminatory measures and measures of language policy (concerning the official use of the mother tongue). From third-level goals of identity policy and of the building of the Hungari-

⁴⁰ *Romániai magyarok 2000*, CCRIT, 22.

⁴¹ *Ethnobarometer*, CCRIT, 2000 May-June, 22.

ans' own institutions, the DAHR concentrated on the creation of governmental structures serving the management of minority issues.⁴²

Bilateral inter-state relations: Romania and Hungary

The structure of relations between Hungary and its neighbours is determined by three spheres of problems: differing interests stemming from the neighbouring situation; historical complexes; and the minority issue. In terms of Romania, since 1989, the key question of the relations has been the situation of ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania. At a theoretical level this is based on different interpretations of the concept of nation and minority rights. At the level of inter-state relations, other types of relations (such as economic and integrational relations) are of secondary importance. This aspect of relations also depends on the priorities of the two countries, in a sense if they are or are not impelled to cooperate by foreign political factors. It also depends on the composition and the minority policy of the actual governments of both countries.

As is known, the treaty between Hungary and Romania⁴³ was signed by the government coalition of the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Association of Free Democrats as well as the government of the Party of Social Democracy in Romania in September 1996. According to the evaluation given by the then governing Hungarian parties, the signing of this agreement decisively contributed to and created the conditions for the improvement of Romanian-Hungarian relations. According to the then opposition in the Hungarian parliament, it was a mistake to conclude the agreement in this form, especially with the then Romanian government.⁴⁴

Though widely criticised, the basic agreement contributed to the fact that the DAHR was invited to participate in the next government. It is diffi-

42 A survey of this is given in the next section.

43 Treaty between the Republic of Hungary and Romania on Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighborhood, Timișoara, 16 September 1996.

44 "Memorandum of the National Presidency of FIDESZ-MPP (*Association of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Party*) on the Romanian-Hungarian basic agreement". In Csaba Lőrincz – Zoltán Németh – Viktor Orbán – Zoltán Rockenbauer: *Nemzetpolitika '88–'98*. Budapest: Osiris, 1998, 306–307. A press analysis of the domestic political debate was given by Éva Kovács and Péter Csígy: "Európai integráció vagy/és kisebbségvédelem? A román magyar alapszerződés sajtóvitéja" (*European integration and/or protection of minorities? Press debate on the Romanian-Hungarian basic treaty*). Budapest, 2000, In Sik Endre-Tóth Judit (eds.): *Diskurzusok a vándorlásról*. Budapest: NMMK, 2000, 252–278.

cult to imagine that this would have happened, had there been no basic agreement of its type. Both parties made a compromise by signing the basic agreement, but perhaps the Hungarian party made the greater one (recommendation 1201, the issue of returning church property, the cause of the Hungarian university). We should also not forget that the basic agreement was mainly concluded with a view to NATO accession and we can assume that neither of the signatory parties counted on resolving the minority issue. In spite of this, the agreement provides a basis of reference for both parties and is interpreted according to the particular interests of the signatories. Hungarian foreign policy supported Romania's accession to various international organisations in different international forums and also bilateral relations between the two countries became more intensive with the establishment of several inter-ministerial relations. The principle of Hungarian minority policy whereby the Hungarian government supports the demands of the organisations of the Hungarian minority has not lead to diplomatic complications.⁴⁵ It is an important fact that the representatives of Hungarian foreign politics have not lodged any protest against Romania at any level.

It is difficult to decide if the improvement of the relations between Romania and Hungary have improved due to the DAHR's participation in the coalition or due to the new, more pro-Western coalition, or perhaps due to the signing of the basic agreement. What is certain is that before 1996 the chances of the opening of the Hungarian Consulate in Kolozsvár (Cluj) would have been extremely slim and in all probability the financial support of the Hungarian-language private university with Hungarian money would have been much more problematic. Mutual visits have become frequent between politicians of Hungary and Romania, in the course of which many important agreements have been concluded. Among these agreements the ones concerning guest workers and the opening of new border crossing points must be underlined. It is a very important phenomenon that the case of the pollution of the Tisza river did not trigger off a wave of political hysteria in either country.⁴⁶ Thanks to the participation of the DAHR in the government, different meet-

45 Diplomatic tensions arose in 2001 when the Hungarian Parliament passed the *Act on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries*.

46 Csilla Zsigmond: "A ciánszennyeződés mediátizálása a Népszabadság, a Magyar Nemzet és a HVG hasábjain" (*Media coverage of the cyanide pollution in the dailies Népszabadság and Magyar Nemzet and in the weekly HVG*). *Pro Minoritate*, 2000, No. 1., 139–147.

ings have been organised and agreements have been concluded in an easier way. In this sense *the DAHR has primarily played a mediating role.*

The Hungarians in Romania had a positive opinion about the relations between Romania and Hungary in recent years and are expecting further improvement. Also in this connection, a greater percentage of Hungarian respondees of the opinion polls shared this view as compared to Romanians.⁴⁷

For the Horn government⁴⁸ in Hungary the top priority was Hungary's EU integration and the issue of Hungarian minorities living beyond the present borders of Hungary was considered as a professional issue within foreign policy and slightly fell into the background. The issue of integration was also of primary importance for the Orbán government, but the problems and support of Hungarian minorities beyond the borders, even at the expense of the former, became more emphatic as an issue of national policy and as a main item in the common ideological basis of the coalition parties.

In Romania the former government⁴⁹ was not a true partner for the Hungarian minority. With the DAHR as a partner in the coalition, the government led by the Democratic Convention of Romania had a more positive attitude to the minority issue. Partly, the politicians of the coalition parties had a more positive attitude to the minority issue, partly this was also dictated by political interest. It would be a mistake to think that the basic attitude of the new government was significantly different from that of the politicians of the former government (in the new government, the idea of a more lenient national state neutral to the use of language seemed to prevail),⁵⁰ and it should be clear to all that the DAHR could only expect a degree of support from here to implement its own programme.

With regards to the policy concerning ethnic Hungarians, the Orbán government was more active than its predecessor. It was more open in the support of the endeavours of the Hungarian minority in Romania in the form of declarations, visits and financial subsidies. In spite of this activity, the relations between the two states remained stable. This can partly be explained by the Hungarian participation in the government and partly by the

⁴⁷ *Romániai magyarok 2000*, CCRIT, 22

⁴⁸ The government led by Gyula Horn, 1994–1998.

⁴⁹ The governments led consecutively by Victor Ciorbea, Radu Vasile, and Mugur Isărescu, 1996–2000.

⁵⁰ This line of Romanian policy concerning the Hungarian minority was represented by Zenobie Păclășianu between the two world wars and now by Valentin Stan.

foreign political orientation of the government in Bucharest, which accepted the fact that its good relations with the DAHR would improve its chances in the Euro-Atlantic integration.

Model relations in the period from 1996 to 2000?

It has become clear from the above how much the relations between Romania and Hungary depend on the ups and downs of foreign politics. In order for us to answer the question concerning an appropriate model we must clarify the basics first. In this field there are different kinds of functioning models, but the majority of these models cannot be fully adopted. Regarding our topic, a growing number of references have been made recently to the constant participation of the Swedish People's Party in the Finnish government coalition. These remarks seem to ignore the existence of a background of minority rights and national policy into which the activities of the Swedish People's Party are embedded. It is this very background for the creation of which the DAHR accepted participation in the government coalition.

At the level of inter-state relations this is likely to be the optimum model: the relations of Hungary to a neighbouring country, in the government of which the representatives of the Hungarian minority also participate. This can prove that the government in power in Romania maintains a partnership with the Hungarians and that Hungarians can participate in making and implementing decisions, thereby shaping their own fate. Relations of this kind also pave the way favourably for state subsidies coming from Hungary. In this respect, the Hungarian minority is a true beneficiary of the situation.

At the same time we cannot regard these as model relations, because the handling of the problems of minorities has not been resolved yet. Although it is difficult to decide exactly when the minority issue can be viewed as "resolved", it seems sure that a basic criterion is that the decisive majority of both the members and the elite of the national minority should agree that the conditions for preserving their community and national identity are given. In order to achieve this, some form of autonomy and independent institutions are required. The former has not been implemented at all, the latter has been implemented only partially. The mere fact that the political party of a minority takes part in the government does not signify too much. There is, of course, a potential chance for such a party to implement some goals of

its programme, but for issues of vital importance they need the support of the majority. For this the DAHR was not given ample support.

On the basis of the above, President Clinton's statement that there was a model solution to these problems in Romania can be a base of reference only in the shadow of the events that took place in Kosovo, but does not hold in central Europe.⁵¹ The DAHR's participation in the government coalition can, in the best case, be regarded as the first step in the process of working out a model solution. It is not only governmental participation, but also the creation of consocial relations and their institutions which we regard as the central issue. For this reason, in the following sections we would like to enumerate concrete results achieved by the DAHR as a governing party and the relation of these results to the goals stated in the election and congress programmes, in other words, to the image of the future constructed for the minority society.

Protecting minority interests/minority policy

In the field of minority policy the DAHR has given voice to political priorities for the provision of individual and collective rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania and has initiated measures for the consolidation of a Hungarian system of institutions.

The implementation of the governmental priorities of the DAHR

In this case the task of the analyst seems to be easy. He should take the document entitled *Priorities of action of the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania*⁵² and check what has been implemented thereof.⁵³ However, implementation of the majority of the priorities listed in the document did not depend on the DAHR and for the majority of targeted measures the DAHR had worked out drafts of bills, the majority of which had not passed the stage of negotiation in parliament and in the parliamentary committees by the end of the government cycle, as will be discussed later.

51 The letter of Reform Tömörítés (*Reform Group*) with 150 signatories at the Csíkszereda Congress, *Szabadság*, 15 May 1999.

52 *RMDSZ Közlöny (DAHR Newsletter)*. 27 November 1997, 20-24.

53 Priorities have been compared to the relevant chapters of the publication *Mérlegen*.

In *foreign policy* there was no success with NATO⁵⁴ accession and the abolition of visa obligations for Romanian citizens in the EU⁵⁵, but there was success in improving relations between Romania and Hungary and *in the economy* in creating industrial parks, developing a system of support for small and medium-size enterprises and introducing personal income tax. The most significant result achieved by the DAHR was the restructuring of the Ministry of Tourism. These partial results did not introduce a real change in the structure of the Romanian economy and the economic priorities of the DAHR were only partially successful. *At the level of local government* there was no success in confirming the government decree of urgency in the parliament.⁵⁶

The legal conditions of the assets management of local authorities were created by the acts on local funds, on public property, on the legal status of roads and on concessions. Laws were also successfully passed on local referenda and on public servants.⁵⁷ In other words, with the exception of the confirmation of the government decree of urgency, the rest of the goals were fulfilled. *In the field of minority policy* the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages was successfully ratified and minority protection provisions of laws strengthening local government were successfully worked out.

54 Since then, Romania was invited to join NATO in Autumn 2002.

55 Romania will join the EU not prior to 2007.

56 The government decree of urgency No. 22 passed in the spring of 1997 modifying the Act on Local Public Administration (1991/69) guaranteed that in those units of public administration where the ratio of persons belonging to a minority community exceeds 20%, the agenda of the local or county council must also be published in the mother tongue of the minority community.

In those councils in which the number of councillors belonging to a minority community reaches one third of the total number of the councillors, the mother tongue of the minority community can also be used in the meetings.

In those units of public administration where the ratio of persons belonging to a minority community exceeds 20%, an appropriate number of persons responsible for maintaining written or oral public relations must know the mother tongue of the minority community.

In those units of public administration where the ratio of persons belonging to a minority community exceeds 20%, these persons can turn to the authorities either in writing or orally in their mother tongue and will receive an answer in this language. If the representative or the employee of the local authority does not know this language, the mayor's office is obliged to provide an official interpreter. At the same time, the local authorities in these settlements are obliged to provide public notices in the mother tongue of the minority community.

This government decree could not come into force due to the first coalition crisis and then on account of the decision of the Constitutional Court (taken on 19 May 1998).

57 *Mérlegen*, op. cit, 46-48.

The framework law on minority protection was not accepted, but the anti-discriminatory law was already drafted in August, 2000 and it will be the task of the government led by the Party of Social Democracy in Romania to pass it. The most complex issue is that of the return of community and church property. In 1997–98 several government decrees were passed on this matter (1997/21; 1998/13), some of the indicated 22 properties were returned (including the Petőfi House in Bucharest and the Brassai Lyceum in Kolozsvár). The 1999/83 government decree of urgency ordered the return of 63 properties belonging to minority communities and in December the list was complemented with 53 new items. Twenty-eight of them have been returned to date. After the government decree a separate committee was set up to approve of the list of properties to be returned and another committee was set up to examine whether, considering their present use, the properties can or cannot be returned. Recording the properties' new owners in the land register involves a kind of lawsuit. After this complicated procedure only nine items in the property of Hungarian communities have been registered so far. And out of these nine, only the Petőfi House in Bucharest and the Episcopal Palace of the Calvinist Church in Nagyvárad (Oradea) have been actually taken in possession.⁵⁸ The 1921 land reform involved the appropriation of 85% of the landed properties of the Hungarian churches. Now the churches could make claims in respect of 15% of their pre-1918 property, but this too only became possible within the geographically defined limitations given in Act 1 of 2000.

Among priorities featured “the monitoring of regulations prohibiting assimilation by force and the modification of the demographic composition of regions inhabited by minorities”. The Székelyudvarhely-Cserehát case and the expansion of the institutions of the Orthodox Church in Székelyföld (a region of Transylvania chiefly inhabited by Szekler-Hungarians) showed that the coalition did not have the necessary determination to enforce these regulations.⁵⁹

Among *educational* priorities, satisfying the local needs of Csángó-Hungarian (Hungarian speaking natives of Moldavia) education and the restoration of the state-supported Hungarian University of Sciences in Kolozsvár

⁵⁸ Information provided by Attila Markó, who worked at that time in the Office for National Minorities.

⁵⁹ Jenő Szász: Székelyudvarhelyi Cserehát – áru vagy próbakő? (*Székelyudvarhely-Cserehát – goods or touchstone?*) In *Romániai Magyar Évkönyv* 2000, op. cit., 178–183.

failed. In the other fields, such as the educational reform, modification of the law on education, the expansion of the scale and the number of students of schools where the language of teaching can also be Hungarian, the DAHR scored significant successes.⁶⁰ The issue of Hungarian-language higher education was the one that most severely tested relations between the DAHR and the other partners in the coalition, and almost led to the DAHR leaving the government. At the same time, the issue of an autonomous Hungarian university was the pivotal issue within the DAHR, which also divided the party itself. It is not a professional issue to decide what the DAHR should have done in that situation.⁶¹

In *cultural life* progress was made in utilising the funds of the General Directorate of National Minority Affairs through competitive tenders. The laws listed as priorities were drafted with the exception of the Cultural Statute for National Minorities, but were not passed.

Of priorities pertaining to *churches*, the establishment of denominational educational institutions of all faiths was achieved only within the framework of private education. There was no success in creating the Act on Church Affairs, in returning confiscated church property and in introducing Hungarian-language church services for the Csángó-Hungarians in Moldavia.

In summary, of government priorities, the greatest results concerning structure and the use of language were achieved in the fields of local government and education. But in two key areas, in the return of church and community property and in the restarting of a Hungarian-language state university, the DAHR achieved only partial results.

Legislative work

In the two houses of parliament, certain laws were initiated jointly by the members of the coalition, while others were initiated by the DAHR alone.

60 László Murvai: Magyar nyelvű oktatás Romániában (*Hungarian-language education in Romania*) (1989–1999) *ibid.*, 104–113.

61 The meeting of the Council of Representatives on 5–6 September 1998 took a decision about leaving the government if the demand for the university was rejected. *Szabadság*, 7 September 1998; The proposal of László Tőkés to wait and see, *Háromszék*, 7 September; Government meeting of 30 September 1998 (*Proposal of the Petőfi-Schiller multicultural university*), *Népújság*, 2 October 1998; A new decision of the Council of Representatives on staying in the coalition, *Szabadság*, 5 October 1998 and on the protests of the Romanian opposition, *Szabadság*, 8 October 1998.

In addition to these, a number of measures concerning minority policy were introduced without the usual legislative process through government decrees of urgency. The parliamentary group and the individual members of the DAHR initiated a total of 89 bills. Regarding their distribution by number only, most of them (19) referred to the expansion of local government, but the majority of the latter group (14) initiated a change of the public administrative classification status of certain municipalities.

Another important group of initiatives aimed at the creation of a friendly environment for enterprises (9), the support of small and medium-size enterprises (4) and economic privatisation (6). A significant ratio of drafts initiated by the DAHR dealt with the management of pastures and forests (8) and with labour and social security regulations (9). However, two-thirds of the drafts (61) only succeeded in getting on the agenda of the Senate, the House of Representatives or the specialised parliamentary committees. Only 13 drafts initiated by the DAHR became concrete acts of law. Two of them are important from the point of view of Hungarians in Romania: the return process of land property concerning arable land of more than 10 hectares and forests of more than 1 hectare as well as common, church and community land property and the practical regulations thereof (1997/167) and the maximizing of the returnable land in 50 hectares for arable land and 10 hectares for forest (2000/1). Three other successful initiatives resulted in the acts on the creation of industrial parks and on the support of small and medium enterprises. Altogether three drafts initiated by the DAHR were rejected, but only one of them had an indirect bearing on minority policy.⁶²

If we survey the legislative work of the coalition thematically, we must underline the government decree of urgency modifying the Act on Education providing the right of learning in one's own mother tongue at all levels of education and the modification of the act on local public administration to the same effect. The latter provides the right of official use of the mother tongue if the ratio of a national minority is higher than 20%.⁶³

In terms of the return and confirmation of ownership of private property, the already mentioned two acts initiated by the DAHR represent the most important results. Similar to the former in importance are the acts of de-

62 1998/99: Draft of bill on support from the state budget of electricity, central heating, natural gas, water and sewage bills of religious denominations recognised by the state.

63 See footnote 56.

centralisation on regulating the legal conditions for autonomous assets management of units of public administration and on regulating the political autonomy of local communities, though the basic acts in these matters have not been passed yet.⁶⁴ In spite of this shortcoming, the decision-making power of local authorities has been significantly enlarged.

With respect to minority policy, in addition to the regulations on education and the use of the mother tongue, important progress has been made at the level of the local society and of the local ownership conditions. There are two more almost intangible aspects of parliamentary work which are also relevant to the work of the government. There was a high level of professional expertise among the DAHR representatives, which was a widely shared opinion in Romanian political life and thus a positive contribution to the image of Hungarians. The other important aspect, which also represents a step beyond the protection of minority rights based on a hurt and complaining attitude, is that if a minority politician is present in the processes of preparing certain decisions, certain topics and ideas cannot be reasonably suggested or raised. Such a public case was when the leaders of the National Minority Office took a stand against the planned erection of a statue of Antonescu⁶⁵ or when approval of the draft of the Act of Education was hindered in the specialised parliamentary committee.⁶⁶ And since cooperation with the minority political party is part of the party's policy, for the sake of indispensable cooperation, parties will carefully take into consideration whether they should use loud anti-minority rhetoric at all, since such attacks could be easily returned by the DAHR in government or parliamentary matters of a different nature.

Governmental work

In the governmental work of the DAHR we attach the greatest importance to the creation of *a governmental structure dealing with the minority issue*. In addition to the Office for the Protection of Minorities and the position of the minister without portfolio, the starting of regional offices and the drafts of bills prepared by the Office provided an opportunity to manage these specific problems.⁶⁷ The implementation of important bills initiated by the

64 *Mérlegen*, op. cit., 45–48.

65 *RMDSZ Tájékoztató (DAHR Information)*, 4 November 1999.

66 6 February 2000.

67 *Mérlegen*, op. cit., 4–6.

Office (anti-discriminatory law, the creation of the Institute for Minority Research, and the prolongation of the submission deadline for applications for compensation of the victims of political persecution) is now in the hands of the new government led by the Party of Social Democracy in Romania. In the Ministry of Education a State Secretariat for Minorities and a General Directorate responsible for Hungarian-language education were created.⁶⁸ At county level positions for chief inspector of education and inspectors responsible for Hungarian-language education were established. Within the Ministry of Education the Directorate for Minorities was enlarged and when the advisory boards were reorganised Hungarian professionals were co-opted onto each one of them. The most important development in this field was that 120 cultural institutions were transferred into the sphere of authority of local councils, which caused many issues concerning the use of the mother tongue and the building of institutions to be tackled at local level where, in the case of a Hungarian local authority, Hungarian cultural representation cannot be questioned.⁶⁹ Hungarian representation was provided in the county-level branch offices of the Ministry of Tourism and the State Assets Fund (State Property Agency). In three regions chiefly inhabited by Hungarians out of the 12 tourism regions the leaders of the ministerial branch offices were also Hungarians.⁷⁰

Allocation of resources is an important field of governmental activities. The significantly increased funds of the Office for the Protection of Minorities provided significant support for minority organisations and for various programmes for preserving national identity – in 1997 6 billion Lei (appr. HUF 60 million); in 2000 62.6 billion Lei (appr. HUF 782 million). In the Ministry of Education the enlargement of Hungarian-language training and the creation of new departments and institutions, at the Babeş-Bolyai University the creation of a line of Hungarian training paving the way for the Hungarian section of the University were considered as significant structural expansions.⁷¹ A proportional subsidy for Hungarian programmes represented an important breakthrough in the Ministry of Education (in 1997 67, in 2000 300 tenders were positively evaluated and supported with 5 billion

68 Ibid., 10.

69 Ibid., 18–20.

70 op. cit., 29.

71 András Magyarai – Pál Szilágyi – Zoltán Kása: A Babeş-Bolyai Tudományegyetem 1989 és 2000 között. (*The Babeş-Bolyai University between 1989 and 2000*) *ibid.*, 71–80.

Lei in four years). For publishing books and periodicals, Hungarian institutions received state subsidies in 1997 for the first time. In a similar way for the first time was the erection of statues depicting leading figures of Hungarian history in public places financially supported by the Ministry.⁷² In the field of monument protection 10% of the ministerial funds were spent on restoring monuments of the Hungarian cultural heritage (32 projects altogether).

An indirect role in handling minority problems was played by those measures initiated by DAHR politicians which aimed at approaching the EU and strengthening the market economy and private property. Finally, we must mention that part of governmental work that led to concrete agreements between the Romanian and the Hungarian Ministries (e.g. recognition of university degrees obtained in Hungary, cooperation in monument protection and tourism).⁷³

Society

By participating in the government, the DAHR as a party represented and enforced the interests of the Hungarian minority more efficiently, but, as its critics claim, they allowed the issue of developing the Hungarian society in Romania fall into the background. The DAHR as a party put the emphasis on central, Bucharest-based politics and tried to solve general issues by taking part in legislation. We have already given a list of the fields of success and semi-success.

In safeguarding and enforcing the interests of the Hungarian minority we could witness some positive displacements from the previous situation. Today's task is no longer the handling of open ethnic conflicts and cases of discrimination, but the ensuring of rights to create and operate autonomous institutions. Thanks to the work of the coalition this problem was transferred to the level of local power. At this level, however, we must face the basic fact that very different interests are articulated in places where Hungarians live in majority than in those where they are in minority. All the programmes of the DAHR to date and the knowledge base of its apparatus were prepared for the latter situation. *In areas where Hungarians form a uniform (pure) ethnic block or where they live in majority, issues of modernisation rather than inter-ethnic problems are*

⁷² The making of the statue of Mikó in Sepsiszentgyörgy and of Petőfi in Marosvásárhely was supported by the Ministry of Education by 650 million Lei. Ibid., 19.

⁷³ Ibid.

*in the focus of attention. For these issues, however, the DAHR apparatus has been unable to find more up to date and more efficient solutions than the usual Romanian ones.*⁷⁴

Cleavages within the DAHR

It cannot be decided from a professional point of view whether the strengthening or weakening of cleavages is desirable or not in debates within the elite or between the elites in the case of a national minority. There are two existing views in this respect. According to the first, it is by all means politically desirable that the *unity* of the minority party should be preserved and that it should take joint action to pursue its own interests. This concept is based on the assumption that the Hungarian minority in Romania has collective interests and it is easier to represent these interests in unity and thus no votes are wasted in an election. In this way more representatives can have seats in the parliament and the party's position in any political bargain is stronger. The second view, which puts less emphasis on the collective interests of the Hungarian minority, claims that different political and regional interests can be better represented if they can be articulated. The development of platforms happened in order to bridge this problem, but in lieu of an appropriate structure there is a risk of a split in the party. For the time being, none of the groups dared take this step.

Surveys allow us to draw the conclusion that the Hungarians living in Romania have a quite uniform view about the DAHR's participation in the government, whereas at the level of the elite there is a distinct separation of the two groups. According to an opinion poll of the CCRIT in February 1999, 85% of Hungarians thought that the DAHR represented the interests of Hungarians and 75% of them thought that the DAHR had contributed to resolving the problems of the country and valued its governmental activities positively. Only 8% of the respondees thought that the DAHR did not care at all or cared little (1% and 7%, respectively) with the rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania. According to the survey, 78.8% of respondees supported the DAHR remaining in the government and 9% were against it. On the basis of the other questions of the survey, a great percentage of the Hungarians in Romania judged the role of the DAHR in the government positively and would like it to remain in the coalition. A completely different pic-

⁷⁴ We have reached this conclusion by surveying the press coverage in Székelyföld of the municipal elections.

ture is obtained if we examine the popularity of Iliescu or the Party of Social Democracy among Hungarians in Romania, but to our knowledge opinion polls ordered by the DAHR did not cover this aspect.

In contrast, the leading personalities of the Reform Group (in Hungarian: Reform Tömörülés), the World Association of Hungarians (in Hungarian: Magyarok Világszövetsége) and Transylvanian Hungarian Initiatives (in Hungarian: Erdélyi Magyar Kezdeményezés) often attacked the leadership of the DAHR for its participation in the government.⁷⁵ It must be mentioned that the situation represented only some new opportunities for them to give voice to their criticism of the DAHR. In this sense, the DAHR taking a governmental role only intensified the already existing cracks or cleavages. These conflicts also became evident with the local and preliminary elections and in relation to the issue of a status law for ethnic Hungarians versus granting Hungarian citizenship for ethnic Hungarians living abroad.⁷⁶

This internal opposition would like to return to the programme of the Brassó congress (held in 1993) at which a strategy for national autonomy was outlined and which, in their view, would serve the further existence and growing prosperity of the Hungarian minority. This is a model of local authorities based on internal pluralism. We must note that very few steps had been taken in this direction even before entering the coalition and after 1996 this approach totally fell into the background. The reason behind this was that between 1993 and 1996 the external conditions for implementing the model were not ensured and there was also a lack of political will, while after 1996 the role in the government brought into the foreground another form of enforcing interests based on political and party struggles.

The issue of divisions within the DAHR can be evaluated from two points of view. If “unity” is the main value, then participation in the coalition further deepened the conflict between the groups. If *internal pluralism* is the main value, the poignant expression of internal conflicts is a positive phenomenon, which starts (or continues) a process of internal democratisation. It is difficult to decide which approach can give more support to the further existence and strengthening of the Hungarian minority in Romania, which we as-

75 Tibor Toró T., Imre Borbély, Ádám Katona

76 Initially, the DAHR supported the concept of the “status law”, while the internal opposition of the DAHR, which was partly organised around the Transylvanian Society of the World Association of Hungarians, gave its preference to the concept of dual-citizenship for ethnic Hungarians.

sumed as a basic criterion. The key issue is the problem of stability. If Romanian national politics can choose from several Hungarian negotiating partners, the bargaining position of the Hungarian minority will significantly deteriorate. This has been the fundamental problem of Hungarian minority politics in Romania since 1920. Instead of rigidly sticking to the concept of unity, one should rather start out from the lack of processes of integration. In this respect, the political elite of the DAHR has severely weakened during the past four years. As the DAHR gradually fractionalised as a party, the mosaic-like network of personal, regional, generational and economic interest groups, which developed as the daily needs of government participation dictated, became increasingly rigid after 1998. The attempt by Béla Markó, president of the DAHR, and his followers to form a centre grouping failed. At the congress in Csíkszereda it became clear that there was a 40% opposition to the leadership in the leading institutions of the DAHR.⁷⁷ In the period of municipal elections new DAHR elites at the county level and new economic interest groups emerged and the leadership was no longer able to integrate them. In fact, there was an attempt to push back the opposition which so clearly emerged in Csíkszereda, as the party was getting prepared for the position of parliamentary opposition, to prevent it from taking over leadership within the party after 2000. Following this, mediating politicians belonging to the centre and new, non-integrated local elites also orientated themselves towards the Reform Group. The Reform Group has no such integrative personality in its leadership who can be compared with Markó, no well-defined socio-political programme and its endeavours in collecting supportive signatures in the campaign for dual-citizenship were put to question in the Romanian public view by the present leadership of the DAHR through Budapest.⁷⁸ In addition to the model of local government, a fundamental theme of the Reform Group is the “federal/Transylvanian” programme, which occupied a central place in the election programme of the DAHR.⁷⁹

The opinion of Hungarians in Romania about possible participation in a future government coalition is rather diverse. 52.3% of those asked said that the DAHR should participate in the future government, regardless of which

77 At the Csíkszereda Congress of the DAHR out of 431 delegates 274 voted for Béla Markó and 157 voted for Előd Kincses, candidate of the Reform Group. *Romániai Magyar Szó*, 17 May 1999.

78 Presentation by Zsolt Németh on the priorities of the Hungarian foreign policy in Kolozsvár on 7 October 2000.

79 *RMDSZ Választási program 2000 (Election programme 2000)* RMDSZ, 62.

party wins the elections. 42.6% said that the DAHR should enter a coalition only with democratic parties. Only 1.8% thought that the party should not enter any coalition at all.⁸⁰

We should not forget the fact that those who received their position through the DAHR not only represent “Hungarian” interests but also carry out other “non-Hungarian” administrative functions. Those who are in the administration must carry out decisions in accordance with the government programme, on the one hand, and within this framework must fight for special Hungarian demands, on the other.

Social mobility

The impact of the government in connection with the issues of mobility, development of an image of the future and emigration is difficult to measure. Romanian statistics and surveys do not render sufficient data about the changes of social mobility and we know even less about national minorities in this respect. In addition, according to Romanian analyses, the government failed to implement reforms and to restructure the economy. After promising initial signs, the reform stopped short and impoverishment became more characteristic in society. This is reflected by opinion poll data which suggest a turn to pre-1996 anti-reform and redistributive politics. Naturally, this also has an effect on the Hungarian minority and we have no reason to assume that these processes are less relevant to the Hungarian minority.

As far as mobility is concerned, we have some view only of the elite.⁸¹ First of all we must say that the DAHR did not really have to fight for funds necessary for its functioning. It covered its expenses partially from state subsidies, but, for the greater part, from funds coming from Hungary, primarily from funds of public foundations of Hungarian civil society (NGOs). Locally collected membership fees only covered a part of local expenditure. The elite actually depended on state redistribution, involving two states, though this naturally holds true only for a part of the political elite. Gradually, in the wake of parliamentary and municipal elections, a growing number of DAHR representatives made a living from Romanian state salaries or supplemented their private income with them. This latter income partially explains

⁸⁰ *Ethnobarometer*, CCRIT, May-June 2000, 42.

⁸¹ Primarily on the basis of the publication *Mérlegen*, in which the names of those who obtained positions in state administration are given.

why intellectuals were gradually pushed out from politics by a social stratum of entrepreneurs and “technocrats”. In the course of social change only those parliamentary and administrative representatives were able to perform who had public administrative or economic skills and had a very clear view of their own interests. (This trend already started in the early 1990’s and was only intensified by the DAHR’s participation in the government.)

Mobility primarily affected the political and economic elite. (We have included in the political elite those who got into positions delegated by the DAHR with the change of government.) The already mentioned division within the party was reproduced by the fact that positions in the state administration were given to those who were close to the current leadership of the DAHR. Due to this fact this group had naturally a more positive attitude to the party’s role in the government. This group is not so large and influential as in Slovakia where, in the days following the election, the MKP⁸² (mainly the ex-MPP⁸³ members) had ready-made lists of persons and positions demanded. This did not happen in the case of the DAHR, simply because Romanian politics is not programme and contract driven, but based on personal bargains.

Intellectuals are primarily the product of universities and as mentioned, significant progress was made in this field. However, for the time being, this progress represents a quantitative growth and there are severe shortcomings in quality. Genuine training for the elite takes place in small “workshops” and in Hungary. The number of emigrants from the middle of the 1990s started to rise again, especially among young people from middle-class families.⁸⁴ The majority of those who study in higher education in Hungary will not return to Romania. This, however, has nothing to do with the governmental role of the DAHR.

Conclusions

1) Based on our analysis, we may draw the conclusion that the DAHR’s participation in the government brought about more favourable than unfavourable changes for the Hungarian minority in Romania. It seems likely

82 Magyar Koalíció Pártja (*Party of Hungarian Coalition – Slovakia*)

83 Magyar Polgári Párt (*Hungarian Civic Party – Slovakia*)

84 The number of applications for immigration into Hungary from Romania: 1994: 4619; 1996: 3271; 1999: 5266. www.bm.hu/migráció/statisztika

that these changes could not have been achieved only through the external support for the government on the part of the DAHR. It also seems probable that, compared to the situation before 1996, there would have been some improvements in the fate of the Hungarian minority, even if the DAHR had only supported the government from outside. For the DAHR, however, it was very important to delegate some of its politicians to positions in the state administration. Thereby, the party had more information and had the opportunity to influence decisions. The deterioration of the general economic situation and the lack of implementing economic reforms promised exert a similar influence on the Hungarian minority in Romania as on the rest of the country. For this, however, the DAHR can only partly be blamed. The DAHR ran the risk that, with its governmental participation, the party would be blamed by Romanian voters for any occasional failures. This did not happen and nor did the Hungarian voters punish the DAHR for failures.

2) We can state that in issues of central importance for the DAHR only slight progress was made. No breakthrough was made in strengthening minority society, providing cultural reproduction and gaining autonomy for the Hungarian community. In order to achieve these goals some type of accepted autonomy and an autonomous system of institutions would be required. As background information we must add that the provision of and the fight for these demands are diametrically opposed to the concepts of the Romanian project of nation building. The question of Romanian support for these demands had not even been raised until 1996. The present government⁸⁵, which opposes such endeavours of the DAHR to a large extent, is not a real partner in this. It is likely that the government in general, and the Romanian coalition parties in particular, would have lost much of their popularity if they had supported those DAHR demands judged unacceptable by the Romanian voters and public opinion. According to opinion polls, in the view of Romanians Romanian-Hungarian relations improved, albeit that Romanians still considered the DAHR demands exaggerated.⁸⁶

3) The DAHR was naturally aware of the fact that its demands were not unanimously supported and therefore emphasised that it would do whatever it could without risking the collapse of the coalition. There were important consequences of this attitude. The programme for the local authorities stopped short. Looking back upon these four years, it seems that the DAHR

⁸⁵ The government led by Adrian Năstase; entered in office in 2000.

⁸⁶ *Etnobarometer2000* May-June, 45-46.

tried to utilise the opportunities deriving from governmental participation and made less effort to strengthen internal structures. This partly resulted in internal attacks against the DAHR leadership by Hungarians who were not in government functions and who increased their influence in certain other areas. According to the analysis of Zoltán A. Bíró, “bottom society”, even if it is a beneficiary of the coalitional role of the DAHR, would not give its moral support to it.⁸⁷

4) With the participation of the DAHR in the coalition, the non-governmental and non-parliamentary forums of the DAHR fell into the background. This was also a consequence of the DAHR becoming a political party increasingly concentrating on the elections. Local party organisations and the organisation of society are those areas which suffered most from participation in the coalition. The professionals from the Executive Presidency were drained away by governmental tasks. While the leader of the Executive Presidency made his voice heard in an increasing number of political issues, the importance of the institution significantly diminished as compared to the Bucharest centre.⁸⁸ The leadership of the DAHR suppressed attempts at local takeover of power, because these would have jeopardised placing its own people in winning positions during the next parliamentary elections. An adverse consequence of this was growing discontent within the DAHR in a part of the Hungarian population. This can explain the fact that many candidates of Hungarian nationality entered local elections as independent candidates outside the umbrella of the DAHR.

5) A *consocial* political structure develops where two or more subcultures are organised along with cleavages of religions, languages and ethnicity. Such typical cases are those of multinational societies such as Romania. We can speak of subcultures, and their institutionalised forms: the pillars, if more cleavages overlap. Thus *the sociological part of the model is applicable to Romania*, making a distinction between subcultures organised on Romanian and Hungarian national bases. *The political science part of the model*, which puts consocial democracy in the focus of its attention, is the subject of our further examination. The characteristic features of consocial democracy include a grand coalition in which language and religious groups are represented, the autonomy of these groups, their proportional representation, and a right of

⁸⁷ Zoltán Bíró A. op. cit., 129.

⁸⁸ Miklós Bakk: “Hatáskör módosítás” (*Modification of the sphere of authority*). *Krónika*, 20 January 2001.

veto of minorities in issues which affect them. Favourable conditions for creating a consocial democracy include the roughly similar sizes of the subcultures, the intention of cooperation between the elites, the former positive traditions in cooperation, the lack of external dangers and the geographic concentration of the groups. It would seem an exaggeration to apply the classical model to Romania and by no means can we speak here of consocial democracy. But on a descriptive level, we can speak of consocial practices and consociational agreements. By this we mean that negotiations on the relations between Romanians and Hungarians are conducted by the elite groups representing their subcultures. Agreements are concluded at top level ignoring their own subcultures with the assumption that the elite groups represent the views of their respective subcultures.

According to Lijphart, there are two main conditions that must be met for consociation. On the one hand, these elites must be willing to cooperate and ready for compromise, while on the other, these leaders must ensure the support of their own group for themselves.⁸⁹ *The biggest obstacle in Romania is that here we can speak of two groups pursuing their own nation building policy and their agreement would hinder the implementation of these very projects. In our view, as these projects are connected to issues of identity, agreement is impossible – especially in this case in which one group greatly outnumbers the other and has no real interest in agreements which may be disadvantageous for it and can democratically achieve what is in its interest by majority vote. Consocial practice was able to function when, because of foreign policy considerations, it was necessary to have the representatives of the minority in the government.*

In Romania subcultures are organised along the ethnic cleavage. There are also internal divisions within the Hungarian subculture. *By the end of 2000 the cleavage within the Hungarian minority in Romania seemed to be becoming institutionalised*, as determined by the conflict of the then leadership of the DAHR and its internal opposition. Regional, Catholic/Protestant and generational conflicts are not significant. The conflict characterised by the press as a moderate/radical conflict can also be described as representing differing views about integration. *The present leadership of the DAHR puts the emphasis on integrating Hungarian individuals in Romania into Romanian society, while its opposition supports the integration of the Hungarian minority as an autonomous society.* For this reason the opposition to the present leadership of the DAHR considers the

⁸⁹ Arend Lijphart: *Democracy in Plural Societies: a comparative exploration*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977.

party's role in the government detrimental to the development and strengthening of an autonomous Hungarian society in Romania. For handling these conflicting social and party interests, social control mechanisms also capable of controlling the political party are required (publicity, control of local authorities, concurrent groups, criticism of organisations, etc.)

It will be the key issue of identity policy of the coming years how the Hungarian elite in Romania will be able to use these mechanisms.

REVIEWS

BALÁZS TRENCSENYI

To Find the Voice of Angels and the Devils Dwelling in Details¹

With writing about the intellectual history of the “Jewish question in Hungary,” János Gyurgyák certainly took on a huge task. The author’s purpose was to make us face up things and to think, and if the reader gets over the Pavlovian reflexes of different off-hand reactions he must admit that Gyurgyák’s book really makes one *think*. One measure of the success of the book is actually that there can hardly be any reader who, considering his position unquestionable, would not find at least one assertion that would “rightly” offend him.

According to the author’s expressed intention, one with which we can only agree, telling a story is not an activity for its own sake but a therapeutic communal exercise, and if it does not kill the pain immediately it can, if we are fortunate, at least have a relaxing effect. If we interpret the historian’s tasks in this sense, we can also see clearly that the author’s work is not mere reconstruction but construction, in the “noble sense” of the word. Thus it necessarily has several layers of meaning. On the one hand, the book contains a “metahistorical narration” (in the author’s interpretation this concerns

¹ This essay first appeared in Hungarian as “Megtalálni az angyalok hangját és a részletekben lakozó ördögöket” In: *2000*, January 2002, 8–15., as part of the debate around János Gyurgyák’s book, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon (The Jewish Question in Hungary)*, Budapest: Osiris, 2001. The book generated a series of reactions, ranging from enthusiastic praise to severe criticism. See the reviews by Emil Niederhauser, in *Magyar Tudomány* 2001, No. 12.; Mihály Vajda and Miklós Lackó in *Élet és irodalom*, XLV./22., 2001 July 1; and a number of polemical articles written by Iván Horváth, György Spiró and Sándor Bazsányi in the periodical *2000*, published between November 2001 and January 2002. I would like to express my thanks to Zoltán Iván Dénes, Ágnes Erdélyi, János Máttyás Kovács and Árpád Welker for kindly sharing with me their observations and comments concerning the manuscript of this text.

“the rise and fall” of the ideology of assimilation), which provides the rhetorical framework for the volume; on the other hand it contains a metapolitical layer (the interpretation and assessment of the populist-urbanist schism dividing the Hungarian intelligentsia of the 20th century). Furthermore, there is a “professional-technical” level as well, the historical reconstruction of political and social ideas about the Jewry and the Jewish assimilation.

These layers are naturally built upon one another, but in a certain sense they can be separated, moreover in my opinion they should be. Gyurgyák’s position as a historian focuses on validating the distinctions, i.e. presenting often contradictory viewpoints from the tangled opinions. Hence, with reference to the above, it is advisable to distinguish the rhetoric, metapolitical and methodological layers, not speaking about the fact that it is precisely this intertwining which explains the agitations of those disapproving of the book (most often culminating in the question whether one can be *sine ira et studio* objective, knowing the tragic connotations of the history of Hungarian Jewry). I think that, although the author’s goodwill cannot be doubted in this regard, he is not entirely innocent either.

The rhetorical framework of Gyurgyák’s book is a clear lesson in *tragic narration*, provided it is approached with, let’s say, Hayden White’s metahistorical model in mind. The story he tells is centred on the “failure of the assimilation dream” and the tragic halt of a “well-beginning process”. According to the author, the “framework for a compromise” was formed between the 1840s and 1860s, even though it was not unequivocal for either “side” and therefore the entire construction was built upon mutually unrealistic expectations. (This is well-demonstrated by the unclear meaning of the word “similarity” even in the case of József Eötvös, who was rigorous with concepts.) Nevertheless, the “assimilatory vision” meant a long-lasting programme accepted by the Hungarian political elite, although the “requirements” were becoming increasingly distant from social reality.

According to Gyurgyák (who structures his social history model largely with reference to Jacob Katz) the “halt” had several structural causes. On the one hand, there is the pure fact that “assimilation *en masse* is impossible in the age of nationalism”, while, on the other, the Hungarian story unfolded in a “geo-political cul-de-sac”. In Gyurgyák’s opinion, there were only two severely distorted lines to the story in Hungarian historical consciousness: an *anti-Semitic* explanation of the world, and a narration he calls the “Neologue view of history,” marked by the “denial of the Jewish question”, the “myth of

the thousand-year peaceful coexistence”, the “over-interpretation” of the role of the Hungarian liberal tradition in Jewish emancipation, and finally the “denial of the existence of any inherent Hungarian anti-Semitism.” While the scientific value of the former was anyhow rather insignificant, the latter, a kind of “Whig interpretation of history”, essentially defined the historiographical tradition dealing with the history of Hungarian Jewry. One of Gyurgyák’s most important attempts was to discard this construction. According to him, the Neologue interpretation of history is a vision which those concerned insisted on, despite the gradual distancing of dream and reality. This “blindness” is actually one of the main sources of the tragedy: the unsuspecting calmness of the players, the heart-wrenching duality of their “private” battles and the shadows sneaking up behind them.

In the author’s cyclorama, the representatives of anti-Semitism are also touched by the wind of tragedy. The road leading to Hell is paved if not by goodwill but with the search for truth: only the anti-Semites pointed out the false nature of the assimilation project, while the liberal and moderately conservative critiques fell outside the main Hungarian political-cultural trends, especially in the inter-war period. In this sense, the eruption of anti-Semitism is not simply an “accident”, or perhaps the consequence of the underground influx of imported ideologies, as, according to Gyurgyák, the Neologue interpretation of history tried to make the issue be understood, but rather the critique of a false construction built on false premises.

That is the reason why the anti-Semitic texts embedded in the metahistorical narration of the book mostly sound tragicomic; otherwise they are mainly *nadve*, but 1944 is there in front of them when exactly these principles become the ideological framework of mass murder. At the same time, Gyurgyák retains a “historicist” perspective, asserting that nothing should be viewed exclusively from the “end point”, and he tries to mark the difference between the ethnic and racial/biological discourses, showing that not necessarily all the texts, which challenged the assimilatory social and historical interpretation, had an anti-Semitic orientation.

The tragicomic vein is supported by stylistic elements and adjectives which seem to reflect on Gyurgyák’s attempt to force some kind of “hermeneutic empathy” on himself (and also on the reader) when he is quoting otherwise disturbing arguments, trying to read them as reflections of a valid “social experience” (as long as their authors had “a kind of substantive premonition”, moreover “anticipation” of the troubles to come). This intention is

marked by the author's use of rather polite phrases when he introduces the anti-Semitic authors, such as "may not reflect on reality in all aspects" or "with even the best intentions".

According to Gyurgyák, the cul-de-sac of assimilation was an important catalyst of the distortion of Hungarian political culture as far as it contributed to the institutionalisation of the vision of "two opposing Hungaries" and the self-reproduction of two "camps", turned into themselves and defending their visceral aggression with a self-justifying rhetoric. All these lead us to the author's "political" standpoint. The above may already demonstrate, although his value judgements are disputable and should be disputed, that a thorough misinterpretation is necessary to attribute to the book an anti-Semitic tendency in the author's political subconscious. Gyurgyák does not regard the intellectual *Kulturkampf*, which, in his reading, was also the result of the "Jewish question", as a natural condition, neither does he conclude with a programme of political action. He does not intend to shepherd the Hungarian intelligentsia to ideological trenches, rather out of them.

It must be emphasised that this does *not* mean that we have to agree with his metapolitical vision *in the least*. It is a very severe "political" statement that the distortion of Hungarian political culture is primarily (or at least to a large degree) the consequence of the "Jewish question". His ideological stipulations are connected with this preconception, such as the claim that "political controversies had not deepened into an abyss up to the beginning of the century" (or that the "ideological aggression" of the civic radicals, whom Gyurgyák described as the representative movement of the "Jewish escaping margins", was playing a pivotal role in the formation of the abyss).

The criticism of civic radicalism and primarily the reinterpretation of Oszkár Jászi is one of the pillars of this metapolitical construction. Rather obviously, Jászi is the central figure of Gyurgyák's narrative, a kind of political and intellectual "significant Other", perhaps for personal-biographical reasons, invested with the complex spiritual mechanisms of identification and refusal. It is perhaps justified to read certain ideas in Jászi's portrait as some kind of confession and (also) psychological self-reflection on the part of Gyurgyák (primarily the repeated emphasis on the irreconcilability of the *homo politicus* and intellectual existence, and the opposition of the "man of party politics" with that of intellect). It is important to note that Gyurgyák, in the eighties, ardently acclaimed the intellectual legacy of Jászi and the *Huszadik Század* (*Twentieth Century*), and began his career as a historian by re-

searching the civic radical tradition, while, at the turn of the decade, he participated in the “radical reformist” cultural project of the journal *Századvég* (*Turn of the Century*), from which the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) was later to emerge. It is all the more intriguing to find that his final “political” judgement concerning Jászi is sharply negative and perhaps represents the most questionable part of the volume stylistically, too – although the respect due to the “noble enemy” shows through the entire argument.

In Gyurgyák’s interpretation, the final assessment of Jászi’s activity can be characterised only by the notion of “failure”. In his opinion, this was the result of the lack of widespread popularity of Jászi and his circle, who, despite their intentions, remained within the boundaries of the Jewish bourgeois-intellectual elite, which was advanced in assimilation but not entirely accepted by the Hungarian majority society. It was also connected to the fact that they simultaneously tried to promote both bourgeois values and socialist criticism, manifesting a tragic contradiction. Furthermore, they represented a secular, moreover often atheist tendency, which was alien for the majority society. Last but not least, Gyurgyák thinks that the civic radicals’ failure was most importantly due to “neglecting the Jewish question.” In this sense a tragic mistake was committed by Jászi (and his intellectual medium) – their impatience coming from “nadve intellectual illusions” alienated the larger part of Hungarian political society and thus their political project had a “devastating effect,” moreover, the “liberal socialism” expressing Jászi’s life programme eventually fell into total “disuse”.

According to the author, approaching the matter through the optic of the “Jewish question”, Jászi and his circle bear an indirect responsibility for the fact that the “New Hungary” promoted by them was identified as a “Jewish Hungary” by the majority of the Hungarian political nation. The fact that such an abyss came about is treated as an axiom in the book and is often referred to. In Gyurgyák’s opinion, the right-wing Catholic Béla Bangha, for example, “further deepened the abyss between left-wing and liberal *Jewish Hungary* and right-wing *Christian Hungary*” and although he also thinks that the populist-urbanist dichotomy was not exclusively about the Jewish question, he asserts that it was due to the latter that the “two sides” could not discuss other matters calmly.

In a peculiar way this conception is manifested in the period following 1989. This *duality* makes up the “vicious circle” stifling Hungarian political culture – one side “defends the indefensible” while the other “hinders the re-

generation of Hungarian national consciousness by recalling the Holocaust from time to time". And although he does not take it to the end, he obviously sees some *continuity* between the self-defensive mechanism of the Neologue view of history (which allegedly condemns as anti-Semitic anybody who makes any distinction or just mentions the Jews as a group) and the post-1989 political culture of the liberals. Gyurgyák tries to contribute to resolving the antagonism by symbolically taking on the role of mediator. In my opinion, this attempt is rooted in the confusion of the metapolitical and the historical viewpoints, and thus the author arrives at a highly *ambivalent position*: asserting that the party political conflicts of the 1990s can be traced back to the history of Jewish assimilation. This signals the danger that the sketchy outline of ideas in the epilogue inflates the scientific nature of the book retrospectively, and the essentialist concept of the "Jewish position" leads to the lumping together of radically different biographies and life situations running into one another in the end with a clear political purpose.

This essentialism of the epilogue does not come up to the distinctive level otherwise characterising the text as a whole, and at some points a uniform treatment of the entirely non-uniform Jewry can be seen, which charge, ironically, Gyurgyák himself lays against Jászai. The author is talking about grievances between the "Jewish and Christian society" and about two "entirely opposing" viewpoints of history, which according to him proceed from the radical divergence of the experiences of the non-Jewish majority of Hungarian society and those of Jews, while at the same time he is slipping into some kind of "collective metaphysics", assuming that all members of a certain ethnic community share "one destiny" (as if the Hungarian "Christian", i.e. non-Jewish, society had merely had a fun time during the war and the rule of the Arrow Cross regime, with only the cataclysmic entry of "the Russians" putting a stop to the general public complacency). A significant example of this can be seen in his remark about the significance of the 1989 changes, noting that "today there is no longer any need to use 'urbanist' instead of 'Jewish' and 'populist' instead of 'Christian' or 'non-Jewish'" – as if these terms were quite clearly interchangeable.

In many ways this metapolitical framework coincides with the "post-nationalist" construction of history formulated by the end of the 1990s, but it would be a mistake to identify the two entirely. The post-nationalist set of ideas postulates that the degeneration of the Hungarian national consciousness was the main legacy of the "actually existing socialism", and the task of the

elite is to recreate and fortify the notion of identity. In its present form the post-nationalist patriotism is the projection of the football fan's emotional culture onto history – a good patriot has always been behind the “Hungarian team”. The basis of all this is provided by a non-problematic conception of the past, the intermixing of “image-building” with the historical narration and the conflation of potentially opposing segments of tradition.

A post-nationalist public figure is at the same time an ethnicist and a protagonist of the myth of the “hospitable nation”, a proud bastion of Europeanness and Western civilization against the south-eastern neighbours, but also a representative of “Hungarian characteristics” and exoticism as opposed to “Western uniformity”. Paganism and Christianity, the Kuruc romantics and the nostalgic cult of the Monarchy appear at the same time in its iconography. These are not identity alternatives co-existing in the national tradition and in tragic conflict at their time, neither do they represent historical problems to be studied, but they are components of an ahistorical *success story*, which fit into the framework of the thousand-year continuity of statehood, and can even be included as an image in ministerial speeches. These features are united by a “Hungarian national characterology,” interpreted on the level of popular wisdom. It is not surprising that this “grand narrative” of national identity building shows many similarities with the quasi-empire building “Millennial” nationalism of the previous turn of the century. Neither is it surprising that it picked the most outstanding political personality, István Tisza, from the slate of historical consciousness as its hero.

This *ahistorical national unity* is threatened by the *non-Hungarian outside world*. The aggression always comes from outside (the Mongols, the Turks, the Trianon Treaty, the Russians), perhaps via the domestic servants of external powers. If historical conflicts always came about primarily between Hungarians and non-Hungarians, this accentuates the narrative of differences from the “internal aliens” and over-stretches the question of “who is Hungarian?”. All this can, of course, be reconciled with the “colour-blind” inclusion of noted personalities and developments in the international stage in the national canon, such as Ede (Edward) Teller, János (John) Neumann, Ferenc (François) Fejtő, the “Hungarian atomic bomb”, “Hungarian Hollywood”, Hungarian Nobel prize winners, just to mention a few well-known examples.

When, sometime in the future, a historian will analyse the roots of this *fin-de-siècle* post-nationalist view of history, emerging in the 1990s, it will be obviously a basic task to consider the legacy of the circle around the noted

journal *Századvég*, also hallmarked by János Gyurgyák. In my opinion, this journal also stood for a kind of post-nationalist proposition, in so far as its programme wanted to go beyond the division being reproduced by the discourses on Hungarian identity, if not in the same sense as it all came about in the second half of the 1990s – because *then and there* very few of the young people in the system-changing new elite thought that that aesthetics of the new Hungarian patriotism would be later shaped by the regressive (self)imitation of the rock opera *Stephen the King*. When this narration acquired institutional opportunities, especially after 1998, the fact that the emphasis changed from transcending to identity-building contributed to all this, since Gyurgyák's former colleagues increasingly began to work with what was available in terms of personnel and historical resources, and the inevitable result was that the post-nationalist image of history increasingly became mixed with neo-nationalism.

Gyurgyák believes that the constant appearance of the “Jewish question” hinders the implementation of the identity-building project in as much as the Hungarian identity discourse is constantly confused with the manifestation of anti-Semitism. To resolve this, he considers it necessary to draw a distinction between anti-Semitism and Hungarian ethnicism, which he thinks would essentially promote the cause of Hungarian identity-building. Unlike the neo-nationalist narrative, he does not believe that the Jews “mix” these two registers together primarily to protect “their positions in power”. He thinks it has more to do with exaggerated reactions of fear rooted in particular traumas. The politics of *The Jewish Question in Hungary* in its own way intends to contribute to resolving the tension, and with that to assist in the implementation of an “ideal” – national self-confidence boosting – post-nationalist project.

Gyurgyák's metapolitical narrative is a problematic attempt at mediation, but we cannot let the book be read *backwards* due to that. In judging his work it is at least as important how the concrete textual reconstructions make up the above analysed rhetorical and metapolitical concept. The historical programme of the volume is to explore how the different groupings of Hungarian political culture battled with the “Jewish question” from the formation of the “unstipulated” and “confusing” assimilation construction up to 1945. In my opinion, the main criteria of an ambitious work of the history of political ideas are the following: a) clearness and reflection of the conceptual framework; b) the problem-sensitive exploration of the relationship be-

tween the political and social contexts, and the examined texts; c) drafting the relevant comparative framework (the comparison of specific idiosyncratic phraseologies of a given culture with regional and wider ideological traditions and speech situations); d) identification of the general intellectual sources of certain ideas; e) a heuristically productive grasp of the supra-personal discursive units (traditions, political languages, idioms, etc.); f) sensitivity to genre-specific features and assessment of the relative importance and representative nature of emphasised ideas; g) adequate demonstration of the relationship of several authors to each other; h) reflection on the theme's professional literature, reflection on the historiographical environment. I believe it would be advisable to analyse the book in the light of these points in any further professional discussion.

As far as we are looking at the problem of the *conceptual framework* it can be seen that the author uses exactly the two key notions of the book rather naively. Gyurgyák is making an attempt to dissolve the notional ambivalence of the "Jewish question" rooted in an ideological overburden in such a way that he aims at returning to the "original meaning" of words. However, the question arises whether, in the case of expressions used in the political conflict, there is a pre-ideological meaning, which is not bound at all to political value judgements.

His use of "assimilation", another keyword, is also rather problematic. Gyurgyák adopts the definition of István Szabó, a historian active in the mid-20th century, primarily focusing on the history of the peasantry while being inspired by the *Völksgeschichte* tradition. According to Szabó, a process of assimilation is successful when "the assimilated have assumed the consciousness of the new 'folk-allegiance' without any reservations". Surprisingly, Gyurgyák does not really touch upon the problem that such a definition is not an irrevocable tautology but definitely an ideological construction, as is well shown by the appearance of the characteristic notion of *népiség* (folk-allegiance, ethnicity). This definition should have been related to the historiographical framework of its own time (for example, involving comparison with the notion of *Völkstum*), and then there would have been more space left to grasp the inevitable ambiguity and situationality of collective identities (just think of the complexity of such cases as the Szeklers' Hungarian "consciousness of folk-allegiance").

One of the most serious general problems of the book arises from the viewpoint of drafting the system of relations between *text and context*. When

introducing the “assimilatory construction” of the 19th century, the general ideological medium of Hungarian “nation building” is actually lost, namely that the offer of assimilation was made to all the non-Hungarian population of Hungary, and the Jewish assimilation was part and parcel of a complex issue involving many different nationalities and ethnicities. At the same time, Gyurgyák is not completely lacking valid insights concerning the broader context: for instance, it is a rather important and well-documented realisation that the anti-Semites had also essentially supported assimilation up to the 1910s. The more general frameworks of the transition from the assimilatory concept of nationhood to the ethno-nationalist identity-discourse are well demonstrated by such concrete analyses as the case of Alajos Kovács, an anti-Semitic journalist, who viewed Jews as the vanguard of Hungarianization until 1918, but regarded them as an alien body having intruded into the nation after 1918.

All in all, however, the concrete analyses unfortunately do not receive a wider context, i.e. the author does not fit his results into the framework of the change in Hungarian nationalism. He exclusively highlights the change in the perception of Jews, whereas the entire Hungarian national identity discourse went through a radical change from the turn of the century to the 1930s. Gyurgyák does not give explanations on many occasions, merely records characteristics (for example the contrasting position of the Eastern and Western Jews) and this may lead to misunderstandings, moreover to missing what is significant – as if the structure of Hungarian national ideology changed “just because” of the Jews and the “Jewish question.” There are, however, examples when a certain feature is excellently connected to a wider context. For example, the author convincingly proves that the phantasm of *en masse* Jewish immigration at the end of the 19th century, which captivated not only the anti-Semites but the whole of Hungarian public opinion, was a misinterpretation of the apparent urbanization of Jews, who had already lived in Hungary for one or two generations.

The relationship between text and context is also questionable in parts of the book criticising the civic radicals. As if in Gyurgyák’s interpretation the tragic fault of Jászi and his followers was at the beginning of the causality line and as if the traditional Hungarian political structure had perceived this as the only challenge. At the same time, when analysing the political culture of the 1910s, it should have been necessary to state that at this point the Austro-Hungarian political context was defined by dissatisfaction with the

existing circumstances and an understanding concerning the impossibility of maintaining the *status quo*. Thus the Hungarian historical elite was not only threatened by the civic radicals but, just to give an illustration, also by Francis Ferdinand's neo-conservatism, which was pondering on the most convenient way of breaking through the "1867 construction", and which might have precipitated something in the nature of a showdown had the *Kronprinz* not been assassinated in 1914.

The best analyses in the book can be found where the author makes historical distinctions in view of certain discursive positions which the institutionalised public phraseology completely mixed together. Thus, for example, when analysing Jászi's texts from the 1920s, he excellently identifies the psychological and political context of the emigrant politician's anti-Semitic-like statements. In the same way, he gives a fine description of the self-contradictory standpoint of the liberal-leftist intelligentsia with Jewish origins between the two world wars (they set assimilation to an imaginary "New Hungary" as their aim, while they were unable to distinguish among intellectual groupings which differently related to the system, and they only wanted to hear the ethnicist overtones in the populist rhetoric). There are, however, unfortunately numerous examples when Gyurgyák over-enforced his perspective, passing judgements completely torn from the context: thus the Social Democrats' relative silence about the "Jewish question" becomes equal with the fact that they "artificially closed themselves off" from the outside world – as in Gyurgyák's view the problem of Hungarian modernity necessarily and exclusively stood or fell on the "Jewish question."

The aspect of *comparability* is present also in a highly contradictory way in the book. The author tries to outline a Central European interpretative framework. However, Gyurgyák's model is built on a structural *in-betweenness*: on the one hand, this means the empirical fact of the presence of two types (Western and Eastern) of Jewry, on the other, it is the specifically mixed pattern of socio-political integration. (Neither the individualist integration models based on the Western European Enlightenment, nor the East-European Jewish "nation-building" is manifested with an exclusive validity, but the two overlap, and this is also well-represented in the Neologue-orthodox schism).

The fact that Hungary cannot be understood with the help of an exclusively domestic reference system is valid for any intellectual historian. As far

as Gyurgyák connects the formation of Hungarian radical anti-Semitism to the specific experiences of Hungarian society, it would at least briefly have been worth considering the anti-Semitic arguments of some thinkers who are not tied to Hungarian society and its intellectual traditions, such as Cioran or Céline. An interesting question is how can socio-historical contexts radically different from that of the Hungarian in Gyurgyák's scheme produce ideas rather similar to the Hungarian arguments? It also would have been interesting to demonstrate, at least on the level of references, how German anti-Semitism fits into Gyurgyák's framework. A central question of the current German research – which in many ways resembles that of Gyurgyák's – concerns the continuity of Wilhelmine anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology, for example, but parallels would be enlightening in the wider sense, too. Nineteenth-century anti-Semitic parties flourish and decay approximately at the same time in both Hungary and Germany, radicalisation during World War I is basic both here and there, etc. In my opinion, all this should raise the essential question as to whether and in what ways Hungarian anti-Semitic constructions are adaptations, to what degree they reflect general European (or Central European) ideological conflicts and to what degree they react to the Hungarian medium in a specific way.

Glancing to the East, there is also a basic dilemma concerning how it is possible that, despite the different socio-historical roots, in the Romanian context of the 1930s, for example, political discourse (although not political history) produced frameworks similar to those in Hungary, although we cannot really talk about a 19th century “assimilation dream” there, which was gradually “collapsing”. Similarly, the lack of a comparative framework also distorts such interpretations as when the author, writing about Jászi and his followers, describes the politicising of sociology as virtually a Hungarian phenomenon (it would have been worth him looking at works by *Stefan Collini* about the political involvement of the British turn-of-the-century generation of sociologists, in many respects regarded as an example by Jászi and his circle).

With respect to the exploration of *intellectual sources*, a rather problematic feature of the book is that it presents the different ideological traditions (especially anti-Semitism) as immanent self-developing processes (since it is possible to call someone “the pioneer of the racialist idea” only with such logic). Even with such definitely imported notions as, for example, “blood consciousness”, Gyurgyák does not show from where it got into the Hungarian

discourse. He only mentions the sources briefly when he encounters “internal references” to them.

In the case of *discursive units* (“political languages”, etc.) we must naturally count on the fact that the unexplored Hungarian national discourse and intellectual history of the concept of nation would put anybody on the spot who wanted to examine the debates about assimilation or the questions connected to anti-Semitism with exclusive reference to the Hungarian local context. Gyurgyák’s structural solution, describing the “metapolitical” groupings as traditions running in parallel, further fragments this picture. Thus the different discourses (agrarian, liberal conservative, civic radical, Social Democratic, social Darwinist and Turanist-racial) continuing a dialogue with each other in the 1910s become distant from one another also in a “physical” sense. Since he does not show the debating parties within the framework of common presumptions and conventions underlying the discussions, but as elements of standpoints spanning several generations, an important opportunity is lost for devising a veritable intellectual history of the various lines of thought as dynamic units constantly being reshaped through interaction. This also inadvertently hides the *shared reception* of Western ideological paradigms, which often overlapped with current political conflicts and provided the basic categories of professional and public discourse about assimilation, ethnicity, race and nation (for example in the case of social Darwinism).

On Gyurgyák’s intellectual landscape there are no “political languages” but standpoints, and that from time to time makes it rather difficult for him to map a given context. To give a marginal though characteristic example, he misreads, in a peculiar way, Kossuth’s argument about assimilation (“While they cannot eat the same salt or bread and cannot drink the same wine, cannot sit at the same table [...] the Jews will not be sociabiliter emancipated.”). Those who studied the intellectual history of the period would recognise the argument (i.e. it is about the problem of *sociability*), which movements of national awakening inherited from the Enlightenment and which also served as a basic element to the Hungarianising discourse of the Reform Age. In the same way, it is problematic to interpret the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-liberalism on a segmental basis, disregarding the fact that connecting the two was increasingly a part of a unified political language, which was acquired by speakers without any special individual reflection. Formulations, such as “the Kovács-like approach to society” are typical examples of the unclear relationship of individual discourses and collective idioms. Since

Gyurgyák does not classify the discursive traditions but describes them as a series of separate standpoints, his analyses are often organised by rather questionable models. A most characteristic example of the above is the study of the racist ideology whereby he essentially took over the “hagiographic” logic of Zoltán Bosnyák, who traced the intellectual history of the “Jewish question” from an extreme right-wing perspective. In this “teleological” framework there are doctrines of very different structure and standard, like those of the populist bohemian Miklós Szemere, the eugenics scholar Zoltán Méhely, the conservative literary historian Gyula Farkas and the Arrow Cross-affiliated journalist Mihály Kolosváry-Borcsa.

Problems of methodology are also clear in the descriptions of the populist-urbanist conflict. Gyurgyák speaks about “wrongly chosen adjectives” on the one hand and, on the other, the “Jewish question”, a framework that made the compromise impossible, while he completely neglects the aspect that it was rather a “language struggle” (and those “adjectives” belonged to rather specific discourses). This *intellectual atomisation* sometimes makes understanding absolutely impossible: for example, in a footnote he characterises as simply nonsense the attempt of the populist writer Péter Veres to distinguish conceptually the ‘people’ from the ‘nation’, because his attention is directed only at the duality of the racial and the assimilatory conceptions, while here we can see a characteristic example of what determined populist rhetoric in the 1930s: i.e., following “Bartók’s logic”, they opposed their populism to the “official” discourse of Hungarianness (attacking “middle-class nationalism”, which had “nothing to do” with the peasantry’s, in many ways inter-ethnic, but still “authentically Hungarian”, “popular” culture).

Thus Gyurgyák often tries to make one single distinction, namely to separate the racial discourse from the “historical” construction of identity which relegated the “ethnic” elements to the background. As such, his analyses are marked by an honest and reliable treatment of material, but it is another matter that, in my opinion, this distinction would only have an illuminative force if the interpretation referred to broader contexts as well. It would also have been important to think over the fact that, except for the exclusively import discourses, Hungarian ethno-nationalism could not have been simply biologically based, since actually the Hungarian nation was held to be of a “mixed race”, a melting-pot for people of very different origins during its history. Thus the question is not only whether a discourse left any loopholes for assimilation or whether it clearly thought in racist categories, but also

what *asymmetric counter-concepts* organised these, in Gyurgyák's terminology, "ethnic" discourses, and how certain minorities were defined within the framework of the Hungarian nation while others were "defined to be outside".

The distinction between racial and ethnic discourses is, of course, really important in certain cases. Thus, for example, is Gyurgyák's line of thought when analysing László Németh, pointing out that the essayist's notion of a "community of fate" does not fit a biological but rather a "character discourse" and Németh's thesis was not anti-Semitic as such, but touched on the self-image of the "escaping margins" of the Jewish community. Of course, the next question would be what wider intellectual and rhetorical frameworks determined this argument (e.g. the line of thought in Németh's infamous essay, *In Minority*) and why it is that it received the strongest criticism not from the "Jewish side" but from Gyula Szekfű and his conservative-liberal circle, where, because of this work, Németh was considered as a traitor to the Christian humanist-antifascist intellectual "front."

The problem of *genre characteristics* is related here in a number of ways, i.e. a pamphlet, speech, a diary or memoir do not work on the same register and it is hardly possible to sort statements made in these genres according to the author's "position in the Jewish question". Gyurgyák's methodological starting point has in itself a homogenizing effect: in his reading, people tend to have *an opinion* about the Jewish question, which they express on given occasions and it is the historian's task to *reconstruct* those opinions. Needless to say, this concept does not leave much space for the fact that the situation where speech is pronounced determines the rhetorical framework (since the same *topoi* might work completely differently in different genres) and thus both the author and the reader are in the dark when they try to solve the correlations between an individual opinion and the commonplaces of the period.

The question of the *connection* of authors to *one another* is at the meeting point of the problems of "contextuality" and of the "supra-personal units". Gyurgyák's choice of concentrating on primarily the *diachronic* aspect and thus the self-development of standpoints becomes extremely problematic here. The few synchronical interaction models (according to which Jászi and his followers' vision of "New Hungary" evoked a right-wing reaction) seem so one-sided perhaps because of this. Thus his comparisons remain on the level of bickering when we learn that the Arrow Cross ideologists Ödön Málnási and Miklós Matolcsy thought something "similarly to Jászi" or that

the Arrow Cross regarded certain issues “similarly” to the “other side” (i.e. the left), etc. The increment of working out the synchronical model would have been to underline the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the systems of correlations: unfortunately the “myth of two sides” is quite distorting and makes it almost impossible to place, for instance, the populists’ contradictory position on the intellectual map.

Needless to say, at some points, the advantages of the ideographic method followed by Gyurgyák certainly unfold, especially when he has to distinguish among different points of view within a given tradition. Thus, for example, an important line of thought in the volume is the distinction between Jászi and the civic radical mainstream concerning their views on the question of large capital and the latifundia (as much as Jászi equally attacked the capitalists and the landowners as enemies of democratic modernisation, while a part of the civic radicals regarded large capital as a potential means of bourgeois development overcoming feudal remnants). With this analysis Gyurgyák, of course, undermines the old-new radical right-wing vision of history, which claimed that there was a unified project, according to which the critique of feudalism by the civic radicals, propelled by “racial solidarity”, consciously supported the high bourgeoisie of Jewish origin.

Concerning the last question of the *references to professional literature*, the intentional sparseness of the book is almost to the detriment of scholarship. It’s as if the author had wanted to suggest that everyone writing about the topic, except for concrete philological work, had been making an apologia for some side of the eternal *Kulturkampf*, and therefore the researcher who attempts to explore the topic objectively must take only the strictly empirical works seriously, disregarding historical interpretations. From the “Jewish side” some products of historiography with a “Zionist leaning” are the only exceptions, which Gyurgyák somehow considers as attempting to go beyond the anti-Semite vs. Neologue antagonism.

Thus the author is trapped. He advances through his material, as the champion of truth, does not glance to the right or left but often misses the innocent intellectual tourist signs and has to build an interpretative framework out of nothing. He projects just two alternatives (the eternal Neologue and the eternal anti-Semite position) on the historiographical tradition and essentially disregards the fact the Hungarian historiography has also been formed alongside other axes (e.g. a methodological one: positivism versus *Geistesgeschichte* versus Marxism, etc.), and even within a given ideological conven-

tion several sub-traditions were born (e.g. Marxist historiography created a national-communist synthesis and some kind of internationalist or anti-nationalist canon, which, in turn, could be Stalinist or even “quasi-bourgeois”).

The nearly complete neglect of international professional literature providing wider connections (with reference to European anti-Semitism only the classic works by Poliakov, Arendt and Katz are mentioned in the otherwise thoughtful bibliography) results in the already mentioned naivety of the comparative framework. All this of course implicitly supports Gyurgyák’s meta-narrative (*as far as* there was an indigenous Hungarian anti-Semitism, *so far* assimilation was obviously not successful) but in a scientific sense this does not necessarily shed glory on the author. Should it turn out that anti-Semitism existed everywhere, rather independently from the degree of assimilation and the surrounding social expectation, and the basic question is rather to what degree a given political culture got under the influence of an anti-Semitic world view, the model would lose some part of its explanatory force but certain texts would become more interpretable from the horizon of a “cultural code” (to use Shulamith Volkov’s concept).

All in all, Gyurgyák’s undeniably grandiose undertaking of *Ideengeschichte* raises three basic questions for me. Firstly: can the “history of the Jewish question” be separated from and worked on without the *history* of the Hungarian *national discourse*? Secondly: can an intellectual history, *attempting exclusively to record the standpoints*, be meaningfully written (i.e. is it not necessary to establish wider discursive units)? Thirdly: is it possible to write the history of Hungarian anti-Semitism and the “Jewish question” *exclusively* with respect to the *internal development* of Hungarian society and culture?

Of course, final answers do not exist for these dilemmas and each scholar must relate to them according to his taste and intellectual value judgments. The writer of the present lines would give a negative answer to the above questions in his scientific conscience, but at this point the problem of discutability arises, posing the question of the standpoint of the speaker himself. At the same time, I have tried to show that affirmative answers in certain cases are clearly to the detriment of understanding the source material.

I personally think, keeping in mind that here individual choices and convictions are as strong as concrete analyses, that the principal issue is the internal cohesion and integration of Hungarian society, which for nearly two hundred years has attempted to achieve modernity while being hamshackled in its own “contradictions”. What Gyurgyák calls “the Jewish question” is only

a part of this riddle. Thus, the problem of Hungarian anti-Semitism is connected to the issues of assimilation *as much as* to the history of Hungarian conservatism, liberalism and socialism full of downfalls, decimations and resumptions. In my opinion, in order to examine this problem, an approach involving, however mild, the wording of a *separate* Hungarian and a *separate* Jewish “community of fate” is unlikely to be effective, given its gross essentialist implications. For me it would be much more promising if the author approached collective identity formation through the analysis of the multiplicity of “constitutive experiences,” being sensitive to the perspective of phenomenology and focusing more on narrative identities and alternative “canons” of representation (let us say, somehow like, in the genre of cinematography, Gábor Bódy’s *Private History* or Péter Forgács’s series *Private Hungary* have been doing it).

In my opinion, that is why the mediatory attempt of Gyurgyák has a heteromorphic nature. It is obvious that anyone who undertakes a mediating role between two parties, held to be in antagonistic contradiction, tries to place himself symbolically *between the two standpoints* (let us now disregard the fact that this kind of strategy might also serve to place the writer *in the focus of attention*). The “battle on two fronts” and “empathy with both sides” present the essence of the would-be mediating rhetoric: neither party is right, but I, the mediator, take over the legitimate viewpoints from both and create a united vision by overcoming the two half-truths.

Sometimes such a strategy creates only a *quasi-symmetry*, i.e. tends to exclusively support dominance or to promote radical steps while attributing aggression to the party who is in reality on the defensive. Gyurgyák’s book also shows well that, in the 1940s, anti-Semitic rhetoric aiming most severely at the deprivation of civil rights instrumentalized the demand for such a symmetry, and, alleging the final threat to the Hungarian nation and the unprecedented advance of the Jews, demanded radical steps to “re-establish the balance.”

If now we disregard such spiteful demands for symmetry, the basic issue has a completely different character in those cases when there is a real mediatory attempt and not a mere effort of self-legitimation (and we have no reason to doubt János Gyurgyák’s sincerity in this sense). The success of mediation depends on whether the counter-position is based on *real social experience* and whether the different parties (in reality there are always more than two) recognise themselves in that counter-position and whether they

can recognise the *sub specie aeternitatis* half-truth in their standpoint with the mediator's help.

For me this is the principal problem of the *Jewish Question in Hungary* and the real lesson of the dispute surrounding the volume. According to the book's metapolitical and rhetoric framework, the two opposing parties seen by Gyurgyák, between whom he attempts mediation and tries to create empathy for each other, are the "honest Hungarian ethnicists" (in the "heights" of Sándor Csoóri's *Noonday Moon*) and those who identify consciously with the "collective fate" of Jewishness. The critics' dissatisfaction derives exactly from that: they do not recognise themselves in the counter-position. They feel that, despite his best intentions, Gyurgyák wants to force them into a standpoint they cannot identify with. It is already a consequence of the Hungarian intelligentsia's overpoliticisation that, for many readers, the side-slip of the metapolitical concept retrospectively destroys the credibility of the concrete efforts of the intellectual historian.

It would be reassuring if we were able to discuss those issues (the social history of Jewish assimilation in Hungary; the history of ideas of Hungarian anti-Semitism; the relationship between the Hungarian intelligentsia and politics between 1945 and 1989, and after 1989), which Gyurgyák tries to intermingle in his book. A successful cultural and political attempt at mediation in relation to these issues would be more than welcome, but I would like to think that the breaking points would be at *different* places in all three questions. However, I think that we can only agree with the author's viewpoint that "questions" don't have to be *finally answered*, since what is more important is to "call conflicts by their names", to speak about the different communal traumas and to practice personal and collective empathy.

PÉTER ERDŐSI

In the Museum of Time¹

Notes in a guest book

While he was not a visitor but merely a passenger, from the tram window he only saw three colourful circles on the poster with four pairs of legs underneath and by the time he could have inspected them thoroughly the vehicle had started and so had the legs in the opposite direction, and the circles disappeared without anything being resolved. Then, at another time while the tram stopped for longer, he was able to ponder: would the golden circle be the Wheel of Dharma? As if a glove shape was embroidered with silvery pearls, a moon and star on the red circle.... Is the third a black plate with a white snake twirling on it? May these circles make up for the unknown faces of pedestrians invisible from the waist up?

A few days later another tram stops in front of the Ethnography Museum. The familiar poster above the steps receives visitors. *Images of Time*. In the hollow of the foyer the public at the New Year's Eve opening are said to have swum over to the new Millennium: with one-hand strokes they floated across the corridors and halls, careful not to let the champagne drops fall to the depth of time. The waves of merry-making died out, the walls swallowed up the clinking of champagne glasses, together with the worldwide

¹ The *Images of Time (Időképek)* exhibition of the Museum of Ethnography (Budapest), related to the Millennium (two thousand years of Christianity – thousand years of the Hungarian state), was inaugurated on New Year's Eve, 31 December 2000. See the bilingual catalogue, Zoltán Fejős – Mónika Lackner – Gábor Wilhelm (eds.): *Images of Time. Millennium Exhibition at the Museum of Ethnography 31 December 2000 – 31 December 2001*. (Időképek. Millenniumi kiállítás a Néprajzi Múzeumban: 2000. december 31. – 2001. december 31.) Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum, 2001, and the studies In Zoltán Fejős – Péter Granasztói – György Szeljak – Zsuzsanna Tasnádi (eds.): *A megfoghatatlan idő* (Time inexplicable) Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum, 2000. (Tabula könyvek 2.)

midnight bells. The sea has receded, the objects coming to the surface can still be drying in the semi-darkness and lamp light for a year.

The first floor, the first part of the experiment: does Chronos, carried in her womb by our mother nature, respond to Tempus being brought to the world by human society? One also has to stand about and walk around here, like at other exhibitions, but the two screens, guarding the entrance, are calling us for soaring and falling. The pilot with a rigid face seems to resist gravity, the bird's wings jerkily flutter, motion returns to itself on both screens. Both are put in boxes of the Kékes make.

First resolve the secret of the Wheel in the hall of the Mystery of Time, Visitor! What kind of spinning in what kind of light do you see? If it spins as you see it, the freedom of interpretation is yours. If it is, continue, if not, step forward anyway; new conundrums are expecting you. Look at the engraving by Hogarth, the forbidding old also passes away at one time. You have hardly set off and the world has ended. Aware of that, lose your compass between East and West, select from among the allegories of Time, lose yourself in the hollows of the eyes in an earthenware skull, sway away from the winged figure's scythe, elaborate on the Wheel of Dharma and if you achieved a span-long advance, think: how many more wheels there are compared to the present of Time and, after all, do these objects all speak about the same thing? The universe of Music also becomes spacious in your imagination. Because how much more time music has than a capriccio by Bach (a small piece from the universal master) that can be heard here, which you seem to see in different varieties of the notes. If a metronome signalled the acceleration of your heartbeat, it would surely beat little while you were standing by this corner. Think of the brief nature of your existence: it is only as much as a step over the threshold. It is as fast as a leap from Baroque music to 19th century bonnets, which are balancing in a glass box hung on the door: life flourishes and dries as the shade of colour and decoration do on a set of ladies' coronets.

But the overblown family tree can only be set up in a huge hall. What separates the family's genius from its genealogist, who would be hastily catching the rolling away apples, unless he was not hanging on a tree meanwhile? The tree trunk stands in between the root and the branch. It is necessary to dig down or climb up, and again originating from there, stand on shoulders and hang onto the other's hand. An ancestor figure carved in the secret society of a Nigerian tribe.... a board compiled by a retired state secretary, a Budapest resident from the documents of the National Archives in 1940 about his fam-

ily going back to the battle of Muhi (1241), who then sets up an association to preserve its traditions on the 750th anniversary ... Idols bear curiosity with mask-like faces, but when you move on they seem to wink at each other: is the trick successful, will you succumb to the tempting idea of human universality or slip off?

A satisfactorily bordered world receives you. The time of the tribe for you is much more complicated than that of the family, as is the tribe's structure much more complex than the family's. That may be the reason why the multi-cultural game cannot continue: everything here is from the region of the river Amur. The way of life is fully shown, but where is time? It is how life is adjusted to the changes of seasons. People belonging to the objects remain distant, their absence is attempted to be made up for by four dressed-up dummies standing on a runway borrowed from a fashion show. Winter men and summer women. The objects are silent, imagination supplements numbness, chill and basking in the sun. But step over to the hall of village and town and it is not only your intellect being trained but your body is also having a refreshing adventure, where the theme is getting more complicated and the sophisticatedly simple representation makes the objects disappear and lines up people in a dreamlike photo-montage. In the middle there is elliptical ribbon, which can be viewed from the outside and, if you go under and through, then from the inside, too. Outside the residents of the 19th century towns of Miskolc and Diósgyőr and inside their provincial cotemporaries are standing, peasants from the northern central hills, eternal small players in a self-rewinding reel. Your physical exercise itself will properly show you the tiring migration between village and town, but if you do not dare come forward from an observer's security, you may have a peep: turnable disks open up a window to another world, a motor car appears by the horse and cart, village people appear in the Miskolc high street. Noises of the country and town mingle.

It is not the official history writing that gives an account on "the time of the nation" but the memory of "the people". On the carved sticks there are great heroes and great events. Two hussars: Rákóczi and Thököly, princes of Transylvania. The mermaid is telling the future under a sorrow weeping willow: "A fish maid am I, alas for thee Hungarians". The shepherd carves the picture of the highwayman Sándor Rózsa on his stick and also his best wishes to the beautiful countess and the baron. "Long live his excellence, the minister Kálmán Tisza in Pest." But what does the lordly impishness give in return? The guild society's slogan is inscribed on the plate border from

Tiszafüred: "I buy a plate made in my country, from which do I lunch". Our potters continue to make their green glazed jugs with unbroken enthusiasm when the communist-type coat of arms is in fashion instead of the one with the crown. And what kind of hands cut out the huge oak tree and mark the historic events in the age-rings from the Rákóczi War of Independence to the Hungarian Council Republic of 1919?

How was Hungarian folk art discovered at the end of the 19th century? This could be the theme of the next room, but since it happened on the occasion of the Millennium the mixed collection of kerchiefs, tablecloths, Zsolnay plates, some of which remained from the displays of the Millenary exhibitions, supplemented by two icons of the Last Judgement, can take pride in the title of Millennium, Last Judgement, Turn of the Century. Who knows? Let's take it as encouragement: there were some, who, at the end of the world a hundred years ago, quietly strove and discovered at ease. And right away back to the beginnings, back to the time of the earth. After we have taken in the fossilised ancient crocodile, ammonites, maple-leaf and mammoth tooth, we follow the traces of discoveries on the maps of the early New World. We are in a school lab, where, between the lessons of palaeontology and cartography, pupils draw fantastic monsters living on map edges with chalk on the slate boards (with fossil on the fossil) during the mythological break. The monsters, if you like, are relatives of calcified creatures: as a result of the presented facts, the long-missed holistic view of the world finds its place in the pupils' heads. Should they feel like scribbling, there is the whole length of the main wall. Space is generously provided, not so the light. Searching for traces is not that easy in the labyrinth of time.

We cannot waste time infinitely in the empire of immensurability; let us be careful with our time in the virtual universum of the museum, too. The alarm clock goes off, the dream finishes for the time being. If our exhibition settled for the topic of measuring time, these two rooms would be its focus. In the first we start with, we proceed from astronomical devices to calendars. In the other we can compare clocks. There is no need for special metaphors here, the connection between object and time is given *ab ovo*. The objects lined up in nearly encyclopedic order display the stages of the history of measuring with due precision. They also show the varieties of equipment and with their beauty reflect the aesthetic nature of the practice. The attempt to be distanced from the ethnographic theme and collection, which often presents surprising associations and clever visual effects (of course we can also

see the opposite when the collection at the museum's disposal overcomes thought: as folk art dominated the room of final times), creates the meeting of bibliography and the history of technology and art, and ethnography. Do we see a lot or a little here? Would it be better to have fewer objects, but those to be touched? The many does not present crowdedness in the available space. In these two rooms the use of space seems to be just right. Clanging, ringing and clicking suggest motion. Suddenly a railway time-table makes its way in the line up of clocks with a model train next to the clocks. And a pottery flask with an etched-on clock, railwayman and Aunt Mary. There is the manuscript of an 18th century codex with a clock –Sultan Suleyman's present – in it.

These are rare moments because systematic knowledge, which displays clocks and calendars in a large quantity and good quality, is only seldom made easy by the ingenuity of the exhibition. Although it is possible that the regularity of measuring is actually represented by the systematism best, it is also possible that the objects themselves present us with the game. It is quite an entertainment to read the front pages of calendars and glimpse at the dandy-like chief-tain Lehel, who is "No. VII Chief Captain of the Hungarians", see the picture of Shiva and the "famous Spanish bull fight" on the same page of the 1838 calendar from Kassa (Kosice), thanks to the editor attracted by far-away lands. "A self-respecting farmer, tradesman or agricultural labourer discards flawed and trash calendars." Here is a pocket calendar from 1948, which provides all the holidays for the followers of different religions. A tiny sign, which refers to a great opportunity: the holidays of an ecclesiastical year could have found their place at the exhibition about time in the museum of ethnography.

"Egg, Ring, Fig, Virgin, Wreath, End". And here is the end of the floor. After the many motionless clock hands the visitor checks the unchanged transitoryness on his own watch. He is half-way, the gate to life will at last open in the second half. He receives a new question: "What does 'to live in time' mean?" The answer is not given free. Downstairs it all started with a puzzle and it is not different here, either. How can time be "accumulated"? If storing really meant to preserve food or knowledge in time, then the first cabinet in the first room would really be about the storing techniques of the Incas. But textiles, arms and birds caught forty years ago (they must have stored them in the past to make the feathers into head-gear; two colourful pieces can be seen here, too) give us a taste what has been compiled in Budapest from the culture of the Incas and their late predecessors. Eyes of the soul

open up perspectives, eyes of the body wish for objects. If these requisites were to suggest more about preserving than being preserved themselves, material things marked by the passage of time would nicely respond to them. It is clear who the main hero is in this second act of the drama of preserving. Our hero is a restorer. His life spent in time is an everyday battle. Mostly the damaged and restored pairs of objects witness his fight against repainting, fading, breakage, wear and tear, and dirt. Not only the beginning and the end of the process can be seen, but the process itself, i.e. improper storing. The cover of the museum newsletter, a piece of iron and metal slowly perish in the humid glass box seen in the corner.

At last life arrives in the form of a wedding. The transition rite is coming from nowhere else but the Tunisian Berbers. Hopefully the young couple will be blessed with more lasting health than the perishables seen before. Neither will the expensive fabric disintegrate when the painted beauty marks are wiped off the bride. Perhaps the gracious merchandise will maintain her charm for ever. She sits upon the camel's back easily, which is represented by two hanging draperies and a muzzle. The visitor is the uninvited guest to the wedding preparations. He goes along the stages of the rite and sees them on the pictures above his head and on the way he perceives the time passing between each step. He is looking at the wedding-bed with interest. Next to the bed there is plenty of perfume in authentic bottles. "Authentic to which age?" he may ask in the next room, that is, on Mexican soil, where ghost creatures cut out from a school exercise book's squared sheets fly about, and at a healing rite Coke and Coronita beer are offered to the gods, and the egg for the demons to eat is being dug in the soil just in front of a picture of the Madonna. Thus he steps from the time of rite over to the "parallel" historical ages, and will gain another extraordinary spatial experience. He walks in the atmosphere of a fictitious sanctuary to the copies of the realistically imaginable altars; the apse is replaced by an arched photographic montage with scenes from the life of an Indian village. Around the middle, four corn cobs create a cross and Christ's statue cannot be absent either. The reel-like series of pictures seen beforehand refers to the ways how time is articulated here again; the fact that they live together in the same way as the cultures of ages mingle remains in the back of the altars. After all, spatial thought is a faithful partner to the space of thought.

Hardly does the merry-making of the Berber wedding calm down, the Buddhist worship sounds. After having gone through the way and going up

to the altar you should be sitting. Please do, would the master of Zen suggest if you got as far as wishing to stop and summarise time in the presence and present reality of motionless meditation. You are waiting for the 'self' to disappear and the great something appears. The meditator has been lost but not his trace: aureoles fall down on where the round-headed monks were in the semi-darkness. While the 'not-self' would spend some time there, it would let the 'self' think about the meaning of the creations Zen art displayed all around. If he knew something about Zen, he would ask: "Is it what meditation lets go that seizes these objects, or does meditation become an object and be conscious in them?" If he knew nothing about Zen he would want to know: "what are these nice things for and what have they got to do with time, and anyway what are the props for?" Should he day-dream so, the master's stick would poke his back; and he would only be surprised if he did not know that "Buddha's finger" was knocking.

You would find yourself in "dream time" past realisation or your mind's splitting behind the screen representing the wall of the Zen room, where the ancestors of the Australian aboriginals rest. It used to be possible to contact them via the churinga. The flat pebbles and pieces of wood are lying in the coffin of the display cabinets. In vain may the brown and red colours be so lively, or in vain may the beauty of the etched pattern cast a spell on our glance. All this is merely the attire of death; ghosts do not come to life either, they keep on resting. So that your sorrow would be deeper while dreaming, go to the chamber of death. Beyond the cordon there is a Transylvanian death chamber from around the middle of the 20th century. The wall clock shows nearly midnight. It is dark. A dummy is lying on the deathbed. Take your leave of mourning, too. Bereavement is going away, the woman's dress from Kalotaszeg is becoming more colourful: remember the fading colours of bonnets.

After the mournful speech those who are still here are talking; their calming chatter is sometimes near perversity. Yes, somebody else's death is an ante-room for mourners, its door opens to a ceremonial hall. The over-joyously gathered collection of "anti-transience" remedies allows us to learn and shiver from death, human nature or this swirl of objects, according to taste and sensitivity. The ancient statues, our old acquaintances return, there are plenty of masks, a real skull sounds hollow and a hairy one shrinks. Finally one has to pass through the worst: the house of the dead really opens up over the marble pillars dividing the enormous hall into three. A male mummy from the crypt in Vác is next to the Egyptian child's sarcophagus. Bow to the

omnipotence of death over gender, life and historical ages and civilisations. Or improvise a moral line of thought on the well-known theme of “whether we have the right”.

We might as well come to the end here but persons who had enough time to create in their brief passage of life give a comforting encore in the form of the work. What else would connect the residents of monasteries and prisons than patience, which creates ornamented shrines, relics and dried-out wooden crosses? There are some who independently of where they are and their bond, persevere: they are making a patience glass faithfully. If we have come to a hard-working state of awakening from the depressing dream, we can rise straight to a state of ecstasy, even at this sacred place. Some dull murmur could have already been heard in the chamber of death but the ritual sounds can only be heard clearly now. On this new spiritual journey a Mongolian shaman’s accoutrements would help us provided the accessories of his trade gave a clue as to their use and purpose. Still, boding resolves mystery and the objects are showing the heavenly way floatingly. He who judges everything by seeing, what need may he have for shamans? He deserves to come down to earth once again and look at himself in the dim mirrors of the fixed moment. How can a lover’s gift, an engagement memento and the first communion gift go together with Melius’s Herbarium, Istvánffy’s history, psalm and prayer books, a diary, letter or a postcard? While we are pondering this question, we are overtaken by a disturbing feeling of plenty, just like in the room of clocks and calendars. While contemplating, moments somehow become history. We may have a glance into the secrets of future and fortune without magic. There are cards and games all around. “The scythe brings only devastation and pushes you in deep sorrow. It can be avoided: mingle in fortunate cards.” In the middle there is a game with the game: the fate of the figures on the large board from India is governed by the constellation of the European sky over them.

An outsider cannot see the inner courtyard of the museum on other occasions. Now there is a stage and the space is similar to the temporary theatres of Renaissance palaces. Where did they set up a sea battle filling the courtyard with water? Perhaps in the Pitti Palace in Florence. On the stage representing the world, however, there are TV monitors and projection screens replace the curtain. The present attracts you on the TV sets while history looms on the large screens. Their parallel rule can be studied through the glass from the corridors on both floors. Would you be able to have the upper hand if you

were watching from the second floor? You turn your head away and face motionless pictures on the wall. The pieces always on view compete with those coming out of hiding in the storerooms. Expertise cannot forget the items of its own history when it systematises the tiny mosaics of past lives in a corridor, in the 'time machine' of the museum. Science turns the estate of enthusiastic collectors into the objects of self-reflection in three glass cages. Embroideries left by Mrs Zsolnay and a chemical engineer's tin soldiers are squeezed into glass cabinets similar to the crowded displays of old exhibitions documented on photographs, and on the basis of a photo it precisely reconstructs the Africa exhibition of 1910. The flicker of running pictures to the left, the glitter of its motionless companions to the right. Where is your time and life left in between? And where is the initial freedom of flying? Sunlight and the sky are absent. If you came through the curtained-off halls in semi-darkness and dim light up to here, then now you are surrounded by dark night.

The visitor turns the pages of a guest book and in the catalogue he wants to find out what the three circles on the poster mean. One depicts the shaman's cloak, the other symbolises the sack, which is pulled on the Berber bride's hands. The third has hidden waiting for a new search. One can return, the doors of the Ethnography Museum are wide open this year in many senses of the word. There is another thick purple volume, whose title says that time is not graspable. Several of the exhibition themes can be found in essays in an extended version, but the studies go beyond what one could see. Zoltán Fejős had the idea of the exhibition, he is the chief director and the editor of the volume. Seventeen of the twenty-four authors participated in the team of thirty-four who selected the material for the exhibition. The book may contribute to answering the question arising during the walk in the museum.

Time cannot be grasped but we have some images of it: objects cannot get near to its essence. Objects show the images and reflect on the knowledge about time. Where is time? Are we straying in the labyrinth of Everywhere and Nowhere, or just wondering freely? And is it us who can decide? The human effort to encompass time is simultaneously elevating and aimless. Thus the exhibition bravely approaches totality while boldly tempting nothing. It groups objects around time experiences and it happens that time does not really get involved more or less than objects representing it. What can be seen sometimes follows the speed of thought slowly. Thus heaviness and flying

give sense to this museum walk: this is exactly what the two TV screens in the Kékes sets at the first door suggested.

Objects drifting on the waves of water are motionless moments in time. Should we leave the museum with this idea, the exhibition said enough. If the visitor learnt something but still cannot bring the objects to life, he may set off in two directions when he leaves the museum; he either gives up trying or continues learning. Thus he can take the volume in his hands later. How do the images of time relate to the text? Both are means of demonstrating knowledge about time. A more precise criticism could be made about the transfer of knowledge than the serious and playful attempt to make time visible. This cannot, however, be done by the visitor as such but at and in another time. At the stairs the time for choice arrives. Shall he look at his watch? Or at the sun? At neither? So much choice can be achieved from understanding: he cannot grasp time and neither can he grasp what could be touched. The pool in which we are learning to swim is good. Is there a way through to the sea?

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