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ARTICLES

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”. (Matthew: 5:48)
“He filled them with knowledge and understanding and showed them the difference between good and evil”. (Ecclesiasticus: 17:6)

SOUL DENSITY. SOCIOLOGY OF DEPTHS

Radu Baltasiu¹

ABSTRACT

What is to be done today, when the models that were proposed by a great capital or by a great power have lost their power to offer meaning and guidance, to root someone in reality? Such a question must be asked and answered in the context of the effacement of political and cultural landmarks such as Paris (“Paris” being a stand-in for certain sets of values and paradigms originated from Western Europe that have guided for a while people and politics in different contexts all over the world). Paris, the so-called “city of lights”, lost its role as a cultural and political paradigm during the Cold War due to the process of Americanization and during the process of the expansion of soviet influence; pragmatism and consumerism have replaced whatever such a cultural and geopolitical center had to offer. By being taken over by Americanization and pragmatism, the former “city of lights” lost its identity and the light it imparted to the world. Such a process leads to the impoverishment of the world, whereby the cultural and civilization sources of Western Europe disappear, leading the Western world to collapse, caught in the process of devaluation and self-destruction generated by its own social, political, and cultural development (the so-called “woke-ism”). Due to this process of self-effacement of the West, the geopolitical and social landscape of the world lost an important landmark, a cultural one that used to offer ideological, political, cultural, etc. legitimation and guidance for people everywhere. Without the beacons of light that the West used to represent, the world is now confronted with the presence and activities of Russia and China, two dictatorships. Neither of them should be seen as a source for new paradigmatic values. China has achieved the negative performance of building up a social credit system and a surveillance apparatus that manages to track down the largest number of citizens ever, more than any other state with similar intentions do, and, at the same time, record even the smallest details from its citizens life and activities. If being awoken and cognizant of the predicament that has engulfed the world and the people that live in it is an imperative that every individual must assume and act according to it, then the autochtonization of culture, that is the rediscovery of the community of destiny that makes up a historical community and the pride of being Romanian is a collective one.

Keywords: soul density, soul unity, soul communication, moral economy, geopolitics of the spirit.

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I. SHORT INTRODUCTION

There can be no doubt that the world finds itself in a process of transformation and change. Nowadays, the world – political, cultural, religious, and economic structures and people living therein – is confronted with a situation that has evacuated all previous models and paradigms that guided it, paradigms that might help states, countries, and people to orient themselves and to understand and react in an adequate manner to the predicament they are in. An overreaching geopolitical paradigm is absent from the scene and the states that enjoy the status of great powers are not only imperial structures, but they find themselves in conflict with the people they govern, albeit they pretend – at least some of them – that they are democracies and value freedom and free thought and speech.

More than 300 years have passed since the world entered the great historical cycle that started with the Enlightenment, and, for the first time, people are in the situation of doing science (geopolitics) without having the possibility to be guided by and rooted in an all-encompassing unitary paradigm – political or cultural – that, in the past, great (political) powers (a state or a group of state) used to embody in their behaviour and actions.

Since the 19th century, the most defining and paradigmatic values and models have been set up and spread in the world by Western – imperialist – societies, which were adopted by the states governing them. These values have left their imprint on the structure and behaviour of these states and, thus, the world got French post-enlightenment, British pragmatism, and Bismarckian Germany. These constructions embodied different value configurations that have guided the existence of different states, people and individuals living under their influence. Those developments were followed by the French-German La Belle Epoque of the early 20th century, that later gave in to the new pragmatism of industrialism, followed by the post-industrialism of the United States until the end of the century.

With the Great Disappointment of the beginning of the 21st century – the loss of the global legitimacy of the United States as the “world policeman”, loss caused not so much by its military power but by the diminishing of its power of attraction/enchantment (“soft power”), the world remains for the first time in the modern era without a moral landmark that has no roots in a geopolitical reality. Neither Russia nor China can replace America as a source of geopolitical and cultural model since they lack the power of enchantment that the United States radiated in the world. They cannot replace it because they are not a factor of order but of oppression. This oppression ensures and enforces order domestically. Nevertheless, externally, this order is brought about by using imperial expansionist means, by creating dependence on the imperial center: dependence on resources in the case of Russia, and on production capacities in China’s case.

Another component of the Great Disappointment is the inability of the West to maintain its internal cohesion through democratic means, and the imposition of the

new dictatorship of the “woke”, sexo-Marxist ideology, as the main tool for dominating its own societies and the world. As the new ideology is a factor of disorder and is in contradiction with the main components of power: military, economic, community, and cultural, it follows that the expansionist tendency of the Western states marked by this ideology is and will be inherently conflict-generating. This expansionist tendency lacks the power to attract/to enchant potential partners, and the necessary strength that such an expansionist tendency requires. Even the structure of power is negatively affected in its own makeup, since only the unbridled will to impose oneself remains from all the constituents of power. However, this increasingly weakened West is headed toward conflict. Confrontation has already become an option for other imperial vectors, such as Russia and China, and sub-imperial ones, such as Turkey.

With our immersion into the “woke” chaos of civilization, we will also lose the comfort of living in a given and stable order. The order must be restored. The state in Romania is not a factor of order. To restore its proper function, to regain meaning and to reenchant the hearts and minds of the people it is supposed to represent, it must become a Romanian state, an expression of the will, values, culture, and soul of its inhabitants. And then, those of us who still want to live and breathe in society must find a way to rebuild the social, political, and spiritual order. The source thereof, more precisely one of its main building materials, is the psycho-spiritual density of the human soul.

Henceforth, we are going to present some research directions from an upcoming, yet-to-be constructed noological sociology (sociology of the spirit).

II. GEOPOLITICS OF SPIRIT

Geopolitics is the science of the distribution of power over a given territory. So far, the powers considered are two: pressure-retort by force (hard-power), respectively by attraction/ enchantment (soft-power). The psychological attraction exerted upon the “opponent”/ “competitor” masses by another power can destroy a social and political system, just as pop-rock music, jeans, and Coca-Cola undermined the communist system. Beyond the psychological level, which ultimately operates on the principle of pecuniary emulation (“What does the other one have?!”) that “spills-over” into the stock of social patience, there is the level of soul powers, powers that make it possible for the have-nots to commit acts of disobedience as long as the “societies that have” continue their march toward an increased accumulation with no end in sight. Unlike the other levels of power and order, which are externally rooted through the act of comparison, by virtue of the satisfaction of psychological and material “having” or rooted in the gradual acknowledgment of one’s merits by more and more people, the inner powers of the human soul are stored in The Holy

Tradition and in our original Image and former likeness with God, which is common to everyone. This original and deep Image being internal is, thus, relatively protected from external disturbances. In so far as we succeed on a personal level to regain the lost Likeness to the archetypal Image of God, we acquire unsuspected powers which attest the presence of a superior kind of order in ourselves.

As the Image (less the Likeness lost with the Fall) are common to all, the extent to which everyone rediscovers it triggers a bottom-up interweaving of spiritual and psychic abilities present in each member of society, a process that will propagate itself toward the locus of the secular power (the state and its subordinate institutions). From there these psycho-spiritual capabilities will, in turn, spread through organizations, increasing their potencies. We call this capacity of networking or reciprocal interlinking, after Nae Ionescu, the community of destiny or the nation². In other words, the strongest state is one that is organized as a community of destiny that is truly identified with its people, society, and nation. The power of creation, reaction, innovation, and adaptation of such a state reaches its peak only in this form of identification with the nation. Only by taking this path can a state attain the maximum of its ability to organize its geography and to project its geopolitical interest into the geography of others (in our case, including through historical communities and diaspora). If the state does not overlap with the community of destiny that it should represent and organize, or worse, if it is not related to it at all, a geopolitical and spiritual state of delusion emerges, a separation between the state and the people. In this situation, the psycho-spiritual powers of the people themselves, their aspirations, and collective expectations related to the public interest are not reflected by the administrative behaviour of the state. Then the state finds itself, more or less, in a condition of dysfunctionality (from the oppressive state to the collapsed state).

A state that is structured according to the demands and criteria of spiritual geopolitics will represent the community of destiny, being the carrier and enabler of its aspirations (a vector of power – on the curve of the maximum productive possibility in the economy, of conquering the internal borders related to the maximum fruition of its resources, including demographic and cultural ones). This occurs at the main level. In concrete terms, spiritual geopolitics represents the implementation of the great ideas of the national cultural heritage and the functioning of institutions according to the great themes of this cultural landscape, for example, as follows:

² „«Comunitatea de destin» – comunitatea de iubire a Bisericii se acoperă structural și spațial cu comunitatea de destin a nației. Asta e Ortodoxie (...)” [“«Community of destiny» – the community of love of the Church overlaps structurally and spatially with the community of destiny of the nation. This is Orthodoxy (...)”], in Nae Ionescu, *Teologia. Integrala publicisticii religioase [Theology. Integral of religious publications]*, edition, introduction and notes by Dora Mezdrea, Sibiu, Deisis Publishing House, 2003, p. 44.

– **cosmic Christianity** (Mircea Eliade³) – the understanding of peasant heritage as an intersection between Ancient Cucutenian Europe (Gimbutas⁴) and the Christian tradition, which refers to the power of “undulating space” (Blaga⁵) visible in the serene and precise order of the national specific and

³ See:

1. Creștinismul cosmic se referă la „universalizarea mesajului creștin prin intermediul imageriei mitologice și printr-un proces continuu de asimilare a moștenirii religioase precreștine” [Cosmic Christianity refers to “the universalization of the Christian message through mythological imagery and through a continuous process of assimilation of the pre-Christian religious heritage”.], in Mircea Eliade, *Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase [The history of religious beliefs and ideas]*, Vol. II, Bucharest, Scientific Publishing House, 1992, p. 368.

2. În esență, creștinismul cosmic reprezintă integrarea spiritualității, a tradițiilor și a folclorului comunităților precreștine cu marea credință creștină. Acest fapt a transformat credința, și, totodată a democratizat-o contribuind la popularizarea acesteia și la integrarea sa funcțională cu normele străvechi de simbolizare și ordonare a naturii și a societății. Totodată, prin unificarea unor spații sociale și geografice foarte largi în cadrul aceleiași comunități creștine, noua credință a recentrat lumea și a revoluționat astfel fundamentele socialității. [In essence, cosmic Christianity represents the integration of the spirituality, traditions, and folklore of pre-Christian communities within the great Christian faith. This transformed the faith, and at the same time, democratized it, contributing to its popularization and its functional integration with the ancient norms of symbolization and ordering of nature and society. At the same time, by unifying very wide social and geographical areas within the same Christian community, the new faith recentered the world and thus revolutionized the foundations of sociality.] – see Radu Baltasiu, *Introducere în sociologie, spiritualitate, națiune și capitalism. Considerații de sociologie românească și weberiană [Introduction to sociology, spirituality, nation and capitalism. Considerations of Romanian and Weberian sociology]*, Craiova, Beladi Publishing House, 2007, pp. 109–110.

⁴ „România este vatra a ceea ce am numit Vechea Europă, o entitate culturală cuprinsă între 6500–3500 î. Hr., axată pe o societate matriarhală, teocratică, pașnică, iubitoare și creatoare de artă, care a precedat societățile indo-europenizate patriarhale de luptători din epocile bronzului și fierului” [“Romania is the hearth of what I have called Old Europe, a cultural entity between 6500–3500 BC, focused on a matriarchal, theocratic, peaceful, loving and art-creating society, which preceded the patriarchal Indo-Europeanized societies of warriors of the bronze and iron ages”], in Marija Gimbutas, *Civilizație și cultură. Vestigii preistorice în sud-estul European, [Civilization and culture. Prehistoric remains in south-eastern Europe]*, translation by Sorin Paliga, preface and notes by Radu Florescu, Meridiane Publishing House, 1989, p. 49.

⁵ See:

1. „Omul spațiului mioritic își simte parcă în permanentă, legănată înaintare, într-un infinit undulat. Omul spațiului mioritic își simte destinul ca un veșnic, monoton repetat, suș și coborâș” [“The man of the mioritic space feels swinging progression as if it was caught in a permanent undulating infinity. The man of mioritic space feels his destiny as an eternal, monotonously repeated, up and down”].], in Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii [Culture Trilogy]*, edited by Dorli Blaga, introductory study by Alexandru Tănase, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1985, p. 156.

2. „Cu acest orizont spațial se simte solidar ancestralul suflet românesc, în ultimile sale adâncimi, și despre acest orizont păstrăm undeva, într-un colț înlăcrimat de inimă, chiar și atunci când am încetat de mult a mai trăi pe plai, o vagă amintire paradisiacă: Pe-un picior de plai/pe-o gură de rai”, [“The ancestral Romanian soul feels at its deepest levels a fellowship with this special horizon, and we keep somewhere, in a tearful corner of the heart, even when we have long ceased to live on the plains, a vague paradisiacal memory relating to this horizon: Near a low foothill./At heaven doorsill”], in *Ibidem*, p. 196.

3. Discutând despre importanța acestei matrici, Blaga arată că: „Poporul românesc s-a născut în momentul când spațiul-matrice a prins formă în sufletul său, spațiul-matrice sau orizontul inconștient specific, care alături de alți factori a avut darul să determine stilul interior al vieții sale sufletești” [Discussing the importance of this matrix, Blaga shows that: “The Romanian people were born at the moment when the matrix-space took shape in their soul, the matrix-space or the specific unconscious horizon, which together with other factors had the gift of determining the inner style of their life souls”].], in *Ibidem*, p. 201.

unique⁶ garb, which mirrors the same order embodied by the way of life, an order perfectly integrated into the environment, integration that came spontaneously from the way of being of the Romanian peasant without demanding the existence of contrived ecological policies and long before those were invented. Considering what was just mentioned should completely change the perspective on agricultural, school, etc. policies that were applied in the countryside, and should led to a change pertaining to the baggage of definitions and prejudices regarding the peasant, the village, and the peasantry/rurality. The retrieval of the spiritual, cultural, social, and political legacy of the ancient and traditional peasant world by the state would provide him with an extraordinary resource of spiritual and reorganization/settlement of society power, rendering the attempts undertaken by the state to look for solutions, values, paradigms elsewhere meaningless, avoiding thus the confusion that such undertakings inevitably create.

– **Byzantium after Byzantium** (Iorga) – The title of Iorga’s work expresses the core political idea underlying the spiritual, social, and political makeup of the Romanian people. This idea has been submerged under a veil of ignorance after the Phanariot regime and is still unacknowledged by the contemptuous ignorance of the Romanian intelligentsia after 1989. What is called without any justification “the paternalism of the Romanians” is, in fact, the expression of the presence of a rare imperial legacy that assigns the title of nobility to the Romanian peasant – “țăran” (cognate with țară/Țară). Originally, “țăran” did not mean “submissive”, or unchiseled/uneducated – as today, but a rightful

⁶ „În adevăr, sub unghiul dominației și al dozajului, descoperim că în ornamentica românească suveranitatea geometriismului drept liniar și a figurației stilizate e mai hotărâtă decât în altă parte, iar dozajul între geometrie și motive organic-stilizate – nicăieri așa de echilibrat. Arta populară românească excelează așadar printr-o consecvență stilistică de mare accent. Dar ea mai excelează și prin altceva: prin măsura și prin ritmul manifest în distribuția motivelor. Cât echilibru și câtă măsură în întrebuințarea elementelor «decorative» și a câmpurilor! Ce alternanță de plin și de gol, de accent și neaccent, de substanță și spațiu, de pildă în chilimurile oltenești (...) Popoarele vecine, mai ales cele peninsulare sufăr de un fel de *horror vacui*, câtă vreme românul e cel din urmă care să se lasă pradă acestei frici de gol. Golul nu e simțit din partea românului ca un neajuns, care trebuie neapărat desființat, ci ca un mediu necesar articulării unui ritm. Golul nu e privit ca un cadru, care trebuie numaidecât umplut cu ceva, ci ca element constitutiv și integrant al viziunii artistice” [“Truly, under the angle of dominance and dosage, we discover that in Romanian ornamentation the sovereignty of rectilinear geometry and stylized figuration is more determined than elsewhere, and the dosage between geometry and organic-stylized motifs – nowhere as balanced. Romanian folk art therefore excels through a stylistic consistency of great emphasis. But it also excels in something else: the measure and the rhythm manifested in the distribution of motives. How much balance and measure in the use of ‘decorative’ elements and fields! What an alternation of full and empty, of accent and non-accent, of substance and space, for example in the traditional folkloric carpets from Oltenia (...) The neighboring peoples, especially the peninsular ones, suffer from a kind of *horror vacui*, while the Romanian is the last one to fall prey to this fear of emptiness. The void is not felt by the Romanian as a shortcoming that must be abolished, but as an environment necessary for the articulation of a rhythm. The void is not seen as a framework, which must immediately be filled with something, but as a constitutive and integral element of the artistic vision.”], in *Ibidem*, p. 286.

inhabitant of Countries. “Byzantium after Byzantium” refers to the Romanian political tradition of the princely type⁷, which is an imperial-Roman product with Byzantine Christian continuity, and, on the other hand, to the imperial role that the Romanian rulers played in the Ottoman Empire on the spiritual level, a kind of spiritual function, as heirs to the unearthly dimension of the Byzantine throne⁸.

⁷ „În fundul gândului nostru a fost totdeauna ideea supremă că un număr oarecare de oameni așezați pe un pământ determinat trebuie să fie «dominați», să aibă în fruntea lor un «Domn», prin care se înțelegea, (...) Împăratul roman din Constantinopol, care era de fapt împărat a toată lumea. (...) De aici vine forma «domniei». «Domnul» nu este legat de nici o prescripție scrisă. El nu se găsește în fruntea unei ierarhii de funcționari, ci el însuși poate să îndeplinească, dacă vrea, ceea ce este în căderea oricărui dintre dregătorii săi. Nu este prin urmare acea ierarhie de funcțiuni, ci este o putere a tot pătrunzătoare, care nu are nevoie decât de organul de îndeplinire al unei voințe neîngrădite de nimic. Această voință a toate stăpânitoare se putea arăta deopotrivă prin scris sau, în timpurile cele mai străvechi, numai prin cuvânt. Vodă întreba și pe omul care părea mai apăsător de nedreptate și de nenorocire. Pentru cercetarea oricărui caz, el putea să delege pe cine vrea, precum și pentru îndeplinirea oricăreia dintre operele care în timpurile noastre se îndeplinesc prin funcționari” [“At the fundamental level of our thoughts was always the supreme idea that a certain number of people settled on a determined land must be ‘dominated’, have at their head a ‘Lord’, by which it was understood, (...) The Roman Emperor of Constantinople, who was in fact emperor of the whole world. (...) This is where the form of ‘domnia’ (reign) comes from. ‘The Lord’ is not bound by any written prescription. He is not to be found at the head of a hierarchy of officials, but he can himself, if he wills, do that which falls to any of his subordinates. It is therefore not that hierarchy of functions, but it is an all-pervading power, which needs only the organ of execution of a will unfettered by anything. This all-ruling will could be expressed either in writing or, in the most ancient times, only in words. The lord in power also asked the man who seemed more oppressed by injustice and misfortune. To gather intelligence pertaining to each case he was interested in, he could delegate whomever he wanted. The same holds true for the duties that in our times are discharged by officials”], in Nicolae Iorga, *Hotare și spații naționale. Afirmarea vitalității românești* [*National borders and spaces. Asserting Romanian vitality*], introductory study by Mihai Ungheanu, afterword by Sever Ardelean, Galați, Porto Franco Publishing House, 1996, p. 52.

⁸ See:

1. „Dar în 1688 începe domnia în Țara Românească a lui Constantin Brâncoveanu, și patriarhia va fi condusă rând pe rând de clienții domnilor Moldovei și ai Țării Românești, aceștia fiind ei înșiși protectorii recunoscuți și îndatorați ai noii Renașteri grecești”. [“But in 1688 Constantin Brâncoveanu’s reign in Wallachia begins, and the patriarchate will be led one by one by the clients of the lords of Moldavia and Wallachia, who are themselves the recognized and indebted protectors of the new Greek Renaissance”], in Nicolae Iorga, *Bizanț după Bizanț* [*Byzantium after Byzantium*], Bucharest, Romanian Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1972 (1934), p. 181.

2. „Binefacerile lui Brâncoveanu s-au întins până la mănăstirea Sumela, lângă Trapezunt (...) Ultima stavropighie [lăcaș închinat, subordonat direct Patriarhiei de la Constantinopol] de seamă în țările românești a fost cea a mării ctitorii a lui Brâncoveanu, Hurezi, Scaunul Ierusalimului primind în același timp și splendidul lăcaș al lui Nicolae Mavrocordat, Văcăreștii. Patriarhia ajunsese pe atunci să nu-și mai poată plăti datoriile, fiind silită să restrângă în modul cel mai modest cheltuielile de administrație, cu «doi singuri preoți și doi diaconi, slujind rând pe rând», până când Grigore Matei Ghica, domnind atunci în Moldova, interveni pentru a face să înceteze administrația nefericită a patriarhului Ieremia al III-lea”. [“The benevolence and charity acts reached to the Sumela monastery, near Trebizond (...) The last stavropighie [dedicated place of worship, directly subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople] of importance in the Romanian countries was that built under Brâncoveanu, Hurezi, the See of Jerusalem being gifted at the same time the splendid place of Nicolae Mavrocordat, Văcărești. At that time, the Patriarchate had reached the point where it could no longer pay its debts, being forced to reduce administration expenses to the lowest level, with ‘only two priests and two deacons, serving one after the other’. This situation persisted until Grigore Matei Ghica, then ruling in Moldova, intervened to put an end to the unfortunate administration of Patriarch Ieremia III”], in *Ibidem*, p. 184.

– “**The European Necessity State**” on the Lower Danube is a thesis first stated by Nicolae Iorga. This perspective has been taken up by great Romanian thinkers during the years of great danger of the Second World War (Gh. Brătianu, Golopenția, Vulcănescu, Conea). This thesis can be summed up as follows: “Our Romania does not live and speaks here for her alone”⁹. The fundamental conviction is that the same role Romania performs for itself, she must discharge it for countries such as Germany, France, Austria, and England in relationship to Russia and Turkey, just as Belgium fulfills the same role in the relation between England, France, and Germany. If Romania is to achieve this task – to function as a European Necessity State – here, where the “great geopolitical fords” are located, then she must be run by an administration and by elites able and willing to assume and acknowledge their role of watchers, of carriers of watchfulness, accepting the necessity of being always awake¹⁰.

– **Carpathian Citadel** – Simion Mehedinți. This is the perspective is centered around the conviction that the core of the Romania should be considered the Stronghold that the Carpathians represent. This attitude was inaugurated in Romanian geopolitics under the administration of Simion Mehedinți. Mehedinți’s thesis is also based on Iorga’s idea of Romania – a state of European necessity. In essence, Mehedinți shows that the Carpathian mountains “served as a means of concentration and unification” of the Romanian nation¹¹, representing, at the same time, “the most advanced bastion of Europe in front of Asia”¹². The Carpathian Stronghold is the main ethnopolitical function of Transylvania, in turn serving as the “core of the entire country”¹³.

⁹ „Suntem un stat de necesitate europeană. Răzimată pe cetatea carpatică și veghind asupra Gurilor Dunării, străjuind aici în numele și interesul întregii Europe din spatele ei, ba încă și mai departe, se cheamă că România noastră trăiește și vorbește aici nu numai pentru dânsa singură. Statul nostru este deci în atenția estului și vestului, nordului și sudului deopotrivă și în tot timpul. El deține, cum s-a spus, o pozițiune cheie, iar atenția aceasta a altuia pentru tine poate fi grijă și simpatie, poate fi ocrotire, dar poate fi și apetit sau primejdie. Un stat cu o astfel de situație în care te urmează în tot locul vânturile valurile, dator este cel dintâi să cunoască această situație, să-și dea permanent seama de toate, bune și rele, câte se ascund într-însa”. [“We are a state of European necessity. Based on the Carpathian stronghold and watching over the mouths of the Danube, standing guard here in the name and interest of the whole of Europe, from its behind or even from farther afield. This means that our Romania lives and speaks here not only for itself. Our state is permanently therefore at the crossroads of sights of east and west, north, and south alike. The Romanian state holds, as has been said, a key position, and the attention another party pays to you can mean care and sympathy, it can mean protection, but it can denote appetite or danger. A state located in such a delicate position, must be the first to know this situation, to constantly cognize everything, good and bad, that is hidden in it”.], in ***: „România definită de către marile nume ale spiritului românesc drept un stat de necesitate europeană” [“Romania defined by the great names of the Romanian spirit as a state of European necessity”], in *Cer și pământ românesc*, n.d., Available at: <https://cersipamantromanesc.wordpress.com/2018/05/27/romania-definita-drept-un-stat-deneesitate-europeana-de-catre-marile-nume-ale-spiritului-romanesc/>, Accessed on June 16, 2024.

¹⁰ Nicolae Iorga, „State de interes european” [“States of European interest”] in *Neamul Românesc*, Year XXXV, No. 22, January 28, 1930, and *Geopolitica și Geoistoria*, 1941, Year I, No. 1, p. 3.

¹¹ „au servit ca mijloc de concentrare și unificare”, in Simion Mehedinți, *Opere Complete – Geographica [Complete Works – Geographical]*, Vol. I, Part Two, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Library, Royal Foundation for Literature and Art, 1943, p. 148.

¹² „bastionul cel mai înaintat al Europei în fața Asiei”, in *Ibidem*, p. 307.

¹³ „sâmbure al țării întregi”, in *Ibidem*, p. 186.

– **Ponto-Baltic Isthmus** (Mehedinți). The Stronghold of the Carpathians is the scaffold of the geopolitical frontings of Romanian space. One geopolitical “frontings” of the utmost importance of is the idea of a “Ponto-Baltic isthmus”. The idea of limiting Russian expansion through the geopolitics of the Three Seas (Trimarium) also had an origin in the Romanian idea of the Ponto-Baltic Isthmus. This isthmus is not a form of relief but a border of the Roman type (pulsatory, living), which set up to work as an obstacle against “Muscovitism”¹⁴. The isthmus is part of the “Eastern question”, “the capital problem of our continent” – the problem related to the temptation of the great powers, especially Russia, to advance to the mouths of the Danube and the Straits.

– **Roman heritage along the Transylvania border** (Iorga and Ilie Bădescu). “The Roman frontier created Europe”¹⁵. The Roman heritage of the frontier includes the idea of the Carpathian Fortress and is part of the Romanian national instinct. Should the elites lose this national instinct, then the Carpathians will necessarily be occupied by the Hungarians. Romania would be forced to face a dilemma, as Take Ionescu stated in a speech in the Parliament in 1915:

“Either the Hungarians reach up to the top of the Carpathians and from there they will be dominating us, or we settle in the citadel of Transylvania and from there we will be dominating the Hungarian wilderness; this is the only alternative”¹⁶.

The Romanian people are the heirs of the Roman border, the only type of border that is a true creator of civilization, while the Hungarian border is a factor of oppression of the peoples, driven by an ethnocentric, undemocratic impulse, aiming to transform Transylvania into a mono-ethnic space. Transylvania is inherently Romanian, and it is Romania’s heart. In opposition to this geopolitical view, there is the view focused on the idea of a mythical Mitteleuropa as a civilizational center. This view embodies the Romanian Transylvanian inferiority complex vis-à-vis the “civilization of Vienna and Budapest”, a view that maintains at the same time a superiority complex vis-à-vis Romanians from other regions of the country. The effort to weaken and undermine the Roman heritage and the role of the Romanian space – as a product of the Roman civilizational frontier, is part of the action of demystifying the history of the Romanians and shifting the responsibility for Romania’s drama from the regime of Stalinist communism to the national perspective on reality.

Last but not least, this spiritual geopolitics has a heavenly outlook since at its foundational level one can find martyrs and saints, including the ones that the communist prisons produced. Inasmuch as the elites that work at the state level understand that sacrifice is a necessary dimension of reality and of discharging one’s

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 274.

¹⁵ Ilie Bădescu and Ozana Cucu-Oancea (coord.), *Dicționar de sociologie rurală [Rural sociology dictionary]*, Bucharest, Little Wallachia Publishing House, 2004, p. 290.

¹⁶ „ori ungerii până în vârful Carpaților și de acolo dominându-ne pe noi, ori noi așezați în cetățuia Transilvaniei și de acolo dominând Pusta ungurească; altfel nu se poate”, in *Ibidem*.

duty toward the country and the people, which they as elites are meant to serve – (that is understanding that being a state servant implies or even requires sacrifice), the state will benefit from unexpected spiritual watchfulness and unseen victories against the demons of the air that will be granted by adopting this stance.

III. IMPERATIVES

Our integration in the logic of the psychic-spiritual power depends on the education of the wielders of the administrative might. They must be educated by putting them in contact with manifestations of those said powers same nature. The integration thereof into the administrative and institutional behaviors is mandatory, otherwise there will no possibility to build up the necessary brickwork that underlies the possibility of exerting the act of administering the country (administering it for the sake of the people, not at their expense) and of a moral and economic organization (not just for profit). We list a few.

1. **Evading the ontological orphanism** – ontological “parentless” is the “basic” condition of today’s modernity and signifies the isolation of man as a species in relation to his fellows, to the cosmic order, because of his desire to be autonomous. By reducing pragmatism to profit book-keeping, quality to quantity, efficiency to numerical ratio, the modern man lost on the way, Vulcănescu shows, the Logos¹⁷, abandoned the Word of God, becoming in

¹⁷ „Ceea ce a caracterizat într-adevăr ortodoxia noastră răsăriteană în trecut este tocmai împrejurarea că, în ea, libertatea și autoritatea nu s-au împotrivit nicicând una alteia, și cheazășie pentru aceasta stă comunitatea de iubire. Nicicând autoritatea nu s-a opus cu sila din afară și nici libertatea spirituală n-a însemnat răzvrătire împotriva comunității a spiritului subiectiv. De îndată însă ce-n Apus autoritatea s-a instituit, văzut și a încercat să silească la unitatea de afirmație, conștiința individuală s-a constituit automat, ca realitate antagonistă; comunitatea spirituală s-a spart și libertatea-n duhul cel dintâi de mai înainte a devenit libertatea subiectivă, protestantă, libertatea în afară de comunitate. Protestantismul este răsplata naturală a cezaro-papismului catolic. Așa se face că de unde până mai ieri creștinismul era nevoit să-și salveze afirmația nevoii de unitate de duh luând atitudine fățiș împotriva individualismului modern, atomizat și democratic – creștinismul este astăzi nevoit să ia atitudine împotriva totalitarismului contemporan, autoritar și tiranic, care substituie adevăratei comunități de dragoste a Bisericii lui Dumnezeu, chipul apocaliptic al Leviathanului.” [“What has really characterized our Eastern Orthodoxy in the past is precisely the circumstance that, in it, freedom and authority have never been opposed to each other, and the community of love is the guarantee for this. Authority was never imposed by external force, nor did spiritual freedom mean rebellion against the community of the subjective spirit. But as soon as in the West the authority was established, became visible, and tried to force upon the people a unitary spiritual outlook, the individual consciousness constituted itself automatically as an antagonistic reality; the spiritual community broke up, and the freedom that characterized the spirit before this process of imposition became the subjective, protestant freedom, the freedom apart from the community. Protestantism is the natural outcome of Catholic Caesaro-papism. This is how and why hitherto Christianity had to defend its claims of the need for unity of spirit by openly taking a stance against modern, atomized, and democratic individualism – Christianity is today forced to take a stance against contemporary, authoritarian, and tyrannical totalitarianism, which replaces the true community of love of the Church of God, the apocalyptic face of Leviathan”], in Mircea Vulcănescu, *Logos și Eros. Creștinul în Lumea modernă. Două tipuri de filozofie medievală [Logos and Eros. The Christian in the Modern World. Two types of medieval philosophy]*, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 1991, p. 76.

this process a victim of the terror of history (Eliade)¹⁸, an existence that fell into time (Cioran)¹⁹. To realign itself to this imperative, the state will have to promote the idea of individuality among the members of the community of destiny. This will form the basis from whence all cultural, health, demographic, international relations, economic, etc. policies will flow from this.

2. **The wholeness imperative** – of vocation and of knowing the context (through history, culture). This signifies the double placement of the individual in the love of the other through the profession. The holistic unity to which one belongs takes form in a threefold way. Through the intangible feeling of completeness brought about by the presence of the other or through the tangible form of a job one is called to do, and the professionalization of society. The existence of the individual who acts according to this perspective has meaning, and the society that makes such a thing possible can rightfully be considered one worth living in. This is why Romanians chose to leave *en masse* for Western Europe for a quarter of a century, right after the liberalization of

¹⁸ See:

1. „Chiar când rămănem singuri, tot la Război ne gândim, adică tot sclavii Istoriei suntem. Teroarea evenimentelor este nu numai umilitoare pentru fiecare din noi, ca ființe umane, dar este, în cele din urmă, sterilă. Nimic nu se alege din acest contact permanent cu Istoria; nu ne îmbogățim cu nimic, nu descoperim nimic care să merite într-adevăr să fie descoperit (...)” [“Even when we remain alone, we are still thinking about War, that is, we are still slaves to History. The terror of events is not only humiliating for each of us as human beings, but also ultimately sterile. Nothing is gained from this permanent contact with History; we are enriched by nothing, we discover nothing that really deserves to be discovered (...)”], in Mircea Eliade, *Noaptea de sânziene [The night of the marigolds]*, Vol. 1, Library for all, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1991, pp. 310–311.

2. Or: “(...) modern man to tolerate the increasingly powerful pressure of contemporary history. (...) In his rejection of concepts of periodicity and hence, in the last analysis, of the archaic concepts of archetypes and repetition, we are, we believe, justified in seeing modern man’s resistance to nature, the will of ‘historical man’ to affirm his autonomy; ‘the more modern 12 he becomes that is, without defense against the terror of history the less chance he has of himself making history (...)’”, in Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History. The Myth of the Eternal Return*, New York, Harper, 1959, pp. 154–156.

¹⁹ „După ce a stricat adevărata eternitate, omul a căzut în timp, unde a izbutit, dacă nu să prospere, cel puțin să trăiască: sigur e că s-a obișnuit cu noua lui condiție. Procesul acestei căderi și al acestei deprinderi se numește Istorie. Dar iată că-l amenință o altă cădere, a cărei amploare e încă greu de apreciat. De data asta el nu va mai cădea din eternitate, ci din timp; și a cădea din timp înseamnă a cădea din Istorie, înseamnă, devenirea fiind suspendată, împotmolirea în inerta și posaca monotonică, în absolutul stagnării, acolo unde verbul însuși se împotmolește, neputându-se înălța până la blasfemie sau până la implorare. Iminentă sau nu, această cădere e posibilă, ba chiar inevitabilă” [“Having spoiled true eternity, man fell into time, where he succeeded, if not to prosper, at least to live: it is certain that he became accustomed to his new condition. The process of this fall and this habituation is called History. But here he is threatened by another fall, the extent of which is still difficult to appreciate. This time he will not fall from eternity, but from time; and to fall out of time means to fall out of History, it means, becoming suspended, to get bogged down in inertness and monotony, in the absolute of stagnation, where the verb itself gets bogged down, unable to rise to the point of blasphemy or to supplication. Imminent or not, this fall is possible, even inevitable”.], in Emil Cioran, *Căderea în timp [Falling in time]*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2008, [Paris, Gallimard, 1964], pp. 159–160.

borders – there was no way for them to make sense of their existence and actions. Nothing they did made any sense, not even achieving material wealth, let alone fulfill themselves. The products of the economic activity that are performed within a society and state structured by this holistic vision would present neither qualitative deficiencies nor become a nuisance to the environment, and the service industry would be friendly toward the consumer. The way medicine and medical practices would be carried out would also change. They would no longer be subordinated to the interests of insurance and drug companies but, on the contrary, they will attend to the needs of the human beings considered as a unity made of body and spirit.

3. The imperative of identity and confession (the cult of the dead). Identity is the second essence of the self after the archetypal Image that unites us all, and that is in everyone. Identity is the “mobile element” of humanity while the awareness that we are bearers of the same original Image (of God) is the “fixed dimension”. It makes dynamic density, interaction possible. Only people participating in the division of labor, bearers of specificities/differences (identities) that are actualized through work can interact.

4. The imperative of autochthonism/nativity – a subcomponent of identity and hierarchy, is the autochthonism/nativist imperative. This does not mean restricting knowledge to local cultural traditions. Quite the opposite. This represents the assumption of one’s own imperatives: just as there is a set of civilizational challenges for each great historical cycle or society, there is also a particular set of problems for each society, people, or “household”. In this sense, autochthonism/nativity refers to the rediscovery of our own selves and history, that is, of thinking with our “head” about our problems, which no one is going to solve for us, not even those we imitate. It is something that starting with the elites, followed by universities, and administrative institutions must bear. This in the sequence of accepting and introducing the nativity imperative in society. Working on this institution is unavoidable because households confronted with day-to-day problems have a much better grip on the emergencies they must face. For Vasile Băncilă, the first level that has to orient itself according to the imperative of nativity is the one of philosophy since philosophy sets the orientation of knowledge in a given society:

“(…) we were very little willing to know ourselves and reflect on our own themes; we understand why the becoming native of philosophy in Romanian society was announced too late’. No imitative society can produce a true culture. However, above all, it cannot have a philosophy. Philosophy springs from the application and fecundation of the Socratic dictum: ‘Know thyself!’”²⁰.

²⁰ „(...) noi am fost foarte puțin dispuși să ne cunoaștem și să reflectăm pe propria noastră temă, înțelegem de ce autohtonizarea filosofiei în societatea românească se anunță târziu. Orice societate care imită nu poate avea o cultură. Dar mai ales nu poate avea o filosofie. Filosofia izvorăște din aplicarea și fecundarea dictonului socratic: «Cunoaște-te pe tine însuși!»”, in Vasile Băncilă, *Duhul Sărbătorii [The Spirit of the Celebration]*, edited [and preface] by Ileana Băncilă, Bucharest, Anastasia Publishing House, 1996, p. 190.

Becoming native, accepting the imperative of nativity, means, here, “to know ourselves and to reflect on our own theme” otherwise “we cannot have a culture”. For Nichifor Crainic, this process necessarily involves the integration of culture into our Orthodox substratum (primary culture, as shown in *Nostalgia paradisului [The nostalgia of the paradise]*):

“Condemned by the sterility proper to its nature, mimicry is a solution to continuity in the normal development of a national culture. However, no national culture can grow parasitically on the body of another culture. Every national culture is its own thing, and it is worth considering only because it confers a superior symbolic expression to the qualities of the people that have birthed it. Only a culture deeply rooted in its ethnic specificity that absorbs the spiritual light of orthodoxy will have the certainty of producing its unique style. Through mimicry, we will never reach the peak of creating one’s own unique style, because each peculiar style is the distinctive brilliance proper to all cultural creations, resulting from a great conception of life, wherein individual creative forces meet and acknowledge themselves”²¹.

Nae Ionescu, for his part, shows that autochthonism in culture means nothing more than the discovery of the “essential, non-transmissible element” of one’s own culture and that, moreover, the import of culture is not really possible because it consists of labels, not in its contents:

“I am cognizant, of course, of the false perspective that our habits and laziness of thought create today, of our inability to tear ourselves away from thought patterns that have been violently imposed on us for almost a century. This will not prevent me from affirming and always establishing as a theme for reflection, for those who have not lost the habit of thinking, the fundamental fact that the influences between cultures are only apparent and that any borrowings a culture takes from another more ‘advanced’ one are just names for its own, original realities – the core itself, the essential and characteristic generative element being, by its very nature, non-transmissible, non-transformable and, therefore, non-assimilable”²².

²¹ „Osândit prin natura lui la sterilitate, mimetismul e o soluție de continuitate în dezvoltarea normală a culturii naționale. Nicio cultură națională însă nu poate crește parazită pe trupul altei culturi. Ea e de sine stătătoare și vrednică să fie luată în seamă numai în măsura în care simbolizează în forme superioare proprietățile ființei neamului. O cultură înfiptă adânc în autohtonismul etnic și absorbind în plămăuirile ei lumina spirituală a ortodoxiei are singură de partea ei garanția unui stil propriu. Prin mimetism nu vom ajunge în veacul veacului la el, fiindcă stilul propriu e strălucirea distinctivă a tuturor creațiilor culturale, rezultată dintr-o mare concepție de viață, în care se întâlnesc și se recunosc originalitățile creatoare.”, in Nichifor Crainic, *Nostalgia paradisului [The nostalgia of the paradise]*, 2nd ed., 1942, reprinted in *The yearning for the paradise*, edition with an introductory study by Dumitru Stăniloae, afterword and notes by Magda Ursache and Petru Ursache, bibliographical file by Alexandru Cojan, Iași, Moldova Publishing House, 1994, p. 15.

²² „Îmi dau seama, desigur, de falsa perspectivă pe care o creează astăzi obiceiurile noastre și lenea noastră de cugetare, neputința noastră de a ne smulge unor tipare de gândire cari ne sunt cu violență impuse de aproape un veac. Asta nu mă va împiedica însă să afirm și să pun mereu ca temă de reflecție, pentru cei cari nu au pierdut obiceiul de cugetare, faptul fundamental că influențele între culturi sunt numai aparente și că orice cultură nu împrumută altelei mai «înaintate» decât nume pentru realități proprii, originare – sâmburele însuși, elementul esențial și caracteristic generator fiind, prin însăși natura lui, netransmisibil, netransformabil și, deci, neasimilabil.”, in Nae Ionescu, *quoted work*, p. 402.

5. Hierarchical imperative: The world is hierarchical. It is the hierarchy of the invisible over the visible, of the spirit in the world of life and the world of beings over matter, of merit in human society. It is the hierarchy of identities because there is a hierarchy of callings, depending on the inner constitution and qualities of the “souls”, as Plato would say²³. The higher you are on the power hierarchy, the greater the responsibility²⁴. The imperative of identity is the same as that of hierarchy, as Plato has already seen. Assuming one’s own identity is a component of the cyclical feeling of reality, not of its uniform flow. Not everyone can reach the same place; reality is complex and different; not even the direction of time is unique, neither in general nor now and here, where we have as many realities as we have identities/communities of destiny. There is, of course, a dominant time of an era. Nevertheless, there is the imperative of redemption (of confession), whose central element consists in the acknowledgment, respect of the past, and respect of the ancestors – the cult of heroes and the dead. It follows in a clear manner from what has been said how the administration and organization of the state and society will be rebuilt. The media noise would disappear by itself, and the identity turmoil specific to the young people directly affected by it will return to its age-specific source, allowing them to get free from the confusion that have engulfed the youth.

²³ „Or zeul poruncește conducătorilor mai presus de orice, ca nimic să nu aibă mai abtîr în pază și nimic să nu vegheze mai cu strășnicie, decât pe odrasle. Anume: care dintre metale este amestecat în sufletul lor. Și, chiar dacă propriul copil s-ar naște cu ceva aramă sau fier într-insul, să nu se arate în nici un chip miloși, ci, dându-i ceea ce merită firea sa, să-l trimită printre agricultori sau meșteșugari. Iar dacă, în schimb, printre aceștia s-ar naște vreun copil avînd în el aur sau argint, să-l cinstească, urcîndu-l printre paznici, ori printre ajutoare. [Altfel, cetatea se va distruge] Aceasta deoarece ar exista o profeție, cum că cetatea va fi nimicită atunci cînd vor fi paznici de fier sau cînd omul de aramă va sta să păzească” [“Now, the god commands the rulers above all else, that nothing should be more closely guarded, and nothing should be more closely guarded than the offspring. Namely: which of the metals is mixed in their soul. And even if one’s own child should be born with some brass or iron in it, let him not show himself in any way merciful, but, giving him what his nature deserves, send him among the husbandmen or artisans. And if, on the other hand, a child is born among them with gold or silver in it, let them honor him by placing him among the guards or among the helpers. [Otherwise, the fortress will be destroyed] This is because there is a prophecy that the city will be destroyed when there will be iron guards or when the man of brass will stand guard.”], in Plato, *Works V, Republic*, ed. edited by Constantin Noica and Petru Cretia, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1986, p. 195, 415b, c.

²⁴ „Ortodoxia îmbrățișează în mod egal pe oameni, oricare ar fi dotația și capacitatea lor naturală. Pentru ea nu există clase sociale sau categorii preferate în dauna altora. Viața în ierarhie se întemeiază pe consimțămîntul dragostei (...) Ierarhiile, de la cele pur spirituale pînă la cele pămîntești, se disting în deosebi prin aceste sarcini pe cari superiorii le au față de inferiori. Cu cât treapta e mai înaltă, cu atât sarcina e mai mare față de subordonați.” [“Orthodoxy embraces people equally, whatever their natural endowment and ability might be. For her there are no social classes or preferred categories to the detriment of others. Life in the hierarchy is based on the consent of love (...) Hierarchies, from the purely spiritual to the earthly, are distinguished especially by these tasks which the superiors have towards the inferiors. The higher the step, the greater the burden towards the subordinates”], in Nichifor Crainic, *Ortodoxie [Orthodoxy]*, in pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, „Opera teologică a lui Nichifor Crainic” [“Theological work of Nichifor Crainic”], in *Gîndirea*, Year XIX, No. 4, April 1940, p. 268.

6. **The aesthetic imperative**, the imperative of beauty and the yearning for paradise (Nichifor Crainic). Without the perception and sense of beauty, we can neither have good nor truth. Crainic makes one of the most profound analyses of beauty (at the theological level), showing that the perception and sense of beauty are linked to the discovery of the original image through the daily human participation in the mystery of Creation. This awareness leads to a constant feeling of seriousness and beauty called “yearning for paradise” – which we will discuss in the section dedicated to the notion of “Soul Density”. It is easy to understand, again, that beauty means balance, that is health. From here is easy to grasp that it denotes all the positive relation consequences regarding family life, interpersonal relationships, quality of life, and so on.

IV. AGENTS OF SPIRITUAL ORDER

I have presented the necessity of placing the state in the setting of spiritual or noological geopolitics, emphasizing the role it must play in the domestic realm of a country. There are three relative novelties in this approach. The first one highlights the aforementioned domestic role of geopolitics. This is relatively new because geopolitics traditionally refers to external interests and the external projection of a state’s power. The second element of relative novelty is the integration of society into the power vectors of the state – something also discussed by Barry Buzan from the perspective of “societal security”²⁵. The third refers to the acknowledgment/introduction of the noological dimension of the state as the main source of its the non-imperialist power, of harmonizing the state with society, and of convergence of the political order with society.

I have identified the pillars of these geopolitics as imperatives, discussing five of them.

For their part, these imperatives – or essential directions of propagation of society/state power projection, work by virtue of inner psycho-spiritual “power centers”/ “agents”/ “capabilities”: density, unity, soul communication, moral economy, cultural state, and organic elites. We will cover a few of these. We specify that the relationship between imperatives and these capabilities goes in both directions: those inner powers depend on acting according to the imperatives, and the imperatives come to pass only if there are agents to enact them.

²⁵ „Securitatea colectivităților umane este afectată de factori din cinci sectoare principale: militar, politic, economic, social și de mediu. (...)” [“The security of human communities is affected by factors from five main sectors: military, political, economic, social and environmental. (...)”], in Barry Buzan, *Popoarele, statele și teama: o agendă pentru studii de securitate internațională în epoca de după războiul rece* [*People, States and Fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-Cold War era*], second edition, translation by Vivia Săndulescu, Chișinău, Cartier Publishing House, 2000, p. 31.

Clarification of terms

i. Soul density

Soul density represents the double ability of society and the self to live in a theandric mode and to tend as consciously as possible toward manifesting the original Image in behavior and action. In this manner, human action acquires spiritual content and measure. The density of the soul makes it possible to reunify the word with the deed and, through this, to lead the individual towards regaining the place and the meaning of his or her existence in the scheme of things. Sociologically, a society based on the workings of soul density offers opportunities for “success” to each person, in by merit through work. The stronger the theandric structure of society, the stronger the soul density will be, and vice versa. In so far, a society or state will promote and strengthen this theandric dimension, all the more functional the meritocracy through work will become. This theandric/soul density capacity – that is caught in a process of actualization – should lead to an integrated society, which has become truly a community of destiny and to a state bestowed with tripartite power structure: of organizations (structured according to the principle of multiplying talents²⁶), of elites – endowed with spiritual foresight and of the individuals who act in society vocationally (following the personal calling).

Explaining the terms

The notion of soul density is built on two premises: a) reality also has a qualitative component, not just a quantitative one, and b) the fact that there exists a transcendent world, that is, the world beyond. Thus, “better” does not necessarily mean “more”, quantity, but also quality. Quantity can be easily measurable numerically. Quality is less so. The highest qualities, the ultimate forms of quality, are truth (“true”) and soul (“from the soul” or “from the heart”). The “organ” of truth in human beings is the “soul”, man’s connection with the world beyond. The soul is defended by conscience, which connects reason and lived experience. In sociology, the combination of reason and lived experience is called comprehension. Therefore, soul density also refers to the capacity for comprehension, the capacity for a rational understanding of reality that includes and is bound to the living experience thereof. The highest form of lived experience is the mystical (Nae Ionescu), which is possible through *humble contemplation* (St. Ioan Scărarul). *Humble contemplation* is very dense (it includes 33 steps of “spiritual ascent”). Maximum self-education presupposes certainly spiritual education. The soul, or the “organ” where truth is stored, i.e., the Image (Nichifor Crainic), is what constitutes the most subtle and lasting connection between us and the world. The Soul and the Image stored in the former are the defining aspects of humanity. A spiritualized soul, which is always aware of the spiritual action exerted upon itself to be in Truth, we say that it is “dense”. This is exactly what

²⁶ Matthew: 25:15–30 .

theandric means: the original reality of man and the work of finding anew the presence of God in himself. Both the Original Image and the soul are engrafted at the same time in man. Self-balance is possible only by consciously finding the Truth (the Image and the Logos), the balance being a permanent ongoing work toward spiritualization (to think like God)²⁷. This permanent work is an ever-confession of responsibility “that we are of this world and yet do not belong to it”²⁸. This is the highest form of responsibility that can only be achieved by those who have “soul density”.

a) How does soul density manifest at the individual level?

People with soul density have what Crainic calls the first cause of action, “yearning for paradise”. This longing²⁹ is the consciousness of the existence of a primordial truth that, by virtue of not assuming our freedom, we always lose sight of. The truth is beyond the world, but the sense of the tragedy of the human condition is the setting of existence in this world. Art, moreover, recognizes that even its most cheerful form, comedy, is also a form of drama.

In essence, this feeling is associated with watchfulness and guarding the mind³⁰, which is, in turn, linked to the activation of the “gifts of the Holy Spirit”:

²⁷ „A gândi lumea precum Dumnezeu o gândește, a o iubi precum el o iubește și a lucra în ea precum el lucrează, iată în ce stă modul teandric al credinței și al înțelepciunii creștine, modul lui Iisus Hristos”. [“To think the world as God thinks it, to love it as he loves it and to work in it as he works, this is the theandric way of Christian faith and wisdom, the way of Jesus Christ”.], in Nichifor Crainic, *quoted work*, 1994, p. 6.

²⁸ „că suntem din această lume și totuși nu-i aparținem”, in *Ibidem*, p. 242.

²⁹ „Nostalgia paradisului e sentimentul că suntem din această lume și totuși nu-i aparținem; că lumea din spiritul nostru nu e identică cu lumea care ne înconjoară; că suntem în mijlocul ei ca niște rămași pe dinafară dintr-o ordine înaltă de existență, ce ni se refuză; că din această pricină nu putem adera întru totul la condiția mizeriei terestre, în care ne simțim ca exilați; și că, în sfârșit, tot ceea ce în ființa noastră rimează în chip tainic cu veșnicia ne împinge la depășirea modului actual de existență și la cucerirea unui mod superior și desăvârșit, conceput în antinomie cu cel de acum și de aici. Nostalgia paradisului e astfel sentimentul antinomiei noastre existențiale, de fapte libere în spirit, dar contrazise de limitele ce ne par fatale; de fapte sfășiate de chin, dar care concepem o liniște cerească (...), de fapte nefericite, dar care ardem de setea fericirii absolute”. [“The yearning for paradise is the feeling that we are of this world and yet do not belong to it; that the world in our spirit is not identical to the world that surrounds us; that we are in the middle of it as outsiders expelled from a higher order of existence, which is denied to us; that for this reason we cannot altogether adhere to the condition of earthly misery, in which we feel ourselves as exiles; and that, finally, all that in our being mysteriously rhymes with eternity impels us to overcome the present mode of existence and to conquer a superior and perfect state of being, conceived in antinomy with the here and now. This paradise longing is, thus, the feeling of our existential antinomy, of beings free in spirit, but belied by the limits that seem fatal to us; of creatures anguished by torment, but who conceive a heavenly peace (...), of unhappy creatures, but who burn with the thirst of absolute happiness”.], in *Ibidem*.

³⁰ „Cuvântul trezvie îl găsim în special în volumul IV al Filocaliei și se refera la starea omului care nu doarme. Este altceva decât somnul; este priveghere, luare aminte, așa cum cel treaz știe ce se întâmplă cu sine și în jurul lui. Trezvia are darul de a pune în evidență în special gândurile, înclinările. Este o supraveghere de noi înșine, este starea în care putem să acționăm asupra întregii noastre vieți ulterioare. (...) Ea se manifestă și prin paza minții, în sensul că luarea aminte se face pentru păzirea minții, pentru înlăturarea din minte a ceea ce este negativ, pentru neprimirea în minte și necontinuarea în conștiință a lucrurilor care sunt aducătoare de neliniște, care duc la dezorientare și devieri”. [“The word watchfulness is found especially in volume IV of the Philokalia and it refers to the state of the man who does not sleep. It is something other than sleep; it is vigilance, taking note, as the awake person knows what is happening with himself and around him. Watchfulness has the gift of bringing to fore especially thoughts, inclinations. It is a surveillance of ourselves, it is the state in which we can act

“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, purity”³¹. Last but not least, the feeling of the tragic does not mean bitterness and despair, on the contrary, “the mind when it meets the soul is filled with unspeakable joy and mirth”³².

People with spiritual density are characterized, as Ștefan F. Fay described Vulcănescu, a contemporary prototype of this kind of person, by some salient features:

- “Dominated by the gravity of the imperative to do the job well and for the good”³³.
- “Good and beneficial”³⁴, instead of good and useful, or good = more, as of today.
- They act and think with precision, determination, and great delicacy. Awareness of the Archetypal Image demands great care, and a special cult dedicated to beauty and contemplation. The purpose of contemplation is not the loss of self, nor the art itself, but, as I insisted, the retrieval of the Image, and regaining “the Likeness with God” (Crainic)³⁵.

upon our whole subsequent life. (...) It also manifests itself through guarding the mind, in the sense that remembering is done a defense of the mind, for removing what is negative from it, for not receiving in the mind and expelling from it the things that bring anxiety, that lead to disorientation and deviations”]., in Teofil Paraian, „Despre trezvie” [“About watchfulness”], in *Creștinortodox. Cea mai mare comunitate ortodoxă din lume*, June 9, 2017, Available at: <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/sfaturi-duhovnicesti/parintele-teofilparaian-despre-trezvie-68435.html>, Accessed on June 24, 2024.

³¹ „dragostea, îndelungă răbdarea, bunătatea, facerea de bine, credința, blândețea, înfrânarea (poftelor), curăția (trupească și sufletească)”, in Galatians: 5: 22.

³² „minteă când se întâlnește cu sufletul se umple de o bucurie și veselie de negrăit”, in ***, *Filocalia, sau culegere din scrierile sfinților părinți care arată cum se poate omul curăța, lumina și desăvârși. Volumul VII. Scrieri de: Nichifor din singurătate, Teolipt al Filadelfiei, Sfântul Grigorie Sinaitul, Sfântul Grigorie Palama* [Philokalia, or collection from the writings of the holy fathers that show how man can be purified, enlightened and perfected. Volume VII. Writings by: Nicephorus of Solitude, Theoliptus of Philadelphia, Saint Gregory the Sinaite, Saint Gregory Palamas], translation, introduction and notes by pr. prof. phd. Stăniloae Dumitru, Bucharest, Publisher of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1977, p. 31.

³³ „stăpănit[e] de gravitatea imperativului de a face treaba bine și pentru bine”, in Ștefan F. Fay, *Sokrateion*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1991, p. 97.

³⁴ „Mircea Eliade, în portretul pe care i-l face în câteva pagini de mare concizie și dragoste, spune că tot ce făcea Mircea «era bine făcut și folositor». Să reținem aprecierea lui Eliade: «bine și folositor» – căci aici se află esența comportamentului și a metodei de lucru a tatălui vostru.” [“Mircea Eliade, in the portrait he paints of him in a few pages of great brevity and love, says that everything Mircea did ‘was well done and useful’. Let’s remember Eliade’s assessment: ‘good and useful’ – because here lies the essence of your father’s behavior and working method”]., in *Ibidem*, p. 93.

³⁵ „În ce privește însă participarea omului la colaborarea teandrică, trebuie să ne referim la cele două concepte de antropologie creștină: chip și asemănare. Omul e chipul real al lui Dumnezeu prin creația divină, dar omul e asemănarea posibilă a lui Dumnezeu. Nu atâră de om să poarte chipul lui Dumnezeu sau nu, fiindcă acest chip e un dat în făptura lui, în structura lui spirituală, prin care se deosebește de toate celelalte creaturi. Dar atâră de el să se asemene sau nu cu Dumnezeu, și această posibilitate stă în libertatea voinței lui, care are în față modelul de perfecțiune morală Iisus Hristos”. [But regarding the participation of man in theandric collaboration, we must refer to two concepts of Christian anthropology: image and likeness. Man is the actual image of God through divine creation, but man is the possible likeness of God. It is not up to man to bear the image of God or not, because this image is a given in his being, in his spiritual structure, by which he differs from all other creatures. But it depends on him whether he resembles God or not, and this possibility lies in the freedom of his will, which has in front of him the model of moral perfection Jesus Christ”]., in Nichifor Crainic, *quoted work*, p. 12.

– Being nestled at the same time on all planes of existence, from the vantage point of the highest of them all, the transcendent one, they possess unusual intelligence, manifested in interdisciplinary thinking “through concentration, focus of arguments”³⁶. This is strongly anchored “in culture and erudition” and engaged “with all passion”³⁷.

– They see life as revolving around the “categorical axis” which is the Truth stored in faith, the rural world of the village, and religion. The deeds accomplished here have a counterpart in the transcendent; hence, the impossibility of frivolity. This man is hard to get out of his senses because of the pressure of events:

“Having the categorical axis in religion, Mircea lived his everyday life passing through the days, with his reflection in the transcendent. The very history that gripped him, the very drama that tried to bring him down, could not get him out of his mind”³⁸.

– For these people, truth is more important than accuracy, and this also explains their lives as confessions (of faith) and their willingness to accept the ultimate sacrifice:

“For him, Truth was little more than could be demonstrated through science, but he conceded that science was needed in your everyday life. He reckoned that the results of the sciences had to be exact so that he could orderly operate with them in, but they were transitory, like all things exact, unlike Truth, which intrinsically remains immutable and eternal. The exact result we must know, the Truth we must recognize”³⁹.

During the trial, in his “Last Speech”, Vulcănescu wrote: “I believe in the Truth, and I know that there is no power in the world greater than the Truth!”⁴⁰.

– They are authentic. Such intelligence cannot remain in imitation and urge everyone to their own authenticity: “Probably, like Noica, who seemed a little less lenient, Mircea continued the pedagogy of Nae Ionescu who required from everyone, first of all, to be authentic. (...)”⁴¹.

³⁶ Ștefan F. Fay, *quoted work*, p. 107.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 96–97.

³⁸ „Având în religie axul categoric, Mircea trăia viața de fiecare zi ca pe o petrecere a omului prin zile, cu reflectarea lui în transcendent. Însăși istoria care-l angrena, însăși drama care încerca să-l doboare, nu-l puteau scoate din fire.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 112.

³⁹ „Pentru dânsul Adevărul era puțin altceva decât se putea demonstra prin știință, dar de știință aveai nevoie în viața de toate zilele. Socotea că rezultatele științelor trebuiau să fie exacte, ca să poată lucra cu ele în ordine, dar ele erau trecătoare, ca toate lucrurile exacte, spre deosebire de Adevăr care, intrinsec, rămâne imuabil și etern. Rezultatul exact trebuie să-l cunoaștem, Adevărul să-l recunoaștem.”, in *Ibidem*, pp. 112–113.

⁴⁰ „Eu cred în Adevăr și știu că nu e putere în lume mai mare decât Adevărul!”, Mircea Vulcănescu in *Ibidem*, p. 146.

⁴¹ „Probabil că, asemenea lui Noica, poate acesta ceva mai puțin concesiv, Mircea continua pedagogia lui Nae Ionescu care cerea fiecăruia, în primul rând, să fie autentic (...)”, in Ștefan F. Fay, *quoted work*, p. 61.

- One of the value paradigms that guide them is the peasanthood:
“The restrained and unhurried moderation of the man who knows that many things come, and many things go, seeking and finding the awaited solution, a moderation that showed more insight and foresight than the judgment of the townsman from Mircea, caught in events always waiting to happen”⁴².

- The moment they start something, they do not just finish it; they take it to its last consequence, exhausting the problem and operating, thus, using wholes:
“Every time Mircea entered the game, he spectacularly proved his ability to carry things through to the last consequence. (...) there was something from Leonardo da Vinci in his demeanor, in his multiple talents, in his intellectual vision. Maybe this stemmed from his natural and fundamental serenity. (...)”⁴³.

- Absolute generosity. You cannot be intelligent and spiritually gifted if you are not connected, as I have observed, with the rest of the world and with what it is and what it may become. This connection is not the process of staying permanently informed, but a special moral state that, as an act, is called sharing. The power of communion with the world comes from beyond the world and is called confession (of Christ, who gave Himself to the world). Fay calls this availability “generosity”:
“I think Mircea would have become sick, in the strictest sense of the word, if he had realized that on one occasion, he could have been generous and he was not”⁴⁴.

b) How does soul density manifest itself at the level of people? Networks of good (of benevolence)

Societies in which the soul density of individuals is free to manifest itself can be rightfully and truly described as having the salient features of the community of destiny; they are manifestations of love and networks of good. The answers given to the conspiracy of those who lack insight, intelligence, creativity, goodness, and generosity but are dominated by greed, will power, and the wish to dominate the rest of the people and so on (the truly inept and unfit), are the networks of good. Focusing on pivotal personalities and providing a place where encounters lead to acquiring moral knowledge and promoting acts of humanity with economic value, networks of good can reconstruct the function of institutions that are incapacitated by the conspiracy of the forces mentioned above. The economic dimension of these

⁴² „cumpătarea stăpănită și negrăbită a omului care știe că multe vin și multe se duc, căutau și găseau, astfel, soluția așteptată cu mai multă putere de perspectivă decât judecata orășeanului din Mircea, înghesuit în evenimente mereu iminente.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 41.

⁴³ „De fiecare dată când Mircea intra în joc, își dovedea spectaculos capacitatea de a duce lucrul până la ultima consecință. (...) era ceva leonardovincian în firea lui, în talentele lui multiple, în viziunea sa intelectuală, dar, în același timp, poate datorită seninătății lui funciare (...)”, in *Ibidem*, p. 88.

⁴⁴ „Eu cred că Mircea s-ar fi îmbolnăvit, în sensul cel mai strict al cuvântului, dacă și-ar fi dat seama că într-un prilej ar fi putut fi generos și nu a fost.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 54.

networks can take the form, for example, of complementary households in rural areas (each producing something else) or of micro-networks for the distribution of peasant goods that do not have access to markets controlled by the corrupt middlemen or to large stores that flood consumers with products of questionable quality. Learning from home: homeschooling is another solution to the system, this time to the toxic degradation of education.

ii. Soul (psycho-spiritual) unity

Concept launched by Dimitrie Gusti and the School of Sociology in Bucharest, professed even before Iorga through his entire activity, but also by other interwar Romanian personalities aware of the imperative for achieving a necessary psycho-spiritual unity of the Country after the First World War, between the provinces that until not long before the Great Union had revolved around foreign political and symbolic paradigms and values.

During his service as the minister of Education, Cults and Arts, immediately after the First World War, Gusti with the occasion of presenting the condition of Romanian society to the future King Carol II, introduced the concept. He took the opportunity to roll out his conception of the establishment of a “comprehensive and national culture facility”, a project that he also carried out by creating Cultural Community Centers in the villages. The focal point of the Sociological School in Bucharest, which he founded, as well as of his policy as Minister of Education, Religions and Arts (1932–1933) was precisely the psycho-spiritual unity of the Country. We extract a sequence from the presentation that Gusti made to Prince Charles II, in 1920, regarding

“the grounds and objectives of the work of the cultural upliftment of the people, and the optimal conditions for its organization (...) The happy unification of Romania with the territories freed from foreign occupation has brought a series of decisive problems for our national and state life. Undeniably, there is a cultural issue among these. Our nation had to endure, under the foreign rules that history imposed, the influence of three cultures completely different from the one that took root in the part of the country that was free: in Bessarabia, the Russian culture, and Bucovina and Transylvania, the German and Hungarian ones. Each of these cultures worked to create a soul of its own within the fragment of the Romanian population indwelling those territories. Should this process be able to follow its course to the end, we would find ourselves in a situation of four brothers alien to each other, each one going its own divergent path. The breaches affecting this spiritual realm of our people are most dangerous, and no matter how great the haste is, no sacrifice or expense is too high if they should be healed. Thus, the most important socio-political and cultural predicament that affects Romania today is the problem of soul unification.

Another serious issue is the minorities that build islands among the native Romanian population. These minorities are superiorly prepared to confront the situations they are in due to the knowledge and organization they have and to the cultural policies the states to which they belonged imparted them in comparison – policies that have endowed them with a sense of prestige and pride – with the indigenous population, which has barely escaped the pressure coming from these states, especially on the soul dimension. (...) The

second social-political aspect of this problem is the danger of domestic cultural propaganda stemming from these minorities. Finally, the upheavals of values and the great social waves caused by the war made the crowd more receptive than ever to the promises of demagoguery or the intensification of anarchic movements. To leave this crowd without guidance, a crowd that has never been to school or has shunned its influence would lead to a certain disintegration of the State and present society. The third political-social aspect is the preparation of a real democracy. Cultural intense activity, tailored to the gravity of the problem at hand, is therefore absolutely and urgently needed. The task to lay the basis for an integral national culture, abundantly armed with all means of trade and with all appropriate means of production, is exclusively incumbent on a national establishment designed for accomplishing it. This establishment would not be a competitor but a supplement and a continuation of the school and would work for the broad popular strata of people over 16 years old. The school would no longer end in emptiness but would pass on, after completing its fatally limited cycle, to specifically trained personnel, the care of civic education, and the task of raising, in the age of manhood, the cultural level in general”⁴⁵.

iii. Soul communication

Communication is more than information when it is also soulful. “Soulful communication”⁴⁶ is communication in truth, in inner truth – the truth that is

⁴⁵ „temeiurile și obiectivele muncii de ridicare culturală a poporului, precum și condițiile optime de organizare a ei (...) Fericita întregire a Țării Românești cu pământurile desrobite a adus după sine o serie de probleme, hotărâtoare pentru viața noastră națională și de Stat. Problema culturală e netăgăduit dintre acestea. Neamul nostru a avut să îndure, sub stăpânirile unde vitregia istoriei l-a aruncat, influența a trei culturi, cu totul deosebite de aceea care se înfiripa în țara liberă: în Basarabia, cultura rusă, iar în Bucovina și Ardeal, cele germană și ungară. Fiecare dintre aceste culturi lucra la alcătuirea unui suflet propriu în fragmentul de neam românesc avut la îndemână. Ne-am fi trezit, dacă procesul ar fi putut să-și urmeze până la capăt traiectoria, patru frați străini unul de altul și centrifugali. Spărturile în acest tărâm, al spiritului, sunt cele mai primejdioase, și, pentru oprirea și umplerea lor, nimic nu trebuie cruțat, oricâtă grabă nu e prea mare, nici o jertfă prea scumpă. Cel mai de seamă din aspectele social-politice ale problemei noastre culturale, e, astfel, astăzi: unificarea sufletească. Apoi, insulele de minorități din România sunt, de cele mai multe ori și datorită politicii culturale sistematice a Statelor din care au făcut parte, superior pregătite, prin cunoștințe și organizație, față de populația băștinașă înconjurătoare abia scăpată de o apăsare, efectivă cu deosebire în latura sufletească, și tari prin mândria și prestigiul date tocmai de această superioritate. (...) Al doilea aspect social-politic al problemei e: primejdia propagandei interne culturale minoritare. În sfârșit, răsturnările de valori și marile valori sociale pricinuite de războiu fac mulțimea mai primitoare decât oricând pentru făgăduielile demagogiei sau înțepirea mișcărilor anarhice. Lăsarea fără îndrumare a acestei mulțimi, neintrate de fel sau ieșite de mult din cercul de influență al școlii, ar duce la o sigură destrămare a Statului și a societății actuale. Al treilea aspect politic-social e acela al pregătirii unei democrații reale.

O activitate culturală, de o intensitate, măsurată după gravitatea problemei de deslegat, e, prin urmare, absolut și grabnic necesară. Ea trebuie să fie sarcina exclusivă a unui așezământ de cultură integrală națională, înarmat din belșug cu toate mijloacele de pricepere și cu toate mijloacele materiale convenite. Acest așezământ ar fi, nu un concurent, ci un compliment și un continuator al școlii și ar lucra pentru straturile largi populare ale oamenilor trecuți de 16 ani. Școala nu s-ar mai sfârși în gol, ci ar trece mai departe, după ce și-ar îndeplini ciclul ei, fatal mărginit, în mâini anume pregătite, grija educației cetățenești și a ridicării, în vârsta bărbăției, a nivelului în general”. in Dimitrie Gusti, „Anexa 1. Cultura poporului” [“Appendix 1. Culture of the people”] in *Sociologia Militans* [*Militans Sociology*], Bucharest, Romanian Social Institute Publishing House, 1934, pp. 442–443.

⁴⁶ Extracts from Radu Baltasiu and Ovidiana Bulumac (coord.), *Studii sociologice* [*Sociological Studies*], Vol. I, Collection of Sociological Studies, Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2015, p. 9, p. 15 and p. 31.

distributed without division, the pattern that is in each of us. Soulful communication is also the vehicle to happiness, which makes happiness possible through the rediscovery of the human being in all dimensions: the human being as a whole.

Soulful communication is the phenomenon through which human beings hold together these three components of their being: the individual, the ethereal real of what is general, and their determinations. Soulful communication recovers the religious function of communion and transposes it into everyday life in a fruitful, functional framework. It conveys meaningful information; the aim of the meaning is being the creation of utility as an act that expresses the care for the fellow man. Soulful communication represents the operationalization of the notion of communication from the perspective of Noica's "becoming into being" and of Heidegger's "authentic being". This type of communication is an expression of authenticity that connects the different levels of being described in the ontological model set up by C. Noica.

At the societal level, soulful communication takes the form of ritual, which, in its advanced formulas, is codified in the form of tradition. Tradition is transmitted information, and the framework in which it is cyclically recalled and potentiated (remultiplied) is the celebration, the sacred place of meeting through partaking/communion par excellence.

At the individual level, soulful communication takes the shape of care, manifesting itself almost completely on the three coordinates of love: *philia*, *eros*, *agape*⁴⁷.

Both formulas are brought together under the umbrella of happiness as sharing. In addition, happiness is the last step of joy, as Bernea highlights:

"As a notion, joy belongs more to morality, and happiness is a metaphysical notion. As a reality, joy is linked to our historical life; it is the very essence [of it] (...) However, happiness is linked to beliefs in a life beyond this one, an unfluctuating and permanent world, a world of permanence. It can be lived in another life cycle. In this way (...) joy exists in time, while happiness exists outside time, in eternity"⁴⁸.

At the individual level, communication takes the form of the calling. Communication is the first step in integration, a process that involves both education and work. Education entails clear communication: teaching and learning processes. Work is communication in the sense that it is also an exchange, symbolic and with concrete contents: we often work for the other, more precisely the "others" who make all the things we need to be able to live.

The initiatives that start from the soul show that the process of communication is not self-caused but is also a calling to which the individual gets access by assuming it. The communication process is, thus, part of the personal calling to become

⁴⁷ For a modern description see: Clive S. Lewis, *The four loves*, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1960.

⁴⁸ „Ca noțiune, bucuria aparține mai mult moralei, iar fericirea e o noțiune metafizică. Ca realitate bucuria este legată de viața noastră istorică, este însăși esența [acesteia] (...) Fericirea însă este legată de credința într-o viață de dincolo, lume stabilă, aceea a permanențelor, și că ea poate să fie trăită într-un alt ciclu al vieții. În acest fel (...) bucuria există în timp, pe când fericirea există în afara timpului, în eternitate”, in Ernest Bernea, *Treptele Bucuriei [Steps of Joy]*, Bucharest, Vreema Publishing House, 2008, p. 10.

something, to find a purpose, together with someone, at the workplace, and in society. The key concept here is the acknowledgment thereof and the commitment toward the calling.

- The calling is a measure of the full realization of personality within society. People who accept and act according to their calling are following the priorities of their time – as “Rădulescu-Motru” has shown. The calling thus represents another link between individuals and society.

“Obeying to one’s calling entails being receptive to the reality one lives in. A man with a vocation feels his deeds inter-linked in the reality of time, and therefore, he feels responsible for himself. (...) A man of vocation feels obliged to use every moment of time because he believes in the reality of each of these moments”⁴⁹.

- A calling represents the act by which an individual acknowledges and accepts the challenge posed by the age he or she lives in and the orientation of his/her actions toward the maximum utilization of the potential at his/her disposal, in accordance with the issues society has to face. A calling is therefore the active consciousness of an individual’s social role.

“The perfection of personality is achieved when the individual devotes his maximum of energy to the good of society with which he is endowed by nature. (...) Likewise, in culture. The culture of a people begins to achieve perfection when the treasure of dispositions, brought to the world by its members, starts to be put to work (...)”⁵⁰.

iv. The economy as needed. Moral economy

The economic activity motivated by need is the social action that procures scarce resources, goods, and services through peaceful means (Weber), integrating those resources as fully as possible into the cosmic order. Consumption is a function of determined by lack, being strongly limited by the spiritual framework of economic behavior and the cosmic Christianity discussed above (see note 2). Its prototype is the peasant economy. The needs in the peasant ecosystem are not those of the man governed by desires and lust, by the urge of accumulation, but of the thrifty and sober man because, unlike the first, which is under the “consume more = better” imperative of an exacerbated individualism, the second is under the imperative of the heavenly hierarchy of order, of individual that is root in the cosmic order and has found the

⁴⁹ „Vocația implică simțirea realității timpului. Omul cu vocație simte faptele sale înlănțuite în realitatea timpului și de aceea el se simte răspunzător față de sine însuși. (...) Omul de vocație se simte dator să utilizeze fiecare moment de timp, fiindcă el crede în realitatea fiecăruia dintre aceste momente.”, in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, „Vocația, factor hotărâtor în cultura popoarelor” [“Vocation, a decisive factor in people’s culture”], in *Personalismul energetic și alte scrieri* [*Energetic personalism and other writings*], Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House, 1984, p. 683.

⁵⁰ „Desăvârșirea personalității o ajunge omul atunci când pune în serviciul societății maximul de energie cu care a fost înzestrat de la natură. (...) Tot așa și în cultură. Cultura începe să se desăvârșească la un popor din moment ce comoara dispozițiilor, aduse pe lume de membrii săi, se pune în valoare (...)”, in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, „Personalismul energetic” [“Energetic Personalism”], in *Personalismul energetic și alte scrieri* [*Energetic Personalism and other writings*], Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House, 1984, p. 592.

meaning of his or her existence. An economy working according to needs is also called a moral economy because people work as much according to their capacities, and the fruits are shared according to needs.

The ontological difference between the two types of economies and societies – the consumer society, which is based on mass production, and the peasant society, which is based on consumption as needed – is based on the recognition of the biblical imperative: “Cursed is the ground because of you! Through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life”⁵¹. The consumer economy essentially produces convenience, while the peasant economy produces what is strictly necessary to keep humans balanced (obedience by default) with their bodies, families, and the extended social and natural ecosystem.

The peasant model has several levels: I. the peasant and the village as an anthropological pattern, II. the family household, III. the cooperative (which is not only exclusive to peasantry).

The peasant, as shown elsewhere⁵², represents a socio-anthropological and economic category with an essential role in terms of identity, being the repository of traditions, the source of the natural/normal and moral behavior in society, rooted in eternity, who does not produce for profit or salary but as breadwinner for family consumption. The peasant is an owner but not a rentier and is cannot be confused with either the proletariat or the employers (farmers, etc.).

The village, Mircea Vulcănescu noted, represents a “Organic civilization, (...) sprung directly, we do not know how, as if by itself, from the proximity of the land, from blood kinship, from the circumstances of life endured together, from the father-in-son transmission of language, manners, secrets of knowledge, and rules of behavior. A civilization in which a frugal man, with few and natural needs, aware of his nothingness compared to the fickleness of the times and the infinity of the world, lives shyly, in line with others, taking care of his honor, as well as of his soul, leading a frugal life the only drama accompanying his life being the one of his existences and of the world – in which everything happens like a dream or like a miracle. A man has nothing else to do but persevere in his self-control, fulfilling and respecting the customs inherited from the past immemorial and engrafted in his being. This attitude expresses the opposition – economically measurable by the exploitation of the village by the city – between the rural civilization of peasantry and the ‘civilization of the city’ – an artificial, hallucinatory, unnatural construct born out of the thirst for monetary speculation and the for profit, both as endless as the infinity with which money can be multiplied. A civilization of paranoids, founded on the presumption of man who fancies himself as God, but ends up worshiping the golden calf, who thinks that he can control nature, and can remold it according to the patterns of his thought – in reality, ensnared by the delusions of this civilization, man

⁵¹ „Blestemat va fi pământul pentru tine! Cu osteneală să te hrănești din el în toate zilele vieții tale”, in Genesis: 3: 17.

⁵² Ilie Bădescu and Ozana Cucu-Oancea (coord.), *quoted work*, pp. 611–612.

becomes only a tool, a tool used by who knows who, so many people being tossed around and intermingled with each other in a vortex of forces, getting confused and confounded in a myriad of ways, confusing and mixing different origins, heritages, languages, bloodlines, customs, and longings in a kind of giant Leviathan bereft of goals, direction and horizon. Thus, man no longer can collect himself by getting in communion with his fellows nor can he offer a coherent attitude in the face of the powers he has senselessly unleashed in the world like the sorcerer's apprentice. Aiming to conquer the world, he loses his soul, and at the end 'the angel ends turning the millstone' (Maritain)⁵³.

The household is the economic component of the (peasant) family in which everyone contributes as much as they can and consumes as needed. It is an element of the economic reproduction of society through inheritance and is the primary source of property rights, without which we cannot speak of order, therefore, by society.

The cooperative. This is not peasant-like. The cooperative is an economic tool that emerged as society's reaction to the immorality of capital. One of its main functions was to help to uplift and improve the social conditions in which the peasantry was forced to live. The followers of the Romanian cooperative movement agree that

"The peasant issue is certainly, for the most part, a problem of education, of enlightening the villagers on their rights and duties, on how they should run their interests, and since the cooperative movement is the only one called to perform this apostolic role, completing its holy with entails to do it selflessly and with freedom of action, which is what the difficult life circumstances we are going through demand"⁵⁴.

⁵³ „civilizația organică, (...) izvorâtă de-a dreptul, nu se știe cum, ca de la sine, din vecinătatea de pământ, din rudenia de sânge, din împrejurările de viață îndurate laolaltă, din trecerea din tată-n fiu a limbii, a portului, a tainelor cunoașterii și a rânduieilor purtării. O civilizație în care un om cumpătat, cu nevoi puține și firești, știutor de nimicnicia lui față de nestatornicia vremurilor și față de nesfârșirea lumii, trăiește sfios, în rând cu alții, cu grija de obraz, ca și de suflet, o viață cumpănită – fără altă dramă decât cea metafizică a ființei lui și-a lumii – în care, totul petrecându-se ca-n vis, sau ca-n minune, omul n-are altceva de făcut decât să stăruiască în stăpânirea lui de sine, împlinind rânduieile moștenite ale fapturii lui. Aceasta este în opoziție – măsurabilă economic prin exploatarea satului de către oraș cu «civilizația orașului» – o civilizație artificială, halucinantă, nefirească, izvorâtă din setea de speculație bănească și din setea de câștig, nesfârșite amândouă ca și nesfârșirea cu care se poate înmulți banul. O civilizație de paranoiici, întemeiată pe prezumțiozitatea omului care s-a năzărit pe sine însuși Dumnezeu și a ajuns să se-nchine vițelului de aur, închipuindu-și că poate stăpâni firea, recreându-o după calapoadele gândului său; – dar în care, vai, omul nu e decât o uncaltă, o sculă nu se știe bine-n slujba cui, atât se amestecă și se-ncurcă-n zeci de chipuri oamenii unii cu alții, amestecând baștinile, limbile, sângele, obiceiurile, năzuințele într-un fel de uriaș Leviathan fără cârmă, fără țel și fără zare. Omul nu se mai astfel aduna nici de semeni, nici de puterile pe care le-a dezlănțuit – biet ucenic vrăjitor – în neștire. Năzuind a cuceri lumea, își pierde sufletul, «îngerul ajungând să învârtească piatra moară» (Maritain)", in Mircea Vulcănescu, „Puțină sociologie” [“A Little Sociology”], in Mircea Vulcănescu, *Prolegomene sociologice la satul românesc* [*Sociological Prolegomena to the Romanian Village*], ed. edited by Marian Diaconu, Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House, 1997, pp. 124–125.

⁵⁴ „chestiunea țărănească e desigur în mare parte o problemă de educație, de luminare a sătenilor asupra drepturilor și datoriilor lor, a chipului în care trebuie să-și conducă interesele, și întru-cât mișcarea cooperativă e singura chemată a îndeplini acest rol apostolic, desăvârșindu-și misiunea sfântă ce o are de îndeplinit cu toată desinteresarea și libertatea de acțiune, ce le reclamă grelele împrejurări de viață prin cari trecem.”, in Alexandru Cusin, *Cooperativa sătească în România. Studiu critic* [*Rural cooperatives in Romania. Critical study*], Bucharest, Romanian Typography, 1912, p. 31.

cooperative enterprises, which by its nature should start from the private sector, is, at the present moment in our country, a state affair (...)”⁵⁷.

Cooperation is part of the moral economy for the aforementioned reasons (it restores the economic dignity of the person and the freedom of nations) but also because it sets in order the relationship between demand and supply, “by subordinating production to the needs of consumption”⁵⁸. Therefore, the purpose of economic activity shifts from making a profit to working as needed. Last but not least, cooperation is moral because it makes the worker the owner of the means of production and, thus, enacts real emancipation of the individuals, in opposition to socialism and communism, which only proclaim the emancipation of the working class⁵⁹.

Cooperatives are of several types: consumer, credit, and production. All, however, rediscover the medieval equilibrium of the fair price (“justum pretium”), thus freeing society from the burden of various forms of profit made “on the back of the consumer”⁶⁰.

In the presentation of the cooperative program, Mladenatz concludes:

“This short definition of a cooperative program – the fair price – circumscribes the double characteristic of cooperation: economic and moral. First, the economic one, because the ‘legitimate price’ means the removal of all parasitic elements of the current economic regime, which causes prices to rise above the cost price. (...) The formula of the just price also considers the moral side of cooperation, which consists in the fact that it condemns all the means by which commerce has always tried to falsify both goods and prices”⁶¹.

V. SHORT CONCLUSION

The geopolitics of the spirit (noological geopolitics) deals with several levels of our sociability and personality: the first is sociality and personality itself – the ability to be social beings, by bringing back to light and claiming a fundamental spiritual reality that was forgotten or ignored – the inner impulse to guard our mind

⁵⁷ „La noi, e vorba ca ea, cooperația, să contribuie la deslegarea problemei noastre de existență națională, prin recucerirea pozițiilor pierdute, în domeniul economiei sociale, dela care poporul românesc, în propria lui țară, a fost înlăturat, prin suprindere, de către străini, și fără de care el nu poate trăi. (...) [C]ooperația e astăzi măsura economică cea mai importantă – în multe privinți, chiar singura eficientă, pentru educația noastră economică și pentru reconstituirea organului, esențial, al clasei de mijloc naționale. De aceea tocmai, care, după natura ei, trebuie să pornească de la inițiativa privată la noi, în momentele de față, e și o afacere de stat. (...)”, in A.C. Cuza, „Rostul Cooperăției în România” [“The Purpose of Cooperation in Romania”], in Alexandru Cusin, *quoted work*, pp. 15–16.

⁵⁸ „prin subordonarea producției nevoilor consumului”, in Gromoslav Mladenatz, *quoted work*, p. 195.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

⁶⁰ „pe spinarea consumatorului”, in *Ibidem*, p. 173.

⁶¹ „Această scurtă definiție a programului cooperatist, prețul just, circumscrie deci dubla caracteristică a cooperației: economică și morală. Mai întâi cea economică, căci «prețul legitim» înseamnă înlăturarea tuturor elementelor parazitare ale regimului economic actual, cari pricinuesc urcarea prețurilor peste prețul de cost. (...) Formula prețului just are în vedere în același timp și latura morală a cooperației, care constă în aceea că ea condamnă toate mijloacele prin cari negoțul întotdeauna a încercat să falsifice în același timp mărfurile și prețurile”, in *Ibidem*.

(watchfulness) – where I mentioned soul density; the second addresses the level of society – and here we discuss the unity and communication of the soul and the moral economy, and the last one is that of the state, based on the interlocking inner powers of citizens and institutions – makers of the community of destiny.

This material is also an exhortation toward the act of restoring the power of European culture stemming from the Carpathian Stronghold. We have this right because it is necessary to be not only receivers of models, but also promoters of paradigms of decent human ways of indwelling this world. To do that is necessary to restore in both our individual mind and hearts and in our public consciousness the honor of our culture and civilization, and then to infuse this restored value in the political and administrative behavior of the state, in its blood and reflexes.

We are convinced that only with the awakening of each of us will we transform Romania into a Carpathian Fortress, and we will be able to offer a support against the global disorder.

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Motto:
“the soul of a nation is as alive as its culture”⁶².

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE TODAY

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Narcis Rupe⁶⁴

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the crucial importance of culture for the harmonious development of individuals and society in a context in which the Romanian state values less and less this field. Neither man nor society can live outside culture, except in degrading and anomic forms, as Emile Durkheim would say, because culture generates social order, which is vital for survival. To demonstrate this idea, I first conceptually clarify the idea of culture and then highlight its significance. After establishing this, I will try to answer the question “How much money do we spend on culture today?”. As I see that at least in Romania, culture has an insignificant “budgetary importance”, I will conclude by underlining the disastrous effects of the financial neglect of culture.

Keywords: culture, society, budget, ignorance, crisis.

I. SHORT INTRODUCTION

The premise of this material, which is about society and social structure, is based on the idea that society is a cultural reality⁶⁵. From this perspective, culture is a key element that holds us together and helps us to progress, both individually and collectively. Considering that human biological survival is impossible in the absence of culture, there is no doubt that culture should receive the necessary attention, including financial support. Therefore, in the following, I will show that the importance of culture, which is, as I have said, vital for the survival and development of societies, is in an inverse proportionality relationship with the budgets allocated to it by the state, which has immediate and serious effects.

⁶² „atâta realitate are sufletul unui popor, câtă cultură are el”, in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Cultura română și politicianismul [Romanian culture and politicianism]*, Socec, 1904, p. 736.

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⁶⁵ Radu Baltasiu, *Introducere în sociologie. Spiritualitate, națiune și capitalism. Considerații de sociologie românească și weberiană [Introduction to sociology. Spirituality, nation and capitalism. Considerations of Romanian and Weberian Sociology]*, Craiova, Beladi Publishing House, 2007, p. 170.

II. WHAT IS CULTURE? THEORETICAL CLARIFICATIONS

Culture refers to a logical system “that makes possible understanding between people, the production of things and services, social coherence and stability”⁶⁶.

In other words, culture is “a set of shared meanings that circumscribes the social space”⁶⁷; “the totality of learned and socially transmitted behaviours”⁶⁸; “the totality of patterns of thought, attitude and action that characterize a population or a society”⁶⁹.

Culture refers to the experience and knowledge that man records in his collective memory⁷⁰. It is “the sine qua non-of humanity”⁷¹ and “the foundation of social relations, and social relations make life itself possible”⁷².

From a Gustian perspective, culture contributes essentially to the structure of society. The two elements through which it accomplishes this is ideal and personality. Social reality is the fruit of social will; social actuality is the result of a community of will. In other words, social will is the element without which societies would not have actuality. The actualization of society depends on our ideals, i.e., on the community that we assume through our personality. Therefore, Dimitrie Gusti introduces the concept of cultural personality as a factor of social actualization through social will. Therefore, personality is also “cultural” because the development of an individual and society are culturally conditioned processes mediated by the process of socialization. We thus understand socialization as “actualized culture”. The opportunity for the correct structuring of society, social justice, and individual dignity is provided by the establishment of the cultural state, which is an institutional ensemble based on cultural personality and vocation⁷³. Intelligence, coping skills, communion, faith, and identity are just a few typical human phenomena that cannot exist outside culture. Therefore, culture is more than the actual way in which individuals relate to each other; it is also about experiences and how it is transmitted⁷⁴.

In Nichifor Crainic’s conception, culture is the totality of the creations of human genius. It has no meaning in itself but is integrated into religious conceptions. It radiates from faith, like the flame from a blazing fire⁷⁵. Culture also has a prophetic

⁶⁶ „care face posibilă înțelegerea dintre oameni, producerea de lucruri și servicii, coerența și stabilitatea socială”, in *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁶⁷ „un ansamblu de semnificații comune, care circumscrie spațiul social”, in *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁶⁸ „reprezintă totalitatea comportamentelor învățate și social transmise”, in Richard Schaefer and Robert Lamm, *Student’s guide to accompany Schaefer, Sociology*, second edition, McGraw Hill, 1986, p. 28.

⁶⁹ „ansamblul modelelor de gândire, atitudine și acțiune care caracterizează o populație sau o societate”, in Ioan Mihăilescu, *Sociologie generală. Concepte fundamentale și studii de caz [General sociology. Fundamental concepts and case studies]*, Bucharest, University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2000, p. 55.

⁷⁰ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 193.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 202.

⁷² Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, HBJ, 1966, p. 248, in *Ibidem*.

⁷³ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, pp. 188–189.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 190.

⁷⁵ Nichifor Crainic, „Modul teandric” [“Teandric mode”], in *Gândirea Journal*, January 1941, in Nichifor Crainic, *Nostalgia paradisului [Paradise nostalgia]*, Iași, Moldova Publishing House, 1994, p. V.

meaning, similar to the Christian doctrine of the finality of life and eternal order⁷⁶. It is through culture that man transcends his nature⁷⁷, that is, he is saved. For Nichifor Crainic, culture necessarily implies “the original mode of our ethnic personality. Its law cannot be imitation but autochthony. We define culture as the total of those developments of the spirit that are born spontaneously and have no claim to universal or constraining valorization (...) The spontaneous character attributed to the creations of culture in this definition shows us their intimate connection with the very essence of the spirit, that is, freedom. Culture is not decreed; it is born. This birth, which is usually called inspiration, is always a mystery that neighbors divinity and eludes attempts at explanation. But once born, culture can guide itself [and us]”⁷⁸.

In other words, our chance to be free and to recover our lost paradise is cultural because culture “is a symbolic relationship with the transcendent”⁷⁹. This is why Nichifor Crainic sees culture as “an irradiation of the flame of the worship of God, as a concretization in objective forms of the religious essence”⁸⁰.

III. WHY IS CULTURE IMPORTANT?

i. Individual level

Culture has a vital role in the liberation of individual vocations because it is only through culture that the individual discovers their true potential and can direct it toward their highest values: family, country, and God. It is only through culture that individuals acquire self-awareness of their capabilities and maximize their aptitudes and abilities.

Culture plays an essential role in human existence because “the soul of a nation is as alive as its culture”⁸¹. A healthy person can only develop in a healthy culture. Therefore, developing the health of the individual means improving society, which can only be achieved through culture⁸².

Personality shapes social reality. Although its vector is the individual, it sets goals in terms of social unity. We can therefore say that the social existence of an

⁷⁶ Nichifor Crainic, *Nostalgia paradisului [Paradise nostalgia]*, Iași, Moldova Publishing House, 1994, p. 13.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁷⁸ „modul original al personalității noastre etnice. Legea ei nu poate fi imitația, ci autohtonă. Cultură numim întreaga sumă a acelor dezvoltări ale spiritului, care se nasc spontan și nu au nicio pretenție la o valorificare universală sau constrângătoare (...) Caracterul de spontaneitate atribuit creațiilor de cultură în această definiție ne arată legătura lor intimă cu însăși esența spiritului, care e libertatea. Cultura nu se decretează, ea se naște. Nașterea aceasta, care se numește de obicei inspirație, e de-a pururea o taină vecină cu divinitatea, ce scapă încercărilor de explicație. Dar odată născută, cultura se [și ne] poate călăuzi”, in *Ibidem*, p. 26.

⁷⁹ „este un raport simbolic cu înălțimea transcendentă”, in *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁸⁰ „o irradiație din flacăra adorării lui Dumnezeu, ca o concretizare în forme obiective a esenței religioase”, in *Ibidem*, p. 34.

⁸¹ „atâta realitate are sufletul unui popor, câtă cultură are el”, in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *quoted work*, p. 736.

⁸² Ion Ungureanu, *Paradigme ale cunoașterii societății [Paradigms of societal knowledge]*, Bucharest, Junimea Publishing House, 2002, p. 53.

individual is conditioned by the development of his personality⁸³. Dimitrie Gusti says that there are two principles that guide the development of personality and make it cultural, namely the principles of normative ethics:

1. "Act in such a way that in every moment of your action you reach the maximum realization of your personality"⁸⁴.
2. "Reach the maximum actuality of your personality, to develop it for creating the highest cultural values"⁸⁵.

The shaping power of values on individuals is determined by the level of internalized humanity, *i.e.*, how much a person is concerned about others' well-being. Values that correspond to society, nation, and humanity are cultural values⁸⁶. Thus, the ordering power of culture is also given by its ability to bring people together and hold them together in a moral way, thus creating solidarity.

ii. Community level

Culture is an ordering factor as it ensures the coherence of communities and large social groups⁸⁷. The form that order has taken over time, great successes or failures are determined by culture⁸⁸. Therefore, we can say that culture is the source of social order. The function expresses a set of maxims based on the orientation of individual interactions. Thus, order is the common denominator of subjectivities, having the capacity to organize in a predictable manner⁸⁹.

Sociality and sociability are the main concepts through which sociology explains an individual's relationship with society. Sociality refers to an individual's intrinsic ability to live collectively, while sociability refers to an individual's ability to integrate into a collective. On the other hand, sociability is the form that sociality takes in different types of civilizations and cultures. In other words, the individual's need to live in collectivities (sociality) manifests itself in different forms of soul aggregation (of culture) and material aggregation (of civilization)⁹⁰.

Ion Ungureanu demonstrated that sociability is "the individual variation or measure of sociality"⁹¹. Furthermore, sociability "measures, through the aspects of culture and civilization that it acquires over time, not only the individual abilities of integration, but the type and strength of social cohesion as a whole"⁹².

⁸³ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 182.

⁸⁴ „Acționează astfel încât în fiecare clipă a acțiunii tale să atingi realizarea maximală a personalității tale”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *Opere [Works]*, Vol. II, Bucharest, Academy Publishing House, 1969, p. 37.

⁸⁵ „Atinge actualitatea maximală a personalității tale, spre a o desfășura pentru crearea celor mai înalte valori culturale”, in *Ibidem*.

⁸⁶ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 182.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 170.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 176.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

⁹¹ „variația sau măsura individuală a socialității”, in Ion Ungureanu, *quoted work*, p. 62.

⁹² „măsoară prin aspectele de cultură și civilizație pe care le capătă în timp, nu numai abilitățile individuale de integrare, ci tipul și tăria coeziunii sociale în ansamblul său”, in Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 93.

Culture is, as we have demonstrated, a key concept for the social order because society is based on it, as are adaptive or institution-building processes. In short, relations between people, between individuals and society, the very idea of society is culture⁹³. Last but not least, culture is our potential and capacity to adapt to the environment through which we adapt to our needs. In other words, culture refers to the potential for innovation, discovery, and invention, which are fundamental to the progress of a society⁹⁴.

iii. State level

The ordering function of culture is maintained at the individual, community, and state levels. The expression of cultural order in a state is the cultural state. This is a sociological and geopolitical concept introduced into universal culture by “Junimea” at the end of the 19th century. The cultural state is the response of the elites of a backward society to the competition for development. The cultural component refers to competence in society and the state. The Romanian state has an essential geostrategic role because it is a state of European necessity at the mouths of the Danube, *i.e.*, a mandatory factor of order in the Danube and Black Sea areas. For this natural Romanian role to be useful to Romanians, Gusti points out that the state must be based on a hierarchy of competences, thus becoming a cultural state⁹⁵.

The cultural state has the mission of organizing competences, coagulating the initiatives of different departments, and creating a higher culture concerned with the promotion of science, literature, and art. This will put it in direct connection with the culture of the people, which is concerned with spreading the benefits of science, literature, and art to the common people⁹⁶. In other words, the cultural state is “the mediator between the higher culture and the needs of the community”⁹⁷, but also the form of organization in which “politics is based on knowledge”⁹⁸. On the other hand, the cultural state is a structure that organizes work through knowledge of the real needs of society. At the level of the social system, the cultural state is centered on the hierarchy of competences, which makes possible the just or fair character of government⁹⁹.

As long as we have a functional hierarchy of competences, we can talk about justice and therefore social order. However, Constantin Rădulescu Motru warns us that only goods that are actual are real¹⁰⁰. Only true culture exists in the consciousness of a society, making it an element of prime necessity for developing a nation¹⁰¹. The cultural state is the institutional framework within which the work

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 189.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 191.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 213–214.

⁹⁶ Dimitrie Gusti, *Opere [Works]*, Vol. III, Bucharest, Academy Publishing House, 1970, p. 239.

⁹⁷ „mijlocitorul dintre cultura superioară și nevoile comunității”, in Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 231.

⁹⁸ „politica se întemeiază pe cunoaștere”, in *Ibidem*, p. 250.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 214.

¹⁰⁰ Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *quoted work*, pp. 51–52.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

and life of the community are organized according to the principle of scientific knowledge of reality and satisfying the real needs of society¹⁰². Therefore, culture is of vital importance to the state because it generates and maintains social order by organizing work according to competence criteria.

IV. HOW MUCH MONEY DO WE SPEND ON CULTURE TODAY?

i. Romania

Over the years, in Romania, no more than 1% of the total budget has been allocated to culture. In 2018, spending on culture as a proportion of GDP was around the European average of around 0,4% of GDP. Over the last 3 years, the money allocated to culture has been declining continuously. In 2020, due to the pandemic situation, only 0,39% of the total budget was allocated to the three institutions responsible for cultural services (the Ministry of Culture, the Romanian Academy and the Romanian Cultural Institute)¹⁰³. In 2022, the budget allocated to culture represented 0,1% of Gross Domestic Product¹⁰⁴. In 2021, the budget proposal for the Ministry of Culture was 980,94 million lei, compared to 880,83 million lei in 2020. The ministry's budget estimate for 2022 was 843,4 million lei, for 2023, 829,6 million lei, and for 2024, 835,9 million lei¹⁰⁵.

The share of state budget expenditure allocated to the Ministry of Culture decreased constantly from 0,41% in 2017 to 0,18% in 2020 (Chart 1). Over the four years, the budget for culture almost halved in percentage terms, but in absolute values, the allocated amounts increased by more than 100 million lei, from 630 million lei to 774 million lei (Chart 2). Thus, although the expenditure in absolute values increased both in the state budget and in the budget of the Ministry of Culture, the ratio between these two indicators shows that between 2017 and 2021, the amounts allocated to the Ministry of Culture accounted for an increasingly smaller share of the state budget¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰² Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 229.

¹⁰³ „Câți bani au fost alocați pentru cultură în ultimii 4 ani?” [“How much money has been allocated to culture in the last 4 years?”], in *Wall Street*, n.d., Available at: <https://www.wallstreet.ro/articol/Social/266786/cati-bani-au-fost-alocati-pentru-cultura-in-ultimii-4-ani.html>, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

¹⁰⁴ G4Media Newsroom, „Bugetul alocat Culturii, pentru 2022, reprezintă 0,1% din Produsul Intern Brut, fiind cu 45% mai mare decât în 2021” [“The budget allocated to culture in 2022 represents 0,1% of Gross Domestic Product, 45% more than in 2021”], in *G4Media*, December 24, 2021, Available at: <https://www.g4media.ro/bugetul-alocat-culturii-pentru-2022-reprezinta-01-din-produsul-intern-brut-fiind-cu-45-mai-mare-decat-in-2021.html>, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

¹⁰⁵ Patricia Marinescu, „Bugetul Ministerului Culturii, creștere de 12% în 2021 – proiect” [“Ministry of Culture budget, 12% increase in 2021 – draft”], in *News*, February 12, 2021, Available at: <https://www.news.ro/cultura-media/bugetul-ministerului-culturii-crestere-de-12-in-2021-proiect-1922405612002021021119972066>, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

¹⁰⁶ *Finanțarea culturii la nivel național și local (2005–2020) [Culture financing at national and local level (2005–2020)]*, p. 3.

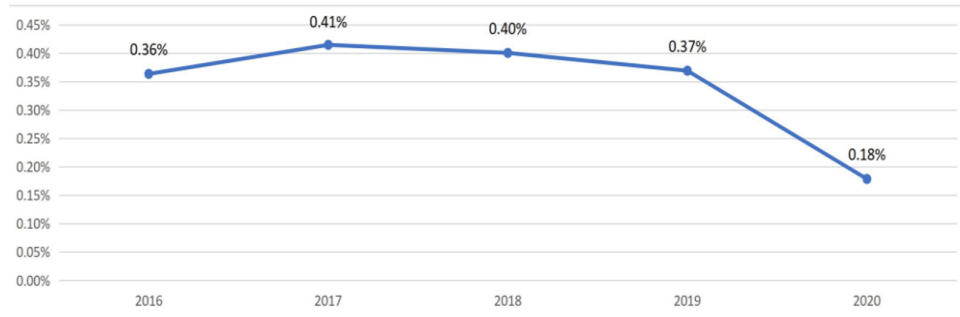


Chart 1. Expenditures of the Ministry of Culture as a percentage of state budgets expenditure¹⁰⁷.

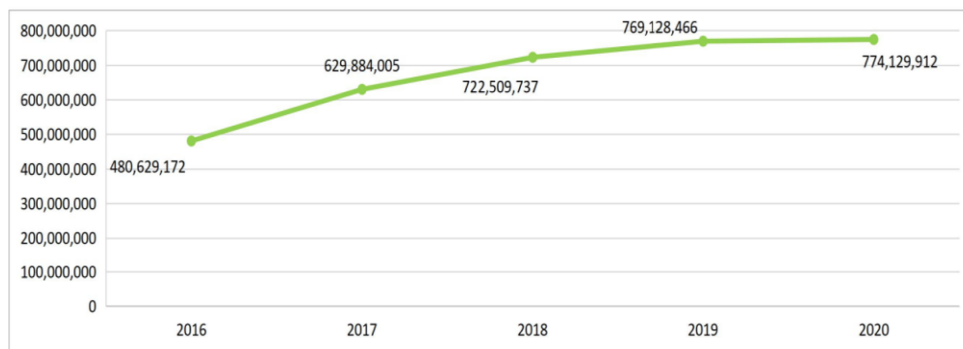


Chart 2. Ministry of Culture expenditure nominal values in lei¹⁰⁸

In rural areas, the amount spent on culture has shown a general trend of slow growth compared to municipalities and cities in Romania. However, for almost 20 years, from 2000 to 2017, spending on culture has not reached 100 lei/year/inhabitant¹⁰⁹.

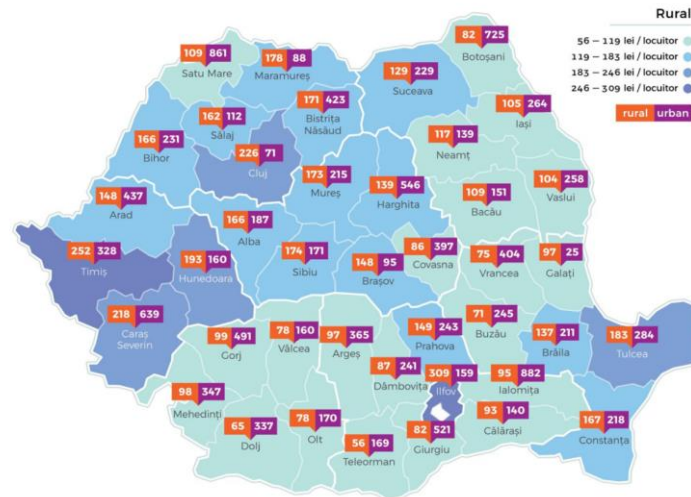
The rural environment has exceeded this level since 2018, reaching 129 lei per inhabitant in 2020. For comparison with the urban environment, in 2020, Bucharest allocated 686 lei per inhabitant for culture, the other municipalities allocated a little over a third of this amount, and the cities allocated 249 lei per inhabitant¹¹⁰. We note that the money allocated to the cultural dimension is insufficient in relation to the needs and importance it has in people's lives and for the advancement of society.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 6.



Map 1. Spending on culture per capita – rural compared to urban (in 2020)¹¹¹.

ii. Comparison with other countries

Overall EU public spending on “recreation, culture and religion” amounted to €162 billion or 1,2% of EU GDP in 2019. In the same year, Hungary allocates 3% of its GDP, Estonia allocates 2% (with the highest allocations), and Romania allocates only 1%¹¹².

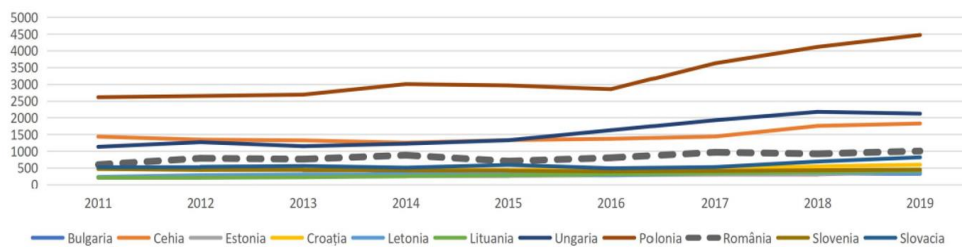


Chart 3. Evolution of public expenditure on “cultural services” and “broadcasting and publishing services” (2011–2019, million euro)¹¹³.

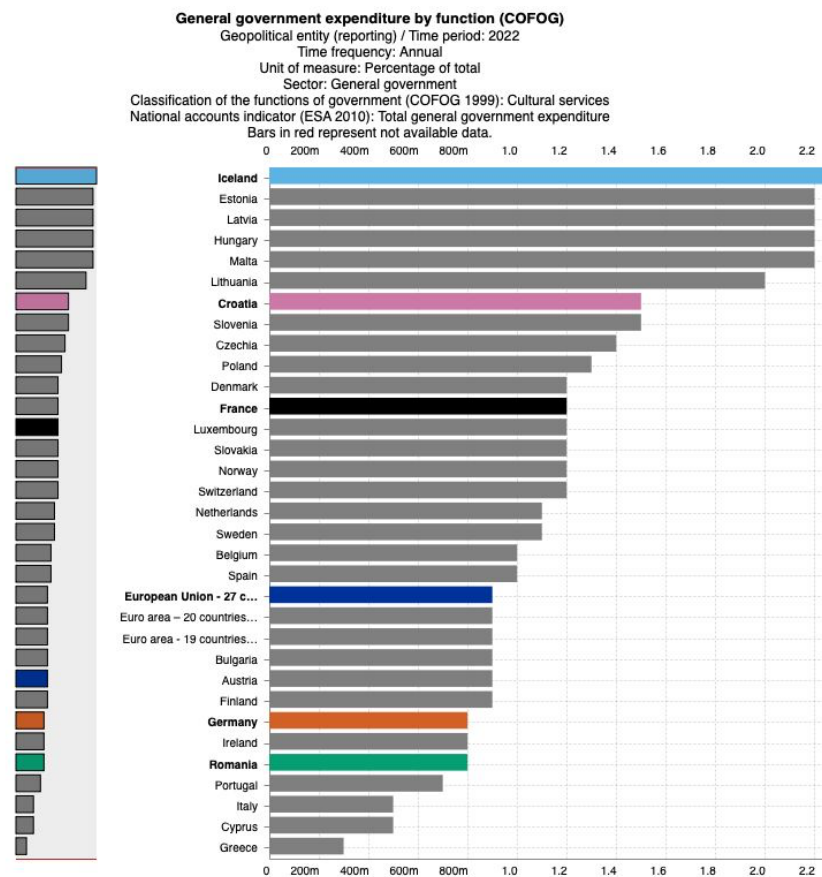
Between 2007 and 2014, the European average per capita spending on culture was 107 euro (about 450 lei, based on the average exchange rate for that period). In Eastern Europe, the average per capita spending on culture during the same period was the around 50 euro (about 210 lei). Thus, the average per capita spending on culture in Romania (165 lei) was about one-third of the European average and about

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 7.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*.

50 lei lower than the average for Eastern Europe¹¹⁴. The government allocates one of the lowest percentages to culture (0,8% of the public budget), placing Romania, for example, at the bottom of the European ranking in 2022 (26th out of 30 countries recorded by Eurostat):



Source of data: Eurostat (online data code: gov_10a_exp)
 Last update: 22/07/2024 11:00



This graph has been created automatically by ESTAT/EC software according to external user specifications for which ESTAT/EC is not responsible.
 General disclaimer of the EC website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/legal-notice_en.html

Chart 4 – based on data provided by Eurostat¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ Eurostat, “General government expenditure by function (COFOG)”, July 22, 2024, Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/gov_10a_exp\\$dv_578/default/bar?lang=en&category=cult.cult_gov](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/gov_10a_exp$dv_578/default/bar?lang=en&category=cult.cult_gov), Accessed on September 3, 2024.

V. THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING CULTURE

i. Theory explaining the link between culture and other social branches: Dimitrie Gusti's law of sociological parallelism

The theory that makes it possible to understand social logic is the Gustian theory of frames and manifestations because it is the only theory that can cover the entire reality in real time. For Dimitrie Gusti, reality is made up of frames and manifestations, and the relationship between them is called the "law of sociological parallelism"¹¹⁶. The manifestations are economic, spiritual, political, and legal, and the frameworks are cosmological, biological, psychological, and historical. There is a parallelism between them: between frames, between manifestations, and between frames and manifestations¹¹⁷. This means that when we have an imbalance in one area, its effects will be felt in all other areas. For example, we understand the investment problem if we understand the attitudes of capital-owning classes. In other words, we can understand the economic action of those with money if we first understand their economic ethics. Mihai Eminescu, Max Weber, and Mihail Manoilescu have demonstrated that where the culture of money is centered on saving, advanced and prosperous democracies emerge, and where the culture of money in the ruling classes is centered on luxury consumption, we will experience underdevelopment, value disorientation among young people, and social depression in general. This is an example of the cultural conditioning of an indicator that is only apparently "economic". Any indicator also has serious sociological and cultural components. This is why policies of any kind that are out of the spirit often lead to disaster¹¹⁸.

ii. Concrete effects: A few statistics to illustrate the crisis that our country is facing – basically cultural

Social reality is determined by will, which in turn "is formed by culture and can be blocked by destroying culture"¹¹⁹. This means that we cannot speak of state, society or civilization without culture, except in its degraded form. For example, a state without culture becomes oligarchy; the "outside culture" would become a mass with minimal identity, and civilization becomes a historical impossibility¹²⁰. Malinowski calls sociocultural responses to social problems functions. He points out that in any culture, there are at least four response functions to the imperatives of survival through which the social order is secured: economic, social, educational and

¹¹⁶ Radu Baltasiu, *Dosarul de problemă – instrument științific și instituție pentru relația dintre statul român și comunitățile istorice [The issue dossier – scientific tool and institution for the relationship between the Romanian state and historical communities]*, manuscript, 2023, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Dimitrie Gusti, *Sociologia militans. Introducere în sociologia politică [Militans sociology. Introduction to political sociology]*, Vol. I, Bucharest, Romanian Social Institute Publishing House, 1934, pp. 45–46.

¹¹⁸ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 52.

¹¹⁹ „se formează prin cultură și poate fi blocată prin distrugerea culturii”, in *Ibidem*, p. 131.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

political¹²¹. Since the “budgetary importance” given to culture is very low in general and in Romania in particular, I will review some statistical data indicating a number of dysfunctions in the four responses identified by Branislav Malinovski, with the mention that they are not the only ones. I will use this approach to demonstrate that the source of social disorder at the economic, social, educational, and political levels is cultural after all.

Considering the economy, the undervaluation of culture is reflected in indicators such as inflation, indebtedness, and the borrowing rate. Eurostat data showed that in August 2024, Romania had, for the sixth month in a row, the highest inflation in the EU – 5,3%, while the EU average was almost half (2,8%)¹²². Max Weber pointed out that inflation “is always and first a tool to increase purchasing power for certain interests”¹²³.

Inflation is thus “the result of serious social imbalances between the dominant interests of political and financial circles, between them and the rest of the population”¹²⁴.

On the other hand, in May 2023, Romania’s public debt reached 50,1% of GDP¹²⁵, exceeding for the first time in history the 700 billion lei threshold, being twice as high as at the end of 2018 and three times higher than 10 years ago. In other words, at that time, each Romanian owed €7.500¹²⁶. Last but not least, interest expenditure tripled in just 3 years, from 12,1 billion lei in 2021 to more than 36 billion lei in 2023. Governments have paid an equivalent of €50 billion in interest over the past 25 years. Almost half of this amount has been accumulated in the last five years¹²⁷. This is (also) explained by Romania, which has been borrowing more than 10 years at the highest interest rates in Europe¹²⁸. As a result, debt increases

¹²¹ Ion Ungureanu, *quoted work*, p. 50.

¹²² Digi 24 Newsroom, „România a avut cea mai mare inflație din UE pentru a șasea lună la rând” [“Romania had the highest inflation in the EU for the sixth month in a row”], in *Digi 24*, September 18, 2024, Available at: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/romania-a-avut-cea-mai-mare-inflatie-din-ue-pentru-a-sasealunalarand2934287>, Accessed on September 18, 2024.

¹²³ Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, University of California Press, Vol. I and II, 1978, p. 133.

¹²⁴ „rezultatul unor grave dezechilibre sociale între interesele dominante ale cercurilor politico-financiare, între acestea și restul populației”, in Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 320.

¹²⁵ Profit Newsroom, „Datoria publică a depășit din nou 50% din PIB” [“Public debt has again exceeded 50% of GDP”], in *Profit*, July 26, 2023, Available at: <https://www.profit.ro/taxe-si-consultanta/datoria-publica-a-depasit-din-nou-50-din-pib-21266309>, Accessed on August 9, 2024.

¹²⁶ 60m Newsroom, „Guvernele PSD, PNL, USR și UDMR au îndatorat fiecare român cu 7.500 de euro” [“The PSD, PNL, USR and UDMR governments have indebted each Romanian with 7.500 euro”], in *60m*, May 18, 2023, Available at: <https://60m.ro/2023/05/18/guvernele-psd-pnl-usr-si-udmr-au-indatorat-fiecare-roman-cu-7-500-de-euro-datorii-de-peste-700-de-miliarde/>, Accessed on August 11, 2024.

¹²⁷ Alexandru Pop, „707 miliarde de lei a ajuns datoria publică a României, depășind 50% din produsul intern brut” [“Romania’s public debt has reached 707 billion lei, exceeding 50% of GDP”], in *Newsweek*, June 7, 2023, Available at: <https://newsweek.ro/economie/707-miliarde-lei-datoria-romaniei>, Accessed on August 11, 2024.

¹²⁸ Agerpres Newsroom, „VIDEO Ministrul Finanțelor: România se împrumută la cele mai mari dobânzi din Europa de 10 ani, poate și mai mult” [“VIDEO Finance Minister: Romania has been borrowing at the highest interest rates in Europe for 10 years, maybe more”], in *Agerpres*, April 21, 2022, Available at: <https://www.agerpres.ro/economic-intern/2022/04/21/video-ministrul-finantelor-romania-se-imprumuta-la-cele-mai-mari-dobanzi-din-europa-de-10-ani-poate-si-maimult906513>, Accessed on August 11, 2024.

annually by 20 billion lei from the increase in interest. All this is happening while other countries borrow at much lower interest rates: Bulgaria for example borrows six times cheaper¹²⁹. We therefore see how these financial indicators, stripped of their cultural component, lead to poverty, a lower standard of living, and increasing dissatisfaction with life.

From a social perspective, I will review only a few socio-demographic dynamics to outline the significant decline that we are facing. Data from the National Institute of Statistics showed that in 2023, Romania recorded the lowest number of births in the last 100 years: only 155.000 new-borns, whereas the number of deaths was almost double, amounting to around 250.000. With a negative natural increase, we lose about one million people every 10 years¹³⁰. Another factor that has had a negative influence on the demographic decline we are facing is the recent massive emigration of Romanians. Romanian emigration has become a major social and economic phenomenon. The remarkable size of the Romanian diaspora places Romania in fifth place in the world¹³¹. According to official data, in 2019, there were 9,7¹³² million Romanians living outside Romania's borders, of which 5,6¹³³ million were in the diaspora, *i.e.*, about 58%. Unofficially, PMP deputy Constantin Codreanu claimed that the number of Romanians living abroad in 2019 exceeded 12 million¹³⁴.

¹²⁹ Gabriela Ținteanu, „România se împrumută cel mai scump dintre țările UE. Datoria crește anual cu 20 de miliarde de lei din majorarea dobânzii. Bulgaria se împrumută de șase ori mai ieftin” [“Romania is borrowing the most expensive among EU countries. 20 billion lei a year in debt increases due to higher interest rates. Bulgaria borrows six times cheaper”], in *Economica*, April 17, 2022, Available at: https://www.economica.net/romania- cea- mai- mare- dobanda- din- ue- la- titlurile- pe- 10- ani- datoria- creste- cu 20 de miliarde de lei doar din majorarea dobanzii- bulgaria se imprumuta de sase ori mai ieftin_576922.html, Accessed on June 21, 2024.

¹³⁰ Tamara Ceaicovschi, „STUDIUL. 150.000 de copii s-au născut anul trecut în România. Este cel mai mic număr de nașteri din 1924 încolo” [“STUDY. 150.000 babies were born in Romania last year. The lowest number of births since 1924”], in *Aleph News*, February 13, 2024, Available at: <https://alephnews.ro/guvern/studiu-150-000-de-copii-s-au-nascut-anul-trecut-in-romania-este-cel-mai-mic-numar-denasteridin1924-inceoace/>, Accessed on June 21, 2024.

¹³¹ Marilen Gabriel Pirtea, „COMUNICAT DE PRESĂ: Raportul OCDE asupra migrației românești: Prin impactul diasporei asupra pieței europene a muncii, România a devenit cea mai importantă contribuatoare netă de cetățeni activi în piața muncii, în cadrul grupei țărilor Noii Europe” [“PRESS RELEASE: OECD report on Romanian migration: Through the impact of diaspora on the European labor market, Romania has become the largest net contributor of active citizens to the labor market within the New Europe group of countries”], in *The Chamber of Deputies*, n.d., Available at: http://www.cdep.ro/relatii_publice/site2.text_presa?pid=18508&catg=3&timp=&asoc=G20162002, Accessed on May 27, 2024.

¹³² Europa Liberă Newsroom, „Ministrul pentru romanii de pretutindeni: 9,7 milioane de români trăiesc în afara granițelor țării, iar 5,6 milioane sunt în diaspora” [“Minister for Romanians Abroad: 9,7 million Romanians live abroad, 5,6 million in diaspora”], in *Europa Liberă*, July 24, 2019, Available at: <https://romania.europalibera.org/a/ministrul-pentru-diaspora-9,7-milioane-de-romani-traiesc-in-afara-granitelor-tarii-iar-mai-mult-de-jmatate-sunt-in-diaspora/30073056.html>, Accessed on September 21, 2020.

¹³³ *Ibidem*.

¹³⁴ Ziarul Românesc Newsroom, „Cifre șocante avansate de un parlamentar român. 12 milioane de români în afara granițelor?” [“Shocking figures from a Romanian MP. 12 million Romanians abroad?”], in *Ziarul Românesc*, November 7, 2011, Available at: <https://ziarulromanesc.net/diaspora/cifre-socante-avansate-de-un-parlamentar-roman-12-milioane-de-romani-afara-granitelor/>, Accessed on September 21, 2020.

Beyond the significant numbers of those who have emigrated, another interesting aspect to emphasize refers to the profile of those who have left they are primarily people who are able to work, primarily in the 25–29 age group, according to NIS¹³⁵. Second, because they are young people, we are referring to a fertile population. Therefore, in 2016, more children were born in the diaspora than in Romania¹³⁶. Based on the numbers of children born by Romanian emigrants in countries such as Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States, specialists estimated that in less than 20 years more than half a million Romanians were born abroad (630.000 children between 2000 and 2018)¹³⁷. Last but not least, we are talking about specialized people: recent years have revealed a migration of specialized people, the so-called brain-drain phenomenon¹³⁸ (IT, engineering and medicine are the main fields affected by this phenomenon). Romania has thus turned into a “machine” of specialized labor, working for the economies of other countries:

“Between 1990 and 2017, Romania registered the highest increase in migration stock among all EU states – 287 per cent. The boost of the migration phenomenon was supported by significant changes, including in the migrants’ profiles, in terms of their level of education; consequently, the loss of human capital represented by highly skilled Romanians already has an impact on the key sectors of the Romanian economy”¹³⁹.

In short, since the 2000s, Romania has been among the top 30 countries with the highest emigration of highly qualified people¹⁴⁰. Another aspect that has a significant influence on the demographic problems we are facing at the national level

¹³⁵ Camelia Badea, „Jumătate dintre tinerii români vor să plece din țară. Se schimbă destinațiile, media de vârstă, euro-navetismul este în creștere” [“Half of young Romanians want to leave the country. Destinations are changing, the average age, Euronavetism is on the rise”], in *Ziare*, 2018, Available at: <http://www.ziare.com/social/romani/jumatate-dintre-tinerii-romani-vor-sa-plece-din-tara-se-schimba-destinatia-media-de-varsta-euronavetismul-este-in-crestere-interviu-i-1512827>, Accessed on August 26, 2024.

¹³⁶ Pro TV News Newsroom, „2016 pentru prima data s-au născut mai mulți copii în Diaspora decât în țară” [“2016 for the first time more children were born in the Diaspora than in the country”], in *Pro TV News*, May 2, 2017, Available at: <https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/international/anul-trecut-s-au-nascut-mai-multi-copii-in-diaspora-decat-in-romania-multi-dintre-acestia-nu-mai-invatalim-baromana.html>, Accessed on August 26, 2024.

¹³⁷ Digi 24 Newsroom, „Cel puțin 630.000 de copii născuți în străinătate de românii care au emigrat. Datele surprinzătoare dintr-un raport OECD” [“At least 630.000 children born abroad by Romanians who emigrated. Surprising data from an OECD report”], in *Digi 24*, July 17, 2019, Available at: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/cel-putin-630-000-de-copii-nascuti-in-strainatate-de-romanii-care-au-emigrat-datele-surprinzatoare-dintr-un-raport-oecd-1161085>, Accessed on May 27, 2020.

¹³⁸ Raluca Iacob (Bâra), “Brain Drain Phenomenon in Romania: What Comes in Line after Corruption?”, in *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2018), Available at: <https://www.journalofcommunication.ro/index.php/journalofcommunication/article/view/259>, Accessed on August 8, 2024.

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁰ Luciana Lăzărescu (coord.) et al., *Emigrația forței de muncă înalt calificată din România: o analiză a domeniilor de cercetare dezvoltare, medicina și tehnologia informației și a comunicațiilor*, [Emigration of the highly skilled labor force from Romania: an analysis of the fields of research and development, medicine and information and communication technology], 2017, Available at: http://www.cdcdi.ro/files/services/25_0_EMITNET_Emigrația%20forței%20de%20munca%20înalt%20calificate_2017.pdf, Accessed on August 8, 2024.

is abortion. In 2012, Romania had the highest abortion rate in the European Union (48%): 480 of 1000 births. This meant that half of the children conceived were aborted¹⁴¹. After 11 years, in 2023, Romania will rank second in the EU at a rate of 28% per 1.000 women¹⁴². From 1958 to 2011, 21.651.277 abortions were reported in Romania, according to a statistic compiled by the Pro-Vita Association of Bucharest at the end of 2013¹⁴³. We can therefore see that both health and family culture are directly affected by the devaluation of the idea of culture, and the immediate, medium, and long-term effects are not long in coming.

The education situation is also showing major imbalances: 30% of students who entered the public education system 12 years ago did not take the Baccalaureate exam, around 40% of young people wanted to move to another country in 2023, and the rate of young people in Romania aged 15–29 who were neither working nor attending any school or training was in 2022 the highest in the EU (20%), the number of young people with poor reading, science and math skills was twice the EU average between 2009 and 2018, and 49% of Romanian pupils were victims of physical violence or threats, making Romanian public schools the most important source of stress for teenagers in 2023¹⁴⁴. Another prominent indicator of educational dysfunction is the high rate of functional illiteracy, which exceeded 50% in 2021. Functional illiteracy refers to a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills or limited ability to understand written text at a basic level¹⁴⁵.

At the political level, we are dealing with other dysfunctions. According to a survey conducted by the Laboratory for Information Warfare Analysis and Strategic Communication, in partnership with the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs and

¹⁴¹ Paula Rotaru, „România are cea mai ridicată rată de avort din Europa: 480 de avorturi la 1.000 de nașteri” [“Romania has the highest abortion rate in Europe: 480 abortions per 1.000 births”], in *Mediafax*, October 28, 2016, Available at: <https://www.mediafax.ro/social/romania-are-cea-mai-ridicata-rata-de-avort-din-europa-480-de-avorturi-la-1-000-de-nasteri-15875649>, Accessed on March 15, 2023.

¹⁴² World Population Review, “Abortion Rates by Country 2023”, in *World Population Review*, n.d., Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/abortion-rates-by-country>, Accessed on March 15, 2023.

¹⁴³ Pro Vita Bucharest, „Oficial: 21,6 milioane de avorturi în România, în perioada 1958–2011. Regimul Iliescu-Roman a ucis aproape 1.000.000 de copii nenăscuți numai în 1990” [“Official: 21.6 million abortions in Romania between 1958 and 2011 the Iliescu Roman regime killed almost 1.000.000 unborn children in 1990 alone”], in *Active News*, January 8, 2014, Available at: <https://www.activenews.ro/prima-pagina/Oficial-21-6-milioane-de-avorturi-in-Romania-in-perioada-1958-2011-Regimul-Iliescu-Roman-a-ucis-aproape-1.000.000-de-copii-nenascuti-numai-in-1990-12730>, Accessed on August 8, 2024.

¹⁴⁴ Zeno Sustac, „România, țara analfabetismului funcțional obligatoriu” [“Romania, the country of compulsory functional illiteracy”], in *Ziare*, September 23, 2024, Available at: <https://ziare.com/romania/romania-tara-analfabetismului-functional-obligatoriu-1895599>, Accessed on August 23, 2024.

¹⁴⁵ Dacian Dolean, „Analfabetismul funcțional din România depășește 50% și aceasta nu este cea mai mare problemă a sistemului educațional din România – cercetătorul Dacian Dolean” [“Functional illiteracy in Romania exceeds 50% and this is not the biggest problem of the Romanian education system researcher Dacian Dolean”], in *Edu Pedu*, October 23, 2021, Available at: <https://www.edupedu.ro/analfabetismul-functional-din-romania-depasese-50-si-aceasta-nu-este-cea-mai-mare-problema-a-sistemului-educational-din-romania-cercetatorul-dacian-dolean/>, Accessed on August 23, 2024.

the Institute of Political Science and International Relations, Romanians in 2022 had the lowest trust in parties, parliament and government¹⁴⁶. Another survey conducted in 2024 by CURS showed that 79% of Romanians did not trust the Government, 83% did not trust the parliament, and 86% did not trust the Presidency, a percentage that is also maintained for political parties¹⁴⁷. Another IRES survey shows that the level of distrust in political parties is even higher among young people: 95% of them say they do not trust political parties¹⁴⁸. The lack of trust was generated by several factors, including the following:

“On the one hand, we are talking about the performance of the political class, the poor quality of the political class, the fact that lately it has started to be populated by all sorts of characters, more or less shady, and their quality has been declining over time; the way they interact with the public has also changed”¹⁴⁹.

High levels of distrust lead to low voting participation. This has a domino effect on other areas of society. Culture, or in this case, the devaluation of culture, causes social disorder at economic, social, educational, and political levels, leading to structural changes in society.

Dimitrie Gusti's law of sociological parallelism shows a co-determination relationship between frames and manifestations and between frames and manifestations. Therefore, when one dimension is affected, the consequences are felt in the other domains. When culture is neglected at the individual, community, and state levels, we can understand the emergence of imbalances such as inflation, emigration, and others. Moreover, if decision makers, *i.e.*, politicians, make decisions that affect the entire society on the basis of an unhealthy culture

¹⁴⁶ Hot News Newsroom, „Românii au cea mai mică încredere în partide, parlament și guvern/Biserica și Armata, în continuare în topul încrederii – sondaj” [“Romanians have the least trust in parties, parliament and government/Church and Army still top in trust poll”], in *Hot News*, December 14, 2022, Available at: <https://hotnews.ro/romnii- au- cea- mai- mica- ncredere- n- partide- parlament- si- guvern- biserica- si- armata- n- continuare- n- topul- ncrederii- sondaj- 91819>, Accessed on August 23, 2024.

¹⁴⁷ Arina Delcea, „Aproape 90% dintre români nu au încredere în Președinție și nici în partide. Cum se raportează cetățenii la instituțiile politice în an electoral” [“Nearly 90% of Romanians do not trust the Presidency or the parties. How citizens relate to political institutions in an election year”], in *Euro News*, January 30, 2024, Available at: <https://www.euronews.ro/articole/aproape- 90- dintre- romani- nu- au- incredere- in- presedintie- si- nici- in- partide- cum- se>, Accessed on June 12, 2024.

¹⁴⁸ David Leonard Bularca, „STUDIU 3 din 4 tineri au încredere mică sau deloc în democrația din România: «Politicienii români au eșuat»/În ce instituții au încredere tinerii” [“3 out of 4 young people have little or no trust in democracy in Romania: ‘Romanian politicians have failed’/Which institutions do young people trust?”], in *Hot News*, March 21, 2024, Available at: <https://hotnews.ro/studiu- 3- din- 4- tineri- au- ncredere- mica- sau- deloc- n- democratia- din- romnia- politicienii- romni- au- esuat- n- ce- institutii- au- ncredere- tin- 10740>, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

¹⁴⁹ „Pe de o parte vorbim de performanța clasei politice, de slaba calitate a clasei politice, de faptul că în ultima vreme a început să fie populată de tot felul de personaje, mai mult sau mai puțin dubioase, iar calitatea lor a tot scăzut de-a lungul timpului; s-a modificat și modul în care interacționează cu publicul”, in PS News Newsroom, „De ce nu mai au încredere românii în clasa politică” [“Why Romanians no longer trust the political class?”], in *PS News*, September 23, 2023, Available at: <https://psnews.ro/de- ce- nu- mai- au- incredere- romanii- in- clasa- politica/>, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

of money (*i.e.*, luxury consumption), the country is condemned to underdevelopment. Culture is therefore extremely important for any society because it makes possible its existence – not just any existence but a prosperous and harmonious one.

iii. The cultural state and anomic society: from social justice to relative frustration

We have seen that the cultural state is a form of social organization based on the hierarchy of competence, which generates social order. An anomic society, by contrast, is a social organization in which the power of the norm is diminished. Emile Durkheim refers to social imbalances and disorder in society as anomie. For the French sociologist, anomie is a social disease that reveals a crisis of social solidarity¹⁵⁰. In other words, anomie is the loss of social community control over individual actions¹⁵¹. In short, “anomie refers to the mutual alienation of individuals and the loss of the authority of the rules naturally recognized until then”¹⁵².

As the power of social norms diminishes, the state of social disorder increases, and feelings of relative frustration emerge. Relative frustration refers to “the degree of dissatisfaction increases as man realizes that he does not have what others have what he should or could have”¹⁵³.

Equally, the feeling of relative frustration, theorized by Tocqueville and Durkheim, among others, is accompanied by “the feeling of injustice in that those who do not have often perceive the possession of that thing by those who have it as unjust”¹⁵⁴.

The devaluation of culture shifts the focus in contemporary societies from the cultural state, which is based on a hierarchy of competences, to a disordered society marked by major imbalances, economic, social, political, cultural, and so on. Along with this change, the idea of social justice has been replaced by relative frustration. Change is fundamental to the harmonious development of individuals and societies because it directly influences social stability.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the importance of culture in our lives, its revaluation is imperative. This revaluation should occur at all levels, that is, at individual, community, and state levels. At the individual level, reading, classical music, visiting museums, and

¹⁵⁰ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 87.

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 157.

¹⁵² „anomia se referă la înstrăinarea reciprocă a indivizilor și la pierderea autorității regulilor în mod natural recunoscute până în acel moment”, in *Ibidem*, p. 279.

¹⁵³ „creșterea gradului de insatisfacție pe măsură ce insul conștientizează că nu are ceea ce alții au ceea ce ar trebui sau ar putea avea și el”, in *Ibidem*, p. 157.

¹⁵⁴ „sentimentul de nedreptate prin aceea că cei care nu au adesea percep ca înjustă posesiunea respectivului lucru de către cei ce-l au”, in *Ibidem*, p. 158.

especially going to church are just some of the actions that can make this reevaluation possible. Discovering and acting on the vocation are also pressing needs. These directions are all more important for young people because they are the most vulnerable to social imbalances and experience feelings of social frustration, which are reflected in high rates of anxiety, depression, and even suicide attempts. Given that for only 3% of Romanian high school students the desire to learn is an important value in life¹⁵⁵, it is not surprising that almost half of young people in Romania have had at least one thought of suicide¹⁵⁶. Therefore, a lack of culture can be deadly. It is culture, Nichifor Crainic said, that guides us to aspects that really matter. In its absence, man can no longer understand the meaning of life. The idea of meaning is fundamental because humans were created with meaning and cannot live in the absence of meaning except in degrading, anxious, depressive, and suicidal forms. Thus, at an individual level, culture not only saves us from our own ignorance but also guides us toward things with meaning.

At the community level, the orientation of our actions toward others must have a moral basis because this is the only way to create, maintain, and develop structural functionality. In addition to being a person concerned with the meaning of life, humans are also social beings. Thus, the discovery and pursuit of meaning occur almost exclusively within the community. As social and sociable beings who need community, which in turn is only possible if we have social order and discipline, humans cannot live outside the collective without suffering the consequences of being alone. From this perspective, the reevaluation of culture at the community level is vital, as it is like a social link that provides coherence and consistency to a group, which is otherwise subject to social disintegration as a result of personal egos. From a state perspective, culture must be a priority for the state budget. At the same time, the organization of government and society should be based on competence. Governance based on knowledge is the only kind of governance that can generate social order and hence a sense of social justice. Last but not least, we note that societies ordered according to competence criteria are prosperous and productive because culture generates the adaptive processes necessary for survival and development.

¹⁵⁵ Edu Pedu Newsroom, „Studiu pe un eșantion de oportunitate: din peste 570 de liceeni care au răspuns la chestionare online, majoritatea au valori de stânga, iar nouă din zece vor ca statul să asigure sănătate și educație de calitate și să garanteze drepturile egale ale cetățenilor” [“Opportunity sample survey: of more than 570 high school students who responded to online questionnaires, the majority have left-leaning values, and nine out of ten want the state to provide quality health and education and guarantee equal rights for citizens”], in *Edu Pedu*, June 3, 2024, Available at: Studiu pe un eșantion de oportunitate: din peste 570 de liceeni care au răspuns la chestionare online, majoritatea au valori de stânga, iar nouă din zece vor ca statul să asigure sănătate și educație de calitate și să garanteze drepturile egale ale cetățenilor – Edupedu.ro, Accessed on June 7, 2024.

¹⁵⁶ Claudia Untaru, „Aproape jumătate dintre tinerii români au avut cel puțin o dată gânduri de sinucidere. Avertismentul unui medic arădean” [“Almost half of young people in Romania have had thoughts of suicide at least once. A doctor from Arad warns”], in *Adevărul*, 3 februarie 2024, Available at: https://adevarul.ro/stiri_interne/sanatateaproape_jumatate_dintre_tinerii_romani_au_avut_cel_2336914.html, Accessed on June 7, 2024.

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A MODERN AVATAR OF RELIGION: THE GLOBAL INDUSTRIAL REORGANIZATION OF MANKING

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ABSTRACT

Religion and religious feelings do not disappear. They can take new forms and invest new objects. The transcendent God is not the condition sine qua non of a religion. The contemporary world is neither areligious nor disenchanting. It is configured and engulfed by a religion that is different from traditional religions. This new religion was baptized by Henri de Saint-Simon as the industrial religion, a new type of Christianity (in his mind). His conviction was that the entire society should be organized as a manufacture, or in present day terms, of the enterprise. This new religion has found new expressions: cybernetics and the theory of organization, management sciences. It is a force that intends to transform and to mold the whole human existence in a certain manner, based upon the model of cybernetics and information technology. Efficiency is one of its slogans. The end-result should be a world that is entirely transformed into an organization, run by the central organ that sets the goals and controls the feedback loop – world government. In practice, this should also lead to the building of a collective intelligence, which will absorb everyone and coordinate all the activities of the individuals. The world is now on the road to an unprecedented form of tyranny, which can be described as the scientific organization of life.

Keywords: tyranny, management, freedom, cybernetics, political philosophy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mankind is religious. Religiosity takes many forms. Religiosity is not bound to an organized form of a cult of a transcendent being, polytheism, or a pantheistic religion, etc. It can be invested in other kinds of beliefs and worldviews. Values change and societies look for another source for its norms, models, laws than God or the natural law and so on. The source of the norms that should guide and mold the way people live is the manufacture, the industrial workshop, the plant, or the enterprise. So, the source of values, norms, rules, and coherence of society changes. And this source is a modern one. It is the realm of technique, although even this realm of modern technique has its roots in the religious one, in the organization of life and work in the monasteries of earlier Middle Ages. The new form of religiosity has been called the industrial religion by Henri Saint-Simon and his likes, though it has taken other forms as well. It might be called a religion of power of efficiency, of

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technology as such. Another form it takes is the theory of management or the theory of organization, and it is expressed in the tendency of “the world to become organization” and the tendency of “organization to become the world”, as the French philosopher Baptiste Rappin expresses it¹⁵⁸.

Paraphrasing Martin Heidegger, he describes the contemporary existence as being-thrown in organizations. This industrial religion is in a sense a defining *imago mundus* of the Western world (and of its soul or lack thereof). This image and the transformation it produced in Western society have expanded and occupied the whole planet. With it, come models of what human existence is, what the world is, how must society and individual life be organized, etc. The meaning and understanding of nature changes along the way, too. Nature is transformed and is considered as something that can be exploited. Expressions such as the Great Reset refer to this de facto religion of the Western world (one among others).

Industry means something more than an economic branch centered around producing manufactured things. It denotes a point of view, a worldview. It is a construction that is the object of a belief, a religion¹⁵⁹; according to Saint-Simon industry can mean every kind of activity or thing that is useful, theory and practice alike, the works of the hand and the works of the spirit¹⁶⁰. The Great Reset and the dystopian and totalitarian reorganization of the world that is ongoing is a reconfiguration of the order along the lines prescribed by this industrial religion. Even concepts and activities as de-industrialization belong to this imaginary, being a product of this belief system that underlies the Western world for centuries.

II. INDUSTRY. WHAT IT MEANT

In the sixteenth century the meaning of industry was the economic one, denoting the totality of operations, which took part in the production and circulations of richness, later acquiring the generic meaning of productive activity¹⁶¹. In the eighteenth century, another meaning added to the word, industry pertaining to the inventions of useful machines in the arts and trades; it meant also industrial technique, “machinisme” – the modern sense. To the original meaning of term, industry also denoted a kind of secret activity, an activity, or an application. The term derived from the Latin *industrius* which meant to be active, diligent, etc. *Struere* meant also to conspire, to plan in secret, to calculate, to foresee – *tramer*, *machination*. It was derived from ancient Greek *endon* and *struere*. *Struere* meant to bring order, to put in order, to organize, and to construct. *In-dustria* refers to the

¹⁵⁸ Baptiste Rappin, *Au fondement du management. Théologie de l'organisation [At the foundation of management. Theology of the organisation]*, Nice, Ovadia Publishing House, 2014, p. 31.

¹⁵⁹ Pierre Musso, *La religion industrielle [The industrial religion]*, Nantes, The Institute for Advanced Studies/Fayard, 2017, p. 10.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 31–32.

interiority of mankind, for the Latin grammarian Festus *ab intro struendo* stood for an activity or someone who works also for the inside, for the household¹⁶².

The problem of industrial religion refers to an anthropological revolution that makes use of the religious mechanism present in man. And as such it regards even the spiritual and concrete aspect of the life of individuals caught in its net. Every new social order implies the modification of the human mind both at the individual and collective level. As Jacques Ellul once observed, the problem of the technique is the most eminent spiritual problem of contemporary human existence. Management and cybernetics as techniques of organization are not limited to what one call in a limited sense and an organization, enterprise, the Mafia etc. They extend to all of society. An organization is an association of people who aim to achieve something and whose activities are ordered to this end. This attitude is applied nowadays to the whole existence.

The existence of what is called in a day-to-day sense industry was made possible because there is such a thing as *industry* in a more ancient sense, being understood as creativity and as constructing (*struere*) that is inside (in), an exteriorization or manifestation of an inner structure or power. Industry – with all its achievements – works as a mediator between a belief and reason, between believing and doing. In its economic and technical sense, obeys certain belief and imposes or manifest a material power. It combines the mystery of the faith with the power of rationality and material power (and a faith in technique in mankind, too). Just as dialectics is supposed to do, industry – a form of faith and belief in human ingenuity – brings apparent contraries together. It is a system of faith that prioritizes the so-called practical and mechanical arts. Industry is a religion of action based on a pragmatic kind of reason. The industrial religion signals a shift in the structure of the Western world from scholasticism/ philosophy/dialectics to the domain of the mechanical arts, of practical efficiency, and a shift from heaven to earth, from nature to technique, a shift towards the mastering of nature. Just one is supposed to triumph over the adversary in a dialectical dispute, so industry is supposed to triumph over nature. Though the domains of philosophy and argumentation on one side, and the domain of practical ingenuity and mechanical arts there is a difference, at least for ancient Greeks, there was an analogy between the two activities since both made use of the same metal categories and concepts¹⁶³.

Even though back then the act of fabrication was mostly manual, and techniques were a tool, there is a continuation between the ancient technique and the modern one. The use of hands mean manipulation, the *savoir-faire* (an implicit kind of knowledge) and the use of other things as instruments. Other aspects of industry are reflection, invention, and conception. Even if nowadays machines are running whatever is left of industry, the hand is still present at least symbolically in the meaning of industry. The manufacture embodied the idea, and the unity of the natural

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 34.

¹⁶³ J.P. Vernant in *Ibidem*, p. 26.

world and the artificial one created by man through *techne*. The birth of the industry represents the segue from spiritual to temporal power¹⁶⁴. It meant even “qui prépare en lui-même”¹⁶⁵. *Industria* is first an inner reality, in the body and afterward it gets projected outside, taking form in the technical objects it produces, in the city, in the production of machines and in society as such. During history, the realm to which *industria* applies extends itself. As already mentioned, among other meanings, the term industry used to mean the capacity to do something, ingenuity, the art to make something pertaining to a *savoir-être*. It also meant the – in French in the fifteen century – the practicing of a manual activity, a trade, a *Handwerk*. In the eighteenth century in England industry and industrious meant someone who is diligent in his work.

The etymology and the genealogy of the meaning of industry show a much richer meaning of the term that is assumed. Industry is both a reality and a concept that unites different realities, the mystery of faith, the practical use of technique, and human interiority and the body. The modern sense of term was acquired in the eighteenth century and represents an impoverishment of its meaning; it hides its rich history and the connection to the inner reality of mankind. The meaning of industry as know-how began to wane and the sense of operations that produce richness came to the fore. In the language of administration, the term of industry was used only for the domain of manufactures and commerce/trade. Sometimes it means the whole real of economy but agriculture, though there was another meaning for it: making use of immoral/illegal means to attain economic aims. The association with the industrial enterprise as an institution came only with Jean Baptiste Say. Around 1820 manual work has become clearly distinct from industry, which is associated with science and technology. Industry began to be used in the sense of activity.

Industry is a Western phenomenon just as modern technique is. It is the dogmatic infrastructure of Western Europe and has started forming around the thirteenth century, although some may try to argue the seeds can be found earlier. Even someone like John Scotus Eriugena thought that the use of mechanical arts could help mankind restore its condition from before the Fall and to conquer the world¹⁶⁶. Its formation took a long time and was for the most time invisible – it can be called the religion of progress, too. It is a secret mechanism that models the modern world. Pierre Musso names it *industrialization*. It constitutes the dogmatic architecture, spiritual infrastructure of modern society. The term industrial religion is not new. It has been used by different authors (Henri de Saint-Simon), among them being Günther Anders and Erich Fromm. According to the last one, due to this religion mankind becomes the slave of economy and of machinery.

Technical objects cars, tanks, planes, spaceships, mobile phones and so on do not exist just as mere isolated objects, the products of a rational way of existence. They

¹⁶⁴ Pierre Musso, *quoted work*, p. 30.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 32.

¹⁶⁶ David F. Noble, *The Religion of Technology*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, pp. 16–17.

are also embodiments of a phantasmatic structure, a conceptual structure, not only management techniques or ways of employment thereof. Under the guise of the theories of management, this hidden form of spirituality expands and imposes its form of normativity all over the world, including in the minds and hearts of the people. In a sense, the perceived secularization of the West has led to another form of re-enchantment centered around the norm and values born by the new religion. There is no disenchantment, but a new kind of enchantment, the one produced by what Jacques Ellul has called the technical system. The technological development of the world, the development of industry, finance, and economy has led to a new enchanted world, of a transfer of sacrality from one region to another. The techno-science has become sacred – applied science and the production of good on a large scale, a fact underlined by the French thinker Gilbert Simondon. It is a spirituality or religion of efficiency and functionality. This development was made possible by the idea of Incarnation and even by the Papal revolution from the eleventh century. At that point in time a separation between spiritual and political power took place, a separation that the industrial religion wants to close. It is a religion that affect every aspect of social and human life. Just as Christianity has as a center piece the Incarnation of Christ – God assuming the human nature and creation – the new religion has its incarnation: the real existing, enterprises, plants, waterworks. All these are concrete and visible incarnations of the value of efficiency:

“This secular religion was built with patience in the background of the political scene, fighting for its autonomy against the religious sphere. In the silence of the cloisters, in the shadows of the manufactures and behind the smokestacks of industrial plants, this religion developed until it came to light in the triumph moment of the universal Enterprise and Management”¹⁶⁷.

Such systems of beliefs and values organize the existence of human communities. The basic models of social existence that this new religion has to offer are the manufacture, the industrial plant, and the enterprise. It comes also with an article of faith, has normativity and the band that unites the faith and the practical and concrete manifestations of this religion. This is an invisible referent, that plays the role of “divinity”. The belief in this symbolic referent, other beliefs are formed: in progress, in utility, the belief in development, etc. Whatever is accomplished or said in the name of this not-so-new religion is done in the name of this supreme referent and as such it works on the promises it makes. The categories of future and the progress are two important factors in this new spiritual construction, and so are the promises of wealth and happiness. From its practice and successes new precepts and rules for organizing life are drawn, new norms, new technological reasons, new interdictions.

¹⁶⁷ „Cette religion séculière a été patiemment battue dans l’arrière-boutique de la scène politique, combattant pour sa propre autonomie par rapport au religieux. Dans le silence des monastères, dans les pénombres des manufactures et derrière les fumées des usines, cette religion s’est développée jusque à advenir, aujourd’hui, en pleine lumière, à l’heure du triomphe de l’Enterprise et du Management universel.”, in Pierre Musso, *quoted work*, p. 46.

The main thrust of existence goes in the direction of efficiency, of organization, action, productivity, how a healthy and productive life should be led, what mental health is, etc. It has representatives, its own messengers, and its own body. It creates its own images, concepts, rhythms, discourses, even art, its own propaganda, and the effects by which it models human existence without being perceived. In a sense, it is a type of self-idolatry since it pertains to man and to his self-realization without God – which is the idea of self-divinization that can be seen in the Fall from Genesis and Lucifer's Fall. It is a cult of the transformation of nature by using science, technology, rationality, and work.

Due to the efficiency and the results of technique, mankind thinks it can replace God and become the ontological center of existence. Transhumanism is an expression of this underlying belief system born in the Western world. It is a way to thoroughly organizing human existence according to the norms of utilitarian and functional norms of the rule of efficiency. Free time, and leisure as such belongs to this field. It is something that must be organized. For a while, the most representative figure that incarnated the dynamics of the new religion was the engineer, although today that has changed. Leisure must be scientifically managed. The free time must be used pragmatically and efficiently so that the fatigue and the time lost by being tired will be recovered; the individual must come back in the chain of production, must be preoccupied by something, a preoccupation that would make it impossible for him or her to reflect on their condition and to dream about liberty¹⁶⁸.

The same result can be achieved by manipulating and impoverishing language, making it impossible to think otherwise or in opposition to the given reality, as Erich Fromm found out. The day-to-day and the official language makes it impossible to have transcendent meaning, reducing everything to only one dimension – the existing social reality, which is posited as the only one possible. This is made possible by using a kind of ritualized language and making it impossible to access to the past (the cultural legacy of mankind or of a particular culture), or to one's cultural history. One of the main features of the scientific organization of the world as Bertrand Russell describes it, consists in forbidding the access to such things.

Reading Shakespeare would be possible only with government approval – and, to highlight the homogeneity of this future society, there would be only a language spoken in the world. English for example. The cultural heritage, the works of literature, etc. of different people are not going to be translated and made accessible, they will be forbidden. And even in the ruling classes, in the different levels of technocracy, intellectual curiosity will not be encouraged¹⁶⁹.

Erich Fromm called this language magic and operational. The operational misconception of language and thought (reduction of the meaning to a series of operations) is technical, related to the empiricist and neopositivist conception of language, to the idea of banning ambiguity and polysemy out of language – which is utterly impossible. According to Fromm, this operational conception of language

¹⁶⁸ Michel Blay, *Dieu, la nature et l'homme [God, nature and man]*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2013, p. 228.

¹⁶⁹ Russel Bertrand, *The Scientific Outlook*, London, Routledge, pp. 183–186.

focuses on the effort to reduce the meaning of the words to the thing it happens to denote in a certain circumstance. It is an attempt to bind language and meaning to the solely present reality, so no one could think of other possibilities as what is seen or deemed to be the *status quo*. There is only one reality and words adhere to things, but only to a thing as such. That things could be different is a thought should not occur to the speakers.

The new defining figures of the industrial religion are the manager and the social engineer and their latest tool, *cybermanagement*¹⁷⁰. Cybernetics and management are centered around a concept imported from biology, namely organization and information (organization is related to ancient Greek *organon*, meaning instrument), which in Saint-Simon's work got a new meaning, that of network. After WW II, what we call the domain of management was rebuilt around ideas stemming from cybernetics. There is the domain of strategy – wherein the finalities are thought and established, and other domains that pertain to the activities of evaluation, retroaction, of control, of extension of the IT systems, etc.¹⁷¹. They can be seen as being at the core of a tendency called the movement toward a pan-organization, which has engulfed the whole world. It is a form of colonization done using the technological rationality of Western origins.

The extension and regularization of life has become a salient feature of human life these days. Individuals become engulfed in organizations since the moment they are born¹⁷²; school and family have become organization – organization means the conscious activity of cooperation and coordination of different activities and operations. An organization is, thus, an association of peoples who work together to achieve an end¹⁷³. This is an ordering of existence based only on the instrumental rationality. A first expression of this movement toward this technological remodeling of humane existence is to be found in Saint-Simon's and his conviction that a nation must be governed in the same way as a manufacture or as an enterprise/cybernetic machine¹⁷⁴. The whole existence can be seen as a giant workshop/industrial plan¹⁷⁵.

III. THE RELIGION OF ORGANIZATION

This very concept of organization is central to the industrial religions of Henri de Saint-Simon¹⁷⁶, for his science of man and sociology. It stems from biology though (it was not a new concept that got a new meaning in the Macy Conferences).

¹⁷⁰ Pierre Musso, *quoted work*, p. 448.

¹⁷¹ Baptiste Rappin, *quoted work*, 2022, p. 116.

¹⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 32.

¹⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁴ Pierre Musso, *quoted work*, p. 491.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 632.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 256.

There it marks a revolution. It replaces the visible structure. The predominance of the visible structure in biology has led biologists to teleological conception of life, which now are overcome. A living organism becomes a structure governed by its functions. The organization imposes the order to features, form, or behavior of a plant or animal. Structure, function, and environment are united in the organization of a living being. The organization is supposed to assure the homeostasis of the organism¹⁷⁷. Adaptation to the environment and the feedback loop are the keys to understanding it. To preserve itself, an organism must adapt and learn. The learning process and self-correction are paramount and make possible the adaptation. From there, it becomes a central concept for the new form of the industrial religion, namely cybernetics. An organism maintains its homeostasis by changing information with its surrounding. Life is reduced to the acts of receiving and sending information – communication – properly. Society and man must be treated in this way and a proper management of society entails, according to this view, ordering it along these lines. The older management model of Taylor is now replaced with the cybernetic one. Cybernetics or the cybernetic-inspired governing apparatus can be seen as a tool to fight against the entropy of the world, a tool to rebuild a lost unity. Cybernetics is hunted and informed by the Jewish mysticism of Kabbalah, and it carries such a mystical orientation that aims to achieve *Henosis*¹⁷⁸.

During this process, society and politics are transformed. Politics as such might disappear completely. The idea that politics should become a science of production or something that makes it possible was expressed by Saint-Simon. Politics has changed. Jacques Ellul speaks about the illusion of politics, referring to the fact that the decisions that are made by politicians are seldom truly political decisions. Instead, they are technical ones, taken by experts – technocrats. and this has already become something else: the theory and practice of management, of transforming the existence as such after the image of the enterprise (and, eventually, to fuse all people and individuals in a huge one world government/collective intelligence). Politics must be replaced by science and economics – that is, by a technocracy that will take command of society. In this sense, if such a thing will come to pass, there will be no room for freedom and for debating (science is supposed to be the spiritual power, while industry the temporal one; nevertheless, the practical power is the one that leads the spiritual one, since everything is done in the sense of acquiring power).

This new religion was a new Christianity, according to its apostle Saint-Simon. It put to work the divine power present in mankind. In the new ordering of society, the spiritual and temporal powers are to become one and mold the whole existence, social and individual. This is why Pierre Musso speaks of the closure of the *Schize*, of the distinction of the two power that happened in the eleventh century in the Papal

¹⁷⁷ Baptiste Rappin, *Les origines cybernétiques du management contemporain [The cybernetic origins of contemporary management]*, Nice, Ovadia Publishing House, 2022, pp. 15–16.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 125–127.

Revolution. It is another way of affirming the totalitarian thrust of the industrial religion, its expansion in all areas of life. Technique changes man, even ancient technique not only the modern one.

The invention of such a thing as the heavy plow in the twelfth century has led to kind of mini-revolution, to the reorganization of agriculture, and even to the apparition of the attitude proper to modernity that nature is something to be exploited. It changed the way property was considered, how the land was distributed, and how communities should be organized and run. This was the consequence of adopting a plow that was far more productive and that required eight or ten pairs of oxen, necessitating the cooperation of more families. Before the invention of this plow and its expansion in agriculture families produced what was necessary for their consumption. As a result of the transformation of this main working instrument, productivity increased, and agriculture began to be an activity oriented toward more production and exploitation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The new religion is a religion of efficiency, and it finds its most adequate expression in the science of efficiency, that is cybernetic – the core of managerial sciences (utility justifies everything). The existence of society and of man is thus transformed to become an organization, a form of order that search for efficiency, based on the idea of the feedback loop. An organization can exist only if it adapts permanently to the challenges of the environment, and, by virtue of the transformation of the whole society into an organization, society ceases to be a place wherein individual can exercise their creativity, capacity of judgment, becoming one that imposes the self-correction of behavior based upon some objectives determined by the technocratic class.

Man, and society become self-regulating mechanisms. It is a huge step toward the realization of the dream of a scientific governing of mankind, an automatic process that eliminates debating, discussion, and judgement. Decision-making and the rest of the mental operations/activities undergo a process of standardization, they should become codes, programs, automatic sequences (the efficiency of the action is the aim of this process). This development birthed the idea of a planetary governing machine, which would govern every decision of the people on Earth. It is a new form of alienation and oppression, a governing by numbers. The invention of the computer, the apparition of the personal computers, and the internet is also an essential condition for building up this new totalitarian nightmare, since the network makes possible the unification and integration of all aspect of life, including a total surveillance.

This scientific organization of life does not tolerate difference or different cultures. The only way to act allowed would be the one based on the norms of technological rationality and efficiency, whereby free choice and a free decision

would be made impossible. The individual is just a part of the machine. Politics disappears. This is one possible meaning of the expression the “world becoming of organization”. One of the main thrusts of this is the domestication of man, make him docile¹⁷⁹, and to fusion of all individuals in a giant collective intelligence. Annihilating national (and personal) sovereignty is an integral and necessary part of this process¹⁸⁰. The sciences of organization and management are a new expression of the industrial religion. And their aim is well-described by Baptiste Rappin:

“The management sciences aim to achieve the complete domestication of mankind using social engineering, which is conceived of a cybernetic mode of intervention, directly or indirectly, in the organization of life”¹⁸¹.

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¹⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 44 and p. 84.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 91.

¹⁸¹ “Les sciences de gestion visent à la domestication intégrale de l'être humain en usant de L'INGINERIE SOCIALE, conçue comme mode, direct ou indirecte, d'intervention cybernétique dans les organisation.”, in Baptiste Rappin, *quoted work*, 2014, p. 130.

FROM POPA BUCUR CRĂCIUN TO POPA BUCUR ȘOLNAL. THE PROCESS OF ETHNIC ASSIMILATION OF A ROMANIAN COMMUNITY IN HARGHITA COUNTY AT THE END OF THE 18TH – BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY

George-Damian Mocanu¹⁸²

ABSTRACT

Archival sources from the 18th–19th centuries allow us to reconstruct, at least partially, the process by which a true dynasty of Romanian priests from south-eastern Transylvania changed their family name from a Romanian one to a Hungarian one, most probably in an attempt to “fit in” in the middle of a Hungarian-dominated region.

Keywords: ethnic assimilation, Transylvania, Plăieșii de Jos, Harghita.

INTRODUCTION

The Romanian community of Plăieșii de Jos commune (Harghita county) has been the subject of several previous studies in which the depth of the phenomenon of ethnic assimilation of Romanians within Romania was noted¹⁸³. A previous field research¹⁸⁴ revealed the illustration of this process of ethnic assimilation in the cemetery of the local Orthodox church, this time we will focus on archival sources to try to describe the causes of ethnic assimilation of Romanians.

The Romanian church in Plăieșii de Jos dates back to 1729¹⁸⁵, most probably a wooden construction that was replaced in 1750¹⁸⁶. At this date in Plăieșii de Jos

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¹⁸³ Radu Baltasiu, Ovidiana Bulumac and Gabriel Săpunaru, *Slăbirea comunității românești din Harghita-Covasna [The weakening of the Romanian community in Harghita-Covasna]*, Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2013, p. 120.

¹⁸⁴ George Damian Mocanu and Narcis Rupe, “The hungarianization of names and inscriptions on the crosses in the cemetery of Plăieșii de Jos – a form of manifestation of ethnic assimilation”, in *Etnosfera*, No. 1/2024, pp. 63–70.

¹⁸⁵ Nicoleta Ploșnea, *Biserici, școli, comunități rurale românești din Covasna și Harghita (1850–1918) [Churches, schools, Romanian rural communities in Covasna and Harghita (1850–1918)]*, Grai Românesc Publishing House, 2012, p. 438.

¹⁸⁶ Ion Ranca, *Românii din scaunele secuiești [Romanians from the Szekler Seats]*, Vol. 2, Târgu Mureș, Pax Historica Publishing House, 1997, p. 196.

there were 433 Greek-Catholic believers registered in the village, but without a priest¹⁸⁷. The new church built by the Romanian community is recorded in 1760, when two priests served 86 families¹⁸⁸. According to archival data, during the 18th – 19th centuries the names of the villages that made up the commune of Plăieșii de Jos, as used by the Romanians in the area, were as follows: Satu Nou (Cașinu Nou), Iacfalău (Iacobeni), Imper (Imper), Satu de Jos (Plăieșii de Jos) and Satu de Sus (Plăieșii de Sus). Doboii is a village inhabited exclusively by Romanians, attested in the 18th century around the Romanian church, but which never received an official administrative status – we have chosen to use the name “church of Doboii” to refer to the church that served the Romanian community in the villages listed above.

THE PARISH REGISTERS

The parish registers of the church of Doboii kept at the National Archives of Harghita County represent a series of extremely interesting and illustrative documents for the process of Magyarization of the Romanian community in this region. Probably the most interesting document in this series is the oldest parish register of the Romanian community – wrongly dated by the National Archives 1793–1852, in reality the register covers the period 1787–1853¹⁸⁹. This parish register contains 89 pages, 87 of which are written, distributed as follows: pages 1 – 61 registration of baptisms for the years 1787–1850, pages 62 – 76 registration of marriages for the years 1789–1853, pages 77 – 78 registration of correspondence, pages 81 – 83 registration of baptisms for the years 1851–1853, page 84 registration of deaths 1787–1788, pages 85 – 89 various notes. The title of the table that makes up the parish register of the church of Doboii is worded as follows: “Protocol of those baptized in the parish of Cașinului, Diocese of Făgărașului, Eparchy of Harom Csikului”. The headings of the table are as follows: “Year”, “Month”, “Day”, “Baptizer”, “Infant”, “Parents”, “Godparents”, “Law” (meaning confession), “Place”.

The entries in this register were made in Romanian language, in chronological order, by the following priests: priest Ion (1787–1789), priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai (1789–1834), priest Ștefan Șolnai (1826), priest Ioan Șolnai (1834–1853). Priests Ion, Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai, Ștefan Șolnai used the Cyrillic alphabet for recording baptisms, marriages and deaths, but after 1834 priest Ioan Șolnai switched to writing the records in Romanian with the Latin alphabet using the Hungarian orthographic rules – which contributed to the acceleration of the Hungarianization of the names of Romanians in the region. Priest Ioan Șolnai’s choice to use the Hungarian spelling rules is explained by the fact that the spelling rules of the Romanian language written

¹⁸⁷ Augustin Bunea, “Statistica românilor din Transilvania în anul 1750” [“Statistics of the Romanians in Transylvania in 1750”], in *Transilvania*, No. 9, 1901, p. 248.

¹⁸⁸ Virgil Ciobanu, *Statistica românilor ardeleni din 1760–1762 [Statistics of Transylvanian Romanians from 1760 – 1762]*, in *Yearbook of the Institute of National History*, 3, 1924–1925, p. 681.

¹⁸⁹ D.J.A.N. Harghita, *Colecția Registre Parohiale [Parish Registers Collection]*, Register 302.

in the Latin alphabet were not fixed until the second half of the 19th century. In fact, even Ioan Șolnai would abandon the Hungarian orthographic rules after 1860 in the parish registers of this period. The parish register that we analyze here reflects a very interesting phenomenon, especially during the lifetime of the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai: an external pressure to abandon the Cyrillic alphabet, which we will discuss in the following lines.

It is worth noting that there is a difference in the handwriting of the above-mentioned priests: the priests Ion and Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai used Cyrillic script and it is obvious that writing was an occasional activity for them, while the priest Ștefan Șolnai wrote cursive and calligraphic, a testimony to the fact that he had attended several years of school at one of the Greek-Catholic seminaries in Transylvania, the same being the case for the priest Ioan Șolnai.

THE DYNASTY OF THE ȘOLNAI PRIESTS

The purpose of this article is to trace and, as much as possible, to explain the transformation at the beginning of the 19th century of the family name of a whole dynasty of Romanian priests from Harghita and Covasna counties. A methodological clarification is necessary. The name Șolnai appears in various variants in different documents of the 19th century, depending on the period, who was writing it, what alphabet was used and who was the addressee of the document: a) with the Cyrillic alphabet the name was usually written phonetically in the form “Шолной/ Șolnoi” but also “Шолнай/Șolnai”; b) in documents that came into contact with the Hungarian-speaking administration in Transylvania or in those written in compliance with the spelling rules of the Hungarian language one of the forms “Solnay/Solnaj” is used; c) the bearers of this name prefer, after the transition to the Latin alphabet, in the vast majority of cases the form “Șolnai”, which is also used in official documents and printed publications of the Greek-Catholic Church. In the following we will use the latter variant of the name.

The origin of the name Șolnai is relatively obscure, the word having no obvious or recorded etymology. In an article entitled “Din Săcuime” (From Săcuime) published in the “Gazeta Transilvaniei” of November 14, 1907, the priest Vasiliu Urzică from Varviz states that:

“the priest Ioan Solnaj from Casonul Mare, who originated from the commune of Șona in the Făgăraș region, descendant of the famous Bucur family”¹⁹⁰.

The genealogical information provided by the priest Vasiliu Urzică mixes real data with a great dose of imagination: the priest Ioan Șolnai who was alive in 1907

¹⁹⁰ „preotul Ioan Solnaj dela Casonul Mare, care și-a tras originea din comuna Șona din ținutul Făgărașului, descendent al vestitei familii Bucur”, in ***, *Românii din Treiscaune, Ciuc, Giurgeu și Odorhei, în presa din Transilvania până în anul 1918 [Romanians from Treiscaune, Ciuc, Giurgeu and Odorhei, in the Transylvanian press until 1918]*, St. Gheorghe, Eurocarpatica Publishing House, 2021, p. 144.

was indeed the great-grandson of the priest Bucur from Doboï, but his surname was Crăciun, later changed to Șolnai. The descent from the commune of Șona in the Făgăraș region seems rather intended to explain the Hungarian-sounding name by the similarity Șona/Șolnai. We can understand the attempt of the priest Vasile Urzică to promote a Făgărașean origin of the Șolnai family in the 20th century if we consider the fact that Ioan Șolnai was since 1900 the protopope of the Romanian churches in Trei Scaune – without excluding the possibility that the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai was really originally from the village of Șona.

On the basis of the yearbooks of the Transylvanian Greek-Catholic Church, the records and notes in the parish registers of the church of Doboï, as well as some historical studies, we will try in the following lines to reconstruct the family tree of the Crăciun/Șolnai family, which gave several successive generations of priests and intellectuals of the Romanians from Harghita and Covasna counties in the 19th century.

1. Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai

The founder of a true dynasty of Romanian priests in the region of today's Harghita and Covasna counties, Bucur Crăciun became a priest in the village of Doboï on April 23, 1789¹⁹¹. He was a priest in Casonul Mare until 1834, a long period of 44 years. Until 1826 he used the name Bucur Crăciun – from 1826, most probably under the pressure of his sons, he started to call himself Bucur Șolnoi. According to the entries in the parish register, the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai refused until his death to record the “Greek-Catholic” confession, to the faith of those baptized/ married/buried he preferred to record the confession as “pravoslavnic” (the Slavonic translation of the Orthodox term) or “Greek” – a testimony to and an effect of the confessional tensions and conflicts among the Romanians in 18th century Transylvanian Transylvania. He certainly knew how to distinguish between the various Christian confessions existing in Transylvania: at a wedding on July 10, 1794, he records that “he is of the Greek law, but she is a popist”¹⁹², at a baptism on January 23, 1798, he notes that “the godfather is popist, the godson is of the Greek law”¹⁹³.

We don't know very many details about the life of priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai – he was married to Maria, with whom he had at least 5 sons: Ștefan, Ioan, Gheorghe, Ignatie and Andrei. We also know that he was an organized and dedicated man to his church, at least this is attested by the parish register he kept, which he wrote in a neat and mostly tidy hand, although it is obvious that priest Bucur's hand was more used to hard work than to quill and inkwell. Most likely when he came to Doboï in 1789 he was married and had at least two sons – Ștefan and Ioan – who from 1810–1811 appear in the documents as adults, most probably born a few years before 1793 when George's baptism is recorded. The first record of the birth of a child of the

¹⁹¹ D.J.A.N. Harghita, *Colecția Registre Parohiale [Parish Registers Collection]*, Register 302, Cover II.

¹⁹² *Ibidem*, f. 62v.

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, f. 6v.

priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai is for his fourth son to whom he dedicated a special note: “Year 1795 was born our child Ignatie December 16”¹⁹⁴, the fifth son of the priest Bucur Crăciun/Şolnai was baptized Andrei on November 29, 1798¹⁹⁵. In the institutional memory of the Greek-Catholic Church, this priest remained with the name Bucur Şolnai, according to the Greek-Catholic yearbook of 1900¹⁹⁶.

2. Ştefan Şolnai

He was probably the eldest son of the priest Bucur Crăciun/Şolnai, unfortunately the documentary information preserved about him does not allow us to approximate at this stage of documentation the date of his birth and death. The yearbooks of the Greek-Catholic Church indicate Ştefan Şolnai as a priest in the village of Turia (Covasna County) between 1811–1819¹⁹⁷, in the village of Poian (Covasna County) between 1816–1827¹⁹⁸, and from 1835 until at least 1842, if not several years after that date in the village of Ernei (Mureş County)¹⁹⁹.

We know that Ştefan Şolnai officiated several baptisms in the church pastored by his father, recorded in the parish register of Doboi: on July 6, 1814, Ştefan Şolnai baptized Maria, daughter of Cojoc Ioan and Virag Colara²⁰⁰, on April 13, 1826, Ştefan Şolnai baptized Eva, daughter of Dima Pinti and Otvaş Maria²⁰¹, and on May 21, 1826, Ştefan Şolnai baptized Ignatie, son of his younger brother, Ignatie Şolnai²⁰². From the notes kept in the parish register of Doboi, it appears that Ştefan Şolnai used both the Cyrillic and the Latin alphabets with equal skill, and it is possible that he was also a connoisseur of Latin – the inner cover of the register is signed in Latin “Stephanus Solnay 1810 7ma die Augustus”. It is most likely that Ştefan Solnay attended a Transylvanian seminary or college, and his calligraphic handwriting makes it clear that he was a man of letters, much more studious than his father.

3. Ioan Şolnai senior

We do not know the exact date of birth of Ioan Şolnai sr., we only know with precision that on September 4, 1810, he and his wife Eva Şimon were the godparents of Maria, daughter of Toader Maro and Borbara Şimon²⁰³ – which means that she was born a few years after Ştefan Şolnai, although the reverse situation cannot be

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 4v.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 7.

¹⁹⁶ ***, *Şematismul veneratului cler al arhiepiscopiei metropolitane greco-catolice române de Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș pre Anul Domnului 1900 [Yearbook of the the Venerable Clergy of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Metropolitan Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraș in the Year of Our Lord 1900]*, Blaj, Typography of the Archdiocesan Seminary, 1900, p. 573.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 579.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 578.

¹⁹⁹ ***, *Schematismus venerabilis cleri graeci ritus catholicorum dioceseos Fogarasiensis in Transilvania*, Blaj, Typis Diocesan Seminaries, 1835, p. 59.

²⁰⁰ D.J.A.N. Harghita, *Colecția Registre Parohiale [Parish Registers Collection]*, Register 302, f. 15v.

²⁰¹ *Ibidem*, f. 24v.

²⁰² *Ibidem*, f. 25.

²⁰³ *Ibidem*, f. 13.

excluded, in any case the two sons of the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai were of similar ages. In the parish register of the church of Doboii Ioan Șolnai sr. appears several times as cantor of the church between 1810–1819. On April 13, 1819, Ioan Șolnai sr. officiates at the church of Doboii the baptism of Floarea, daughter of Ion Cojoc from Imper²⁰⁴ – which means that before this date he was ordained. In 1835 the priest Ioan Șolnai sr. was serving in the parish of Turia (Covasna county) where there was a church built in 1730 and there were 352 Greek-Catholic believers²⁰⁵. From the yearbook of the Greek-Catholic church in 1900 we learn that the priest Ioan Șolnai sr. replaced his brother Ștefan Șolnai in the parish of Turia in 1819 until 1864, when he most probably died²⁰⁶.

While he was cantor at the church of Doboii, Ioan Șolnai sr. had a son Ioan, baptized on December 23, 1811, according to the parish register here – most probably he had other children, but to establish this fact exactly, it is necessary to extend the research area. It is also worth mentioning that Ioan Șolnai sr. and his wife Eva Șimon appear in the parish register of the church of Doboii as godparents at 6 baptisms in the period 1810–1819 – a sign of the prestige enjoyed by the family of the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai.

4. George Șolnai

On April 3, 1793, the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai registered the baptism of his son Gheorghe²⁰⁷. It is possible that this Gheorghe born in 1793 was the priest George Șolnai who served at the Greek-Catholic church of Ghelinta between 1841–1870²⁰⁸. About the priest George Șolnai we only know that in 1853 he baptized his nephew Dionisiu in the church of Doboii.

5. Ignatie Șolnai senior

The fourth son of the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai born on December 16, 1795, according to the entry in the parish register²⁰⁹ – a special entry considering that usually the date of baptism was recorded, not the date of birth. Ignatie Șolnai sr. most probably died between 1881–1883 and 1890: between 1881–1883 the new stone church in Doboii was built, and in 1890 a stone cross was placed in the area of the altar of the old wooden church built in 1750, with a largely illegible inscription in Hungarian, but on which the year and the inscription “SOLNAI IGNACZ KANTOR” can be read.

Ignatie Șolnai sr. was cantor of the church in Doboii after the departure of his elder brother Ioan, priest in Turia in 1819, he is mentioned in this position since 1836, during the period when the priest of the church in Doboii was his nephew Ioan Șolnai jr.²¹⁰ Married to Agnes Halanda, Ignatie Șolnai had several children: Andrei,

²⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 19.

²⁰⁵ ***, *Schematismus venerabilis...*, 1835, p. 155.

²⁰⁶ ***, *Șematismul venerabilului cler...*, 1900, p. 579.

²⁰⁷ D.J.A.N. Harghita, *Colecția Registre Parohiale [Parish Registers Collection]*, Register 302, f. 3.

²⁰⁸ ***, *Șematismul venerabilului cler...*, 1900, p. 576.

²⁰⁹ D.J.A.N. Harghita, *Colecția Registre Parohiale [Parish Registers Collection]*, Register 302, f. 4v.

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*, Register 303, f. 4, 9.

baptized on November 27, 1821; Maria, baptized on February 17, 1824; Ignatie, baptized on May 21, 1826 by his uncle Ștefan Șolnai; Agneș, baptized on June 28, 1828; Ignatie, baptized on April 23, 1831²¹¹; Alo(i)suiu, baptized on April 18, 1836 and Ladislau, baptized on July 3, 1839²¹². Certainly, Ignatie baptized on May 21, 1826, fell victim to the infant mortality of the period, since the next boy born in Ignatie Șolnai's family in 1831 received the same name.

Ignatie Șolnai is mentioned as godfather in the parish registers of the church of Doboi 11 times, proving to have been an influential figure in the Romanian community here – an extension of the current research is to trace the social networks built around the godfather-godson relationship. Another interesting observation concerns the evolution of the names Ignatie chose for his children: from names such as Andrei, Maria, Ignatie to names such as Agnes and Ladislau.

6. Ioan Șolnai junior

He was the son of the priest Ioan Șolnai sr., baptized on December 23, 1811, in Doboi, died in 1873. From 1834 he became the priest of the church of Doboi in place of his grandfather Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai²¹³. Shortly after Ioan Șolnai jr. took over the parish, the yearbook of the Greek-Catholic church noted that there was a wooden church and 700 Greek-Catholics in Doboi²¹⁴. He was married to Maria Crăciun (who constantly appears in the registers in the Hungarian spelling “Karatson”) with whom he had 8 children: Julianna (b. June 22, 1835), Ioan (January 1, 1837), Alexander (b. June 24, 1841), Barbara (b. January 28, 1844 – d. November 2, 1872), Maria (b. February 8, 1846 – d. January 19, 1938), Anna (b. May 17, 1850), Dionisiu (b. May 22, 1853), Carolina (b. May 29, 1858)²¹⁵. An observation worth noting: the vast majority of the children of priest Ioan Șolnai jr. were baptized by the Roman-Catholic priest of Imper, unlike in previous generations when the children of the Greek-Catholic priests of Doboi were baptized by priests of the same confession from other Romanian villages – which signals a closeness of priest Ioan Șolnai jr. to the local Hungarian authorities; in addition to this, there is the appearance of Latin personal names (Iuliana, Dionisiu, Carolina). From 1834 Ioan Șolnai jr. abandons the use of the Cyrillic alphabet in the baptismal register of the parish church in Doboi, replacing it with the Latin alphabet and using the Hungarian orthography for the Romanian names. It is also the priest Ioan Șolnai jr. who begins to record the confession as “Greek-Catholic”. This priest wrote his name as “Joannes/ Joanne”, which together with his neat and calligraphic handwriting indicates that it is highly likely that he attended a long school.

7. Șolnai Andrei

Baptized on November 27, 1821, in the church of Doboi, Andrei Șolnai was the eldest son of the cantor Ignatie Șolnai sr. He studied at the Roman-Catholic

²¹¹ *Ibidem*, Register 302, f. 20, 22v, 25, 27v, 31.

²¹² *Ibidem*, Register 303, f. 4, 9.

²¹³ ***, *Șematismul veneratului cler...*, 1900, p. 573.

²¹⁴ ***, *Schematismus venerabilis...*, 1835, p. 153

²¹⁵ D.J.A.N. Harghita, *Colecția Registre Parohiale [Parish Registers Collection]*, Register 303, f. 3, 6, 11, 14, 17, 22, 27, 36.

secondary school in Șumuleu-Ciuc where he was registered as a pupil in 1834²¹⁶. From 1862 to 1869 he was a priest in the village of Ilieni (Covasna County), and from 1862 to 1881 he was a priest in the village of Turia (Covasna County)²¹⁷.

8. Ioan Șolnai (Tertius)

He was born on January 1, 1837, son of the priest Ioan Șolnai jr., he was the one who reached the highest position in the church hierarchy of all the members of the priestly dynasty of Șolnai – namely, the protopope of the Trei Scaune district since 1900²¹⁸. Ioan Șolnai (tertius) attended four classes at the Roman-Catholic gymnasium in Șumuleu-Ciuc, graduated the theological course in Blaj, where he was ordained in 1859²¹⁹. From this year until 1874 Ioan Șolnai (tertius) was a priest in the village of Poian (Covasna County), from 1874–1890 he was a priest in the village of Joseni (Covasna County), and from 1888 he became vice-protopope of the Trei Scaune district²²⁰.

9. Alexander Șolnai

He was born on June 24, 1841, son of the priest Ioan Șolnai jr., studied at the Roman-Catholic gymnasium in Șumuleu-Ciuc, studied law and became a lawyer²²¹, was followed in his career by his son Cornel Șolnai who practiced law in Budapest during the interwar period.

10. Dionisiu Șolnai

Dionisiu, son of priest Ioan Șolnai jr. was born on May 22, 1853, and, like his older brothers, attended the Roman-Catholic gymnasium in Șumuleu-Ciuc between 1867–1870. He then completed the theological course in Blaj and was ordained in 1874²²². Until 1876 he was a priest in Ghelința (Covasna County), and in 1900 he was recorded in the yearbook of the Greek-Catholic Church as a priest in Sândomic since 1877²²³.

The family founded by priest Bucur Crăciun at the end of the 18th century in the village of Doboii proved to be extremely influential among the Romanian communities in south-eastern Transylvania throughout the 19th century. From the ranks of this family arose 7 priests and 2 cantors who served in the churches of 7 Romanian villages in the region (Doboii, Poian, Turia, Ernei, Ilieni, Joseni, Ghelința), and one of the priests of the third generation of the Șolnai family rose to the rank of protopope of the Trei Scaune district.

²¹⁶ Liviu Boar, *Românii din scaunele Ciuc, Giurgeu și Cașin în secolul al XIX-lea [Romanians from Ciuc, Giurgeu and Cașin in the 19th century]*, Târgu-Mureș, “Petru Maior” University Publishing House, 2004, p. 163.

²¹⁷ ***, *Șematismul veneratului cler...*, 1900, p. 579.

²¹⁸ ***, *Șematismul veneratului cler al arhidiecesei metropolitane greco-catolice române de Alba-Iulia și Făgăraș pre Anul Domnului 1906 [Yearbook of the the Venerable Clergy of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Metropolitan Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraș in the Year of Our Lord 1906]*, Blaj, Typography of the Archdiocesan Seminary, 1906, p. 267.

²¹⁹ Liviu Boar, *quoted work*, p. 100.

²²⁰ ***, *Șematismul veneratului cler...*, 1900, p. 337 and p. 576.

²²¹ Liviu Boar, *quoted work*, p. 164 and p. 163.

²²² *Ibidem*, p. 98.

²²³ ***, *Șematismul veneratului cler...*, 1900, p. 338 and p. 576.

FROM CRĂCIUN TO ȘOLNAI

In view of the long-lasting influence of this family on the spiritual life of several Romanian communities in south-eastern Transylvania, the process of changing the family name becomes all the more interesting.

The second cover of the parish register of the church of Doboii contains (among other notes) an extremely interesting phrase:

“In order to let them know that I, the priest Bucur (Crăciun/ overwritten Șolnoi) came to Cason in the year 1789 April 23”²²⁴.

Mirroring this note, on the third cover of the book it says: “Note to be known when I, priest Bucur Crăciun came to be priest in Nog(hi) Cason 1789 April 23”²²⁵.

Both notes are written in Romanian with Cyrillic alphabet and represent a form of certification of the parish register, but also a “taking possession” of the parish by the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai. The register was started by priest Ion (whose surname unfortunately does not appear) on January 3, 1787. The baptism entries of priest Ion were abruptly interrupted on February 25, 1789, followed by four years without any baptism entries. The entries were resumed by priest Bucur Crăciun on April 3, 1793, when he records the baptism of his son Gheorghe²²⁶.

The lack of records for the years 1789–1793 may indicate that the parish register of the church of Doboii was no longer here and it is possible that it was with the priest Ion, the one who started it – in 1789 the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai becomes priest here, in 1793 the baptismal records are resumed. The moment of the recovery of this register by priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai in April 1793 seems to have been an important and significant one, which may have provoked the new parish priest to write on the second and third covers the date when he took over the parish.

What is striking about the above-mentioned cover inscriptions is that in the first one the surname “Crăciun” has been crossed out and replaced by “Șolnoi”, while in the second one this change has not been made. During the more than 40 years in which he recorded the baptisms of the members of his community, the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai preferred to address himself simply as “priest Bucur”. However, there are also a number of deviations from this rule, when the signature appears in other forms: “priest Bucur, paroh of the village”/ “popa Bucur, paroh locului”, “priest Bucur paroh”/ “popa Bucur paroh” and the most important of these deviations from the rule is when he signs himself “priest Bucur Crăciun”/ “popa Bucur Crăciun”. It is worth mentioning here two records that might better illustrate the assumption of this name: at a baptism on October 23, 1794, the mother of the child is recorded as “Eva Caracion”, a Magyarized variant of the surname, and at the

²²⁴ „Pentru ca să știe că am venit eu popa Bucur (Crăciun/Șolnoi) la Cason anul 1789 aprilie 23”, in D.J.A.N. Harghita, *Colecția Registre Parohiale [Parish Registers Collection]*, Register 302, f. 3.

²²⁵ „Însemnare pentru ca să știe de când am venit eu popa Bucur Crăciun preot la Nog(hi) Cason 1789 april 23”, in *Ibidem*.

²²⁶ *Ibidem*.

baptism immediately following on November 11, 1794, the priest signs himself “priest Bucur Crăciun”, as a kind of correction of the previous variant of the same name²²⁷. The frequency with which the priest Bucur Crăciun used this surname in the parish register is as follows: 1794 three times, 1795 twice, 1796 once, 1797 three times – otherwise he preferred the simpler version “priest Bucur”/ “popa Bucur”.

The oldest record of the name “Șolnoi” in the parish register of Doboii dates from 1811, when the priest’s son is listed as godfather at the baptism of a girl under the name Ion Șolnoi²²⁸. Priest Bucur Crăciun became priest Bucur Șolnai in 1826 by the hand of his eldest son Ștefan. The latter served his first baptism at Doboii on July 6, 1814, when he entered his name Ștefan Șolnai in the register and signed himself – a personal mark, he being the only one to use a signature²²⁹. On April 13, 1819, the second son of the priest Bucur served a baptism in the church of Doboii and registered himself in the parish register with the name Ioan Șolnoi²³⁰. On February 16, 1826, Eva’s baptism is registered, here the priest’s name appears “Bucur Șolnai” – written by Ștefan Șolnai, in his obvious handwriting, besides he added his signature²³¹. At the next baptism on February 19, 1826, the inscription in the register was written by the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai who changed his name to “priest Bucur”/ “popa Bucur” – in fact, no inscription written by him in which he assumed the name “Șolnai” has been preserved, after this date in all the entries in the parish register he used exclusively the form “priest Bucur”/ “popa Bucur”. Only towards the end of his life, in the first half of 1834, his name was entered in the register as “Bokor Pop” with Latin alphabet, by his nephew Ioan Șolnai jr. – who at least at the beginning of his career wrote in Romanian using the spelling rules of the Hungarian language²³².

We can thus trace the evolution of the change of the family name in an extended dynasty of Romanian priests in southeastern Transylvania: the founder of the dynasty occasionally uses the surname Crăciun between 1789 and 1797, after which he prefers to sign himself only by his personal name for a long period; his sons who became priests, however, prefer to use the name “Șolnai” with an unclear origin from 1811 onwards; in 1826 one of these sons enters his father in the parish register as “Bucur Șolnai”, but the priest from Doboii does not take over this name. In the institutional memory of the Greek-Catholic church, the priest Bucur Crăciun remains as Bucur Șolnai and is recorded as such in the 1900 yearbook. All his numerous descendants continued to use the name Șolnai until the middle of the 20th century, and any memory of the original family name Crăciun disappeared.

On the basis of the preserved documents, it is rather difficult to formulate an explanation for the transformation of the surname of a Romanian priest from Crăciun into Șolnoi. In the first place, the Hungarian resonance of the chosen name attracts

²²⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 4.

²²⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 13v.

²²⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 15v.

²³⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 19.

²³¹ *Ibidem*, f. 24v.

²³² *Ibidem*, f. 67.

attention, which points to a possible adaptation strategy in a Hungarian-dominated environment, such as that of the Romanians in south-eastern Transylvania. And this adaptation strategy seems to have been set in motion by the sons of the priest Bucur, especially by Ștefan. The parish register of Doboi illustrates a latent conflict between the priest Bucur and his sons, which we will try to elucidate in the following lines.

CYRILLIC ALPHABET AND ARABIC NUMERALS

First of all, there is a “tension” about the alphabet used. Priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai was not very good at calligraphy, his handwriting is clumsy, he did not use cursive letters, but at the same time it was legible and relatively neat. Until 1834 the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai preferred to write using the Cyrillic alphabet – but over the years he “experimented” with the use of Arabic numerals. In the Cyrillic alphabet numbers are rendered using letters, which are assigned a value from 1 to 19, then tens, hundreds and thousands are rendered using letters and groups of letters – the Cyrillic script lacks the digit 0, so the decimal rendering of numbers is different from Arabic numerals. Writing numbers with Arabic numerals proved to be extremely difficult for the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai: he repeatedly tried to switch to Arabic numerals, but never succeeded. He begins to do so from the year 1800 (a symbolic moment, which we suspect he chose specially) and from this time onwards the years are written with Arabic numerals – although the year 1813 is written by priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai as “18013”, according to the principle of the Cyrillic alphabet where thousands, hundreds and tens are rendered by special groups of characters in the absence of the digit 0. Often write 15 as “105” following the principle of the Cyrillic system of letter groups, many such mistakes occur in the parish register. Usually, after several attempts to render the day with Arabic numerals, he would revert to writing the numbers in the Cyrillic alphabet. By contrast, his sons Ștefan and Ioan wrote the Arabic numerals without any mistakes – besides a very beautiful calligraphic handwriting in Cyrillic, they also mastered cursive writing in Latin letters, a sign of their superior education compared to their father.

IDENTITY AND CONFESSION

The second level of tension between the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai and his sons can be identified in terms of the denomination designation. In the parish register of Doboi, the priest Ion entered the word “Romanian”/ “Rumân” under the heading “Law” (meaning confession). Priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai used over the years several variants for the designation of his confession: “of the Greek law”, “pravoslavnic”, “pravoslavnic of the Greek law” – even though the official designation of his confession was “united” or “Greek Catholic”.

The first record of a baptism in Doboï in which the Greek-Catholic confession appears dates from 1797 and is a handwritten inscription in a hand other than that of the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai²³³: the year 1797 is written with Arabic numerals; the month “Mar(tie) with Cyrillic letters; the day 10 with Arabic numerals; the name of the priest “popa Bucur” with Cyrillic letters; the name of the father Joan (Latin) Suciū (Cyrillic) of the mother Anna Koszok (Latin letters); godparents Kojok Gyorgy Ola(h) Maria (Latin letters); confession G(reco)-C(atolic) (Latin letters); place Ujfalu (with Latin letters, Hungarian variant, priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai preferred the Romanian variant Satul Nou). After this entry, the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai returned to his Cyrillic alphabet in which he designated the confession “of Greek law” or “pravoslavnic”. We suspect that this record belonged to a superior of the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai, he was a person who mastered the Cyrillic alphabet (which he used in cursive) as well as the Latin alphabet, the Romanian names were written in Hungarian spelling, the numbers were correctly rendered with Arabic numerals, and the official Hungarian name of the town was chosen. It is easy to imagine a scenario in which a hierarchical superior of the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai shows him how to fill in the parish register with the official name of the denomination. From 1806 we have another similar inscription, written by a different hand from that of the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai, this time entirely in Cyrillic alphabet, but the confession is written “Greek-Catholic”²³⁴. Even stranger is an entry from 1811, when the handwriting in most of the headings looks like that of the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Şolnai in Cyrillic script, but the month is written in Latin alphabet “April”, as is the child’s name “Joan” and the confession “Greek-Catholic”²³⁵.

The next record in which the denomination is designated as Greek-Catholic appears on February 16, 1826, being the one analyzed above, in which Bucur Crăciun becomes Bucur Şolnai, written by his son Ştefan. It is interesting that on April 13, 1826 – a few months after the aforementioned moment – Ştefan Şolnai officiated a baptism which he also recorded in the parish register, and in the confession he passed the “Greek law”. This allows for the hypothesis of a discussion between father and son, as a result of which the son decided not to designate the confession as Greek Catholic in the register. In 1830, at a baptism celebrated by the priest Ioan Şolnai sr. at Doboï, the Greek-Catholic confession is again recorded. At the beginning of 1834, the four weddings officiated by the priest Bucur Crăciun/Şolnai in February were recorded in the register by his nephew Ioan Şolnai jr. and he switched to the “Unitus” confession, the Latin version for “united”²³⁶. Shortly afterwards the priest Bucur Crăciun/Şolnai died – unfortunately we do not know the exact date, only that in July his nephew Ioan Şolnai jr. was parish priest in

²³³ *Ibidem*, f. 5v.

²³⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 11.

²³⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 13.

²³⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 67.

Doboi – without having put in the register any other confession than “Greek law” or “pravoslavnic”. After the death of Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai, his nephew Ioan Șolnai jr. started a new parish register in which he constantly used the “Greek-Catholic” confession and made the entries in Romanian with Latin alphabet using the orthographic rules of the Hungarian language.

In the light of the above, a generational conflict is evident between Fr: the first, less scholarly, did not give up until his death to define his confession as “Greek law” or “pravoslavnic” – while his sons, with a much more beautiful handwriting, knowledgeable in Latin, but also in the Latin alphabet and Arabic numerals, obviously with much more advanced studies than their father, tried to slip into the parish register of Doboi the official designation of the confession, namely Greek-Catholic. Last but not least, three external interventions in the parish register (from 1797, 1806 and 1811, which suggests a certain rhythm) – most probably made by a hierarchical superior of the priest Bucur Crăciun/Șolnai who also tried to indicate the official denomination of the confession.

CONFESSIONAL CONFLICTS AND THEIR EFFECTS

The manifest and long-term reluctance of the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai to use the term “Greek-Catholic” for his confession has deep-rooted causes, with origins in the confessional conflicts between the Transylvanian Romanians in the 17th century. In order to shed light on the manifestation of the effects of these confessional conflicts in the parish of the Romanians of Doboi, it is necessary to take a broader look at the history of the Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania in the 18th century. The Greek-Catholic Church of the Transylvanian Romanians came into being following the Alba Iulia Synod of October 7, 1698, at which Metropolitan Atanasie Anghel and 38 Orthodox protopopes declared their union with the Catholic Church, subject to the preservation of the rites and traditions of the Orthodox Church. The creation of the Greek-Catholic Church of the Transylvanian Romanians was supported by the Imperial Court of Vienna, which pursued a number of confessional and political objectives: the confessional unification of Transylvania and the alteration of the inter-confessional balance of power in the province, the exercise of more effective control over its governance – in practice, the Romanians were an instrument of the Habsburg Empire to impose a new rule in Transylvania²³⁷. From the Romanians’ point of view, the union with the Catholic Church was to pave the way for the social, political and cultural emancipation of the Romanians of Transylvania, who were considered legally “tolerated”²³⁸.

²³⁷ Mathias Bernath, *Habsburgii și începuturile formării națiunii române [The Habsburgs and the Beginnings of the Romanian Nation]*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1994, pp. 78–79.

²³⁸ Greta-Monica Miron, “Motivetele Unirii religioase [The Reasons of the Religious Union]”, in Johann Marte, *Unirea Românilor Transilvăneni cu biserica Romei [The Union of the Transylvanian Romanians with the Church of Rome]*, Vol. I, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2010, pp. 214–225.

The failure to fulfill the promises of the Leopoldine Diploma of 1701, which guaranteed the political and religious rights of Romanians in Transylvania under the conditions of union with the Catholic Church, led to the emergence of several movements contesting the union. In the context of the debates on the realization and imposition of the union with the Catholic Church among the Orthodox faithful at the beginning of the 18th century, a series of events took place, which were to be repeated in many other places. At the synod of September 4, 1700, convened by Metropolitan Athanasius in Alba-Iulia, the Orthodox protopope Vasile Grid from Braşov signed the act of union – but as soon as the Romanians of Braşov found out, they threatened to replace him with an Orthodox protopope, which made Vasile Grid promise to remain Orthodox²³⁹. Throughout the 18th century, this scenario was repeated in many Romanian villages in Transylvania: priests usually joined the union with the Catholic Church in order to benefit from the same status as Catholic priests and especially from tax exemption, without informing the believers of this change. In many cases, as soon as the believers learned of the change of confessional subordination, they asked the priest to return to the Orthodox confession under threat of banishment and replacement²⁴⁰. Particularly active were the movements against the union of Romanians with the Catholic Church provoked in the middle of the 18th century by the monks Visarion Sarai²⁴¹ and Sofronie of Cioara²⁴².

The Orthodox Romanians' definition of their own confession was recorded in the 18th century in several documents – Romanians defined their confession in forms such as “Romanian law”, “old law”, “old faith”, while Greek Catholic hierarchs tried to impose the term „united” for their own believers²⁴³. In this context we can see more clearly the choice of the priest Ion de la Doboi between 1787–1789 to use the formula “Romanian law” to designate the confession of the Romanians here – at a

²³⁹ Keith Hitchins, “Cele trei puncte în care decizia de Unire a fost respinsă de la bun început și informațiile noastre asupra altor disensiuni referitoare la deciziile Unirii din anii 1697–1701, care au existat deja de pe vremea lui Atanasie” [“The three points on which the decision of Union was rejected from the outset and our information on other dissensions concerning the decisions of the Union of 1697–1701, which already existed from the time of Athanasius”], in *Ibidem*, pp. 307–319.

²⁴⁰ Mihai Săsăușan, “Curtea din Viena și chestiunea Unirii bisericești a românilor din Transilvania la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea” [“The Court of Vienna and the question of the ecclesiastical union of Romanians in Transylvania in the mid-18th century”], in Johann Marte, *Unirea Românilor Transilvăneni cu biserica Romei [The Union of the Transylvanian Romanians with the Church of Rome]*, Vol. II, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2010, pp. 564–623.

²⁴¹ Paul Bruszanowski, “Egumenul Visarion de la Sâmbăta și disputa teologică cu greco-catolicii (1746)” [“Visarion from Sâmbăta and the theological dispute with the Greek-Catholics (1746)”], in *Ibidem*, pp. 348–367.

²⁴² Florin Dobrei, “Un opozant al Unirii religioase a românilor din Ardeal cu Biserica Romei: călugărul Sofronie de la Cioara” [“An opponent of the religious union of Romanians in Transylvania with the Church of Rome: Sofronie from Cioara”], in *Ibidem*, pp. 402–435.

²⁴³ Daniel Dumitran, „Forme ale definirii identitare în Transilvania veacului al XVIII-lea. Introducere la critica imaginii istoriografice a românilor neuniți” [“Forms of Defining Identity in XVIIIth Century Transylvania. Introduction to Critique of Historiographic Image of the Non-Uniate Romanians”], in *Apulum*, 2013, pp. 149–203.

time when the inhabitants of Doboii appear as Greek-Catholics from 1750. The choice of the priest Bucur Crăciun/ Șolnai to use the expressions “Greek law” or “pravoslavnic” for the confession, until late in 1834, could signal either the existence of a local resistance of the faithful to the union with the Catholic Church, or a personal decision to find a way to avoid the terms “united” or “Greek-Catholic”. In the absence of other documents, we cannot speculate further, we can only say that the change from “pravoslavnic” to “Greek Catholic” like the change from Crăciun to Șolnai was not something accepted by the priest Bucur from Doboii.

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THE ETHNONYM “BOSCOR/BOZGOR”. CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM

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ABSTRACT

The ethnonym “Boscor/Bozgor” is presented by some researchers or Hungarian politicians who support political correctness as being of relatively recent origin (1934), having appeared out of nowhere (ex nihilo), and as carrying exclusively pejorative or offensive connotations. In reality, this ethnonym has a significant history in the Romanian language, with a comprehensive lexical paradigm and a wide area of distribution. The ethnonym “Boscor/Bozgor” (exonym) derives from the ethnonym “Bashkir” (endonym). Its borrowing into the Romanian language might have occurred between the 9th and 14th centuries, a period during which the massive presence of the Bashkirs in the Pannonian Plain, alongside Hungarians and Romanians, is attested by various foreign authors (Byzantine, Persian or Arab). The subject should be approached without subjectivism, manipulation, or political correctness, strictly adhering to the methods and tools of objective scientific research.

Keywords: Ethnonymy, Boscor/Bozgor, Bashkir, Hungarian-Bashkir issue, etymology.

THE MEANING OF THE ETHNONYM “BOSCOR/BOZGOR”

The self-identifying names of the tribes and clans from the old Hungarian horde that migrated to Pannonia at the end of the 9th century, or the auxiliary tribes of the Hungarians, preserved to this day in the Romanian language, include a few: *maghiar, ungur, and boscor/bozgor*²⁴⁵.

The ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor* is perceived and presented by some researchers, especially Hungarian ones, as being exclusively pejorative and offensive²⁴⁶, based on the hypothesis that the term is a Romanian exonym, invented manifestly for the purpose of stigmatization, with meanings such as “homeless person”/“stateless

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²⁴⁵ After the tribal name *Megyer*, the Turkic tribal name *Onogur*, and the generic tribal name *Başqort*.

²⁴⁶ Imola Katalin Nagy, “Deprecatory Ethnonyms: The Case of Bozgor”, in *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica*, Vol. 15, No. 3/2023, pp. 55–85, Available at: <https://acta.sapientia.ro/content/docs/4887255.pdf>, Accessed on September 30, 2024.

person”²⁴⁷, “person without a mountain”²⁴⁸, or “person without a city”²⁴⁹ i.e., “rootless, nomadic, outsider”, or “wearer of traditional footwear”/“peasant”²⁵⁰, or from the assumption that it represents a lexical hybrid resulting from the attachment of a Hungarian derogatory expression to the Romanian word “ungur” (“Hungarian”)²⁵¹.

The term “boscor/bozgor” is recorded in Romanian dictionaries²⁵² as being colloquial, synonymous with “ungur” and “maghiar”. Some of these dictionaries indicate that the term can, in some cases, carry pejorative connotations. Romanian dictionaries also attest to the verb *a boscorodi* (to grumble/ mumble) as part of the lexical paradigm of *boscor/bozgor*.

Referring to the meanings of the ethnonym boscor/bozgor, the Hungarian researcher from Romania, Szilágyi N. Sándor, states:

“From a linguistic point of view, Bozgor is a rare and interesting case (...) Romanians do not know the meaning of the word Bozgor as ‘stateless’. They haven’t even heard of it. (...) They believe that this word means ‘Hungarian’, but said in a slightly mocking, scornful, and not entirely benevolent manner. And because everyone believes this (those of them who know the word, as not all Romanians are familiar with it), in Romanian, it only means that, it cannot mean anything else”²⁵³.

²⁴⁷ “bozgor: homeless, stateless – *A rományok mocskoltak, mer aszonták: ești bozgor, úgy mondták, mer magyar vagy* [The Romanians mocked us saying: you are bozgor, for being Hungarian] (P). *Ha megharagudnak, még azt es mondják, hogy bozgor. Ezt azért mondják, hogy ők nem értik a Magyar beszédet, s akkor azt mondják: bozgerálunk.* [If they get mad at us, they even call us bozgor. They call us that because they do not understand the Hungarian language and then they say: we speak bozgor] (Fr)” [bozgor: fără casă, fără țară – *A rományok mocskoltak, mer aszonták: ești bozgor, úgy mondták, mer magyar vagy* [Români ne-au batjocorit spunând: ești bozgor pentru că ești ungar] (P). *Ha megharagudnak, még azt es mondják, hogy bozgor. Ezt azért mondják, hogy ők nem értik a Magyar beszédet, s akkor azt mondják: bozgerálunk.* [Dacă se supără pe noi, chiar ne spun bozgori. Ei ne numesc astfel pentru că nu înțeleg limba maghiară și spun apoi că vorbim bozgorște] (Fr)], in Lehel Peti and Vilmos Tanczos, *Language Use, Attitudes, Strategies. Linguistic Identity and Ethnicity in the Moldavian Csángó Villages*, Cluj-Napoca, ISPMN Publishing House (Institute for the Study of National Minorities Issues), 2012, p. 130.

²⁴⁸ Szilágyi N. Sándor suggests that *bozgor* might be a loanword in Romanian that came through Slavic: *bez* (“without”) + *gora* (“mountain”), in Sándor N. Szilágyi, *Uő: Mi–egy–más: közéleti írások [Uő: What-else: public writings]*, Cluj-Napoca, Kalota Publishing House, 2003, pp. 503–505.

²⁴⁹ The author presents a second hypothesis regarding the loan from Slavic: *bez* (“without”) + *gorod* (“city”), in *Ibidem*.

²⁵⁰ The American sociologist Rogers Brubaker, without presenting a pertinent and convincing linguistic argument, derives the ethnonym *bozgor* from the Hungarian regionalism *bocskor* = “shoe”, in Rogers Brubaker *et al.*, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 307.

²⁵¹ The author suggests that *bozgor* might be a combination of the Hungarian curse *Ba(s)zld meg* (“f* you”) and the Romanian word *ungur* (“Hungarian”), in Szilágyi N. Sándor, *quoted work*, pp. 503–505.

²⁵² DEX (2016), DOOM 3 (2021), Argou (2007).

²⁵³ Szilágyi N. Sándor, *quoted work*, pp. 713–717.

EX NIHILLO? THE ATTEMPT TO TABOO THE TERM

For any word, it is important to establish, as much as possible, the time of its appearance in a language or another. In the case of lexical borrowings, it is also crucial to determine, if possible, whether it is a direct loan from a specific language or if the borrowing occurred through an intermediary language. Thus, from the outset, we must note that in the case of the term *Boscor/Bozgor*, Hungarian researchers claim that it appeared in the Romanian language *ex nihilo*²⁵⁴, and that the place and time of its appearance are very concrete (Cluj, 1934)²⁵⁵. Furthermore, we note that no researcher has yet determined whether the term exists in other languages as well.

We observe that the entire supposedly scientific Hungarian debate surrounding the old word *Boscor/Bozgor* is conducted exclusively in terms of discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia, and hate speech, occasionally bordering on self-victimization, without the necessary attention to the philological and etymological aspects of the term.

We thus notice an increasingly pronounced tendency among some Hungarian researchers to taboo the term and to condemn, from the perspective of political correctness, all those who have used or continue to use it in Romanian popular or academic language. Here, we can foresee the desire to ban and remove the innocent ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor* from Romanian usage, against which some Hungarian researchers or politicians have declared an all-out war. The term is being used as a pretext to directly or implicitly suggest alleged discrimination against ethnic Hungarians²⁵⁶.

Let's provide just a few recent examples: Imola Katalin Nagy from the Sapientia Hungarian University in Transylvania, who published the study *Deprecatory Ethnonyms: The Case of Bozgor*; Gábor Egry, director of the Institute of Political History in Budapest, with his study *Bozgori. Verbal Abuse, Mockery, and Insult in Daily Relations Between Hungarians and Romanians in Romania Between the Two World Wars*²⁵⁷; and Vilmos Tánzos, an ethnographer of Székely origin

²⁵⁴ "It would not have simply appeared in the second half of the 20th century almost *ex nihilo* as an ethnic insult. Pejoration could have taken place, but the word itself would have entered at least some dictionaries. Moreover, the ethnonym Bashkir applied to Hungarians could be explained by the fact that Turks have always supported the Asian origin of Hungarians, and the lexeme *bozkir* means 'steppe' in modern Turkish, therefore this exonym could mean 'people of the steppe', 'people who come from the steppe'."], in Imola Katalin Nagy, "Deprecatory Ethnonyms: The Case of Bozgor", in *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica*, Vol. 15, No. 3/2023, Available at: <https://acta.sapientia.ro/content/docs/4-887255.pdf>, Accessed on September 30, 2024, p. 60.

²⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

²⁵⁶ Magyar Távirati Iroda (MTI) Newsroom, "To be Hungarian is a duty and a mission", in *Kormany*, March 7, 2018, Available at: <https://20152019.kormany.hu/en/primeministersoffice/news/tobehungarianisadutyandamission>, Accessed on September 30, 2024.

²⁵⁷ Gábor Egry, "Bozgorok. Verbális sértés, gúny, inzultus a mindennapi magyar-román kapcsolatokban a két világháború közti Romániában" ["Bozgori. Verbal abuse, mockery, and insult in everyday relations between Hungarians and Romanians in Romania between the two world wars"], in Sándor Gebei *et al.*, *Tanulmányok a 60 éves Romsics Ignác tiszteletére [Studies in honor of Ignác Romsics, aged 60]*, Linceum Kiadó, Budapest, 2011, pp. 366–372.

from Harghita County, who, together with Lehel Peti, published the *study Language Use, Attitudes, Strategies. Linguistic Identity and Ethnicity in the Moldavian Csángó Villages*²⁵⁸.

Referring to the ethnonym *Bozgor*, in the current sense of *Hungarian*, Imola Katalin Nagy claims, among other things, that:

“especially on some forums and platforms not dedicated to scientific debate, participants tend to reiterate this idea solely to demonstrate that *bozgor* is not an insult but an ethnonym”²⁵⁹

without specifying whether the individuals involved in the discussion are Romanians or Hungarians, and without providing any valid arguments to support her hypothesis about the absence of any neutral ethnic meanings of the term.

While present in Miercurea Ciuc on June 17, 2023, Hungary’s Deputy Prime Minister, Zsolt Semjén, made a statement asserting that the ethnonym *boscor/bozgor* has been used continuously for centuries:

“It is no secret that this is also a personal objective of my life. My mother is from Transylvania, so I know what it means **to be called bozgor for centuries**”²⁶⁰.

Earlier, on March 7, 2018, the same Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary, Zsolt Semjén, referred to the ethnonym *boscor/bozgor*, attributing to it the meaning of “*a person without a country*”. A statement from the Hungarian government reiterates this declaration:

“At the launch of a new book titled *A Million* about national unification and Hungarian Christian-Democratic politics, Zsolt Semjén emphasized: considering his own family and Transylvanian roots, he knows very well what it means to be called **bozgor, a person without a country**”²⁶¹.

This statement, included on the official website of the Hungarian government, aligns with the Hungarian official’s view on the centuries-old existence of the ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor*, also bringing attention to one of the hypotheses regarding the term’s origin, even if it proves to be a popular and unscientific one.

²⁵⁸ Lehel Peti and Vilmos Táncoz, *quoted work*.

²⁵⁹ Imola Katalin Nagy, “Deprecatory Ethnonyms: The Case of *Bozgor*”, in *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica*, Vol. 15, No. 3/2023, Available at: <https://acta.sapientia.ro/content/docs/4887255.pdf>, Accessed on September 30, 2024, p. 56.

²⁶⁰ Flux 24 Newsroom, „Vicepremierul Ungariei la Miercurea Ciuc: Mama mea este originară din Transilvania, așa că știu ce înseamnă să fii numit, secole de-a rândul, *bozgor*” [“Vice Prime Minister of Hungary in Miercurea Ciuc: My mother is from Transylvania, so I know what it means to be called, for centuries, *bozgor*”], in *Flux 24*, July 23, 2023, Available at: <https://flux24.ro/vicepremierul-ungariei-la-miercurea-ciuc-mama-mea-este-originara-din-transilvania-asa-ca-stiu-ce-inseamna-sa-fii-numit-secole-de-a-randul-bozgor/>, Accessed on September 30, 2024.

²⁶¹ At the launch of a new book entitled “*One-Million*” on national unification and Hungarian Christian democratic politics, Zsolt Semjén highlighted: In view of his own family and Transylvanian roots, he knows very well what it means to be called **a bozgor, a person without a country**, in Magyar Távirati Iroda (MTI) Newsroom, “To be Hungarian is a duty and a mission”, in *Kormany*, March 7, 2018, Available at: <https://20152019.kormany.hu/en/primeministersoffice/news/tobehungarianisadutyandamission>, Accessed on September 30, 2024.

We will also note that on October 7, 2020, the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) in Romania, led by an ethnic Hungarian, issued its Decision No. 699 in case No. 23/2020, supplemented by the self-referral 18A/2020, concerning “the publication of discriminatory comments on the Facebook page of the Digi 24 television station”²⁶². This was initiated at the request of the petitioners, the Szekler Monitor Foundation and the CNCD, who accused, among other things, the use of the terms *Bozgor* and *Bozgorime*. The television station was fined 5.000 lei (equivalent to approximately 1.000 Euros)²⁶³.

THE ETHNONYM “BOSCOR/BOZGOR”. FORMS AND ANTIQUITY

1. Forms

The ethnonym *Boscor/ Bozgor* and all its variants in Romanian and other languages is an endonym meaning *Bashkir*, an ethnonym attributed to the multiple Bashkir tribes within the Hungarian tribal confederation. It is most likely that in the Romanian language, this ethnonym entered directly from the Turkic kypchak dialect of the Bashkirs or through Hungarian channels, given that the lexeme bears the imprint of Ugric phonetic alternations that allowed the evolution from the original Bashkir form “*başqor(t)*” to the current “*Boscor/ Bozgor*”.

The common noun *Bozgor/ Boscor* is productive in the Romanian language. From its paradigm, we find the verb “*a boscorodi*” (“*to speak in a foreign, unintelligible language*”²⁶⁴), the adjectives “*bozgoreasc/boscoreasc*”, “*bozgorească/boscorească*”, “*bozgorean*”, “*bozgoreană*”, the adverb “*bozgoreşte/boscoreşte*”, the nouns “*bozgoroaică*”, “*bozgorică*”, “*bozgorea*”, “*bozgorel*”, “*bozgoraş*”, “*bozgoruş*”, “*bozgorie*”, “*bozgorime*”, “*bozgoreală*”, “*boscoroadă*”, “*bozgoroi*”, “*bozgoreală/ boscorodeală*”, “*boscorodenie*”, “*bozgorodire/boscorodire*”, and “*bozgorodit/ boscorodit*”, as well as the vocative forms “*bozgore*”, “*bozgoroaco*”, “*bozgorilor*”, “*bozgoroaicelor*”. Clearly, none of the speakers of the Romanian language imagine that these words appeared *from nothing – ex nihilo* – or that they originated only in 1934, after the “*first attestation*” of the proper name *Bozgor* by the Hungarian-language newspaper *Új Kelet* from Cluj.

²⁶² ***, „Hotărârea nr. 699 din data de 07.10.2020” [“Decision No 699 of 07.10.2020”], in *National Council for Combating Discrimination*, October 7, 2020, Available at: <https://www.cncd.ro/wpcontent/uploads/2021/01/Hotarare-699-2020-1.pdf>, Accessed on September 30, 2024.

²⁶³ *Ibidem*.

²⁶⁴ The lexicographer Mihai Vinereanu, fixes the term in the Etymological Dictionary of the Romanian language based on Indo-European research published in 2008 by Alcor Edimpex in Bucharest: “*boscorodi* (var. *bozgorodi*) – to babble, to gibber, to speak unintelligibly” (p. 149), but hypothesizes that the ethnonym *Bozgor* is a regressive derivative of *a boscorodi*: “*Der: Bozgor ‘Hungarian’ (worse.) with the original meaning of ‘person who speaks unintelligibly’, chatter, babble*”, in Mihai Vinereanu, *Dicţionarul etimologic al limbii române pe baza cercetărilor de indo-europenistică [Etymological Dictionary of the Romanian language based on Indo-European research]*, Bucharest, Alcor Edimpex Publishing House, 2008, p. 149.

In the Bashkir language, Bashkir is said as *başqort* (башҡорт, phonetically transliterated as *baş'qort*), featuring a specific *K*.

Throughout history, apart from the Arabic and Persian forms mentioned above, the word *başkir* has been rendered differently in other languages: *bascard*, *bastard*, *baskar/bashkar*, *baskatur/bashkatur*, *baschart*, *baszkir* (pronounced *baskir*), *bazkir*, *bascart*, *bashart*, *biscart*, *bistart*, *pascatur*, *pascatir*, *pascatu*, etc.²⁶⁵

The term does not have derogatory connotations in Arabic, Persian, Ukrainian, or German. The ethnonym “*Boscor/Bozgor*” was initially attributed to the Bashkirs within the Hungarian tribal confederation and, over time, was assigned, through association, to the Hungarians, among whom the numerous Bashkir element blended. Why would the same term constitute an exception in the Romanian language? The fact that it is an ethnic term alternative to *ungur* and *maghiar* is not an argument for stripping it of the neutral ethnic connotations it has always contained.

To this day, in the Volga-Ural region, once called Greater Hungary, there exist surnames that – do they not? – sound somewhat familiar to any Romanian ear: *Boskor*, *Boskorov*, *Baskor*, *Baskir*, *Baskirov*, *Baskirev*²⁶⁶. Additionally, we encounter surnames from the same paradigm – *Boschkor*, *Boškor* – among Austrians and Ruthenians. In present-day Kyrgyzstan, we also find surnames like *Bozgorov* and *Bozgorpoev*²⁶⁷, while the surname *Bosgor* is quite common in Turkey. Furthermore, the surnames *Boscor* and *Boşcor* are carried by several individuals in Romania, where older and newer ethnonyms, which were initially simple appellatives used for identification or nicknames, are often fixed as anthroponyms²⁶⁸.

We must also point out that in colloquial and slang Russian, the adjective *bozgoriski* (бозгорский) is often encountered, with the current meaning of

²⁶⁵ Талмас Магсумович Гарипов, «Новые версии происхождения этнонима Башкорт», in Раиль Гумерович Кузеев и Константин Владимирович Сальников (соавт.), *Башкирская этнонимия, Уфа, БФАН СССР, 1987 г.*, с. 4, 24 – 28. [Talmas Magsumovich Garipov, “New Versions of the Origin of the Ethnonym Bashkort”, in Rail Gumerovici Kuzeev and Konstantin Vladimirovici Salnikov (coord.), *Bashkir Ethnonymy*, Ufa, USSR Academy of Sciences, Bashkortostan Branch, 1987, p. 4 and pp. 24 – 28].

²⁶⁶ Russian language – Боскор, Боскоров, Баскор, Баскир, Баскиров, Баскирев.

²⁶⁷ Kyrgyz language – Бозгорев, Бозгорпоев.

²⁶⁸ For example, the anthroponyms Arapu/Arăpaşu (=Arab), Armanu/ Armeanu/Armenaş (=Armenian), Arnăut/Arnăutu/Arbinaş (=Albanian), Boscor (=Bashkir, attributed to Hungarians), Bulgaru, Cerchez, Cingină/ Ginghină (=Rom), Coman/Comănel/Comănici/Comănescu/Comăniţă (=Cuman), Cozaru (=Khazar), Frâncu (=Italian), Ghiftu/Ghiftea/Ghiftei/ Curbet (=Roma, especially found among Macedonian Romanians), Grecu, Guţu/Huţanu/Guţuleac (=Hutsul), Ivireanu (=Georgian), Jidovan/ Ovreiu (=Jew), Cazacu/Zaporojan (=Ukrainian, also attributed to others such as, especially, Russians), Grecu, Sârbu, Leahu/Leafu/Leahiu/ Lehaş/Lehoiu/Leahotă/Mazuru (=Polish), Litfan, Liftescu (=Lithuanian), Neamţu/Sas/Sasu (=German), Pecineagu/Pecineagă/ Becineagă/Pecinişcă (=Pecheneg), Raţ/Raţiu (=Serb), Rus/Rusu/ Moscalu (=Russian), Rusnac (=Ruthenian), Şcheau (=Slav), Secuiu/Secuianu (=Szekler), Tăut/Tăutu (=Slovak), Turcu/Turculeţ/Turceanu/Turcescu (=Turk), Țiganu/Țigănaş/ Țigănuş/Țigănescu (=Roma), Tăturu/Tătăruş/Tătărescu, Ungur/Ungureanu, Uzu/luzu/Ozoiu (=Uz, Pecheneg tribe) and others.

unintelligible, foreign, literally meaning Bashkir (for example, *бозгорский лепет* [=bozgorean babble] or *бозгорские бредни* [=bozgorean nonsense]).

From a phonetic perspective, the ethnonym *Bozgor*, derived from the endonym *Başqort*, raises four issues, namely: a) the transformation of the first vowel A into O; b) the transformation of the consonant Ş into S; c) the transformation of the consonant clusters SQ and ZG; and d) the omission of the final consonants –T and –D, as found in medieval writings.

The phenomenon of vowel alternation specific to the languages of the Volga region, namely the A/O alternation, explains why *başqor(t)* became *boşqor(t)*, and later *boscor*. The transformation of the unstressed A into O can be explained by a characteristic reflex of Turanic languages in general, and Uralic languages in particular. Generally, Uralic languages tend toward *vowel harmony/symmetry*²⁶⁹, a fact manifested through the transformation of the unstressed vowel from the preceding closed syllable into the stressed vowel of the following syllable, and vice versa. In fact, we should also note that in Persian, the current form reflects the phenomenon of transforming the first vowel A into O: *boşkord*.

We will also consider the phonetic alternation of Ş/S attested in Old Hungarian, as well as in some present-day Bashkir dialects, an alternation that some Russian researchers explain through the Evenki (Tungusic) component of the Bashkirs. This type of alternation has led to the emergence in the Turkic world and the eastern Uralic world of surnames like *Boskor*, *Bozgor*, *Bozgorev*²⁷⁰, anthroponyms derived from the ethnonym *Bashkir*. Moreover, many medieval authors who wrote about the Bashkirs in the Pannonian Plain and/or Greater Hungary (present-day Bashkortostan and surrounding regions) used forms of the ethnonym in which the consonant Ş had already been replaced with S (*Basghird*, *Basgird*, *Pascatir*, etc.), which sometimes shifted to Z (*Bazghird*).

The specific sound K in the endonym *başkort* is an occlusive or explosive velar sound, which makes it very similar to a velar G. This fact explains the transition from *Boscor* to *Bozgor*. We observe the same phenomenon in the historical forms recorded in Latin, Persian, and Arabic centuries ago²⁷¹. We especially note the forms *başgurt*,

²⁶⁹ Hadumod Bussmann (coord.), *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, London – New York, Routledge, 1998, p. 47.

²⁷⁰ Russian language – Боскор, Бозгор, Бозгорев.

²⁷¹ Regarding travelers and authors such as the Italian Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (“Baskart, meaning Greater Hungary,” in the work *Historia Mongalorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus*, written in 1240), the Fleming Guillaume de Rubrouck (“Pascatir, meaning Greater Hungary,” “The language of the Pascatiri and Hungarians is one and the same,” “Next to Pascatir live Ilak, which means the same as Blak” (Blak = Wallachian) in the work *The Travels of Guillaume de Rubrouck in the Eastern Lands of the Year of Salvation 1253*), the Arab from Spain Ibn Said al-Magribi (“To the north of the foul-smelling lands lies the land of Basgirt. The Basgirts are pagans and kill all who come to them” in the work *The Book of the Extent of the Earth*, written between 1270 and 1280), and the Hungarian Iulianus Hungarus (“When I, Brother Iohanus, along with two Hungarian brothers and an Englishman, arrived in Baskardia – the great people subject to the Tatars” in the work *Letter from Brother Iohanus Hungarus, by the order of the Minorites, to the head of the order, Brother Mihail of Cesena*, written in 1320). Extracts translated from: Игорь Владимирович Антонов, *Башкиры в эпоху средневековья – Приложение I. Средневековые авторы о башкирах*, Уфа, Башкирский государственный педагогический университет имени Мифтахетдина Аkmullы, 2012, с. 233–307 [Igor Vladimirovich Antonov, *Bashkirs in the Middle Ages – Appendix I. Medieval authors about the Bashkirs*, Ufa, Bashkir Miftahetdin Akmulla State Pedagogical University, 2012, pp. 233–307].

bazghird. The phenomenon is broader, especially in Romanian, where the sound C alternates with G. For example, consider: *examen, exemplu, exist*.

The final consonant –T, represented in other languages as –D, both affixes having the grammatical function of a marker of belonging or plural, is naturally omitted. The final affix has disappeared from the ethnonym *başkir* in most Indo-European languages, as well as in some Turkic or Uralic languages, being replaced, as appropriate, with specific affixes of those languages, especially for indicating the plural (for example, the Hungarian form *bozgorok* or *baskírok*).

2. Antiquity

The ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor* is presented to us as being of relatively recent origin, appearing after the Treaty of Trianon, specifically in 1934, when the respective lexeme was first attested as a proper name in the Hungarian-language press in Cluj²⁷². It is also claimed that the extent of this ethnonym's usage by Romanians returned during the Ceaușescu era²⁷³. Researcher Imola Katalin Nagy argues that the ethnonym *bozgor*, functioning as an ethnic insult, would be a neologism intended to replace another archaic derogatory term, namely *boanghină*²⁷⁴, but does not explain why such an “replacement” would occur objectively.

We would not be wrong to assert that no Romanian doubts the antiquity of the ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor* and does not perceive it as a post-Trianon neologism invented by the malevolent genius of the Romanian language out of thin air, with the aim of ethnically insulting the Hungarian people and its related minority in Romania.

The linguist Vasile Bogrea, a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, referring to the verb *a boscorodi*, from the paradigm of *Bozgor/Boscor*, notes:

“Regarding the antiquity of the word (the cited lexicons only recognize modern examples: from Alecsandri, Negruzzi, Creangă), we observe that it is attested in the

²⁷² “The lexeme *Bozgor* was attested in this form in 1934 (for example, in the newspaper *Új Kelet*, as a proper name, but see other occurrences as well), then there was a gap. It was used in oral communication in the 1970s and 1980s as a pejorative exonym used by Romanians to refer to Hungarians and was widely used in the 1990s in similar contexts and situations. However, in this form, it was not included in any dictionaries before the 2000s, when it was listed in Volceanov (2007). Parekh, B. (2006) emphasizes that there are three main characteristics of hate speech: a constant, almost obsessive reference to a certain individual or community, with the evident aim of defamation; allocation of a set of negative characteristics or behavioral traits, viewed with disgust by other members of society; exclusion of the targeted individual or community.”, in Imola Katalin Nagy, “Deprecatory Ethnonyms: The Case of *Bozgor*”, in *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica*, Vol. 15, No. 3/2023, Available at: <https://acta.sapientia.ro/content/docs/4887255.pdf>, Accessed on September 30, 2024, p. 74.

²⁷³ “The term spread as an insult for Hungarians, especially in the last decades of the communist era; it is possible that it was favored by the communist nationalism promoted by Ceaușescu, which greatly contributed to the emergence and proliferation of negative stereotypical representations (although official propaganda constantly emphasized the common goals of all friendly socialist states)”, *Ibidem*, p. 56.

²⁷⁴ “The archaic *boanghin*, or *boanghen* seems to be a political construct which has the purpose of naming the enemy and personifying the evil. It is a typical case of verbal abuse, mockery, or insult which used to display a significant amount of collectively formed pejorative connotation. Today it is old-fashioned, as it has been replaced by another slur, *i.e.*, *bozgor*, which is going to be presented in a forthcoming study”, in *Ibidem*, pp. 106–122.

coresian texts: ‘Up til now, consider what you have learned: little and less, for you know nothing; suddenly, for you have not understood that the priests have *boscorodit* in the church’²⁷⁵.

‘do not *boscorodiți*, for the Lord will strike you’²⁷⁶.

The renowned linguist Bogrea notes the existence of the term in Ruthenian: ‘In fact, our *boscorodesc* is Ruthenian *božkoroditi*’, also pointing out the Ruthenian forms *božkar* and *božkadajlo*²⁷⁷.

Moreover, another renowned Romanian linguist, Vasile C. Ioniță, has argued for the considerable antiquity of the ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor*, which he relates to the verb *a boscorodi*:

‘The nickname *bozgor* attributed to Hungarians is not glossed in DLR. I have tried to explain where this word originated and have concluded that the incomprehensible speech of Romanians regarding Hungarians is to blame. (...) In Romanian, *a bâlbâi* also means ‘to mumble’ or ‘to mutter’ (the latter also meaning ‘to recite incantations’). Therefore, I believe that *bozgor* comes from *a boscorodi*, a word contrasted with the voiced consonant cluster -sc-, which became -zg-²⁷⁸’.

When referring to the antiquity of the term *Boscor/Bozgor* in the Romanian language, we must consider that in the Middle Ages, the Bashkirs were recorded as neighbors of the Romanians and were designated by various authors²⁷⁹ with forms of the ethnonym in which the alternation of Ș-S/Z was already produced: *basghird*, *basgird*, *pascatir*, *bazghird*.

VOLGA-URALIAN GREATER HUNGARY AND THE BASHKIR-MAGYAR PARALLELS

The mere existence of the term *Boscor/Bozgor*, along with all its variants and the entire lexical suite from its paradigm, holds particular significance for explaining and understanding the ethnic relationship between Hungarians and the Bashkirs from the southern Ural region and the middle course of the Volga River (present-day

²⁷⁵ „În ce privește vechimea cuvântului (lexicele citate nu cunosc decât exemple moderne: din Alexandri, Negruzzi, Creangă), observăm că el e atestat încă în textele coresiene: «Până acmu socotiți ce-ați învățat: mai nemică, că nu știți nemică; derep ce, că n-ați înțeles, că popii au boscorodit în bisearecă»”, in *Cazania*, quoted by Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria literaturii române [History of Romanian literature]*, 2nd edition, Vol. I, p. 186, in Vasile Bogrea, *Note lexicale și etimologice [Etymologies and lexical notes]*, Vol. VII, Cluj-Napoca, Institute of Graphic Arts “Ardealul” Publishing House, 1924–1926, pp. 795–796, Available at: <https://dspace.bcuiasi.ro/handle/123456789/87130?show=full>, Accessed on September 30, 2024.

²⁷⁶ *Molitvelnic*, quoted by Nicolae Iorga, *quoted work*, quoted by Prinos Sturdza, p. 251, in Vasile Bogrea, *quoted work*, pp. 795–96.

²⁷⁷ Vasile Bogrea, *quoted work*, p. 795.

²⁷⁸ Vasile C. Ioniță, *Contribuții lingvistice. Onomastică. Legicologie 2 [Linguistic Contributions. Onomastics. Lexicology 2]*, Reșița, InterGraf Publishing, 2004, p. 55.

²⁷⁹ For example, Al-Idrisi, Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, Guillaume de Rubrouck, and Ibn Said al-Magribi. The forms of the ethnonym attributed to Romanians are: Olac, Avlac, and Al-avlac.

Bashkortostan and the adjacent regions of Chelyabinsk and Kurgan), a territory referred to in the Middle Ages as Greater Hungary²⁸⁰.

Referring to history can help us here. Among those who, in the medieval era, visited *Bashkortostan*, that is, *Greater Hungary (Magna Hungaria, Hungaria Maior)* on the Volga, and claimed, starting from the 13th century, that there is a close ethnogenetic relationship between Hungarians and Bashkirs were travelers such as Iulianus Hungarus (Hungarian), Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (Italian), and Guillaume de Rubrouck (Flemish)²⁸¹, from whose writings I have cited above.

Thus, we retain the argument that today's Bashkiria, or Bashkortostan, perfectly overlaps, for at least seven centuries, with the old Greater Hungary²⁸², and since then, there has been talk of a genuine Hungarian-Bashkir or Bashkir-Hungarian issue²⁸³.

In Hungary, the ethnic relationship and parallels between Hungarians and Bashkirs have been the subject of research by several scholars, especially in the 20th century. Here are just a few names: Mészáros Gyula, Róna-Tas András, Tóth Tibor, Vargyas Lajos, Torma József, Pauler Gyula, Ligeti Lajos, Czeglédy Károly, Káldy-Nagy Gyula, Berta Árpád, Péter Juhász, Czeglédi Katalin, Vásáry István and Németh Gyula.

In Bashkiria (Bashkortostan), the Bashkir-Hungarian relationship has been studied by historians and ethnographers such as Talmas Magsumovich Garipov, Rail Gumerovich Kuzeev, Ahmetzaki Ahmetshah-ulí Walidov (Ahmad-Zeki Velidi Togan), Saria Fazullova Mirzhanova, Rim Zainigabitdinovich Ianguzin, and Galimjan Ghirvan-ul Tagan, an ethnographer and Bashkir Turkologist who lived and worked in Hungary.

We also note that the same subject has been extensively researched by Russian historians, ethnographers, and Turkologists such as Daniil Abramovich Hvolson, Nikolai Alexandrovich Baskakov, Vladimir Pavlovich Shusharin, Igor Vladimirovich Antonov, and Boris Alexandrovich Serebrennikov.

²⁸⁰ Игорь Владимирович Антонов, «Страна башкир и её соотношение с Великой Венгрией», *Вестник Челябинского государственного университета*, Том 43, № 1(216)/2011, с. 17–22 [Igor Vladimirovich Antonov, "The Land of the Bashkirs and Its Relation to Greater Hungary", in *Bulletin of Chelyabinsk State University*, Vol. 43, No. 1(216)/2021, pp. 17–22].

²⁸¹ Igor Vladimirovich Antonov, *quoted work*, 2012, pp. 25–27.

²⁸² Ярослав В. Пилипчук, *Башкирско-венгерская проблема – дискурс источников и стереотипы историографии*, Budapest-Esztergom, Hadak útján, 2017 г., с. 233–243 [Jaroslav V. Pilipciuk, *The Bashkir-Hungarian Problem – The Discourse of Sources and Stereotypes in Historiography*, Budapest-Esztergom, Hadak útján, 2017, pp. 233–243].

²⁸³ Талмас Магсумович Гарипов, Раиль Гумерович Кузеев, «'Башкиро-мадьярская' проблема (Краткий обзор основных источников)», АЭБ, Том 1, 1962 г., с. 337 [Talmas Magsumovich Garipov and Rail Gumerovich Kuzeev, "The 'Bashkir-Hungarian' Problem" (A Brief Overview of the Main Sources)", in *Archaeology and Ethnography of Bashkiria Journal (AEB)*, Vol. 1, 1962, p. 337].

TRIBES OF THE ANCIENT HUNGARIAN HOARD

Long before the three travelers to the Mongol Empire mentioned above, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, author of the work “On the Administration of the Empire”, written between 948 and 952, provides information regarding the 8 basic tribes that formed the ancient Hungarian tribal confederation: the *Nyekes*, *Megers*, *Kurt-Guarmats*, *Tarjans*, *Yeneys*, *Kers*, *Kesis* and *Kavars*²⁸⁴. We should note that the erudite Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII uses the generic term “Turks” for the tribes settled in the Pannonian Plain and refers to their living space as “Turkia”²⁸⁵.

Hungarian and Bashkir researchers from the 20th century, mostly Turkologists, have argued with valid and hard-to-refute points that the ancient Hungarian tribal confederation included 1 or 2 tribes of Ugric origin (specifically the Megheri and possibly the Nyicsi), 6 or 5 tribes of Turkic origin (specifically Bashkir), and 1 tribe of Khazar origin, encompassing three different branches.

For example, the Bashkir origin of the Nyicsi is considered certain by the Hungarian researcher Németh Gyula and the Bashkir ethnographer Rail Gumer-ulí Kuzeev. Németh Gyula writes about the connection between the Megheri and the Bashkirs in his work “The Tribal Names of Hungarians among the Bashkirs”²⁸⁶.

Another Hungarian researcher, Mándoky Kongur István, nicknamed the “Apostle of the Huns”, indicates that there was also a tribe among the ancient Bashkirs called the Medier²⁸⁷, which introduces a significant degree of confusion regarding the Ugric or Bashkir origin of the *Magyer* ethnonym.

²⁸⁴ Sources:

1. In the original: “Νέκη, Μεγέρη, Κουρτουγερμάτου, Ταριάνου, Γενάχ, Καρή, Κασή, Κάβαροι” in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, greek text edited by Gy. Moravcsik, english translation by R. J. H. Jenkins, Washington, Dombaron Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies Trustees for Harvard University, 1967, pp. 174–175;

2. In the original and Russian: “Νέκη, Μεγέρη, Κουρτουγερμάτου, Ταριάνου, Γενάχ, Καρή, Κασή, Κάβαροι / Неки, Мегери, Куртугермат, Тариана, Генах, Кари, Каси, Кавары” in Константин Багрянородный, *Об управлении Империей*, текст, перевод и вступительная статья Геннадия Григорьевича Литаврина, Москва, Институт славяноведения Российской академии наук, 1991 г., стр. 132–133. [Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *On the Governance of the Empire*, text, translation and introductory article by Gennady Grigorievich Litavrin, Moscow, Institute of Slavonic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 1991, pp. 132–133].

²⁸⁵ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *quoted work*, 1967, pp. 174–175.

²⁸⁶ Sources:

1. Дюла Немет, *Венгерские племенные названия у башкир*, in *Археология и этнография Башкирии*, Том 4, 1971 г., с. 249 [Gyula Németh, “The Hungarian tribal names among the Bashkirs”, in *The archaeology and ethnography of Bashkortostan*, Vol. 4, 1971, p. 249].

2. Gyula Németh, “Ungarische Stammesnamen bei den Baschkiren” [“Hungarian tribal names among the Bashkirs”], in *Acta Linguistica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 16, No. 1–2/1966, pp. 1–21.

²⁸⁷ Mándoky Kongur István, “Tribes of Hungarian descent within the Bashkirs”, in *Tiszataj*, Vol. 30, No. 10/1976, pp. 41–44.

Hungarian historiography and ethnography links the Kurt-Guarmats with the Bashkir tribe of the *Iurmat*. The same Hungarian Turkologist, Németh Gyula, provides arguments supporting the Bashkir origin of the *Tarjan*, *Yeney*, *Kary* and *Kese* tribes, the latter being presented as part of the large Bashkir Kese tribe from the *Tabyn*²⁸⁸ branch.

According to the Bashkir Turkologist Ahmetzaki Ahmetşah-ulî Walidov (Ahmad-Zeki Velidi Togan), the numerical dominance of the Bashkirs in the Hungarian army and the transfer of political power in Hungary to the nobility of the Bashkir tribes of the *Iurmați* and *Ienei* in the 12th century led to the ethnonym *Başghird/Basghird/Bazghird* appearing in medieval Arab chronicles as a term defining the entire population of the Kingdom of Hungary, alternatively referred to as *Ba Unkurija* or *Başghirdija/Başghirdia*²⁸⁹.

There are also other authors who provide ancient testimonies about the intimate relationship between Hungarians and Bashkirs, which justify the presence of the archaism *Boscor/Bozgor* in various languages, including Romanian. Thus, the Arab historian and geographer Al-Masudi (cca 896–956) refers in his work “The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems” to Hungarians and Bashkirs as a single people, calling them *Bashghirs*, *Badjghirs* or *Bazghirs*. These mentions appear in the description of the war waged by Hungarians and their Pecheneg (Kuman) allies against Byzantium (years 932–943)²⁹⁰.

In the centuries X–XIV, chronicles and other Persian and Arabic writings from historians and travelers such as Abu Abdallah al-Jayhani, Al Istakhri, Muhammad Abu'l-Qasim Ibn Hawqal, Abu Hamid al-Garnati, Ibn Said, Abu-l-Fida al-Hamawi, Yaqut al-Hamawi, Al-Qazwini, Abu-l-Fida, Ibn-Dast, Ibn-Fadlan, Abu Zayd al-Balkhi, Al-Idrisi, Dimeshki, or Shukrallah provide testimonies about the Muslim Bashkirs (“*bajghirds*”, “*basghirds*”, “*bazghirds*”) in Hungary (“*Hunkarija*”, also called “*Bajghirdija*”, “*Basghirdia*”, “*Bazghirdia*”)²⁹¹.

With so many Bashkirs coming to Europe, along with the Megyers and Khazars, it was natural for the ancient Romanian population of Pannonia and Transylvania to call most of them by the ethnic name they identified with: *Bashkirs*.

Moreover, not only the Romanians but also other peoples, who did not take the time to distinguish among the multitude of ethnic, tribal, and gentilice names of those settled in the Pannonian Plain under King Árpád, applied the old name of *Bashkirs* to all the ancestors of today’s Hungarians for centuries.

²⁸⁸ Gyula Németh, *quoted work*, 1966.

²⁸⁹ Ахмедзаки Валиди Тоган, *История башир*, Уфа, перевод с турецкого, Китап, 2010 [Ahmedzaki Walidi Togan, *History of the Bashkirs*, translation from Turkish, Ufa, Kitap Publishing House, 2010].

²⁹⁰ Igor Vladimirovich Antonov, *quoted work*, 2012, pp. 233–307.

²⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

ORIGINE OF THE ETHNIC NAME BASHKIR

To understand exactly how the Turkic endonym of the Kipchak type, “Başqor(t)”, evolved into “*Boscor/ Bozgor*” in Romanian, it is necessary to refer to the origin of the Bashkir ethnonym. Several Hungarian, Bashkir, and Russian researchers consider that the Hungarian and Bashkir ethnonyms are related, as well as the tribes that identified with these names.

Let’s first review all seven versions put forward by various researchers regarding the origin of the name *Bashkir*.

No.	Proposed etymology	Explanation
1	<i>Başqurt</i> < <i>baş</i> (head, main, leader) + <i>qurt</i> (wolf) > <i>baş qurt</i> “leader of the wolves”	The wolf is one of the totems of the Bashkirs, after which they might have taken their name.
2	<i>Başqurt</i> < <i>baş</i> (head, main, leader) + <i>qurt</i> (bee – in some Bashkir dialects) > <i>baş qurt</i> “queen bee”	The name could have been attributed to the Bashkirs due to the widespread practice of beekeeping among them.
3	<i>Başqurt</i> < <i>baş</i> (head, main, leader) + <i>qart</i> (elder) > <i>baş qart</i> “the great aqsaqal”	The name could have been given to the Bashkirs because of the important role of the tribal leader
4	<i>Başqurt</i> < <i>baş</i> (head, main, leader) + <i>qur</i> (trib) + <i>t</i> (a plural affix) > <i>baş + qur + t</i>	The meaning would be “ <i>peoples of the chief tribe, of the leading/principal tribe</i> ”.
5	<i>Başqurt</i> < <i>beş</i> (five) + <i>oğur</i> (name of the Ogur tribe) + Hungarian suffix <i>-d</i> > <i>Beş(o)ğurd</i> > <i>Başğyrd</i> > <i>Başqurt</i> – “five ogurs”	An analogy with: *On-Oğur* “ten Ogurs”; *Toquz-Oğuz* “nine Oghuz”.
6	<i>Başqurt</i> < <i>başqırt</i> < <i>başıq</i> (head, main, leader) + <i>yurt</i> (hoard)	This suggests that the tribes bearing this name may have been part of the Great Avar/Hunnic Horde, which settled in the Pannonian Plain centuries before the Magyars. This can be verified through topical inversion, which in Turkic languages does not change the meaning: “Qurt baş” or “Baş qurt”.
7	<i>Başqurt</i> < <i>Başghird</i> (anthroponym)	There is a hypothesis that the anthroponym “Başghird” became an ethnonym. “Başghird” was a military leader of an army of 2.000 horsemen, mentioned by Gardizi (11 th century), who wrote that in the 8 th century they were in Khazaria.

Most researchers tend to believe that the first four versions presented above are popular, and that the fifth hypothesis, put forward by the Hungarian Turkologist Németh Gyula, which identifies the name of the tribal Ogur in the ethnonym Başkir, is the most plausible²⁹².

The sixth hypothesis was proposed by the Kazakh researcher **Serikbol Adilbekuly Kondybay**; (1968–2004). He believes that the ethnonym Başkir is much older than previously thought and that it originates from the period of the unification of the Hunnic hordes (2nd–4th centuries AD²⁹³). Although it has not been embraced by many Turkologists, it is worth noting this hypothesis, as if confirmed, it would clarify that this name could have been transmitted into the Romanian language during the first invasion of the Hunnic hordes in Europe. This would demonstrate the ancient contacts between Romanians and Huns, as well as the fact that when the ancestors of the Hungarians arrived in the Pannonian Plain, the indigenous Romanians coexisted with the descendants of the Huns, known as Başkori or Boşkori. Kondybay derives Başkir from başqırt < başıq (main, chief) + yurt (horde), attributing it the meaning of “Main Horde” or “Great Horde”.

The seventh hypothesis is considered rather popular, so we will not dwell on it.

The overwhelming majority of ethnographers and linguists recognize that the Bashkirs are a people descending from a Kipchak tribe under the significant influence of the Bulgarian and Ugric substrata, which, in turn, have a close genetic relationship with the Hun-Bulgar tribe of the Ogurs ~ Ughurs ~ Ugric people, known in the eastern part of the Turkic world as *Oguz* (oγur ~ oγuz are the same name differentiated phonetically according to the rule of rhotacism-zetacism).

The renowned Russian Turkologist **Nikolai Aleksandrovich Baskakov** states in his study “On the Origin of the Ethnonym Bashkir”²⁹⁴ that in some Turanic dialects or varieties, initial **B** could alternate with **M**, according to the Turkic-Mongolian correspondence B ~ M. Thus, the ethnonym *badža oγur* (brother-in-law of the Ogurs, brother-in-law of the Ugors) > *badž(a) oγur* > *badžγar* acquired the form *madž(a) oγur* > *madžγur* > *madžγar* > *madjar*, meaning that, in other words, the ethnonyms *Bashkir* and *Magyar* have a common origin.

The identity of the ethnonyms *badžγyrt* and *madžγur* ~ *madžγar* is confirmed by the majority of researchers on this issue. The situation has progressed to the point where there is an increasing discourse in the scientific community about a genuine **Bashkir-Hungarian question (= baskír-magyar kérdés)**.

²⁹² Gyula Németh, “Magyar törzsnevek a baskíroknál” [“Hungarian tribal names among the Başkirs”], in *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények*, Vol. 68, No. 1/1966, pp. 17–18.

²⁹³ Серикбол Адилбекулы Кондыбай, *Гиперборея: родословие эпохи сновидений*, Алматы, издательство Уш киян, 2003. [Serikbol Adilbekuly Kondybay, *Hyperborea: the genealogy of the era of dreams*, Almaty, Ush Kiyay, 2003].

²⁹⁴ Николай Александрович Баскаков, «О происхождении этнонима башкир», Отв. ред. Роза Шотаевна Джарылгасинова и Вячеслав Алексеевич Никонов, *Этническая ономастика*, Москва, издательство Наука, 1984, с. 13–18 [Nikolai Aleksandrovici Baskakov, “On the Origin of the Ethnonym Bashkir”, in Roza Shotaevna Dzharylgasynova and Vyacheslav Alekseyevich Nikonov, *Ethnic Onomastics*, Moscow, Nauka Publishing, 1984, pp. 13–18].

The close and intimate relationship between the ethnonyms Hungarian (generic), Bashkir (tribal), and Maghiar (tribal) is evident. It is plausible that the tribes constituting the ancient Hungarian tribal union were related tribes that spoke distinct dialects, which were mutually intelligible but differentiated by the phonetic alternation **B/M**: *Baškiri* (*Badžyor* > *Baskar* > *Boscor/Bozgor*) and Maghiari (*Madžyur* > *Madžyar* > *Madjar* > *Maghiar*). These represent two branches closely linked to each other and possibly twin in origin, growing from **the same Onoguric stem**.

CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between the ethnonyms *Bashkir* (*başqort*) and *Boscor/Bozgor* is evident and easy to demonstrate. The ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor* did not originate in Romanian territory; it is a lexical borrowing produced in an ancient era. It did not enter the Romanian language and other languages by chance.

There are valid grounds to consider that the lexical borrowing of the term *Boscor/Bozgor* could have occurred via one of the following transmission paths: a) Directly from the Bashkir language spoken by the numerous Bashkir tribes that were part of the greater Hungarian horde settled in the Pannonian Plain; b) Through the intermediary of the Hungarian language, which functioned as a lingua franca, facilitating contact both with Bashkir and Romanian; c) Directly from a contact Turkic language spoken by certain tribes within the Great Hunnic Horde, established in the Pannonian Plain in the 4th century, or from the Avar Horde, which settled in the region during the 6th century.

Each of these pathways offers a plausible mechanism for the transmission of the ethnonym into the linguistic landscape of the region.

The ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor*, with its ancient meaning of *Bashkir* and currently attributed to the Hungarians, should not be rejected, tabooed, or expelled from the Romanian language. Instead, it should be studied impartially, with a good measure of academic curiosity and intellectual honesty, within a framework defined by truth rather than so-called political correctness. The antiquity of the ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor* is also confirmed by its presence as a surname in Romania and other states.

The ethnonym *Boscor/Bozgor*, preserved and used for centuries in the Romanian language, holds significant importance for both explaining and understanding the historical relationships between the native Romanians and various migrating tribes settled in the Pannonian Plain, as well as for understanding the ethnogenesis and history of the Bashkirs of the Volga.

We express the opinion that the ethnic term *Boscor/Bozgor*, which is very valuable from a linguistic and historical perspective, should not be tabooed but subjected to multi-faceted research, as it provides the opportunity for a better

understanding of Hungarian ethnogenesis and the historical relationships between the various tribes within the Hungarian tribal confederation settled in the Pannonian Plain and their Romanian, Slavic and German neighbors.

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A FALSE “REFERENDUM” FOR GAINING AN ANACHRONISTIC ALREADY EXISTING AUTONOMY

Samira Cîrlig²⁹⁵

ABSTRACT

This material starts from the book entitled A false “referendum” for gaining an anachronistic already existing autonomy²⁹⁶, written by sociologist Ioan Lăcătușu and lawyer Ioan Solomon. Published in 2007, the book is of great public interest because it discusses a serious problem that still affects state sovereignty. The subject of discussion is Hungarian leaders seeking ethnic autonomy over the so-called “Szeklerland”, which is unconstitutional. In this respect, under the unfounded pretense of acquiring citizenship rights, the leaders of the Hungarian community have tried (and are still doing so) to obtain autonomy on ethnic grounds for the area in question, creating the preconditions for the establishment of a state within a state, which is contrary to the Constitution, which stipulates for a sovereign, independent, unitary and indivisible national state. Thus, since December 2006, the leaders of Hungarian civil associations, which are not legally registered, have initiated an action in Covasna, Harghita and Mureș counties, called a “referendum for the autonomy of Szeklerland”, which was nothing more than a fake “referendum” to obtain a “de facto” autonomy in that area. The paper points out the geostrategic importance of the subject, argues the unconstitutionality of the action, and demonstrates that in these counties we can already speak of anachronistic autonomy, which is why the creation of a legal framework to protect Romanians in this area is a state emergency.

Keywords: referendum, autonomy, anachronism, Romanians, discrimination.

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Obtaining autonomy on ethnic grounds for the area artificially called “Szeklerland” (in fact, the geographical area covering the counties of Covasna, Harghita and south-eastern Mureș) is a recurring theme in Hungarian leaders’ discourse, despite the fact that this initiative is unconstitutional. In other words, under the false umbrella of obtaining citizenship rights (Romania being an example of good practice at European level in terms of respect for minority rights), the leaders of ethnic Hungarians in Romania want to create a “state within a state” by establishing a “Szeklerland” right in the heart of the country.

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²⁹⁶ Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *Un fals „referendum” pentru impunerea unei autonomii anacronice deja existente [A false “referendum” for gaining an anachronistic already existing autonomy]*, St. Gheorghe, Eurocarpatica Publishing House, 2007.

The name is ironic, to say the least, considering only two aspects: first, Hungarian leaders want the autonomy of a land with no inhabitants, as no more Szeklers were registered in the 2021 census²⁹⁷. Second, the autonomy of the “land” in question is demanded by those who assimilated the Szeklers, and historical documents show that this process has not been a “friendly” one over the years²⁹⁸.

In less than 200 pages, the authors of the book *A false “referendum” for gaining an anachronistic already existing autonomy* present a detailed and precise description of the problems faced by the Romanian community in this area. The work is also a veritable collection of documentary sources, as it includes several appendices that elaborate on the problems presented. Note that the publication of this book is a private initiative and is not supported by any state institution. For this reason, it should no longer surprise anyone that this monumental work has been completely ignored by Romanian decision makers.

2. THE CONTEXT OF THE BOOK AND THE PUBLIC USEFULNESS

Although the Romanian model of protection of national minorities is appreciated by European institutions as an example of good practice, some Hungarian leaders in Romania continue to claim that the rights and freedoms of this minority are being violated by the Romanian authorities²⁹⁹. Thus, the leaders of Hungarian civil associations, such as the National Szekler Council – NSC, the National Council of Hungarians in Transylvania – NCHT, or the Hungarian Civic Union – HCU, tried to misinform the European Union forums and other transnational organizations, claiming that the Romanian authorities discriminated against the Hungarian minority³⁰⁰.

Noticing the attempt of Hungarian leaders, sociologist Ioan Lăcătușu and lawyer Ioan Solomon presented in their book entitled *A false “referendum” for gaining an anachronistic already existing autonomy*, in an objective manner, the main steps taken under the egis of NSC, NCHT and HCU to initiate, organize and conduct, since December 2006, in the counties of Covasna, Harghita and the south-eastern part of the county of Mureș, an action pompously called “referendum for the autonomy of Szeklerland”, which was nothing other than a false “referendum” for obtaining a “de facto” autonomy in the area in question³⁰¹.

²⁹⁷ Ion Teleanu, „Bomba recensământului 2022. În România nu mai există niciun secu. Adio Ținutul Secuiesc!” [“The 2022 census time bomb. In Romania, there are no more Szeklers. Goodbye Szeklerland!”], in *Puterea*, January 17, 2023, Available at: <https://www.puterea.ro/bomba-recensamantului-2022-in-romania-nu-maieexistaniciunsecuiadiotinutul-secuiesc/>, Accessed on August 9, 2024.

²⁹⁸ Ioan Lăcătușu, *Argumente împotriva autonomiei teritoriale pe criterii etnice ale așa-zisului „Ținut Secuiesc”* [Arguments against the territorial autonomy based on ethnic criteria of the so-called “Szeklerland”], St. Gheorghe, Eurocarpatca Publishing House, 2008.

²⁹⁹ Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *quoted work*, p. 7.

³⁰⁰ *Ibidem*.

³⁰¹ *Ibidem*.

The current legal framework in Romania fully guarantees the protection of national minorities, ensuring that Hungarians can exercise all their identity, cultural and educational rights at higher standards than Europeans. On the other hand, representatives of Hungarian ethnic groups monopolize all decision-making levers at the local level in county councils, local councils, town councils, prefecture, etc., while at the national level, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) actively participates in major decision-making processes. For example, the President of the DAHR, as Deputy Prime Minister from 2004 to 2007, precisely coordinated the areas of education, culture and European integration with representatives at all state institutions³⁰².

Even if almost 20 years have passed since the publication of this paper, the topic is (still) relevant, because Hungarian organizations in Romania (still) promote and carry out segregationist and separatist actions on ethnic grounds, which are in deep disagreement with European practices and theories on minorities, in flagrant violation of Romanian law³⁰³. The problems of Romanians in this area have not been solved, not even partially. On the contrary, the process of the accelerated assimilation of Romanians by Hungarians is even more aggressive, discrimination is more frequent, and the (Romanian) state is increasingly absent.

3. WHERE IS THE SO-CALLED “SZEKLERLAND” LOCATED IN THE HUNGARIAN COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION?

The authors of the book entitled A false “referendum” for gaining an anachronistic already existing autonomy clearly state from the outset that the so-called “Szeklerland” does not exist as an administrative territorial entity in Romania. However, the NSC conception includes the region formed by the counties of Covasna, Harghita and the southern part of Mureş county³⁰⁴.

4. WHY IS THE AREA OF GEOSTRATEGIC INTEREST?

Covasna, Harghita, and partially Mureş counties are located in the center of the country and have played a crucial role over the years in the communication between the three Romanian provinces. In other words, southern Transylvania has always been an area of cultural and demographic crossroads and confluences, providing a close link between the three Romanian provinces, as well as between the Carpathian Basin, the Balkan-Danube area and the North-East³⁰⁵. The importance of the center is explained by German geopolitician Friedrich Ratzel through the concept of the “state center” or “Mittelpunkt”, which is defined as follows:

³⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 10.

³⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

³⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

³⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

“the natural geographic embryo from which states have emerged through spatial evolution (...). The Mittelpunkt becomes, politically and culturally, the ethno-spiritual nucleus of a nation’s civilization. In time, it will become an exemplary symbol of that culture and its political and territorial landmark”³⁰⁶.

The strength of this Mittelpunkt “quantifies the energy of the people, its full crystallization occurring in the form of the state”³⁰⁷. Considering that “the state is maintained around a center, and this center is precisely the Mittelpunkt from which the state is molded”³⁰⁸, the state of health of the “state center”, which in this case is precarious with strong accents of “de-sovereignization”³⁰⁹, indicates the state of health of the entire social called Romania.

In Romanian geopolitics, the one who addressed the issue of the “Mittelpunkt” is Ion Conea, who spotted Romania’s “pulsar” in the Transylvanian area, pointing out in a 1941 study entitled “Transylvania, heart of the Romanian land” that:

“Transylvania (...) is destined from the beginning of the world to be the heart of a country, as we see it in Great Romania – and not a secondary, marginal piece, as it was – and would be! – in a Great Hungary”³¹⁰.

5. SOME DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE AREA UNDER DISCUSSION

According to the 1992 census, 1.603.923 Hungarians were living in Romania, 1.434.377 in 2002, and 1.224.937 in 2011 (6,2% of the country’s population). Most of them lived in the north-western part of Romania, Transylvania, and comprised Harghita’s majority (85%) and Covasna’s (75%)³¹¹. At the last census in 2021, the

³⁰⁶ „embrionul geografic natural din care s-au izvodit prin evoluție spațială statele (...). Mittelpunkt-ul devine, din punct de vedere politic și cultural, nucleul etnico-spiritual al civilizației unui popor. Cu timpul, va deveni simbolul exemplar al acelei culturi și reperul său politico-teritorial”, in Ilie Bădescu et al, *Sociologia și geopolitica frontierei [Sociology and geopolitics of the border]*, Vol. I, Bucharest, Blue Flower Publishing House, 1995, p. 48.

³⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

³⁰⁹ Dan Dungaciu, „Ce înseamnă de-soveranizarea României în Transilvania? O clarificare pentru presa de la Budapesta” [“What does de-sovereignization of Romania mean in Transylvania? A clarification for the Budapest press”], in *Larics*, June 4, 2020, Available at: <https://larics.ro/dan-dungaciu-ce-inseamna-de-soveranizarea-romaniei-in-transilvania-o-clarificare-pentru-presa-de-la-budapesta/>, Accessed on December 12, 2021.

³¹⁰ „Transilvania (...) e sortită de la începutul lumii să fie sâmbure de țară, cum o vedem că e în România Mare – și nu piesă de margine, secundară, cum a fost – și ar fi! – într-o Ungarie Mare”, in Ion Conea, „Transilvania, inimă a pământului românesc” [“Transylvania, heart of the Romanian land”], in *Geopolitica și Geoistoria Journal*, Year. I, No. 1, 1941, pp. 18–34.

^{311***} „Ai cui sunt maghiarii din România?” [“Whose are the Hungarians in Romania?”], in *Corbii Albi*, n.d., Available at: <http://corbiialbi.ro/index.php/contact/481-ai-cui-sunt-maghiarii-din-romania/>, Accessed on January 8, 2020.

number of Hungarians was 1.002 million (6% of the country's population)³¹². Although the number of Hungarians decreased from one census to the next, in the Covasna, Harghita, and Mureș areas, the number was relatively stable. On the other hand, statistical data show that Romanians are decreasing from one census to the next in this area: while in 2011, 33,73% of the population of the three counties was Romanian³¹³, and in 2021, the share of Romanians will have dropped to 32,55%³¹⁴.

In Covasna, unlike in 2002, at the 2011 census, preliminary data showed the following ethnic distribution of inhabitants: 45.560 people declared themselves Romanian (compared to 51.790 in 2002), 151.787 declared themselves Hungarian, and 8.238 declared themselves Roma (Gypsies)³¹⁵. A comparative analysis of the data regarding the nationality structure of the population of Covasna County shows that in 2011, compared with 2002, the total population of the county decreased by 7%, the Hungarian population by 7%, the Romanian population by 12%, and the number of Roma increased by 38%. The Romanian population has decreased by 12% in urban areas and by 7% in rural areas³¹⁶. The population percentage of Covasna County in the 2011 census was 22,09% as Romanians, compared to 23,28% in 2002, a decrease of 1,20%, Hungarians 73,58% (compared to 73,79% in 2002), a decrease of only 0,21%³¹⁷. Overall, over the period 2002–2011, *i.e.*, about 9 years, the Romanian population decreased almost 6 (5,71) times more than the Hungarian population.

Harghita County experienced the following dynamics between the two censuses: 45.870 Romanians and 276.038 Hungarians (in 2002), 40.431 Romanians and 258.615 Hungarians in 2011, out of a total of 326.222 in 2002 and 304.969 in 2011. In other words, in 2002 in Harghita there were approx. 14% Romanians and 85% Hungarians,

³¹² Oleg Ghilas, „Numărul maghiarilor din România a scăzut dramatic cu o cincime într-un deceniu. «Este de parcă ar dispărea întreaga populație maghiară a județului Harghita»” [“The number of Hungarians in Romania has fallen dramatically by a fifth in a decade. ‘It’s as if the entire Hungarian population of Harghita County is disappearing’”], in *Monitorul de Cluj*, January 3, 2023, Available at: <https://www.monitorulcj.ro/stiridintransilvania/105892numarul-maghiarilor-din-romania-a-scazut-dramatic-cu-o-cincime-intr-un-deceniu-este-de-parca-ar-disparea-intreaga-populatie-maghiara-a-judetului-harghita>, Accessed on August 7, 2024.

³¹³ Own calculations based on data available here: NIS, „Rezultatele Recensământul 2011: Vol. II. Tab.2. Populația după etnie – macroregiuni, regiuni de dezvoltare, județe și categorii de localități” [“2011 Census results: Vol. II. Table 2. Population by ethnicity – macro-regions, development regions, counties and categories of localities”], 2011, Available at: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumuliiipopulatia-stabila-rezidenta-structuraetnicasi-confesionala/>, Accessed on October 21, 2020.

³¹⁴ NIS, „Recensământul Populației și Locuințelor 2021. Rezultate definitive: Caracteristici etno-culturale demografice: Tabel 2.02.1 și Tabel 2.02.2” [“Population and Housing Census 2021. Final results: Ethnocultural demographic characteristics: Table 2.02.1 and Table 2.02.2”], 2021, Available at: <https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-rpl-2021/rezultatedefinitivecaracteristicietnoculturaledegrafice/>, Accessed on December 27, 2023.

³¹⁵ Lazăr Lădăriu, „Concluziile unui recensământ sau cine pe cine deznaționalizează” [“Census findings or who is denationalizing whom”], in *Condeiu Ardelean*, 2012, Available at: <http://www.condeiuardelean.ro/articol/concluziile-unui-recensamant-sau-cine-pecinedeznationalizeaza>, Accessed on April 1, 2020.

³¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

³¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

while in the 2011 census there were approx. 13% Romanians and 85% Hungarians. The percentage of the population of Romanian nationality in the total population of Harghita County in 2011 decreased by 0,81% compared with 2002, whereas the percentage of the population of Hungarian ethnicity increased by 0,19%³¹⁸.

Note that the numbers analyzed are official and often double in reality; thus, we expect discrepancies to be more pronounced in reality. From this perspective, the statistics presented by His Holiness Andrei, bishop of Harghita and Covasna, are illustrative, stating that in a relatively short period of time, the Harghita-Covasna area has perhaps seen perhaps the biggest demographic collapse in the country: “a decrease in the number of Romanians by 30.000” (from 81.000 to 50.000³¹⁹, *i.e.*, 37% in just 4 years – 2015–2019).

According to the latest Romanian census conducted in 2021, Romanians account for only 11,5%³²⁰ of the population in Harghita county (33.634 people out of a total of 291.950)³²¹, 21,4% in Covasna³²² (out of 200.042 people, only 42.752 were Romanians³²³), and 48% in Mureș³²⁴ (out of a total of 518.193 inhabitants, 252.400 were Romanians³²⁵). We note that from 2021 onwards, Romanians will no longer exceed 50% of Mureș County. The demographic situation differs from 2011 when: only 12,6%³²⁶ of the population of Harghita county (39.196 out of 310.867 inhabitants) was Romanian³²⁷, and in Covasna 21,42%³²⁸ (out of 210.177

³¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

³¹⁹ Iulia Drăghici-Taraș, „Exodul românilor din Covasna și Harghita provoacă îngrijorare” [“Exodus of Romanians from Covasna and Harghita causes concern”], in *Covasna Media*, January 28, 2019, Available at: <https://covasnamedia.ro/stireazilei/exodulromanilordincovasna-si-harghita-provoaca-ingrijorare>, Accessed on November 4, 2020.

³²⁰ Calculations based on the data available here: NIS, „Recensământul Populației și Locuințelor 2021. Rezultate definitive: Caracteristici etno-culturale demografice: Tabel 2.02.1 și Tabel 2.02.2” [“Population and Housing Census 2021. Final results: Ethno-cultural demographic characteristics: Table 2.02.1 and Table 2.02.2”], 2021, Available at: https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate_rpl_2021/rezultate_definitive_caracteristici-etno-culturale-demografice/, Accessed on December 27, 2023.

³²¹ *Ibidem*.

³²² *Ibidem*.

³²³ *Ibidem*.

³²⁴ *Ibidem*.

³²⁵ *Ibidem*.

³²⁶ NIS, „Recensământul populației și locuințelor. Vol. II. Populația stabilă (rezidentă) – structura etnică și confesională. Tab.10. Populația după etnie și limba maternă – județe” [“Population and Housing Census. Vol. II. Permanent (resident) population – ethnic and confessional structure. Table 10. Population by ethnicity and mother tongue – counties”], 2011, Available at: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etnica-si-confesionala/>, Accessed on October 13, 2020.

³²⁷ NIS, „Rezultatele Recensământul 2011: Vol. II. Tab.2. Populația după etnie – macroregiuni, regiuni de dezvoltare, județe și categorii de localități” [“2011 Census results: Vol. II. Table 2. Population by ethnicity - macro-regions, development regions, counties and categories of localities”], 2011, Available at: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etnica-si-confesionala/>, Accessed on October 21, 2020.

³²⁸ NIS, „Recensământul populației și locuințelor. Vol. II. Populația stabilă (rezidentă) – structura etnică și confesională. Tab.10. Populația după etnie și limba maternă – județe” [“Population and Housing Census. Vol. II. Permanent (resident) population – ethnic and confessional structure. Table 10. Population by ethnicity and mother tongue – counties”], 2011, Available at: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etnica-si-confesionala/>, Accessed on October 13, 2020.

inhabitants, only 45.021 were Romanian³²⁹), while in Mureș county 53%³³⁰ (out of 550.846 inhabitants, 277.372 were Romanian³³¹).

Drawing the line, although the number of Romanians places them in a local minority position in Covasna and Harghita³³², and in the Covasna-Harghita-Mureș area, the Romanian population does not exceed 32,55%³³³, the current structure by nationality of the three counties is far from that of a mono-ethnic Hungarian bloc. In spite of this demographic reality, Hungarian leaders are taking steps to obtain autonomy on ethnic grounds without considering the position and interests of the non-Hungarian population in the area³³⁴.

6. WHY ARE ROMANIANS A LOCAL MINORITY IN THIS AREA?

In Harghita and Covasna counties, the Romanian community has become a local minority³³⁵. When we say local minority or dominated, we refer to “the population that is a majority on the national level but a minority on the local level”³³⁶.

This status became more pronounced between 2011 and 2021 due to the demographic collapse among Romanians.

In the Covasna and Harghita counties, during the last centuries, an extensive process of assimilation of Romanians has taken place through Secuization and then Hungarianization, a process demonstrated by official and confessional censuses³³⁷. Secuization’s process of the Romanians occurred over time, slowly, peacefully, and naturally, but there were also ethnic and confessional pressures and constraints. The

³²⁹ NIS, „Rezultatele Recensământul 2011: Vol. II. Tab.2. Populația după etnie – macroregiuni, regiuni de dezvoltare, județe și categorii de localități” [“2011 Census results: Vol. II. Table 2. Population by ethnicity – macro-regions, development regions, counties and categories of localities”], 2011, Available at: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etnica-si-confesionala/>, Accessed on October 21, 2020.

³³⁰ NIS, „Recensământul populației și locuințelor. Vol. II. Populația stabilă (rezidentă) – structura etnică și confesională. Tab.10. Populația după etnie și limba maternă – județe” [“Population and Housing Census. Vol. II. Permanent (resident) population – ethnic and confessional structure. Table 10. Population by ethnicity and mother tongue – counties”], 2011, Available at: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etnica-si-confesionala/>, Accessed on October 13, 2020.

³³¹ *Ibidem*.

³³² Radu Baltasiu *et al*, *Slăbirea comunității românești din Harghita- Covasna. Raport de cercetare* [The weakening of the Romanian community in Harghita-Covasna. Research Report], Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2013.

³³³ NIS, „Recensământul Populației și Locuințelor 2021. Rezultate definitive: Caracteristici etno-culturale demografice: Tabel 2.02.1 și Tabel 2.02.2” [“Population and Housing Census 2021. Final results: Ethnocultural demographic characteristics: Table 2.02.1 and Table 2.02.2”], 2021, Available at: <https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultaterpl2021/rezultate-definitive-caracteristici-etnoculturaledemografice/>, Accessed on December 27, 2023.

³³⁴ Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *quoted work*, p. 10.

³³⁵ Radu Baltasiu *et al*, *quoted work*, 2013.

³³⁶ „populația care este majoritară în plan național, dar minoritară în plan local”, in *Ibidem*, p. 14.

³³⁷ Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *quoted work*, p. 9.

process of Hungarianization, on the other hand, which began in the second half of the 19th century, was violent and constrained and was based on the forced conversion of Hungarian-speaking Romanians to Hungarian religions³³⁸.

7. FALSE, UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND POINTLESS “REFERENDUM”

7.1. When began, and how long did it last?

The authors of A false “referendum” for gaining an anachronistic already existing autonomy point out that the so-called “Referendum” lasted more than nine months because the NSC leadership failed to collect half plus one of the signatures of eligible voters in Covasna, Harghita, and southern Mureș County in a shorter time. Note that this is the first situation in democratic countries in which it is not known exactly when the consultation of the population started and ended³³⁹.

7.2. Why is this approach not justified?

The action of the NSC does not correspond to any scientific theory or practice on the matter, being outside legal, sociological³⁴⁰, ethnic, political, historical, economic, geopolitical, and other principles, in short, outside all known common-sense principles. Here, only a few arguments in support of the above assertion will be highlighted:

a) Legislative perspective

From a legislative perspective, the “Referendum” is useless according to the Romanian Constitution and Law 3/2000³⁴¹. Art. 148 of the Constitution states in para. (2) that no revision can be made if it results in the suppression of the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens or their guarantees³⁴². On the other hand, Art. 3 of the Referendum Law (3/2000) provides that:

“matters which, according to Art. 148 of the Constitution, cannot be subject to revision may not be subject to referendum”³⁴³.

b) Sociological perspective

From a sociological point of view, the action is not only not a “Referendum”, but even more, it cannot even be considered an opinion poll because it violates elementary rules such as the following:

- Absence of a representative sample;
- The exclusive use of a “mobile voting box” to collect the votes;
- Repeatedly extending the deadline for collecting signatures;

³³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

³⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

³⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

³⁴² *Ibidem*.

³⁴³ „problemele care, potrivit art. 148 din Constituție, nu pot fi supuse revizuirii nu pot face obiectul referendumului”, in *Ibidem*, p. 14.

- Secrecy in the vote was not ensured; moreover, the vote was directly influenced by a representative of the NSC;
- The process was conducted in the absence of impartial persons (“observers”) representing non-governmental organizations from home and abroad;
- The collection, centralization and interpretation of the results were not objective, as they were carried out only by members of the NSC;
- Last but not least, in the process of collecting signatures, the Romanian population was not questioned, and a large number of “voting forms” that did not support the cause of autonomy were ignored (not counted)³⁴⁴.

The position of the Romanian Academy (expressed through the European Center for Ethnic Studies and the Institute of Sociology), which is the highest scientific forum in the country, confirmed the multiple irregularities associated with this initiative:

c) Constitutional perspective

Constitutionally, a referendum is a state institution that cannot be used outside the will of the state. Therefore, anyone who uses the institution of a referendum outside the will of the state is guilty of violating the integrity of the state³⁴⁵. On the other hand, the two academic institutes also pointed out that a government that allows the use of a state institution in ways other than those legally permitted is itself guilty of complicity in a type of operation that strikes at the state³⁴⁶.

d) Data credibility perspective

Neither the data collection nor the data itself is credible because:

- “the problem raised by the CNS is illegal, as the idea of local autonomy on ethnic grounds is unconstitutional”³⁴⁷;
- “the procedure initiated by the CNS is outside the elementary legal principle that evidence collected outside the legal framework cannot be formally used and is devoid of legal relevance and effectiveness”³⁴⁸;
- “the claim that the referendum is merely advisory is absurd”³⁴⁹.

e) Historical, political and ethnic perspectives

Considering that the Hungarian minority enjoys all the rights provided for in the Founding Act³⁵⁰, the insistence of the initiators of the “referendum” to refer to the Alba Iulia Declaration (Resolution) is in contradiction with their public statements that they are not willing to recognize the founding principle of the Romanian state, namely its

³⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

³⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

³⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

national, unitary and indivisible character³⁵¹. Moreover, the excessive insistence on the thesis of identity between the “Szekler minority” and the “Hungarian national community” jeopardizes the cultural identity of the Szeklers³⁵². Based on solid evidence, scientists have demonstrated that Hungarians and the Szeklers were two distinct nations³⁵³. On the other hand, territorial autonomy on ethnic grounds would mean for Romanians in this area, instead of eliminating the sources of discrimination, the legislative enshrinement of the aberrant status of national minority in their own state³⁵⁴.

f) Economic perspective

While promoting the myth of Secession as a “little Switzerland” that “must be allowed to develop”, the area is one of the poorest in the country, in which case autonomy would be de facto financed by the other regions. Thus, the myth of “economic emancipation” is thus based on an incorrect political judgment³⁵⁵. In 2014, Harghita had the lowest salary in the country, according to the National Institute of Statistics (NIS)³⁵⁶, and in 2016, both Harghita and Covasna had the lowest salaries in the country³⁵⁷. In other words, the Hungarian elite wants autonomy for the “Szekler” region, but it should be financially supported by the Romanian state, which it is doing through the National Local Development Program (NLDP), for example (see the conclusions of the report on the state of Romania’s north-western border 100 years after the Treaty of Versailles³⁵⁸).

g) Geopolitical perspective

The new philosophy of international relations after the 1990s shows that regional autonomy creates conflictual communities by deepening differences, gradually leading to severe threats to the state³⁵⁹. The authors emphasize the following points on this topic: “we are faced with a fake ‘referendum’, devoid of legitimate and real motivation, organized by associations not legally registered and led by nostalgic leaders, out of touch with reality, who maintain and exploit the ‘dream of Great Hungary’ and the non-acceptance of the irreversible political-state realities after the Great Union of December 1, 1918, trying in every way to force the legislature to legislate an anachronistic, medieval type of autonomy, which will never be accepted by the Romanian people”³⁶⁰.

³⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

³⁵² *Ibidem*.

³⁵³ Ioan Lăcătușu, *quoted work*, pp. 11–12.

³⁵⁴ Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *quoted work*, p. 17.

³⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁵⁶ ***, „Cele mai mici salarii din România sunt în județul Harghita” [“The lowest salaries in Romania are in Harghita county”], in *Ziar Harghita*, October 2, 2015, Available at: <https://ziarharghita.ro/cele-mai-mici-salarii-din-romania-sunt-in-judetulharghita>, Accessed on September 23, 2021.

³⁵⁷ ***, „Harghita și Covasna, cele mai mici salarii din țară în 2016” [“Harghita and Covasna have the lowest salaries in the country in 2016”], in *We Radio*, September 26, 2017, Available at: <https://weradio.ro/harghita-si-covasna-cele-maimicisalariei2016/>, Accessed on September 23, 2021.

³⁵⁸ Radu Baltasiu (coord.), *Situația actuală a frontierei de nord-vest a României la 100 de ani de la Tratatul de la Versailles – raport de cercetare [The current situation of Romania’s north-western border 100 years after the Treaty of Versailles – research report]*, Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2022.

³⁵⁹ Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *quoted work*, p. 18.

³⁶⁰ „ne aflăm în fața unui simulacru de «referendum», lipsit de motivație legitimă și reală, organizat de asociații neînregistrate legal și conduse de liderii nostalgici, ruși de realitate, care întregin

8. ANACHRONISTIC AUTONOMY EXISTING IN COVASNA AND HARGHITA

The two authors point out in their book, entitled *A false “referendum”* for gaining an anachronistic already existing autonomy, that Hungarian minorities have even more rights than the law provides for³⁶¹. Furthermore, ethnic Hungarians have more rights than Romanians, even though they are theoretically equal in terms of rights. This leads to a situation in which Romanians are discriminated against in their own country, while Hungarians enjoy all kinds of rights and are constantly gaining new privileges that cover all aspects of life:

8.1. Education

Considering the educational situation in Covasna, Harghita, and partly Mureș counties, the separation of schools along ethnic lines during the 1989–1990 school year laid the foundation for a Hungarian-language education network, from kindergarten to university and postgraduate education³⁶². The educational process in most of these schools, however, has strong ethnocentric tendencies, which is why many graduates of Hungarian-language schools are unable to converse in the official state language³⁶³.

8.2. Culture

Hungarians enjoy opportunities to freely express, preserve, and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious identity. To this end, their own cultural institutions – theaters, museums, libraries, cultural centers, and cultural houses – are created, maintained, and actively financed by the state. On the other hand, Hungarians can edit and publish books, newspapers, and broadcast radio and television in their mother tongue³⁶⁴. County, municipal, and town museums have become Szeklers museums, as have the two professional folklore ensembles in Covasna and Harghita counties, which have become “state Szekler ensembles”. This situation also applies to county, municipal, and city libraries and cultural houses in the two counties³⁶⁵.

8.3. Church

The church, whether Roman Catholic, Reformed, Unitarian, or Evangelical, has become one of the main pillars of autonomy in southern Transylvania. All Hungarian churches enjoy the support of the state, considering that they have regained their patrimony nationalized by the communists, while also benefiting from the support of the Romanian state. A major act of reparation for the Hungarians was the restitution

și exploatează «visul Ungariei Mari» și neacceptarea realităților politico-statale ireversibile de după Marea Unire de la 1 decembrie 1918, încercând cu orice chip forțarea legiferării unei autonomii anacronice, de tip medieval, ce nu va fi acceptată niciodată de poporul român”, in *Ibidem*, pp. 47–48.

³⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

³⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 24.

³⁶³ *Ibidem*.

³⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

³⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

of Hungarian churches, denominational schools, and community associations over an area of over one million hectares and important buildings. This gesture has not been, and is not being, appreciated and recognized for its true value³⁶⁶.

8.4. Publishers, printers, and libraries

Other important components of the autonomy of the Hungarian community in Covasna and Harghita counties are the countless publishing houses and printing houses, the dense network of libraries (most of which are local subsidiaries of Hungarian libraries), shops and newsstands, as well as the network of shops selling handicrafts and Hungarian folklore³⁶⁷.

8.5. Media

In addition to print media, Hungarian-language media includes several local and regional radio and television stations as well as the possibility of receiving broadcasts from Hungarian radio and television stations. Cable TV companies have translated the broadcasts of the main international TV channels into Hungarian. However, part of the local Hungarian-language press in Covasna and Harghita counties practices hyper-ethnic discourse and aggressive identity policies, which feed intolerance and discriminatory actions toward Romanians³⁶⁸.

8.6. Civil society

A large part of the objectives of ethnic autonomy in Covasna and Harghita counties has been realized by Hungarian-speaking civil society through its many civic, cultural, sports, tourist, and other associations. In Harghita County alone, in 2004, 1.443 NGOs were operating, of which 1.025 had economic, tourist, sports, and social profiles, 381 had Hungarian identity, 12 had Romanian identity, and 25 promoted multiculturalism³⁶⁹. However, there are very few Hungarian associations and foundations that promote the promotion of interethnic dialog, most of which have objectives that consolidate the status of the Hungarian minority in the area as part of the Hungarian nation³⁷⁰. This explains the fact that in most localities in the two counties, local Hungarian authorities have raised more than 300 monuments, commemorative plaques (with texts in Hungarian only), trophies, and other signs marking the 1000th anniversary of Hungarian statehood and the 1100th anniversary of the settlement of Hungarians in Transylvania³⁷¹.

8.7. Policy

Ever since the first parliamentary elections on September 27, 1992, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) has obtained numerous seats as deputy and

³⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

³⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 26–27.

³⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

³⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

³⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

senator, each time constituting its own parliamentary group. Deputies and senators representing the Hungarian minority form the leadership structure of both chambers. Moreover, in several legislatures, DAHR politicians have taken part in government affairs, serving as ministers, deputy prime ministers and heading numerous national agencies³⁷². At the local level, County Councils, Local Councils, and Town Councils in Covasna and Harghita counties are formed and permanently run by members of ethnic Hungarian parties and, in fact, impose quasitotal autonomy (self-government)³⁷³. The ethnic composition of councilors, mayors, and deputy mayors of most localities in the two counties shows that the effective holders of local power are Hungarians. Romanians are not represented in the local councils of ethnically mixed localities, not having the possibility to defend their own interests, values, and identity³⁷⁴.

9. NEED FOR POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION OF ROMANIANS IN NUMERICAL MINORITY IN THE AREA

In Covasna and Harghita counties, Romanians are discriminated against, which is why they need a legal framework for protection. Although they constitute a numerical regional minority subject to marginalization in the middle of Romania, Romanians in Covasna and Harghita do not benefit from the protection of the legal status enjoyed by all national, confessional, sexual or other minorities³⁷⁵. In a situation in which the Hungarian minority in the area dominates politically, economically, culturally, etc., it is the Romanians who need protection to preserve and assert their ethnic identity³⁷⁶. The leaders of the Hungarian community worked methodically to enclave this area from the rest of the country: first, through decentralization, they gained control over some priority areas of social life in the two counties, and then they initiated a process of “deromanization” of the area, by excluding the Romanian element from decision-making processes at the local level³⁷⁷. As a result, the only remaining option is to emigrate to other parts of the country, or abroad.

The lack of an effective system of protection for Romanians and the refractory climate of interethnic coexistence have perpetuated and accentuated the frustration and marginalization of Romanians in many localities in Covasna and Harghita counties. Since the Romanians in these counties do not have the legal, institutional, and logistical framework to counter the effects of the ethnocentrist policy of the DAHR administration through their own forces³⁷⁸, the only way to solve this problem is to apply the stipulations of the Explanatory Memorandum to

³⁷² *Ibidem*, pp. 28–29.

³⁷³ *Ibidem*, pp. 29–30.

³⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

³⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

³⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

³⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 33–34.

³⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

Recommendation 1201 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which states that: the protected minority rights apply to everyone, including a majority ethnic group when it is a minority in a region of their country³⁷⁹. The creation of this legal framework of protection requires, first, the political will of those who run the state and, second, the establishment of a central consultative structure to finalize this much-needed reparatory process³⁸⁰.

10. ARGUMENTS AGAINST ETHNIC SEPARATISM OF COVASNA, HARGHITA AND MUREȘ COUNTIES

The arguments that discredit separatism on ethnic grounds can be multiple: cultural, historical, ethnic, demographic, and educational grounds. They have been detailed in another work³⁸¹, also reviewed and published; therefore, this time, we will limit ourselves to highlighting only a few of them:

– First, it is enough to say that administrative organizations on ethnic grounds represent a real danger to the cohesion of contemporary European states, which is based on the principle of social inclusion³⁸²;

– Second, it should be noted that aligning the administration along ethnic grounds leads to ethnic cleansing, *i.e.*, to ethnocratic state theory, which is the heaviest strike against the national state, a member of the European Union³⁸³.

The Romanian Academy's European Center for Ethnic Studies notes that among the arguments undermining autonomy on ethnic grounds is the following:

– Romanians in Covasna and Harghita will have the feeling that they belong to a community abandoned by their own state³⁸⁴;

– Permanent risk of animosities between ethnic groups living in the same area, which have not existed until now³⁸⁵;

– The fact that ordinary Hungarians will be indoctrinated with the idea that they must marginalize Romanians from this area to develop their own community³⁸⁶.

11. FINAL REMARKS

The above shows that ethnic autonomy already exists in Covasna and Harghita counties³⁸⁷. In this area, where the ethnic vote determines the perpetuation of power

³⁷⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

³⁸¹ Ioan Lăcătușu, *quoted work*.

³⁸² Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *quoted work*, p. 37.

³⁸³ *Ibidem*.

³⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

³⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 42–43.

³⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

by the ethnic Hungarian party, regardless of the alternations of power at the national level, we cannot speak of democracy, but of ethnocracy³⁸⁸. Therefore, it is fair to say that the Hungarians in the area represent a community in a symbolic minority situation that is claimed only to gain privileges. In reality, they are a dominant community that perpetually occupies local power with a monopoly on resources. In this case, the need for them to have special legal protection is not justified. Those who really need legal protection to preserve their ethnic identity are Romanians who are in danger of being extinction in the two counties³⁸⁹. I conclude by saying what I have said on other occasions on this subject, namely, that the Romanian state is no longer an important actor in this area. This implies the loss of sovereignty of the entire state because its duty is to protect all its citizens, including in terms of identity (ensuring societal security³⁹⁰). In the absence of the Romanian state, the Hungarian state is becoming increasingly present and taking over its prerogatives. If concrete action is not taken as soon as possible, Romanians in this area will be completely assimilated.

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³⁸⁸ Ioan Lăcătușu, *Tendențe de enclavizare a unui spațiu românesc – Covasna și Harghita [Tendencies of enclaveization of a Romanian space – Covasna and Harghita]*, Bucharest, Romania plain and simple Publishing House, 2004.

³⁸⁹ Ioan Lăcătușu and Ioan Solomon, *quoted work*, p. 31.

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REVISITING A PROBLEMATIC FILE FOR THE ROMANIAN DIPLOMACY: THE GOJDU LEGACY

Emanuil Ineoan³⁹¹

ABSTRACT

Emanuil Gojdu has remained to this day the absolute landmark of Romanian philanthropy, of Aromanian origin, but his legacy continues to remain a difficult subject to deal with, especially because for more than a century it has generated and continues to generate a series of debates and controversies on this subject, inflaming the national political scene, but also the Romanian-Hungarian foreign relations. Although there is the impression that this is an exhausted issue, the course of which is largely known, the subject of the Gojdu legacy deserves to be revisited, if only as a necessary exercise in historical memory.

Keywords: Emanuil Gojdu, Aromanians, philanthropy, Gojdu Foundation, diplomacy.

AROMANIAN ROOTS

Emanuil Gojdu was born in 1802 in Oradea, into a family of Aromanian merchants (father, Athanasie Popovici-Gojdu, mother, Ana Poynar) who emigrated at the end of the 18th century from a powerful commercial center for the southern Danubian Macedo-Romanians, Moscopole³⁹².

This biographical information on the great philanthropist's Aromanian ancestry may at first surprise some, being considered a detail rather a footnote in the illustrious patron's destiny. We believe, however, that more generous explanations are needed regarding the way in which Gojdu's Aromanianness was a structuring part of his personality and projects.

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3. Cornel Sigmirean and Aurel Pavel (editors), *Emanuil Gojdu – Bicentenar [Emanuil Gojdu – Bicentenary]*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing House, n.y.

4. Titus Serediuc, *Fundația Gojdu – Dimensiunea Economică [Gojdu Foundation – Economic Dimension]*, Sibiu, University Lucian Blaga Printing House, 2006, as well as numerous articles published in the press of the time or in the Gojdu Fund Files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives in Bucharest.

Today, most Romanian and foreign historians and philologists agree that the Romanian people was formed on a territory stretching both north and south of the Danube, a territory that obviously goes far beyond the borders of today's Romania. From a single common trunk, the Daco-Romanians, *i.e.*, the North Danubian Romanity, and the Aromanians, Megleno-Romanians and Istro-Romanians, *i.e.*, the South Danubian Romanity, were later separated.

The Romanic element (called Vlah in the chronicles) was in a continuous retreat from the successive Slavo-Turanian invasions towards the mountainous areas, less exposed to the ravages of time, where it can be localized until the modern era. This shows a continuous regression of the Romanic population, but on the other hand it also proves the reaction of preservation of the specificity of an ethnic individuality towards the oncoming Slavic wave. In documents, the Romanic population appears under the ethnonym of Vlachs, but they have always called themselves by a name inherited from Latin: Romanus. The most widespread variant today is that of Aromanian, with a prosthetic specific to their language (especially in front of the sounds r- and l-) with an unaccented o closed to the u, the syncopation of which is not absolutely obligatory. The Aromanians of northern Pindus (especially the Fârșeroti) have preserved the old form without- a- Rumăn, Rămân (the latter with the delabialization of o after r).

At the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century, most of the Balkan Peninsula came under Ottoman rule, and thus the possibilities for the Christians, and thus the Aromanians, to assert themselves politically and culturally became extremely limited.

However, Sultan Murad II (1422–1452) issued a capitulation to the Aromanians, later confirmed by subsequent sultans, which from the very first point specified:

“High justice will be distributed in the country in the form of a *cadi*, according to Wallachian laws. The Wallachians will be able to travel freely throughout the empire, practicing whatever profession they see fit”³⁹³.

These facilities granted to the Aromanians were no coincidence, as in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Aromanians became suppliers to the conquering armies in full expansion, whose maintenance required meat, dairy products and clothing, beasts of burden, etc.

The Aromanian settlements of Kleisoura (a.k.a. Clisuri), Șiatista, Linotopi (Aliakmon river valley), Măcove (a.k.a. Aminciu), Călarli, Șipisca, Gramoște, Grabova, Moloviște, Siracu, Samarina, Malacaș and last but not least Moscopole, developed in the 16th – 18th centuries and became important centers of trade. Aromanian merchants made their mark in international trade by land and sea,

³⁹³ „Înalta dreptate va fi distribuită în țară în ființa unui *cadiu*, conform legilor valahe. Valahii vor putea călători în toată libertatea, prin tot imperiul, exercitând orice profesiune li s-ar părea bună.”, in Aravantinos, *Chronographia tis Ipiru*, I, Athens, 1856, p. 57, quoted by Anastasie Hâciu, *Aromânii [Aromanians]*, Constanța, Aromanian Book Publishing House, 2003, p. 35.

especially on the eastern Adriatic coast, doing business with the Italian states, especially Venice³⁹⁴.

The starting point for all this intense trade was the Aromanian settlement of Moscopole, which reached its peak in the mid-18th century. This town appeared in the documents of the time as an “*urbs amplissima*”, with over 12.000 houses and a population of around 50.000³⁹⁵. It was probably the second largest city after Constantinople in the entire Balkan Peninsula. Pouqueville gave for Athens at the same period only 10.000 souls, mostly Albanians and Turks³⁹⁶. Moscopole had several schools, a printing press, an academy inaugurated in 1750 and an important library. Against the backdrop of the Russo-Turkish (1768–1774) and Russo-Austro-Turkish (1787–1792) wars, Moscopole was sacked twice in 1761 and 1769, and in 1788 it was plundered and completely destroyed along with the surrounding Aromanian settlements of Shipiska, Bitcuchi, Niculița, Linotopi, Nicaea, Lanca, Grabova and Birina³⁹⁷.

Much of the population uprooted by the barbarity of the Albanian Muslims, the perpetrators of the destruction, would eventually settle in Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, the German States, the Danube Principalities, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, etc. In their new homeland, the Aromanians, although recognized as Greeks – a religious term, which was applied to all Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire – made a name for themselves among the commercial and financial bourgeoisie (the Aromanian families of Sina, Dumba, Tirca, Curti, Tricupa, Kapra von Zsuppa, von Mitta, Zotta, Șaguna, Mocsonyi, Gojdu or Manno, who distinguished themselves through charitable foundations and patronage and thus came to enjoy special consideration in their new homeland, often even receiving noble titles)³⁹⁸.

For the Aromanian intellectuals in the diaspora, the Latin origin and the attraction of Rome proved strong enough to create an awareness of their own individuality, which then tended towards the development of a modern national consciousness. While in the diaspora the Aromanian intellectuals were able to cultivate and assert their identity, at home, in their homelands under Ottoman rule and Byzantine Greek influence, there was a meandering and sometimes contradictory manifestation of identity. Modern Hellenic nationalism supported by a propaganda-driven educational system severely weakened the identity consciousness of Balkan Roma groups.

As far as the Aromanian element was concerned, the Greek authorities practised a series of assimilation policies which altered the demographic balance in

³⁹⁴ Matei Cazacu, „Vlahii din Balcanii Occidentali” [“Western Balkan Vlachs”], in Neagu Djuvara (coord.), *Aromânii: Istorie, Limbă, Destin* [Aromanians: History, Language, Destiny], Bucharest, Humanitas, 1996, p. 97.

³⁹⁵ Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Die Druckerei von Moschopolis, 1731–1769* [The printing works of Moschopolis, 1731–1769], Habilitation, University of Vienna, December 1988, p. 35.

³⁹⁶ Anastasie Hâciu, *quoted work*, pp. 154–155.

³⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

³⁹⁸ Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Chestiunea Aromână* [The Aromanian Question], Bucharest, Encyclopedica Publishing House, 1994, p. 16.

the area and produced huge waves of displacement of this population. The intervention of the Romanian state in the mid-19th century, by supporting a network of consulates, schools and churches serving in Aromanian, attempted to limit the extent of this phenomenon of denationalization and to offer an alternative for the cultural and linguistic preservation of this group.

Arriving in Central Europe as early as the 18th century, the Aromanian refugee communities from the Balkans would always carry with them the ambition to become professionals, to validate their community. They had the experience of surviving in a hostile environment and a range of skills developed mainly in the area of trade. Not by chance, this ethnic group was recognized in modern times as the “Jews” of the Balkans³⁹⁹.

In 1783, Emperor Joseph II granted a special ordinance drawing the attention of the authorities to these refugees as those who brought great benefit to the monarchy’s great trade and needed special protection⁴⁰⁰.

In the Romanian territories of the Habsburgs, the Aromanians settled especially in large urban centers such as Brasov, Alba-Iulia, Blaj, Cluj, Oradea, Beiuș, Timișoara, Sibiu, Lugoj, Caransebeș.

In Oradea, the birthplace of Emanuil Gojdu, the Aromanians are not a discreet presence. Theodor Capidan notes that a bishop, Meletie Covaci, a native of Neagușta (now in Greece), was appointed bishop in 1748⁴⁰¹.

The same author thus appreciated the role played by the Aromanian communities in the Romanian regions:

“As far as Transylvania is concerned, there is no church that has not received the donation of a Macedo-Romanian family. No archival research is needed to prove this. A simple glance at the inscriptions on the tombstones in the older cemeteries of these churches is enough to discover their great donors. In this respect the churches of Budapest, with the largest donation from the great merchant Dimitrie Arghir of Moscopole, the church of Miskolc, on the frontispiece of which is written ‘at the expense of the Romanian confraternity of Macedonia’ the church of Tokay, the residence of the Mocioni family, and finally the church of Zemlin, etc., will remain for a long-time living testimonies to the generosity and generosity of this invaluable Aromanian element. The role played by the Macedo-Romanian families in the provinces under Hungarian rule inhabited by Romanians is, unfortunately, still not well studied. All that is known is that they came into contact with the Romanian element in those parts and immediately became its brothers, taking an active part in all its national upheavals and giving it a number of men who, through their genius and patriotism, wrote the most beautiful page in the history of the rebirth of the Romanian people over the mountains. From the way in which these Romanians behaved in the Romanian provinces in Hungary, it follows that where, in their estrangement, they encountered a

³⁹⁹ Ronald Matthews, *Sons of the Eagle Wanderings in Albania*, Londra, Methuen, 1937, p. 234.

⁴⁰⁰ Maria Berényi, *Cultura românească la Budapesta în secolul al XIX-lea [Romanian culture in Budapest in the 19th century]*, Giula, 2000.

⁴⁰¹ Theodor Capidan, *Macedoromânii. Etnografie, istorie, limbă [Macedoromanians. Ethnography, history, language]*, Bucharest, Royal Foundation for Literature and the Arts, 1942, p. 84.

Romanian environment, they quickly returned to national consciousness, identifying themselves with the aspirations of the Romanians; where this environment was lacking, they lost themselves, by encusading, in the midst of the foreigners with whom they lived”⁴⁰².

One of the ancestors of the Gojdu family, named Naum, is among the founders of the Orthodox church in Miskolc⁴⁰³, Hungary, built between 1785–1806 “at the expense of the Wallachian brothers from Macedonia”, as the origin of the church’s benefactors is specified in the church’s inscription⁴⁰⁴.

According to the preserved historical information, Emanuil Gojdu’s father was a cattle merchant, thus preserving the traditional socio-professional profile of the Aromanians. Athanasie Popovici-Gojdu and Ana Poynar had 6 children together, Emanuil being the second.

After attending elementary school in Oradea, he began his studies at the Roman-Catholic high school in the same town, which he completed in Eger, Hungary. He began his legal studies at the Academy of Law in Oradea, continued them at the Academy of Law in Pojon (Bratislava) and completed them at the University of Pest, where he obtained his law degree in 1824.

Emanuil Gojdu made himself known to Romanian circles in the Hungarian capital during his traineeship with a recognized lawyer, Vitkovics Mihály. During this period, he contributed to the first Romanian literary magazine, “Romanian Library”, published and edited by the Aromanian Zaharia Carcalechi, and it was also during this period that he came into direct contact with the Romanian elite of the time and met the man who would later become the Metropolitan of Transylvania, Andrei Şaguna, another Aromanian. The friendship between the two can certainly be traced back to this period when Emanuil Gojdu frequented the home of the Aromanian Athanasie Grabovski, an Aromanian, uncle of Andrei Şaguna and one of the most active members of the Aromanian colony in Pest.

⁴⁰² „În ce priveşte Transilvania, nu există locaş bisericesc care să nu fi primit donaţia unei familii macedoromâne. Pentru dovedirea acestui lucru, nu este nevoie de cercetări în arhive. Ajunge o simplă ochire pe inscripţiile de pe pietrele mortuare din cimitirele mai vechi ale acestor biserici, spre a putea descoperi pe marii lor donatori. Sub acest raport bisericile din Budapesta, cu cea mai mare donaţie din partea marelui negustor Dimitrie Arghir din Moscopole, biserica din Miskolc, pe frontispiciul căreia stă scris, «prin cheltuiala confracţilor Români din Macedonia», biserica din Tokay, reşedinţa familiei Mocioni, în fine, biserica din Zemlin, etc. vor rămânea multă vreme mărturii vii despre generozitatea şi dărnicia acestui nepreţuit element românesc. Rolul pe care familiile macedoromâne l-au jucat în provinciile de sub stăpânirea maghiară locuite de Români, din nenorocire, nu este încă bine studiat. Atâta se ştie numai că ele venind în atingere cu elementul românesc din acele părţi, imediat s’au înfrăţit cu el, luând parte activă la toate frământările lui naţionale şi dându-i o seamă de bărbaţi care, prin genialitatea şi patriotismul lor, au scris cea mai frumoasă pagină din istoria renaşterii poporului român de peste munţi. Din felul cum aceşti Români s-au comportat în provinciile româneşti în Ungaria, rezultă că acolo unde, în înstrăinarea lor, dădeau de un mediu românesc, ei reveneau repede la conştiinţa naţională, identificându-se cu aspiraţiile Românilor; acolo însă unde acest mediu lipsea, ei se pierdeau, prin încuscrire, în mijlocul străinilor cu care trăiau.”, in *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰³ In this church was baptized Andrei Şaguna, the future metropolitan of Transylvania, today canonized by the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Metropolitan’s ancestors are also among the founders of this imposing church.

⁴⁰⁴ Maria Berényi, *quoted work*, 2002a, pp. 9–10.

After his traineeship he opened his own law office in Budapest and from that moment on he became an authority on civil law, his pleadings being studied in the textbooks of the time. His fame began to be increasingly coupled with financial prosperity, with Emanuil Gojdu acquiring over time numerous plots of land and buildings in central Budapest and investing wisely in shares in Hungarian banks. He thus became one of the influential figures in the Hungarian capital. He felt the political temptation, and in 1848 he was one of the political leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians. He was elected Supreme Committee of Caraș and, in this capacity, became a member of the House of Magnates in Budapest, the equivalent of the Senate. Parallel to this political activity, Emanuil Gojdu also strongly supported Romanian cultural institutions: he was a founding member of the Association for the Culture and Literature of the Romanian People (ASTRA), organized a committee to help Romanian students in the Hungarian capital, prepared the establishment of a Romanian high school in Lugoj, etc. In 1869 he was appointed member of the Supreme Court of Justice in Budapest and at the end of the same year, in November, he made his will.

Ioan Cavaler de Pușcariu recounts in his memoirs that together with other friends he was called as a witness to the authentication of Gojdu's will:

“Then Gojdu said to us only this, that he would like in a hundred years to rise from the grave to see what had become of his will? Then he added: Why! As a lawyer, I have made hundreds of wills for my clients, but no one has been able to attack them, and I don't think anyone will attack my will either!”⁴⁰⁵.

Only a few months later, on February 3, 1870, he died. It was his close friend Andrei Șaguna who was to open the will in which the bulk of his estate was to form the material basis of a foundation to support young Romanian Orthodox scholars in Transylvania. In the absence of proportionate political representation, Transylvanian civil society was forced to strengthen itself ecclesiastically and culturally by setting up numerous foundations to take over the task of an absent ministry of culture. There are countless cases in which wealthy people, but also peasants with a small property, bequeath a piece of land or a sum of money after their death to set up foundations bearing their name and working for the cultural emancipation of the area. This institution of patronage meant the cultural and ecclesiastical survival of Romanian Transylvania in the modern era.

WILL

In article 7 of the will left by Emanuil Gojdu it was stated:

⁴⁰⁵ „Atunci zise Gojdu cătră noi numai atâta, că ar vrea peste o sută de ani să se scoale din mormânt ca să vadă ce s-a ales de testamentul lui? Apoi adause mai departe: Măi! Eu ca avocat am făcut sute de testamente pentru clienții mei, dar nu le-au putut ataca nimenea și cred că nici testamentul meu nu-l va ataca nimenea!”, in *Ibidem*, p. 107.

“I leave my entire estate to that part of the Romanian nation in Hungary and Transylvania which is bound by the Eastern Orthodox law. From this bequest I wish to establish a permanent foundation, which will bear the name ‘Gojdu Foundation’”⁴⁰⁶.

This foundation was to be headed by a representative body which was to include: the Orthodox metropolitan or archbishop (at the time of the will there was only one Orthodox metropolitan see of Romanians in Hungary, the one with its seat in Sibiu), all the Romanian Orthodox bishops of Hungary and Transylvania and three laymen. Gojdu also made it clear that all the members of the representative office would not be materially remunerated for their work within the Foundation

“feeling remunerated by the consciousness that they have also helped to process the material given by me for the flourishing of the beloved nation”⁴⁰⁷.

The scholarship was to be destined for:

“young Romanians of the Orthodox religion, distinguished by good behavior and talents, whose parents are not able with their own wealth to provide for the upbringing and education of their children”⁴⁰⁸.

The Representation, in fact a board of trustees, was to submit to the financial control of the Metropolitan all the capital of the foundation to be invested. This testament is not a dead letter, and we are still within the validity period of its provisions, Gojdu having devised a scheme to grant scholarships until 2020 after which it would enter another funding cycle.

The provisions of the will were intended for the exclusive use of Orthodox Romanians, thus excluding Orthodox Serbs or Greek-Catholic Romanians from the possibility of stipends.

Emanuil Gojdu thus left an extremely clear message to future generations also in terms of his confessional, but also national identity, one of the articles of his will stating unequivocally:

“If in time the Eastern Orthodox Church in the homeland should be so constituted, that Serbs with Eastern Romanians should hold church synods together, or if in national matters Romanians of the Eastern religion should hold congresses or other national assemblies prescribed by law together with Greek-Catholic Romanians, otherwise called united, – in such convened assemblies, my foundation would under no title be able to make itself the subject of discussion; – on the fate of this foundation, not only the vote, but not even the opinion of the Serb and of the united Romanian should be disregarded”⁴⁰⁹.

⁴⁰⁶ „Întreaga averea mea, o las în întregul ei acelei părți a națiunii române din Ungaria și Transilvania care se ține de legea răsăriteană ortodoxă. Din lăsamântul acesta voiesc să se constituie o fundațiune permanentă, care va purta numele ”Fundațiunea Gojdu”, in *Ibidem*, p. 172.

⁴⁰⁷ „simțindu-se remunerati prin conștiința că au ajutat și ei la prelucrarea materiei date de mine spre înflorirea iubitei națiuni.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 175.

⁴⁰⁸ „tinerilor români de religiunea ortodoxă, distinși prin purtare bună și prin talente, ai căror părinți nu sunt în stare cu averea lor proprie să ducă la îndeplinire creșterea și cultivarea copiilor lor”, in *Ibidem*, p. 174.

⁴⁰⁹ „Dacă cu timpul Biserica Ortodoxă Răsăriteană din patrie s-ar constitui astfel, ca sârbii cu românii răsăriteni să țină împreună sinoadele bisericesti, sau dacă în privința națională românii de religiunea răsăriteană ar ținea împreună cu românii greco-catolici, numiți altfel uniți, congrese sau alte adunări naționale premise de lege, – în astfel de adunări mestecate, fundațiunea mea nicând sub nici un

The above passage suggests that Gojdu did not accept at the helm of the foundation Romanians without an Orthodox confessional criterion (Greek-Catholics), or Orthodox without a Romanian ethnic mark (Serbs). For Gojdu the influence of the Serbs, even if of the same faith, was not acceptable, the memory of the Serbian hierarchy's domination over the Romanians from the Carpathian arc, exercised in a denationalizing spirit, was still alive and further enhanced by the complications of the process of ecclesiastical separation.

We therefore note the very well-defined symbiosis of confessional and ethnic consciousness in the case of Emanuil Gojdu.

If at the beginning the assets of the foundation consisted of a number of shares in the most important banks and credit houses in Budapest, as well as vineyards and orchards on the outskirts of Budapest, thanks to an intelligent administration – the name of Ioan Cavaler de Pușcariu should be mentioned here – since the end of the 19th century the foundation's wealth has grown considerably, as well as investments in land and buildings (the 7 buildings of 28 floors in total that are today in the center of Budapest, known generically as the Gojdu Courts, were built between 1903–1908).

As for the number of scholarships awarded to Romanian Orthodox students, some 6.200 scholarships and over 1000 other grants were awarded between 1871–1919.

A good example to characterize the wealth and prosperity of this foundation is that in 1920 alone it supported 251 students to study in the universities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and other universities⁴¹⁰.

The amount of the scholarships varied according to the needs and financial problems of the scholarship holder. The names of those who benefited from these scholarships are, in fact, the Orthodox elite of Transylvania: Ioan Lupaș, Victor Babeș, Valeriu Braniște, Traian Vuia, Aurel Vlaicu, Octavian Goga, Silviu Dragomir, Aron Cotruș, Lucian Blaga, Andrei Oțetea and Dumitru Stăniloaiie – to name but a few of the generous list of beneficiaries. Unfortunately, the generation of 1919–1920 would be the last generation to benefit from the Gojdu scholarships.

In an article of the Treaty of Trianon, which officially sanctioned the union of Transylvania with Romania, recognized by the Great Powers, but especially by Hungary, it was specified that Hungary was obliged to return all movable and immovable property to the owners, natural and legal persons in the successor states (Romania in this case). In 1924 an agreement was signed between Romania and Hungary on the settlement of the affairs of the Gojdu Foundation.

There were to be a series of working meetings, which were to be systematically postponed until 1928, when the Hungarian government announced that it had frozen the foundation's accounts and appointed a Hungarian commissioner to administer its assets, to be paid from the foundation's own wealth. Not coincidentally, the period marks a serious setback in the Foundation's income.

titlu să nu se poată face obiect de discuțiune; – asupra soartei acestei fundațiuni nu numai votul, dar nici chiar opiniunea sârbului și a românului unit să nu se asculte”, in *Ibidem*, p. 215.

⁴¹⁰ Maria Berényi, *Moștenirea lui Gojdu în oglinda presei române și maghiare (1995–2005)* [*Gojdu's legacy reflected in the Romanian and Hungarian press (1995–2005)*], Budapest, 2005, p. 179.

This delaying tactic, in which the Hungarian partner excelled, was to continue throughout the inter-war period (a number of agreements were signed during this period, which would decide future negotiations on this issue, but which were always put on hold). The tension between the two sides that should have been at the negotiating table was also growing because of the list of claims that the Hungarian governments displayed whenever the Gojdu Foundation's assets were brought up for discussion. However, under repeated pressure from Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, an agreement was signed on October 27, 1937, whereby Hungary was to hand over to Romania within 30 days of the entry into force of this decision the entire patrimony of the Foundation that was located on Hungarian territory.

However, the neighboring state carefully premeditated this move, ratifying the treaty only in 1940, shortly before Horthy's troops occupied Northern Transylvania.

In a letter dated February 5, 1941, Bishop Nicolae Colan, the only remaining Romanian Orthodox hierarch in the occupied territory, wrote to Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan expressing the hope that the Emanuil Gojdu Foundation could be reactivated, especially in the new context when a large number of Orthodox Romanians who had escaped foreign domination in 1918 had returned to Hungarian occupation with the Vienna Dictatorship. For the Vulgate Nicolae Colan

“the reactivation of the ‘Em. Gojdu’ is expected by the entire Orthodox community in Transylvania. But it is especially awaited by our faithful in Transylvania ceded to Hungary (...)”⁴¹¹.

The bishop of Cluj insists to his metropolitan that once the Hungarian-Romanian negotiations resume, the Gojdu issue should be at the top of the Romanian demands.

Of course, the importance of the effective functioning of this foundation for the Orthodox people of occupied Transylvania became a priority for Bishop Nicolae Colan in view of the increasingly complicated financial situation of the Orthodox diocese. From September 1940 onwards, it remained within the framework of a state whose official apparatus had from the very beginning engaged in numerous abusive seizures of land and real estate, leaving the church institution without much money income⁴¹².

After World War II, the Hungarian People's Republic issued a decree in 1952 nationalizing all houses in Hungary with more than 6 rooms. Unjustifiably, this list of nationalizations also included the Gojdu Foundation's properties. The following year, in 1953, on the recommendation of the Soviet Union, the two sister-states of the communist camp signed an agreement by which they renounced all claims for compensation. The Gojdu estate remained closed for almost half a century. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Romanian Orthodox communities in Hungary demanded

⁴¹¹ „reactivarea fundației «Em. Gojdu» e așteptată de toată obștea ortodoxă din Ardeal. Ea este așteptată însă mai ales de credincioșii noștri din Ardealul cedat Ungariei (...)”, in Archive of the Archdiocese of Cluj, Manuscripts Fund, unpaginated.

⁴¹² *Ibidem*.

the restitution of the foundation's assets, invoking the 1992 Hungarian law on compensation for damage caused to religious denominations during the communist regime. In this context, in 1993, the Hungarian authorities allocate the sum of approximately 200.000 euro and a building of almost 1000 square meters to the Romanian Orthodox Vicariate in Hungary.

On September 30, 1996, on the initiative of Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală, the Gojdu Foundation was re-established in Sibiu with the aim of bringing the forgotten will of Emanuil Gojdu to the attention of the authorities and public opinion. In 1998 several members of parliament will propose to the Parliament's Foreign Policy Committee to open negotiations with Hungary to recover the Foundation's assets. In the meantime, the municipality of Budapest's 6th district sold the Gojdu buildings to several owners for derisory sums. In order to have a concrete picture of this real estate heritage in the center of Budapest, it is worth mentioning that the Gojdu complex comprises 38 shops, restaurants and cafes, 340 parking spaces, a medical rehabilitation center and about 249 luxury apartments.

In 2002, on the occasion of the Gojdu centenary, the question of the foundation became more and more pressing, with the ecclesiastical, cultural and part of the political elite insistently demanding the reopening of the Gojdu file. In order to settle the issue once and for all, the Romanian government came up with a new idea that ignored practically all Romanian demands to date: it proposed the establishment of a joint Romanian-Hungarian Emanuil Gojdu Foundation, which would operate in parallel with the Gojdu Foundation in Sibiu and would grant scholarships not only to Romanian Orthodox students but also to Hungarian ones. This project will be signed at the end of 2005. The haste with which the two executives have moved is explained, as High Bartholomew suggests, by the administrative vacuum in the Metropolitanate of Sibiu caused by the death of Metropolitan Antony and the failure to appoint a successor. The whole process of setting up this new foundation was a case study in how the manipulation of a nation can be practiced.

Here is just a cynical quote from the then Foreign Minister

“The agreement concluded on October 20, 2005, makes no reference to Emanuil Gojdu's will. It is merely a source of inspiration for the Romanian-Hungarian Public Foundation”⁴¹³.

Here is also the opinion of Hungarian MEP Zsolt Nemeth in the Budapest Parliament session

“The agreement between Hungary and Romania on the Gojdu estate puts an end to the discussion that has dragged on for many years. The essence of this issue is that Romania renounces the claim to the material property that it has formulated on several

⁴¹³ „Acordul încheiat la 20 octombrie 2005 nu face referire la testamentul lui Emanuil Gojdu. Acesta este o doar sursa de inspirație pentru Fundația publică româno-ungară.”, in Civic Media, „UNGARIA a pierdut «Afacerea Gojdu» în Senatul României” [“Hungary lost the ‘Gojdu affair’ in the Romanian Senate”], in *Civic Media*, January 22, 2007, Available at: <https://www.civicmedia.ro/ungaria-a-pierdut-afacereagojdu-in-senatul-romaniei>, Accessed on September 10, 2024.

occasions. This means that Romania accepts Hungary's view that in 1953 the material law treaty settled the Gojdu issue⁴¹⁴.

Despite the media bombardment, the mystifications, under pressure from the hierarchs of the three Transylvanian metropolitan orders, the Chamber of Deputies rejects (by a difference of only 1 vote) the emergency ordinance calling for the ratification of the Romanian-Hungarian agreement on the foundation, as does the Senate. As a result, the act orchestrated by the then minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu and his Hungarian counterpart did not enter into force.

After this date we have no further high-level action. Despite the fatalistic voices around, it should be noted that this matter of the Gojdu estate is not time-barred, it remains current awaiting worthy people to recover it and implement the testamentary provisions. Fortunately, the issue was taken up again by Metropolitan Andrei of Cluj, Maramureş and Sălajului on February 19, 2013, at the metropolitan meeting in Cluj, where he requested the public resumption of the legal steps to obtain and administer the Gojdu Foundation.

It should be noted that there are precedents in relation to the recovery of church property in Dualist Hungary. Thus, the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate, with the help of the Belgrade politicians, recovered in the late 1990s several buildings of considerable value near Budapest, which belonged until 1920 to the Karlowitz Patriarchate.

The cessation of these Gojdu scholarships from 1919 to the present has impoverished us not only materially, but also morally and culturally. Let us beware, however, of two attitudes that are equally damaging to the good of this cause. It is the seizure of the Gojdu issue by two types of discourse that are equally unproductive in our opinion. The first is the discourse used by those who empathize so much with the subject that they believe that the mere emotional charge it generates is enough. To the mass of arguments this extremely vocal chorus will respond either affectively, not infrequently using the pretext of Gojdu to plunge into lamentations about the fate of Hungarian-Romanian relations or to turn the same subject into a political platform for others. Surprisingly, such an attitude, started in some cases with the best of intentions, is blocking the issue of the Gojdu Foundation.

Let's be careful: the subject is indeed prone to strong emotional charges, and it is legitimate to be so, but these must be coupled with lucid, informed attitudes on our part. Another discourse that undoubtedly represents a major obstacle to a favorable resolution of this issue is the attitude, unfortunately common among most members of Romanian diplomacy, who, invoking good-neighborly relations with Hungary and a certain predisposition towards compromise that should guide foreign

⁴¹⁴ „Acordul dintre Ungaria și România asupra averii Gojdu pune punct discuției prelungite de mulți ani. Esența acestei probleme este că România renunță la revendicarea bunurilor materiale pe care a formulat-o în mai multe rânduri. Aceasta înseamnă că România acceptă punctul de vedere al Ungariei conform căruia în 1953 tratatul de drept material a rezolvat problema Gojdu.”, in ***, „Stenograma ședinței Senatului din 20 februarie 2012” [“Stenogram of the Senate plenary session of February 20, 2012”], p. 56, Available at: <https://www.senat.ro/pagini/stenograme/Stenograme2012/12.02.20.pdf>, Accessed on September 9, 2024.

policy, are blithely advising us to give up clinging to the past of this foundation that can no longer be resurrected and to try to find formulas that are as politically correct as possible so as not to upset anyone. As I was saying, the Gojdu issue is being blocked in the project in two ways at the moment: that of tearful drifts without solutions or arguments and the other of renunciations with the value of betrayal that we are being urged to accept resignedly.

THE FUNERAL

In Article 6 of his will, Emanuil Gojdu stated:

“I entrust the burial of my earthly remains to my beloved wife, but I ask her to do it as simply as possible and with as little expense as possible, calling only the Romanian priest from Pest to operate exclusively; instead of futile expenses to distribute among the poor on the first Saturday after my funeral one hundred (100) fl. v.a.; may my beloved wife be assured that the costly luxury of an hour for nothing will not change the judgment of the world, which on every man only after his death has been accustomed to be said without reserve”⁴¹⁵.

These lines show that we are dealing with a man who looked beyond the “judgment of the world”, with a particular spiritual attitude, for whom the question of death was a matter of a clear assumption. Emanuil Gojdu, on the other hand, maintained the same reflexes of humility and generosity in organizing his own funeral.

The will ended with an exhortation to forget which Emanuil Gojdu himself proposed:

“In order that these testamentary dispositions may not be forgotten, I order that this testament be read every year in all the eastern Romanian parish churches on February 9, as on the day of my birth”⁴¹⁶.

After his death, the will of the great patron was carried out in all Romanian Orthodox parishes in Transylvania. The archival documents we have found certify that on the penultimate or last Sunday in February of each year a solemn mass was solemnly celebrated in memory of Emanuil Gojdu in all the churches in Transylvania. This ancient parastas became an annual tradition observed even in parishes outside Romania’s borders: Cuvin-Serbia, Bătania-Hungary, etc. Even during the period of the Horthist occupation of Northern Transylvania “the service

⁴¹⁵ „Astrucarea rămășițelor mele pământești o încredințez iubitei mele soții, însă o rog, ca să o facă cât se poate de simplu și cu cheltuieli cât se poate de puține, chemând să funcționeze numai exclusiv preotul român din Pesta; în loc de cheltuieli zadarnice să împartă între săraci în prima sâmbătă după înmormântarea mea o sută (100) fl.v.a.; fie încredințată iubita mea soție că luxul costisitor de o oră întru nimica nu va schimba judecata lumii, care asupra fiecărui om numai după moartea lui s-a obișnuit a se spune fără rezervă.”, in Maria Berényi, *quoted work*, 2002a, p. 172.

⁴¹⁶ „Pentru ca dispozițiunile acestea testamentare să nu se dea uitării, dispun ca testamentul acesta să se citească în toți anii în toate bisericile parohiale române răsăritene la 9 februarie, ca în ziua nașterii mele.”, in Maria Berényi, *Istoria Fundației Gojdu 1870–1952 [History of the Gojdu Foundation 1870–1952]*, Budapest, 2002b, p. 16, and Titus Serediuc, *quoted work*, 2006.

of the funeral Mass for the repose of the great patron”⁴¹⁷ was considered by Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan in the circular sent to the suffragan bishops

“(…) as a duty of gratitude and as a model, especially in these times, for the great benefactor of the Romanian Orthodox students in Transylvania (…)”⁴¹⁸.

The discontinuation of the tradition of Gojdu’s funeral mass in Transylvanian parishes occurred with the establishment of the communist regime when any reference to the philanthropic past of church foundations had to be erased from the collective memory. After 1990, however, the Orthodox churches in Transylvania only sporadically observed the question of celebrating the funeral Mass dedicated to Emanuil Gojdu.

It is worth noting, however, the initiative of His Beatitude Andrei this year to celebrate a memorial dedicated to Emanuil Gojdu in the entire diocese of Vadului Feleacului and Cluj as a beautiful renewal of the pre-war tradition, even if only in one of the 12 dioceses in the area where the Gojdu Foundation has poured its benefits during its period of operation arbitrarily stopped by the interference of political factors. From now on, the service of the funeral mass and the reading of the will left by Emanuil Gojdu in every town, commune or village parish throughout the intra-Carpathian arc must be the natural consequence of the legitimate will of the testator who asked for nothing else in exchange for his enormous contribution to the formation of a Romanian elite.

It should not be forgotten that the Gojdu inheritance is not just a matter of bank accounts or real estate, but it represents potential that could have changed the face of a country. In the vacuum of the 1920s and the present, we have lost the chance to form an elite under the aegis of the Church, the chance to develop this corner of the world in a different way. After all, it is human capital that has been lost all these years.

We cannot help but wonder what Romania’s history would have looked like without Ioan Lupaș, Victor Babeș, Valeriu Braniște, Traian Vuia, Aurel Vlaicu, Octavian Goga, Silviu Dragomir, Aron Cotruș, Lucian Blaga, Andrei Oțetea and Dumitru Stăniloae? How many of them have we lost in this parenthesis?

The Gojdu Foundation is based on an imprescriptible will, with no expiry date, above the times. Its cause can never be closed. Therefore, we hope that its destiny awaits only worthy and courageous people who will reopen the file of our powerlessness...

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⁴¹⁷ „slujba parastasului pentru odihna marelui mecenat”, in Archive of the Archdiocese of Cluj, Archive of the Orthodox Parish Cuvin-Serbia, Archive of the Orthodox Parish Bătania-Hungary, etc.

⁴¹⁸ „(…) Ca o datorie de recunoștință și ca pildă mai ales în aceste vremuri pentru marele binefăcător al studențimii ortodoxe române din Ardeal (…)", in *Ibidem*.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ILIE ILAȘCU CASE FROM A HISTORICAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

*Dragoș Burghelia*⁴¹⁹

ABSTRACT

Ilie Ilașcu is part of the generation of Bessarabian Romanians who made a name for themselves in the early 1990s by fighting for the Romanian language, Latin spelling and independence in those complicated moments of the post-Soviet transition. Thanks to his work in Transnistria, the Soviet-style breakaway republic that emerged as a result of the weakness of the young state of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the collapse of the USSR, he later suffered in the dungeons of the separatist regime. Known for his role in the fight for human rights in the context of a landmark trial at the ECHR, which for the first time ruled the direct involvement and responsibility of a state, in this case the Russian Federation, for actions that took place abroad, i.e., on a territory that does not belong to it but over which it exercises authority, namely Transnistria. During Gorbachev's period of reform, society became polarized and divided, and in Moldova, the majority of democratic forces grouped together in the Popular Front of Moldova. Ilie Ilașcu was a prominent leader of this movement in Transnistria, noted for his defense of the Romanian language and freedom. In 1990, he publicly condemned the proclamation of the "Transnistrian republic", which heightened political tensions in Tiraspol. Despite pressures and threats, Ilașcu continued to fight for the integrity of the Republic of Moldova, becoming an active part of the Romanian resistance in Transnistria. Arrested in 1992 and accused of subversive activities, his trial was marked by numerous irregularities and abuses. Ilașcu was finally released after prolonged international pressure and only after a resounding victory at the ECHR, the purpose of this paper is to present a brief biography of the man who decided to fight for justice and freedom in the face of oppression.

Keywords: Bessarabia, Transition, Human Rights, Transnistria, ECHR.

INTRODUCTION

One objective of this paper is, on one hand to present biographical details and information that support the claim that Ilie Ilașcu is a relevant personality in the recent history of the Republic of Moldova and the struggle for human rights in the former Soviet Union, while presenting the tense context and some of the historical reasons that led to the creation of the separatist republic of Transnistria.

Known for his work in the Moldovan Popular Front, Ilașcu distinguished himself by his determination to promote the Romanian language and national values in an extremely turbulent political context. The Transnistrian conflict, marked by

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ethnic and political tensions, was a testing ground for many of the emerging democratic forces in the region. In this context, Ilașcu and his colleagues from the Popular Front active in the territory east of the Dniester were a cohesive factor, as founders of the National Revival Movement in Bessarabia, while facing a hostile and authoritarian separatist regime.

His story, marked by arrest and persecution, reflects not only the political struggles of the 1990s, but also the complexities and difficulties of the post-communist transition in the former Soviet states. This paper explores both his key contributions and the impact he had on democratic movements and Romanian national identity.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Ilie Ilașcu was born on July 30, 1952, in Taxobeni, nowadays Fălești district, and graduated from the State Agrarian University, Faculty of Economics. He was chief economist at the “Dnestr” Scientific Research Institute in Tiraspol and an officer of the Soviet Army. He is one of the founders of the National Revival Movement in Bessarabia (1988–1992) [Mișcarea de Renaștere Națională], which was set up in the context of the fact that, at that time, out of the more than 200 thousand inhabitants of Tiraspol, 35 thousand were of Romanian ethnicity (Moldovans) – about 17%, and yet they had no school or kindergarten in Romanian, all 19 educational establishments in Tiraspol being taught in Russian. Furthermore, the use of language policies as a means of blackmail or a form of Russification in the Transnistrian region was and still is a defining element of the entire existence of this separatist republic and of the authority exercised by the Russian Federation, which we will see is not only morally but also legally responsible for the abuses in this region⁴²⁰.

In 2012, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) sanctioned Russia for violating the right to education in three Transnistrian lyceums: “Evricea” in Ribnitsa, “Ștefan the Great” in Grigoriopol and “Alexander the Good” in Tighina⁴²¹. In 2018, the ECHR issued a new ruling on Romanian schools in Transnistria and ordered the Russian government to pay tens of thousands of euros in compensation to those affected by the closure of the boarding-school for orphans in Tighina. The Russian Federation, which denies responsibility, has so far failed to implement these ECHR decisions.

The school dispute has its origins in 1989, when the Latin alphabet was reintroduced for the Romanian/Moldovan language and when it was declared the

⁴²⁰ Andrei S. Tuluma and Denis Yu. Zubalov, “Impact of Language Ideologies on Language Practices in Pridnestrovie”, in *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences*, Vol. 15, No. 11/2022, pp. 1552–1572.

⁴²¹ Case Catan and others vs. Moldova and Russia (Applications Nos 43370/04, 8252/05 and 18454/06) Judgement of October 19, 2012.

only official language of the Republic of Moldova, to be used in all public domains. The language issue became a trigger for the secessionist movement in the country's eastern districts. After the forces of the unrecognized regime took control of most of the territory on the left bank of the Nistru river and the city of Bender, they maintained the use of the so-called Moldovan language with Cyrillic alphabet, in line with Soviet practices. Only a few educational institutions administered by the constitutional authorities remained in this region, of which some schools continued to use the Latin alphabet for teaching⁴²².

The Russian-speaking population of Transnistria was characterized by a feeling of loyalty to the Soviet regime, given the fact that its central leadership created the region both in the interwar period, when it was part of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, and later, after its annexation to the Moldovan Socialist Soviet Republic. This situation is also due to the fact that the territory was never an integral part of Romania, even though during the Second World War the Transnistrian Government functioned under the authority of the Romanian state, it was not a territory fully integrated into the administrative structure of the Kingdom of Romania. With the armed offensive and the installation of the Soviet authority, there followed decades of hardship for the Romanian natives who suffered the dramas of deportation and denationalization⁴²³. In the final moments of the Soviet empire of sad memory, in the light of the events triggered by Gorbachev's reform, society throughout the Union became polarized and divided, lacking any kind of democratic political experience, with no relevant ideological orientations that could counter communism, the desire for secession and the reaffirmation of national sentiment took root in most of the Union republics.

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE SOVIET UNION

The secessionist mobilization emerged in the Soviet Union as a powerful transnational force, not as a collection of isolated movements, developing initially in the Baltic states in the summer and autumn of 1988 and then spreading massively to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Ukraine and even, eventually, Russia itself⁴²⁴.

In Moldova, the majority of democratic forces grouped around a new political movement, the Popular Front. Between 1989–1991, the Moldovan Popular Front was a real mass organization, able to organize rallies with tens of thousands of people

⁴²² Alin Gvidiani, „Școlile cu predare în grafie latină din regiunea transnistreană – istoricul și problemele cu care se confruntă acestea” [“Latin-script schools in the Transnistrian region – their history and the problems they face”], published in November 12, 2017, in *Laboratory for the Analysis of the Transnistrian Conflict*, Lucian Blaga University Sibiu.

⁴²³ Andrei Vartic and Nicolae Rusu, *Basarabia, rana de la hotarul de est [Basarabia, the wound at the eastern border]*, Bacău, Vicovia Publishing House, 2008, p. 55.

⁴²⁴ Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge studies in comparative politics, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 160.

and numerous street actions, which were peaceful but politically very effective. These street actions were an important factor in the passing of landmark democratic laws in the Supreme Soviet – Moldovan Parliament (August 31, 1989 – the Romanian language acquires the status of state language of the Republic of Moldova and the transition to Latin script⁴²⁵. April 27, 1990 – the Romanian tricolor becomes the state flag of the Republic. June 23, 1990 – adoption of the “Declaration on the Sovereignty of the Moldovan SSR”⁴²⁶. November 3, 1990 – the state coat of arms of the Republic of Moldova was adopted⁴²⁷.)

Much of these events in the late 1980s were dedicated to the Romanian language and Latin alphabet. While at first glance it may seem unexpected that a claim as simple as the linguistic evidence that Moldovans speak Romanian and not the Stalinist invention called *Moldovan language* could generate such mass emulation, the phenomenon of “national awakening” generated a groundswell of political change. The fact that such natural claims degenerated into war illustrates, in essence, a historical and self-determination dilemma. If the language spoken in this territory is Romanian, it is practically accepted that Bessarabia was occupied by the Soviet army without having this right, neither ethnically, linguistically or historically, and as a result this province could, at some point, reunite with Romania.

Thus, the sympathy for the Popular Front was always lower in the Transnistrian region compared to Bessarabia, and in Tiraspol in 1990 there were two organizations of the Popular Front in operation. One of them was made up of academics and students of the Pedagogical Institute, its presidents were Tudor Trișcă and Ștefan Urătu, and it had about 300 members. The city branch of the Front had another 3–400 members and was headed by Ilie Ilașcu⁴²⁸. Ilașcu was to stand out for his fight for the Romanian language and freedom, and he was active throughout the military conflict, even after the disbanding of these branches of the Front.

THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN TRANSNISTRIA

On September 2, 1990, in Tiraspol, the “Congress on the Establishment of Pridnestrovian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (PMSSR)” was held⁴²⁹. Although it was suggested that the Pridnestrovian Moldovan SSR would be the legal successor of the former MASSR (Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic),

⁴²⁵ The Soviet Supreme Assembly of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic on the return of the Moldovan language to the Latin spelling. Law No. 3462 of August 31, 1989.

⁴²⁶ The Soviet Supreme Assembly of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic – Declaration of the sovereignty of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova, No. 148-XII of 23.06.90.

⁴²⁷ The Soviet Supreme Assembly of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic on the State Coat of Arms of the R.S.S.M. of November 3, 1990.

⁴²⁸ Victor Bârsan, *Procesul Ilașcu – Carte Albă a Comitetului Helsinki Român [The Ilașcu Trial – White Book of the Romanian Helsinki Committee]*, Bucharest, Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, 1994, p. 15.

⁴²⁹ Congresul de Constituire a Republicii Sovietice Socialiste Moldovenești Nistrene (RSSMN)/Pridnestrovskaiia Moldavskaiia Sovestkaiia Soșialisiceskaia Respublika (Russian).

it was preferred to maintain a certain ambiguity, avoiding the perception of a simple reissue of the entity created by the Bolsheviks in 1924. In order to avoid a possible conflict of interest with Ukraine, since the former MASSR had been part of the Ukrainian SSR, but also to justify the inclusion of Tighina, which had always belonged to Moldova between the Prut and the Dniester, in the new republic, the Moldovan SSR proclaimed itself a unitary republic within the USSR, with equal status with the other unitary republics⁴³⁰.

As some authors emphasize,

“the addition of the qualifier *Moldovan* to the name of the *Pridnestrovian republic* was not accidental. It was intended to capture the sympathies of Moldovans in the region and to alienate them from their brothers across the Dniester, to make this enclave a repository of Moldovan ethnocultural heritage in Russian clothing, just in case (...)”⁴³¹.

Shortly afterwards, on September 17, 1990, Ilașcu issued to the public space *Resolution No. 6* of the Tiraspol City Organization of the Popular Front

“In connection with the proclamation of the so-called socialist Moldovan Socialist Soviet Republic of Transnistria, which is unconstitutional and directed against the integrity of the Republic of Moldova and its people”⁴³².

At the same time, it is decided “not to recognize and blame the formation of the self-proclaimed PMSSR”⁴³³ asking the population not to submit to the structures of force of this so-called republic, and

“the delegates of the Second Congress and the persons who are part of the leadership of the self-proclaimed republic should be held criminally responsible”⁴³⁴.

This text of the decision immediately reached the Tiraspol press, which is exclusively Russian-language.

A good number of Popular Front members were surprised by the appearance of this decision, as they considered it too clear-cut, especially in that tense context. Noting such an attitude, Ilașcu noted that the text of that decision expressed his own vision and not a collective position of the organization he led. The members of the organization of the Pedagogical Institute distanced themselves from this decision and even launched a comparative discussion in the public space analyzing the causes that

⁴³⁰ Ioan C. Popa and Luiza Popa, *Românii, Basarabia și Transnistria [Romanians, Bessarabia and Transnistria]*, Bucharest, European Titulescu Foundation, 2009, p. 227.

⁴³¹ „alăturarea calificativului moldovenească la numele republicii nistrene nu a fost accidentală. Ea a avut menirea de a capta simpatiile moldovenilor din regiune și de a-i înstrăina de frații lor de peste Nistru, de a face, pentru orice eventualitate (...) din această enclavă un depozitar al patrimoniului etnocultural moldovenesc, în veșmânt rusesc”, in Ion Chirtoagă and Demir Dragnev, *O istorie a regiunii transnistrene din cele mai vechi timpuri și până în prezent [A history of the Transnistrian region from the earliest times to the present]*, Chișinău, Civitas, 2007, p. 358.

⁴³² „În legătură cu proclamarea așa-zisei republici sovietice socialiste moldovenești nistrene, care este anticonstituțională și orientată contra integrității Republicii Moldova și a poporului ei”, in *Resolution No. 6* of the Tiraspol City Organization of the Popular Front, quoted by Victor Bârsan, *quoted work*, 1994, p. 18.

⁴³³ „să nu se recunoască și să se blameze formarea autoproclamatei RSSMN”, in *Ibidem*.

⁴³⁴ „delegații Congresului II și persoanele care intră în conducerea auto-proclamatei republici să fie trași la răspundere penală”, in *Ibidem*.

led to the tension in the political atmosphere in Transnistria, thus trying to find ways to normalize the situation. Although the Russian-language press, the only one present in the region, was extremely prompt in publishing the text of the decision, the release of these conciliatory statements was only achieved after two weeks of insistence and efforts⁴³⁵.

The increasingly agitated and oppressive atmosphere in Tiraspol led to a significant reduction in the membership of the two Popular Front organizations, so that at the end of 1990 they merged and formed a single movement. Ilie Ilașcu was elected president at the first meeting where elections were organized, and the effects of the issuance of Decision No. 6 were discussed, it was considered that a political mistake such as this could be forgiven, given the spirit and courage that Ilașcu had shown in the fight for the integrity of Moldova.

This text by Ilie Ilașcu must be analyzed from the perspective of the period in which it was elaborated and disseminated, namely an uncoagulated, newly formed civil society, led by politicians with no political experience and absolutely devoid of a serious political culture. At that time, a considerable number of organizations and associations appeared, which often represented nothing more than a nucleus of people gathered around a person with organizational spirit and charisma, and thus numerous declarations, appeals and resolutions appeared, all of which caused confusion among citizens, many of which were not always taken seriously. Added to all this was a very large number of dubious individuals, often provocateurs who took advantage of these confusing situations, playing the role of patriots to derail or even undermine initiatives.

These people who were temporarily involved in civic activities were always ready to provide texts with greatly exaggerated appeals that could later be used by Soviet propaganda to incriminate “Moldovan nationalism”. In itself an absurd expression, but enough to justify the “defense measures” that the Russian community and the separatist leaders applied by creating a secessionist state.

The danger of “Romanization” and unification, *i.e.*, the return of Bessarabia to the borders of Romania, acted like a narcotic on the indoctrinated masses on the left bank of the Dniester:

“the almost ancestral fear – of the restoration of the old borders of Romania, inflamed with distorted evidence from the historical past and stirred to the boiling point, will have the greatest mobilizing effect and, consequently, the shaping of an explosive cold war climate”⁴³⁶.

⁴³⁵ Ion Costăș, *Transnistria 1989–1992. Cronica unui război nedeclarat [Transnistria 1989–1992. Chronicle of an undeclared war]*, RAO Publishing House, 2012, p. 214.

⁴³⁶ „frica aproape ancestrală – de refacere a vechilor hotare ale României, inflamate cu probe distorsionate din trecutul istoric și surescitate până în pânzele albe, vor avea cel mai mare efect mobilizator și, în consecință, modelarea unui climat exploziv de război rece.”, in Ion Chirtoagă and Demir Dragnev, *quoted work*, p. 360.

As the U.S. State Department's 1993 Country Report on Moldova noted "the separatist leadership of the RMN has sought to capitalize on fear of discrimination to gain the support of the majority Russian-speaking population in the region"⁴³⁷.

THE WAR IN TRANSNISTRIA AND ILIE ILAȘCU'S TRIAL

On March 1, 1992, when Moldova was admitted to the UN, Transnistrian guard troops and Cossack units attacked the police post in Dubăsari, the last one in Transnistria where the Chisinau authorities still had control⁴³⁸. This marks the beginning of the war between the Moldovan Republic of Transnistria and the Republic of Moldova, a conflict in which the latter entered virtually without its own army, which was only established in May 1992. It is also probably the only war in which a country is attacked by large armed forces and defends itself with police.

After the outbreak of the war, the rights of Moldovan citizens loyal to Chișinău who were still living in Transnistria were under continuous assault, many freedoms were affected, they were subjected to hate speech, their expulsion or even physical liquidation were constant threats. An eloquent case is the day of March 5, 1992, when separatist fighters who were victims in the first days of the conflict were buried in Tiraspol, on the local radio station where the procession was broadcast, the name of Ilașcu was pronounced 23 times, the population was urged to acts of violence against him⁴³⁹.

Although he was urged by friends and relatives to leave the region because his life was in danger, he refused and told them that he was a symbol of Romanian resistance in Transnistria, a resistance that must be maintained at all costs. As military hostilities unfolded, the situation of those who continued to actively support the Moldovan government became increasingly critical. Some people's homes were under surveillance, with attacks on the residence of Ilașcu and Urâtu and raids on the dormitories of the Pedagogical Institute, where students were terrorized, beaten and humiliated, as Ilașcu described the atmosphere:

"From 1991 until June 2, 1992, when I was arrested and accused of committing the so-called crimes, I was placed under strict surveillance. In March, a post of gunmen was installed near my house to guard me. In the same month several attacks were carried out on my home"⁴⁴⁰.

⁴³⁷ „conducerea separatistă a RMN a încercat să obțină capital din frica de discriminare pentru a obține suportul majorității populației rusofone din regiune”, in New York City Bar Association, *Thawing a Frozen Conflict: Legal Aspects of Moldova's Separatist Crisis*, Special Committee for European Affairs, Mission to Moldova, 2006, p. 35.

⁴³⁸ Vlad Greu, *O viziune din focarul conflictului de la Dubăsari. O istorie trăită [A vision from the outbreak of the conflict in Dubăsari, History lived]*, Chișinău, Prut International Publishing House, 2005, p. 30.

⁴³⁹ Victor Bârsan, *Masacrul inocenților. Războiul din Moldova, Martie 1 – Iulie 25, 1992 [Massacre of the innocent. War in Moldova, March 1 – July 25, 1992]*, Bucharest, Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, 1992.

⁴⁴⁰ „Din 1991 și până la 2 iunie 1992, când am fost arestat și învinuit de înfăptuirea așa ziselor crime, am fost pus sub o urmărire strictă. În martie, lângă casa mea a fost instalat un post de pistolari care mă păzeau. În aceeași lună au fost întreprinse câteva atacuri asupra locuinței mele.”, in Statement made by Ilie Ilașcu at the public sitting of October 19, 1993, published in *Țara Journal*, Chișinău, October 27, 1993.

A wave of arrests took place between June 2, and June 4, 1992, with the capture of persons loyal to the Chisinau authorities, namely Ilașcu, Ivanțoc, Petrov (Popa), Leșco, Urâtu, Marian and so on, in total about 15–18 persons. This measure was taken without respecting the most basic rights and provisions of criminal procedure. Around 12 armed militiamen raided the house, arresting him without presenting an arrest warrant or search warrant, the house was also inspected, numerous “corpus delicti” were planted and subsequently mentioned in the search report. These included an “explosive detonator”, which was described in detail, although a later commission was unable to establish its identity, provenance or even whether it belonged to the category of such devices⁴⁴¹. The question thus arises as to how the person who drew up the minutes knew these details so precisely, and other aspects, such as the inconsistency of details regarding the location of some of the objects discovered during the search, again underline the way in which the search was carried out.

The 140-page indictment of the “Dniester republic” prosecutor’s office contains several accusations, but they all center around the following facts: 1) the “Transnistrian Moldovan Republic” is the legitimate heir of the AMSSR and the MSSR; 2) Ilașcu fought by illegal methods against an established state, and that behind it is the Popular Front, the Ministry of National Security of Moldova and Romania; 3) Ilașcu and his accomplices represent the fifth column of Moldova’s aggression against Transnistria, 4) Ilașcu’s actions represent the implementation of the ideas presented in the document called *Decision no. 6*, 5) Ilașcu coordinates a complex activity of training the group led by him, procuring arms and ammunition, recruiting new members, etc. 6) Ilașcu plans several attacks, some of which succeed, others fail, some of which he deliberately gives up, and others are prevented from taking place by his arrest⁴⁴².

All these allegations will be impossible to refute as the defense of those arrested was only a formal one. The self-proclaimed state asserts through all its organs and methods of action that it is a Soviet state, and the legal framework is decided by the *Supreme Soviet*. In such a regime political opponents are treated extremely violently, and the mere accusation of being “anti-Soviet” generates a maximum repressive reaction, being associated with an “enemy of the people”, “fascist” or “terrorist”. These labels never led to a fair or just trial, as the sentence was inevitably one of condemnation, which brought extremely harsh punishments such as deportation to camps or even immediate liquidation.

THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DIGNITY

We note that in this context, respect for dignity, fundamental rights and the imposition of social justice are flagrantly violated aspects, in a way that is specific to a regime of Soviet origin, profoundly anti-Romanian. It is in this context that we

⁴⁴¹ Victor Bârsan, *quoted work*, 1994, p. 25.

⁴⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 32.

can approach the notion of Social Justice. Since it represents the application of “fundamental rules” in the establishment of social, national or humanitarian objectives, as well as those considered intermediate in relation to them. Therefore, we can understand that political justice involves the harmonization of

“social, national or humanitarian objectives of the social will – each of which has a spiritual, economic, political and legal dimension – [which] form an indissoluble, coherent and necessary unity, corresponding to the unitary social whole”⁴⁴³.

A first manifestation of justice is dignity. This has two components: self-respect and the respect accorded by others to the actor concerned. The actor can be individual or collective. For example, a prerequisite for the self-respect of each one of us is national dignity, followed by that of the professional group to which we belong. The state is the repository of national dignity. The social actors responsible for protecting collective dignity are the political class and intellectuals⁴⁴⁴. In Ilie Ilașcu’s situation, this individual actor had numerous rights violated, undermining the idea of social justice, and it is all the more interesting to analyze if we consider that he took up the fight to protect and preserve national identity, even in the absence of a consolidated state, driven by his national consciousness and the certainty of his identity as a Romanian.

As for the detention of the other members of the “Ilașcu Group”, the procedure was similar in all cases, i.e., the methods of apprehension and the treatment applied to them were almost identical. Specifically, between June 2 – 4, 1992, most of them were detained at their homes in the early morning hours by numerous members of the USSR Fourteenth Army, wearing uniforms with distinctive markings, but there were also persons wearing only camouflage uniforms without badges.

Once they were picked up from their homes, the first place they were transported to was the Tiraspol militia headquarters, which is also the headquarters of the “Ministry of Security of the RMN”, where they were interrogated and mistreated for several days. During the first days of their arrest, they were severely and regularly beaten, with almost no food or hydration, all of this taking place in the militia’s rooms, by “investigators” wearing military uniforms, or even identical to those of the Fourteenth Army⁴⁴⁵.

INHUMANE TREATMENT DURING IMPRISONMENT

Moscow has over the years deployed significant military forces, weaponry and combat technology in the Transnistrian region, closely linked to the strategic objectives

⁴⁴³ „obiectivelor sociale, naționale sau umanitare ale voinței sociale – fiecare dintre acestea având o dimensiune spirituală, economică, politică și juridică – [care] formează o unitate indisolubilă, coerentă și necesară, corespunzătoare întregului social unitar.”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *Opere, Vol. II [Works, Volume II]*, Bucharest, Academy Publishing House, 1969, p. 35.

⁴⁴⁴ Radu Baltasiu, *Introducere în sociologie: spiritualitate, națiune și capitalism: considerații de sociologie românească și weberiană [Introduction to Sociology: Spirituality, Nation, and Capitalism: Considerations of Romanian and Weberian Sociology]*, Craiova, Beladi Publishing House, 2007, p. 219.

⁴⁴⁵ Victor Bârsan, *quoted work*, 1994, p. 18.

of the USSR and later the Russian Federation in southern and central Europe. After the end of the Second World War, the Soviet 46th Army, which advanced through Romania as far as Vienna, was withdrawn to the Odessa military district, with most of its units concentrated in Transnistria. This force was later reorganized as the 14th Army, with about 3.000 officers and tens of thousands of local soldiers and reservists and became one of the elite units of the Soviet army during the Cold War⁴⁴⁶.

According to Ilie Ilașcu's testimony, he was taken immediately after his detention to the office of a so-called Minister of Security, where he and five other people who identified themselves as "colonels" from the Russian counter-espionage service were offered a compromise. Specifically, he was asked to offer in exchange for his release all the knowledge and skills he had acquired during his military service in the USSR special troops, recognizing that he was an agent of the Romanian secret services. After he refused, they threatened him that the only alternative was the cemetery⁴⁴⁷.

They were then transferred in vehicles with Russian identification marks to the headquarters of the 14th Army in Tiraspol, where they stayed for about two months. The members of the group were also guarded and mistreated by soldiers of this Army. All these details relating to the involvement of the Fourteenth Army are essential for the subsequent determination of the direct involvement of the Russian Federation in this case, which is why they are mentioned and highlighted throughout this paper, just as they were emphasized in the trial that took place at the European Court of Human Rights.

The Tiraspol Command was headed by Mikhail Bergman, where people were held without cellmates and interrogated mainly during the night, with ill-treatment accompanying the interrogation sessions. Beatings were used during interrogation, but also on other occasions, which were extremely severe and regularly carried out by soldiers of the Fourteenth Army or Transnistrian militiamen. But other methods of intimidation and abuse of detainees were also used. For example, Ilie Ilașcu was subjected four times to mock executions. The first time his death sentence was read out to him, and in the other cases he was taken blindfolded to a field near the place of detention where the guards fired blanks in his direction until he lost consciousness⁴⁴⁸.

Another member of the group, Alexandru Leșco, was subjected to psychological abuse, including threats of rape. While Mr. Ivanțoc was hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital due to the blows he received, this hospitalization lasted about a month.

Detention conditions were typical of Soviet prisons, with a complete lack of any safety measures and medical stability, to which were added the clearly malevolent attitude of the authorities. Thus, the cells were not equipped with sanitary

⁴⁴⁶ Charles King, *Moldovans: Romania, Russia and Cultural Policy*, Chișinău, ARC Publishing House, 2002, p. 188.

⁴⁴⁷ ECHR, *Ilașcu and Others vs Moldova and Russia*, 2004-VII p. 43.

⁴⁴⁸ Mihai Vicol, *Ilie Ilașcu-mărturisirile unui condamnat la moarte [Ilie Ilașcu – the confessions of a condemned to death]*, Galați, Porto-Franco Publishing House, 1998, p. 59.

facilities, water or natural light, with only one lamp in constant use even during rest hours. A folding bed was fixed to the wall, which was lowered at midnight and raised at five in the morning, with no mattresses, sheets or beds, just simple planks⁴⁴⁹.

In terms of movement time, they were given 15 minutes a day to walk in an enclosed space, and during their detention they were not allowed to change their clothes or even wash them, they remained in the clothes they had been wearing since the morning of their detention. As for their physiological needs, they were taken to a shared toilet at the end of the hall, once a day, by guards accompanied by an Alsatian wolf dog. They were each given 45 seconds to relieve themselves, otherwise the wolf was set upon them. As they were only given this opportunity once a day, they were forced to relieve themselves in the cell, the inhuman conditions being obvious.

Isolation from the outside world was also realized, as their family was not allowed to visit them, nor to contact them or send them parcels, and they were also denied access to a lawyer, as they were not allowed to correspond with or visit a lawyer. The period spent in the command of the Fourteenth Army came to an end when General Lebed took over its command on August 23, 1992, and the detainees were transferred to militia barracks in Tiraspol, also in vehicles of the Fourteenth Army⁴⁵⁰.

Their stay in these militia units was not long, as they were held here until April 1993, but the conditions were just as harsh, and the brutal treatment was repeated. The cells here were also deprived of natural light and the rooms were equally unsanitary, and interrogations took place at night and were accompanied by regular beatings. For the first few weeks they were not allowed any visits or parcels, but later they were allowed to receive parcels from their families, but still in a discretionary and irregular manner. Most of the time they could not even benefit from the contents of the parcels as the guards carried out “security checks” so that the food was spoiled and could no longer be consumed. Correspondence with lawyers was not allowed here either and their visits were also forbidden⁴⁵¹.

The inmates’ health deteriorated rapidly, during this period there were only extremely rare medical check-ups and even after beatings or ill-treatment, the doctor’s visit took place only after a long time. Alexandru Ivanțoc’s situation was even worse, as he was given hallucinogens which caused chronic migraines. Throughout this period, he was not offered treatment for his headaches, and medication sent from home was not offered, as his wife was forbidden to send such parcels⁴⁵².

Both prisoners and their families were constantly informed that their trial was to follow “in two weeks”, that “they will be shot soon” or that “all the others have been shot”. In one specific case, one of the detainees, Ștefan Urâtu, overheard one of the other detainees shouting that they were “going to be shot at noon”⁴⁵³. However, as these measures did not produce the expected results, they often resorted to beatings.

⁴⁴⁹ Victor Bârsan, *quoted work*, 1994, p. 26.

⁴⁵⁰ ECHR, Ilașcu and others vs. Moldova and Russia, 2004-VII p. 53.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵² Iași Newspaper, „Sănătatea lui Ilașcu îngrijorează chiar și autoritățile transnistrene” [“Ilașcu’s health worries even the Transnistrian authorities”], December 22, 1997.

⁴⁵³ The Situation of the 6 Detainees in Tiraspol, report of the Romanian Helsinki Committee and the IHRLG, edited by Manuela Ștefănescu and Ed Recosh, January 1993.

SOVIET-STYLE CONDITIONS AND ABUSE

The most degrading treatments were applied to Ilașcu⁴⁵⁴, in addition to the mock executions, procedures such as placing him against a wall, so that bullets could be fired from nearby to the right and left of his head. In one of the cases, on his way back from the toilet, while running due to the extremely short time provided by the guards, he tripped and fell. At that moment a guard shouted “Runner!”, and blanks were fired until he lost consciousness and was dragged into the cell.

The guards’ actions were also aimed at the mental disturbance of the prisoners, in addition to the complete isolation that deeply affects the resistance of any person, they were given false information to frighten and alarm them. Ilașcu was told that his wife and little daughter were being terrorized by the guards and the Cossacks and the only solution to save them was to sign a written statement by the authorities in which he clearly admitted the facts. During the course of the investigation, they were constantly lied to, being told that the government in Chișinău had collapsed and that the Moldovan authorities had declared them terrorists and that the separatist republic was to be “recognized worldwide”.

This inhumane treatment on top of the intoxication with fake news, as well as the alarming news about his family and political developments, had tragic effects on Andrei Ivanțoc. His health was already very poor as in 1988 he had undergone surgery for a hydatid cyst, for which he had received strict recommendations on diet and exercise. After being forcibly administered psychotropic substances, Ivanțoc was set up for an interview with a supposed reporter who filmed him while the prisoner, in a deeply distressed state, repeated with long pauses what he was hearing from a voice speaking lines behind him. These lines are sometimes loud enough that they can also be heard on the footage that was broadcast on ASKET television in Tiraspol, in which Ivanțoc in this interview practically “admits” to killing two people in a so-called terrorist attack⁴⁵⁵.

As a result of the beatings, psychological abuse and threats, Andrei Ivanțoc was seriously mentally disturbed. He even tried to hang himself with strips of cloth obtained by tearing his clothes, but fortunately he failed in this tragic attempt, even though he was discovered by the guards. As a result, absolutely all his clothes were confiscated and he was forced to remain completely naked for 24 hours, after which he was seen by a doctor who was unable to give a clear diagnosis⁴⁵⁶. He was transferred to Odessa for further examination, after which he was recommended to be admitted to a psychiatric clinic. However, he was sent back to prison and given a new diagnosis, namely that he was “sane”. It is important to note that as a professional driver, Ivanțoc regularly underwent medical and psychological tests in accordance with Soviet

⁴⁵⁴ US State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1993 – Moldova.

⁴⁵⁵ ECHR, *Ilașcu and Others vs. Moldova and Russia*, 2004-VII, p. 66.

⁴⁵⁶ General Judgment – Decision on the admissibility of application No. 48787/99 lodged by Ilie Ilașcu and Others against the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation. European Court of Human Rights, sitting on July 4, 2001, p. 11.

legislation, all of which had “very good” results and were recorded in a medical book. This book was suddenly lost while he was hospitalized in Odessa, to put forward the theory that he was suffering from ailments before his arrest.

As mentioned, the right to defense was not respected according to essential human rights standards either. During the first two to three months, access to a lawyer was completely forbidden, and Ilașcu’s first meeting with a lawyer took place on August 28, 1992, while Petrov-Popa and Godiac did not have a lawyer until the beginning of the trial. The atmosphere of the interrogations during this period can be reconstructed on the basis of statements by Ștefan Urâtu, who states that there was a constant attempt to intimidate the detainees. For example, in response to Mr. Urâtu’s objections about inhuman conditions and human rights violations, the interrogator said:

“You forgot where you are. Maybe Ethiopia has better laws. Here we’ll shoot you when we want, and no one will hold us to account”⁴⁵⁷.

On another occasion, when he refused to sign a statement proposed by the investigator, he was told:

“Be careful, it’s wartime and a bullet in the forehead is no big deal, and you’ll be floating down the Dniester like so many others”⁴⁵⁸.

Prior to the start of the trial, there can be no question of respect for the presumption of innocence, which is an essential condition in any trial that claims to be fair. This principle was breached in the very first days of his arrest, when the tape of Andrei Ivanțoc, recorded under the above-mentioned conditions, was broadcasted on local television, in which he “admitted” his crimes. At the same time, the chief prosecutor of the Transnistrian Republic, Boris Lucik, made inflammatory statements to the press, such as that the prisoners’ guilt was proven, that they were the perpetrators of terrorist acts. Such statements were repeated on numerous occasions until the trial began.

Many times, during the trial, the plaintiffs were only able to talk to their lawyers in the presence of armed militiamen. The sessions took place in a tense atmosphere, with the public holding placards hostile to the plaintiffs. As shown in a photo taken in the courtroom, which appeared in a Moldovan newspaper, one of the placards read “Terrorists – take responsibility!”⁴⁵⁹.

Such events were the starting point in the fierce campaign of slandering the detainees, actions carried out in the separatist media, causing the level of tension in society to rise and automatically polarizing the population against those who were to be tried, being extremely violent during the trial, calling for the shooting of prisoners. Another important factor is the fact that at the “Transnistrian Interior

⁴⁵⁷ „Ai uitat unde te afli. Poate în Etiopia or fi legi mai bune. Aici noi te-om împușca atunci când om voi și n-are să ne ceară nimeni socoteală.”, in Victor Bârsan, *quoted work*, 1994, p. 30.

⁴⁵⁸ „Ai grijă, e vreme de război și un glonte în frunte nu e mare lucru, și o sa plutești și tu pe Nistru ca atâția alții”, in *Ibidem*, p. 30.

⁴⁵⁹ “Террористов – к отвety!” – Russian translation.

Ministry”, the place where credentials for access to the trial were granted, propaganda leaflets were also offered incriminating “Moldovan terrorism”, such as the material entitled “Dubăsari, Transnistria’s bleeding wound”⁴⁶⁰. This brochure was full of forgeries and scandalous photos of civilian victims among the Transnistrian population. The pictures were later dismantled with the help of refugees from the Dubăsari area, who recognized that the victims of Cossacks and guards were in fact presented as crimes of Moldovan policemen or volunteers⁴⁶¹.

This is how events unfolded even before the start of the trial, we can observe actions typical of a totalitarian state, with obvious Soviet reminiscences. Attempts were being made to obtain false confessions, under psychological pressure and violence, in order to incriminate the prisoners, even if they were extremely far from the truth, just as in the Stalinist period, when conviction was more important than justice. These violations of fundamental human rights would continue during that sham trial and in the years that followed, until release, with slight differences in quantity or quality.

CONCLUSION

As I said in my introduction, I wanted to demonstrate that Ilie Ilașcu and the other members of his group are notable figures of the post-Soviet history of the Republic of Moldova and of the struggle for Romanian identity in Bessarabia. Their case attracted international attention, and their conviction by an illegitimate Transnistrian court on fabricated charges and following an unfair trial was seen as a flagrant human rights abuse. These men were convicted because they fought for the independence and integrity of the Republic of Moldova, and their detention has been condemned by numerous international organizations and prominent political figures.

Despite countless protests and interventions by the international community, the separatist authorities in Transnistria continued to keep them in detention, which underlined the inability of the Republic of Moldova to exercise sovereignty over the entire national territory. Ilie Ilașcu, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and elected Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, was unable to exercise his mandate because of his illegal imprisonment. This was stated by the Romanian Parliament itself in the declaration of the Romanian Senate on the Ilașcu group of April 17, 2001:

“At the beginning of the third millennium we are facing a unique case on the European continent: The patriot Ilie Ilașcu, unjustly convicted for the ‘crime’ of having fought to defend the independence and unity of his country, nominated in 1996 for the Nobel

⁴⁶⁰ Vlad Grecu, „Tăcerea de miel a Chișinăului” [“Chișinău’s lamb’s silence”], in *Moldova*, March 2, 2010, Available at: <https://www.moldova.org/vlad-grecu-tacerea-de-miel-a-chisinaului-206821-rom/>, Accessed on July 24, 2024. (Vlad Grecu is a former combatant in the Dniester War, originally from Corjova village, Dubăsari).

⁴⁶¹ Violation of the presumption of innocence in the Ilașcu trial, CHR report drafted by Victor Bârsan.

Peace Prize, twice democratically elected, twice elected deputy of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova in two successive legislatures, in elections monitored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other European organizations, has been unable to exercise his mandate as elected representative of the people, because he continues to be imprisoned in Transnistrian jails⁴⁶².

In recognition of their heroism and outstanding contribution to the National Liberation Movement, the members of the Ilașcu Group were decorated with the “Order of the Republic” by the interim President of the Republic of Moldova. These distinctions underline their sacrifice in the struggle for the independence and territorial integrity of the country, as well as in the defense of human and national dignity in the face of an unconstitutional regime⁴⁶³. A further argument to underline the importance of Ilie Ilașcu and his group in the post-Soviet history of the Republic of Moldova is their recognition and honoring by the Romanian state. On July 3, Romanian President Traian Băsescu decorated Andrei Ivanțoc, Alexandru Leșco and Tudor Petrov Popa with the National Order “Romania’s Star” in the rank of Knight. This gesture underlines not only the gratitude for their heroism and sacrifice, but also the deep connection they have with the Romanian cultural and historical vein. Mr. Băsescu underlined that although there are state borders between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, there are values and ties that cannot be delimited by them, such as love of country and common cultural roots. The Romanian President said at the time:

“There are people who, beyond their love for the Romanian vein of their country, their love for the Romanian people, their love for Romanians, have, in days of peace, in the mother country, dug out pages of history for a country that was once part of Romania”⁴⁶⁴.

With these distinctions, the three, together with Ilie Ilașcu, become living symbols of the struggle for national identity and sovereignty, illustrating the Romanian resistance in Bessarabia and its influence in defining the contemporary history of the Republic of Moldova.

⁴⁶² „La începutul mileniului III ne aflăm în fața unui caz unic pe continentul european: patriotul Ilie Ilașcu, condamnat pe nedrept pentru «crima» de a fi luptat pentru apărarea independenței și unității țării sale, nominalizat în 1996 la Premiul Nobel pentru pace, ales de două ori, în mod democratic, deputat al Parlamentului Republicii Moldova în două legislaturi succesive, în cadrul unor alegeri monitorizate de Organizația pentru Securitate și Cooperare în Europa și de alte organizații europene, nu și-a putut exercita mandatul de ales al poporului, deoarece continuă să se afle întemnițat în închisorile transnistrene.”, in ***, „Declarație-Apel

a Senatului României cu privire la grupul Ilașcu” [“Declaration-Appeal of the Romanian Senate on the Ilașcu group of April 17, 2001”], in *Deputies Chamber*, n.d., Available at: https://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?id=27107, Accessed on July 21, 2024.

⁴⁶³ Jurnalul Newsroom, „Decorații pentru «grupul Ilașcu»” [“Decorations for the ‘Ilașcu group’”], in *Jurnalul*, August 2, 2010, Available at: <https://jurnalul.ro/stiri/externe/decoratii-pentru-grupul-ilascu551008.html>, Accessed on July 21, 2024.

⁴⁶⁴ „Sunt oameni care, dincolo de dragostea față de filonul românesc al țării lor, de dragostea pentru poporul român, de dragostea pentru români au săpat, în zile de pace, în patria mamă, file de istorie pentru o țară care cândva a fost parte a României”, in IPN Newsroom, „Trei foști deținuți din grupul Ilașcu au fost decorați cu Ordinul «Steaua României»” [“Three ex-prisoners from the Ilașcu group were decorated with the Order of the ‘Star of Romania’”], in *IPS*, July 7, 2007, Available at: https://www.ipn.md/ro/treifostidetinutidingrupul-ilascuafostdecoraticu7965_965451.html, Accessed on July 21, 2024.

As a result, for his suffering in prison, for the dignity with which he defended himself during the trial and for his courage to face the separatist regime in Tiraspol, Ilie Ilașcu remains an emblematic figure of the Romanian resistance in Transnistria and a relevant figure in the post-Soviet history of the Bessarabian Romanians. Through his tireless fight for human rights and for the integrity of the Republic of Moldova, Ilașcu demonstrated devotion and a spirit of sacrifice during an extremely difficult period in the Transnistrian region. His arrest and trial highlighted the abuses and injustices committed by the separatist regime, as well as the vulnerability of civil society in a period of political transition. Although he went through enormous suffering, Ilașcu remained true to his ideals, becoming a symbol of the dignity and resistance of the Romanian nation.

ANNEX – INTERVIEW

Taken on 26.06.2020 from Mr. Alexandru Leșco, member of the Ilașcu Group, detained, convicted and imprisoned in the separatist region of Transnistria.

1) What was the atmosphere like in Transnistria before the war on the Dniester?

Very tense. On March 2, 1992, the Dubăsari police station was attacked by Cossack units. The roads were blocked, militiamen and armed Cossacks were stationed everywhere. So-called protest rallies against Moldova were held daily. The railroad to Chisinau and Odessa was blocked.

2) What was your activity before the arrest of the Ilașcu group?

We were members of the Tiraspol city organization of the People's Front of Moldova. We used to hold our own meetings, participate in separatists' rallies, distribute flyers, explain to people that what was happening in Chișinău was not against them. In Tiraspol, Russian propaganda scared people with the danger of unification with Romania and enslavement of the Russian-speaking population, that is all kinds of nonsense. That's too much we couldn't afford.

3) How were Romanians treated by the Tiraspol authorities in the past and has anything changed now?

From bad to worse. And until the conflict in 1992, the Romanians were not well regarded on the left bank of the Dniester, let alone after it started, the situation became even more precarious. The Russian propaganda was working at full capacity, scaring people with the arrival of gendarmes and security over them. If Romanians come, they told them, then goodbye to the Russian language and your future is slavery. You can imagine how dangerous it was to speak Romanian in the street.

4) How was the trial in which you were convicted, do you feel that your defense was considered in any way?

The so-called trial lasted from June 1992 to December 1993, i.e., a year and a half, depending on the evolution of events in Moscow. The hall, where the so-called court sessions were held, was a well-guarded bastion. Snipers were posted on the roofs of all the nearby blocks. Our wives called lawyers from the country and from Chisinau. They attended the first few sessions and then they didn't show up. They didn't have to, because all their pleadings were rejected by the so-called judges right from the start. I insisted that we have the right to lawyers, and we received them ex officio, i.e., their own people in principle. There is a lot to say about the so-called trial, but I will limit myself to saying that even the lawyers that they provided, when the so-called sentence was pronounced, declared that we should all be released directly from the courtroom. In other words, everything was stitched up. But no one could do anything about it, and in my opinion, they didn't want to.

5) How were the people coming to the courtroom to watch the trial?

Behavior? Everything happened on command. Too few came alone to waste time. They brought them organized from different organizations and enterprises. On command they shouted, yelled, booed. Everything was well organized in advance. That's why the lawyers hired by our wives couldn't stand it any longer and withdrew.

6) Were you surprised by the sentence you were given?

No, I had neither doubts nor hopes that it would be otherwise. What was decided a long time before was accepted, and not in Tiraspol, but in Moscow. This was also said at the ECHR. In the Court's judgment, it is written in black and white that Russia is recognized as an aggressor in the conflict and that it is guilty of our arrest and sentencing.

7) How were you treated by the guards and military in custody and in prison?

I don't really like to remember all the things that I experienced there. In the atmosphere there I experienced many unpleasant things. As time went by, the unpleasant things became less, but not so much that we forgot all that was there. As I said at the beginning, there was everything, beatings, thirst, hunger, drugs and so on.

8) What would be your most dramatic experiences during the years you were imprisoned in Transnistria?

There were many, starting with my wife, who was chased out of Tiraspol within 24 hours, together with the other declared wives of the enemies of the people, and ending with the death of my father, whom I did not have the opportunity to spend his last journey. There were also some pleasant ones, such as Romania's consistent course towards NATO and the EU. As much as possible, we were following this development and we were very happy. We hoped that there would be changes in Chişinău too, but it was not to be...

9) Do you feel that the authorities in Chişinău have done everything in their power to get you released more quickly?

We always said that more could have been done, but probably what could have been done was done. With betrayals, with changes of governments, which did not go beyond Moscow's word, with a population that had fun in Chişinău, while people were dying on the Dniester, with artists who went to Tiraspol and made them party there, with businessmen from both sides of the Dniester, for whom money has no smell, it could not be otherwise. The good Lord was watching over us, we could have ended even worse.

10) What message do you have for Romanians on both sides of the Prut in the current context?

To the Romanians on both sides of the river, which still separates us, I wish you good health, prosperity, decent living, hope that in the near future we will be one COUNTRY!

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ROMANIAN DIASPORA OR THE EXILE OF TRANSITION WITHOUT FINALITY. CASE STUDY: THE ROMANIAN COMMUNITY IN SPAIN

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ABSTRACT

The Romanian exodus generically called “Romanian migration” represents one of the recent episodes of contemporary history and, at the same time, one of the most tragic in terms of the collective destiny of the Romanian nation. This material offers the reader a sociological perspective on how the essence of societal life and social will has been directed or removed from the natural boundaries of the state. The Romanian migration phenomenon is nothing more than a consequence of allowing too long a nation’s destiny to be taken care of by a superimposed elites. Explain how the superimposed elites affected, slowly but surely, the adaptability of Romanian society to the historical changes that came over our will. In order to draw attention and highlight the main problems, we will try to offer an autochthonous perspective of how the “superimposed elites” (Mihai Eminescu) affected the very essence of societal life, the “social will” (Dimitrie Gusti), a fact that created at the national level a major “imbalance”, understood from the perspective of the “law of sociological parallelism” (Dimitrie Gusti). In an apparently negative perspective, we would like to mention that this phenomenon is, at the same time, part of a process typical of a “heroic culture” (Ilie Bădescu), whose outcome, without a sovereign autochthonous elite, is known only to divine providence.

Keywords: superimposed elites, nation, will, imbalance, diaspora, sovereignty.

I. THE LAW OF SOCIOLOGICAL PARALLELISM

Looking at society as a whole, at first glance, we can say that it is made up of a number of individuals living together, but from a sociological point of view, a question arises: can society be reduced to the number of individuals or is it a synthesis of its component elements? What keeps people together?

II. SOCIETY – AN EXERCISE OF WILLPOWER

Society, regardless of its degree of complexity, is not made up of a single element but always of several factors such as

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“a number of individuals, a series of relationships between them, an organizing principle or structure, etc.”⁴⁶⁶.

This explains why each part of society depends on the other parts to a greater or lesser extent and why each part contributes to the equilibrium of the whole (society) as a whole. If one or more parts of the whole choose to stop contributing to this equilibrium relationship, an imbalance inevitably arises that affects all parts of the whole, an imbalance known today as a crisis.

Dimitrie Gusti responded to this challenge in a manner worthy of the creative powers of the Romanian soul by creating what is known as the law of sociological parallelism. This law was intended to clarify the distinction between frameworks and manifestations, that is, to clarify the distinction between social phenomena and the factors that condition them. Sociological parallelism implies a clear distinction and correlation between the elements that contribute to social equilibrium. In other words, society presupposes the following:

“(…) individuals who live together, that is to say, individuals who have a number of relationships with one another, who are jointly subject to a principle of organization and who are subject to rules that transcend them and often to institutions which precede them (…)”⁴⁶⁷.

In turn, each society has a structure that is voluntarily created by its component social units, which can be defined as

“those associations of individuals bound by objective relations through a principle of organization”⁴⁶⁸.

The voluntary nature of social units is specific to human societies because although they are simple, they have certain ways in which individuals manifest themselves⁴⁶⁹ which implies that any unit pursues “certain ends and employs certain means”⁴⁷⁰. What gives human society its distinctiveness from its environment is social will, and this is why it should be considered *the essence of social life*⁴⁷¹.

i. Societal frameworks and manifestations

The key to interpreting social reality lies in the ability to explain the reciprocal correlation between frames and manifestations. Dimitrie Gusti summarizes societal reality as follows:

“(…) the autonomous totality of individuals, living together and carrying out as manifestations of will an economic and spiritual activity, ethically and legally

⁴⁶⁶ „un număr oarecare de indivizi, o serie de relații între aceștia, un principiu de organizare sau o structură etc.” in Dimitrie Gusti, „Paralelismul Sociologic” [“Sociologic Paralellism”] in *Romanian Sociology Journal*, Year II, No. 9–10, September–October 1937, p. 379, Available at: https://sas.unibuc.ro/storage/downloads/Teorii%20sociologice%20generale-8/DG37c.PARALELIS_SOCIOL.pdf, Accessed on 15 September 2024.

⁴⁶⁷ „(…) indivizi care trăiesc împreună, așadar indivizi care duc o seamă de relații unii cu alții, care se supun în comun unui principiu de organizare și care se supun unor norme care îi transcend și de cele mai multe ori unor instituții care îi preced (…)", in *Ibidem*, p. 380.

⁴⁶⁸ „acele asociații de indivizi legați prin relații obiective printr-un principiu de organizare”, in *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷⁰ „anumite scopuri și întrebuițează anumite mijloace.”, in *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

regulated and organized politico-administratively, conditioned by the cosmic, biological, psychological and historical framework⁴⁷².

ii. Societal disequilibrium

The entire spectrum of possible manifestations constitutes the totality “life manifestations”⁴⁷³ of any social unit because they “they all develop and determine in parallel”⁴⁷⁴. Regardless of the state of equilibrium – static or dynamic – no society can give up any one of the four manifestations, nor can it overdevelop or focus excessively or pay particular attention to any manifestation. The risk, Gusti warns, is the inevitable creation of an imbalance that, in turn, will inevitably lead to the destruction or even disappearance of society.

When social manifestations are alien to their frameworks or when the frameworks change and no longer support social manifestations, import by imitation of economic and spiritual manifestations totally alien to a country’s geographical environment and historical past leads to major disequilibrium.

“Human society is simultaneously influenced by cosmological, biological, psychological, and historical frameworks, without being able to do without any of them, except at the price of disequilibrium”⁴⁷⁵.

This theory is not only of theoretical value but can also be applied in practice to provide a society with its political elites with a summary of how equilibrium can be restored or to prevent the creation of imbalances with permanent effects.

iii. Superimposed elites – a factor of social imbalance

Groups that create or merely borrow the social form in response to the actions of the internal and external environment are called *elites*⁴⁷⁶. The role of elites is fundamental because they can transform their potential into manifestation and thus contribute to the well-being of the society they serve. If elites are worthy of uplifting the society for which they care, they can also plunge it into a major imbalance that can affect the entire system of societal relations. The critical importance of some indigenous elites is emphasized in Mihai Eminescu’s prose when he addresses the issue of the superimposed elite.

“Our intellectual world has not had sufficient power to define the mission of the Romanian nation at the height of the vitality and possibilities of the Romanians. In its migrations, our nation has drawn much wider borders than those claimed by intellectuals and politicians”⁴⁷⁷.

⁴⁷² „(...) totalitatea autonomă a indivizilor, ce trăiesc laolaltă și depun ca manifestări de voință o activitate economică și una spirituală, reglementate etico-juridic și organizate politico-administrativ, condiționate de cadrul cosmic, cadrul biologic, cadrul psihic și cadrul istoric”, in *Ibidem*, p. 382.

⁴⁷³ „manifestărilor de viață”, in *Ibidem*, p. 383.

⁴⁷⁴ „se dezvoltă și se determină toate, în paralel”, in *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷⁵ „Societatea omenească este înrăuită în același timp de cadrele cosmologic, biologic, psihic și istoric, fără să se poată lipsi de vreunul din ele, decât cu prețul unui dezechilibru.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 384.

⁴⁷⁶ Ilie Bădescu, *Sincronism European și cultură critică românească [European synchronism and Romanian critical culture]*, Bucharest, 2002, p. 12.

⁴⁷⁷ „Lumea noastră intelectuală nu a avut o suficientă putere de definire a misiunii neamului românesc la înălțimea vitalității și posibilităților poporului român. În migrațiunile lui, neamul nostru a trasat hotare mult mai largi decât cele revendicate de intelectuali și de oameni politici.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 299.

Social disequilibrium is not a phenomenon that occurs by itself, without providing predictability before it happens and without someone creating the necessary conditions for its creation, as it is a natural reaction of any social unit to “self-preserve” itself. So, we are reminded of what Mihai Eminescu warned us of, the danger of creating “superimposed” elites, the only ones capable and guilty at the same time of degrading Romanian society and pushing the destinies of millions of people outside the borders of the Romanian state:

“(…) a totally unproductive class, which has learned nothing, worked nothing, and had nothing, and which has become the master of those who have learned, of those who have possessions, of those who work”⁴⁷⁸.

In our history, therefore, there have been permanent social struggles between indigenous peoples and those coming from the provinces of great economic powers. Therefore, the constitution of the parasite class cannot be strictly endogenously understood but can be understood in terms of a “dynamism from outside”⁴⁷⁹ a struggle between indigenous and foreign elements, which are influenced by the dynamics of the major economic powers⁴⁸⁰. It is therefore possible to explain how a demagogic state is the perfect place where it can emerge

“a class of politicians, of patriots by trade, with no background, no traditions, who make politics a speculation, a means of livelihood”⁴⁸¹.

This creates an imbalance between native and immigrant social classes, and the worst scenario is that the foreign element dominates the native element.

In light of Romania’s transition from communism to democracy, the 35 years clearly show that the “elites” were not able to manage autochthonous potential but only meticulously directed it from the periphery of the Soviet economic system to the periphery of the Western capitalist system.

III. ROMANIANS IN SPAIN – TRIGGERS OF HEROIC WILL

i. Historic chance to reconquer Romanian capital

From an honest perspective, the diaspora phenomenon can be viewed as a heroic precursor to the movement to relocate Romanian capital within its natural borders. We emphasize heroic values because Romanians who “chose” the path of emigration are people who can easily fit into the typology of heroic culture:

“Heroic culture is the defining characteristic of generations and personalities who give enormously and expect nothing in return. Creative processes have complete sovereignty in these people. Nothing guides people to creative behavior, nothing

⁴⁷⁸ „(…) o clasă cu totul improductivă, care n-a învățat nimic, n-a muncit nimic, și n-a avut nimic și care a ajuns stăpână pe cei ce au învățat, pe cei ce au, pe cei ce muncesc”, in *Ibidem*, p. 115.

⁴⁷⁹ „dynamism din exterior”, in *Ibidem*, p. 338.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸¹ „o clasă de politicieni, de patrioți de meserie, fără trecut, fără tradiții, cari fac din politică o speculă, un mijloc de traiu”, in *Ibidem*.

sustains them; only the voice of their innermost soul is listened to and followed without delay and without any calculation. The prototype of this behavior is apostolic holiness. A man of heroic culture emerges in the life of the nation from the eternally illumined mystery of the Holy Apostles⁴⁸².

From this perspective, what Dimitrie Gusti said at a conference on societal imbalance takes on a completely different light when he stated two fundamental things:

– Economic and spiritual manifestations are the very substance of social unity; without them, life cannot exist⁴⁸³;

– Whenever a society neglects spiritual factors in favor of others, it induces a state of imbalance that can hardly be redressed. The risk is existential, and the social unit disappears⁴⁸⁴.

In this way, the phenomenon of emigration after the change of the communist regime can be summarized as a movement of divine providence, which has as a long-term objective the fixation of Romanian capital within the borders of the Romanian state.

ii. Spain – an area of social reintegration

a) Biological framework

Statistically speaking, the phenomenon of emigration began to take on exaggerated proportions, starting in 2000 and ending in 2016, when there was an increase of over 200% of Romanians who chose this path⁴⁸⁵. On a time, axis, the period 2007 – 2008, the economic crisis, was the peak of this contemporary phenomenon worldwide, becoming the second largest diaspora country in the world after China⁴⁸⁶. On the axis of dominant gender, feminine gender has made a major contribution to increasing the number of emigrants from Romania since 2016⁴⁸⁷.

Romanians constitute the largest foreign community in Spain, topping the one million mark, with an average age of 38 and a 47% female population. The most effervescent episode was the period between 2000 and 2007, when the population of Spain grew from 17.500 to approximately 200.000 people, representing a 1000% growth rate⁴⁸⁸.

⁴⁸² „Cultura eroică este definitorie pentru generațiile și personalitățile care dăruiesc enorm și nu așteaptă nimic în compensație. Procesele creatoare au, la acești oameni, o suveranitate deplină. Nimic nu-i îndrumă spre conduita creatoare, nimic material nu-i susține, singură vocea adâncului lor sufletesc e ascultată și urmată fără întârziere și fără de nici un calcul. Prototipul acestei conduite este sfințenia apostolică. Omul culturii eroice se ivește în viața neamului din zarea de taină în veci luminată a Sfinților Apostoli.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 219.

⁴⁸³ „Manifestările economice și spirituale sunt de natură substanțială în sensul că ele constituie însăși viața socială (...)”, in *Ibidem*, p. 381.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 383.

⁴⁸⁵ OECD, *Talent Abroad: A Review of Romanian Emigrants, Talent Abroad*, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2019, p. 29, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/bac53150-en>, Accessed on 15 September 2024.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 75.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

If, before 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1 million Romanians lived in Spain⁴⁸⁹, in 2024, there would have been approximately 600.000⁴⁹⁰.

b) Psychological framework

Romanians in Spain are well integrated in their adoptive communities and are appreciated as domestic, modest, eager to help their neighbors, and eager to add value to the society in which they live. Their return to their home country could be supplemented or encouraged by fiscal measures adapted to their real needs⁴⁹¹. All this is nothing but the pure manifestations of a soul that is not at all emphasized. Moreover, this proves that the creative abilities of Romanians are still valid, but they must have a favorable framework for manifestation that is not oriented toward “suffocating” these abilities.

c) Economic manifestations

Approximately 80% of those who arrived in Spain were unemployed when they left the country, and upon arrival in Spain, they cited finding a job as their main reason for leaving the country⁴⁹². From another perspective, Romanians represented the second largest community of professionals registered as PFA in Spain (after the Chinese community), with approx. 45.000 people (more than 11% of the total foreign PFA in Spain)⁴⁹³.

Moreover, the fact that they strongly want to obtain Spanish citizenship to secure a stable job in the local/central administration, to ensure a pension 5 times higher than that in Romania, proves that the desire, not understood by the government in Bucharest, is to be appreciated for their work at its true value⁴⁹⁴.

⁴⁸⁹ R.C., „INTERVIU Peste un milion de români trăiesc în Spania” [“INTERVIEW Over one million Romanians live in Spain”], in *Cotidianul*, January 22, 2023, Available at: <https://www.cotidianul.ro/peste-un-milion-de-romani-traiesc-in-spania/>, Accessed on September 15, 2024

⁴⁹⁰ Romanian Embassy in Kingdom of Spain, „Comunitatea românească” [“Romanian community”], in *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, n.d., Available at: <https://madrid.mae.ro/node/769>, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

⁴⁹¹ R.C., „INTERVIU Peste un milion de români trăiesc în Spania” [“INTERVIEW Over one million Romanians live in Spain”], in *Cotidianul*, January 22, 2023, Available at: <https://www.cotidianul.ro/peste-un-milion-de-romani-traiesc-in-spania/>, Accessed on September 15, 2024

⁴⁹² OECD, *Talent Abroad: A Review of Romanian Emigrants, Talent Abroad*, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2019, p. 50, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/bac53150-en>, Accessed on 15 September 2024.

⁴⁹³ Diana Mereșan, „Câți români mai sunt în Spania? Autoritățile iberice oferă cifre diferite despre mărimea diasporei românești” [“How many Romanians are there in Spain? The Iberian authorities provide different figures on the size of the Romanian diaspora”], in *Libertatea*, February 2, 2022, Available at: <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/cati-romani-mai-sunt-in-spania-autoritatile-iberice-ofera-cifre-diferite-despremarimeadiasporei-romanesti-3958479>, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

⁴⁹⁴ The minimum pension in Romania is worth 1281 lei (257.55 Euros) unlike the minimum pension in Spain worth 5000 lei (1000 euros), in Georgi Baciu, „Schimbări majore privind pensiile în Spania: o nouă vârstă de pensionare și mai mulți bani” [“Major pension changes in Spain: a new retirement age and more money”], in *Ziarul Românesc*, April 19, 2023, Available at: <https://ziarulromanesc.es/viatainspania/pensiile-in-spania-in-2023-majorare-pensii-varsta-depensionare/>, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

If we look at the comparative contribution to the country's GDP, we see that in 2021 alone, Romanians in Spain sent about 2 billion dollars to the country, and when added to remittances from Italy and Germany, they are worth 3,21% of Romania's GDP in 2021⁴⁹⁵. However, we realize this huge effort of will as soon as we look at the big picture, so we can see that the economic strength of the diaspora is one of the basic pillars of the Romanian economy, an economy based on consumption. We asked ourselves rhetorically: if there is no industry in the country, what do we consume? The money sent by the diaspora to the country! An analysis of economic data from the national press shows that the diaspora is the largest domestic investor in Romania, recording remittances worth 11 billion euros in 2022, making it the third most important source of revenue for the national budget, after European funds and foreign investments⁴⁹⁶.

We are witnessing a cunning accounting "error": the money sent by the diaspora is taxed twice, once at source and once in the country through the payment of 19% VAT on the consumption of products and services in the country. Not only has the emigration of Romanians abroad been encouraged, but this means that recipients are left with approximately €9 billion, and the difference of €2 billion goes "free of charge" into the state treasury without politicians offering anything significant in return to Romanians who have fled to foreign countries⁴⁹⁷. In order to underscore the fracture of Romanian sentiment that the entire political class in Romania is experiencing, we have to say that neither the IT sector (which accounted for 8% of GDP, €9 billion, in 2022⁴⁹⁸) nor the construction and real estate transactions sector (which accounted for 8% of GDP, €7 billion, in 2023⁴⁹⁹) is

⁴⁹⁵ Alina Mătiș, „Diaspora, investitorul nostru. Câți bani trimit acasă românii de peste granițe și de unde vin cei mai mulți” [“Diaspora, our investor. How much money do Romanians send home from across the borders and where do most come from?”], in *Panorama*, Available at: <https://panorama.ro/diaspora-investitorul-nostru-cati-bani-vin-in-tara-de-la-romanii-din-diaspora-si-de-unde-sunt-trimisi-cei-mai-multi/>, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

⁴⁹⁶ Leonard Bădilă, „Nicolae Ciucă: Cel mai mare investitor, de altfel, în România știi cine este? Diaspora” [“Nicolae Ciucă: Do you know who is the biggest investor, by the way, in Romania? Romanian diaspora”], in *Capital*, May 27, 2024, Available at: <https://www.capital.ro/nicolae-ciuca-cel-mai-mare-investitor-dealtfelinromaniastiiicineestediadspora.html>, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

⁴⁹⁷ Even the former President of Romania, Traian Băsescu, said in an interview „Let's not make a drama out of the fact that we are leaving. Romania's biggest objective was to liberalize the labor force (...)”, in *Adevărul* Newsroom „Băsescu: Să nu mai facem o dramă din faptul că românii pleacă să muncească în afara țării” [“Băsescu: Let's stop making a drama out of the fact that Romanians go to work abroad”], in *Adevărul*, August 5, 2010, Available at: <https://adevarul.ro/stiriinterne/societate/basescu-sa-nu-mai-facem-o-drama-din-faptul-ca-1100447.html>, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

⁴⁹⁸ Lidia Neagu, „Piața IT din România produce 7% din PIB și a depășit valoarea de 9 miliarde de euro – studiu ANIS” [“The IT market in Romania produces 7% of GDP and exceeded the value of 9 billion euros ANIS study”], in *Economica*, November 9, 2022, Available at: https://www.economica.net/piata-it-dinromaniaproduce7dinpibsiadepasitvaloarea-de-9-miliarde-de-euro-studiu-anis_625544.html, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

⁴⁹⁹ Stelian Dinca, „IG: Construcțiile și tranzacțiile imobiliare au generat 16% din PIB în ultimul deceniu” [“IG: Construction and real estate transactions generated 16% of GDP in the last decade”], in *Agenda Construcțiilor*, September 27, 2023, Available at: <https://www.agendaconstrucțiilor.ro/files/actualitateainterna/igconstrucțiileșitransacțiileimobiliare-au-generat-16-din-pib-in-ultimul-deceniu.html>, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

carrying the brunt of the economy but the backs and knees and tears of those who have left for the hardest jobs: fruit picking, construction, elderly care, etc. – which not everyone would be able to do.

IV. CONCLUSION – THE IMPERATIVE OF AN ELITE TO CARE FOR THE ROMANIAN SOUL

At present, the political environment wants to feign interest in the Romanian community in Spain, but it should not be forgotten that the first step toward maintaining Romanian citizenship by granting dual citizenship was 15 years after Romania's integration into the European Union⁵⁰⁰. This shows that the Romanian government does not fully understand the purpose and benefits of EU membership, and the disinterest in Romanians who are already deprived of many rights is alarmingly high.

At a historical turning point, August 1917, in Răcăciuni, King Ferdinand promised the brave Romanian soldiers

“(…) the right to control to a greater extent the land for which you fought (…)”⁵⁰¹

here it is that more than 100 years later since the Great Union, the Romanians find themselves captive to the challenges of the new economic empires, being driven from their native lands by a crisis artificially created by an elite that serves more of the interest of other economic forces to the detriment of the local ones. Thus, if at the time of 1917 we found ourselves together in the face of foreign danger, guided by a leader concerned with the fate of the Romanians, at a distance of a little over 100 years we find ourselves scattered and without a leader in front of other forces equally dangerous for the being national like those of 1917, but this time, the front was in the economic realm. Only alongside and together with the effort of these millions of people who let themselves be guided by the unspoken thought of divine providence and created a national movement to regain economic sovereignty, a strong and wise leader can create a second moment like the one in Mărășești from the summer of 1917, but this time in the economic field.

Impoverished by the economic component, in the midst of an uncertain process toward Western values, the Romanians could not helplessly witness the degradation of the last vital element of society – the spiritual part – and they risked everything,

⁵⁰⁰ R.C., „INTERVIU Peste un milion de români trăiesc în Spania” [“INTERVIEW Over one million Romanians live in Spain”, in *Cotidianul*, January 22, 2023, Available at: <https://www.cotidianul.ro/peste-un-milion-de-romani-traiesc-in-spania/>, Accessed on September 15, 2024

⁵⁰¹ „(…) dreptul la a stăpâni într-o măsură mai largă pământul pentru care v-ați luptat (…)", in Cosmin Roman, „105 ani de la discursul regelui Ferdinand I la Răcăciuni” [“105 years since King Ferdinand I's speech at Răcăciuni”], in *Academia Forțelor Terestre „Nicolae Bălcescu”* din Sibiu, March 3, 2023, Available at: https://www.armyacademy.ro/ev_2022_03_23.php, Accessed on September 15, 2024.

guided only by the hope for a better future and the fact that God would not abandon them. Such a historical gesture, which can be categorized as a sign of the fulfillment of a historical mission of the country in a moment of balance, must be answered by a political class capable of knowing, caring for, and raising the Romanian soul to its dignity as a divine creation and co-participant in the entire creative process at the level of universal culture.

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ESSAYS

ROMANIAN ROLE MODELS FOR TODAY'S YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

Today's generation faces major identity problems. The problem of identity is generated by the existence of dysfunctions in the socialization process of young adults, a process based on following role models. The essay addresses the problem by offering today's young adults role models from the past (Mircea Eliade, Mircea Vulcănescu and St. Hesychius of Sinai) and present history of Romania and beyond (Academician Ioan Aurel Pop, President of the Romanian Academy). Mircea Eliade urges young people to be authentic at the price of being ridiculous, Mircea Vulcănescu encourages them to pursue a common social goal (the unification of the soul of the nation), while the president of the Romanian Academy is a model of an intellectual whose cognitive abilities are harmoniously intertwined with moral ones.

Keywords: generation, identity, Romanian personalities, Mircea Eliade, Mircea Vulcănescu.

YOUNG ADULTS IN THE WORKS OF MIRCEA ELIADE, MIRCEA VULCĂNESCU AND ST. HESYCHIUS OF SINAI

We all acknowledge that we, today's generation of young adults, are not what we should be, even though we have plenty of role models. One of these is Mircea Eliade, the great historian of religions. From his work – Oceanography – we reproduce some of the traits of what a young adult should be.

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To begin with, the young man had to let life vibrate within him, even at the risk of appearing ridiculous to others. After all, we really start to live around the age of 40, whereas until then we imitate.

“The ridiculous alone deserves to be imitated. For only by imitating the ridiculous do we imitate life; for there lies its full sincerity, and not its ideas and conventions – which are aspects of death. And death, thank God, we find enough in ourselves”⁵⁰⁷.

“You don’t really start living until you’re forty. Until then, you live only in gestures, in intentions, in longing for the future and remembering the past”⁵⁰⁸.

Secondly, not to fall into the automatic habits of modern life. To live, not to be lived by life:

“Superstitions are not to be sought only in that which seems obscure to us; superstitious are the very basic acts of our spiritual life. That is, they are part of an automatism in which we never try to intervene; we do them out of fear or out of habit, we believe in the reality of the for without investigating it, we neither try to overcome nor modify it; in a word, we are the living of life, we do not live life; and the perfect superstition is precisely the complete abdication of all autonomy, of all arbitrariness, of all freedom”⁵⁰⁹.

Third, receive the wisdom that occurs in the small moments, not the “big ones”:
“How many of us do not wait all our lives for an event, a man, an experience – through which we glimpse a break in the iron circle that keeps us built in ourselves and only in ourselves, through which we envision a new life, a true joy – and when that encounter or that man appears, we turn in with all the strength of our instinct, we refuse, we neutralize, we turn back to the mineral”⁵¹⁰.

Fourthly, to get out of the nonsense of everyday life by being aware of himself and his place in the world:

“This is what ridiculousness is all about: living your own life; naked, immediate, refusing superstitions, conventions and dogmas. The more personal we are, the more identified we are with our intentions, the more perfectly our deeds coincide with our thoughts”⁵¹¹.

⁵⁰⁷ „Ridiculul singur merită să fie imitat. Căci numai imitând ridiculul imităm viața; deoarece acolo se ascunde sinceritatea ei deplină, iar nu ideile și convențiile ei – cari sunt aspecte ale morții. Și moarte, slavă Domnului, găsim destulă și în noi.”, in Mircea Eliade, *Oceanography [Oceanografie]*, Bucharest, People’s Culture Publishing House, 1934, p. 28.

⁵⁰⁸ „Nu începi să trăiești real decât în jurul vârstei de patruzeci de ani. Până atunci, nu trăiești decât în gesturi, în intenții, în nostalgia viitorului și amintirea trecutului”, in *Ibidem*, p. 163.

⁵⁰⁹ „Superstițiile nu trebuie căutate numai în ceea ce ni se pare nouă obscur; superstițioase sunt însăși actele de bază ale vieții noastre sufletești. Participă adică la un automatism în care nu încercăm niciodată să intervenim; le facem din teamă sau din obișnuință, credem în realitatea lor fără să o cercetăm, nu încercăm nici să le depășim nici să le modificăm; într-un cuvânt suntem trăiți de viață, nu trăim noi viața; și superstiția perfectă este tocmai completa abdicare la orice autonomie, la orice arbitraj, la orice libertate”, in *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁵¹⁰ „Câți dintre noi nu așteptăm o viață întreagă un eveniment, un om, o cunoaștere – prin care întrevădem o spargere a cercului de fier ce ne ține zidiți în noi și numai în noi, prin care ghicim o viață nouă, o bucurie adevărată – iar când acea întâmplare sau acel om se ivește, ne închircim cu toate puterile instinctului nostru, ne refuzăm, ne neutralizăm, ne reîntoarcem la mineral.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 31.

⁵¹¹ „Căci la aceasta se rezumă ridiculul: la trăirea vieții tale proprii; nude, imediate, refuzându-te superstițiilor, convențiilor și dogmelor. Cu cât suntem mai personali, mai identificați cu intențiile noastre, cu cât fapta noastră coincide mai perfect cu gândul nostru.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 26.

Fifth, Mircea Eliade praises the loss of time. The loss of time appears to be a time of rediscovery, of gathering, of contemplation, and self-knowledge, not of idleness or of distractions that take us away from ourselves. We turn to distractions because we are afraid to face ourselves. Our conscience would sting, and the snowflake can't stand the pain.

A distinction needs to be made between the loss of time in general and the loss of meaningful time. Taking the former in Eliade's terms, in which time stands weighed by the arrows flowing on the clock, I place it in opposition to the latter. Meaningful time is not divided in the calendar, but between the Liturgies, it is our occasion of elevation, related to history (whence the pressing urgencies) but also above it. Wasting meaningful time is unforgivable because it is downright idleness, and wasting time is sometimes necessary.

So, let us live the "times" we are given, without wasting them in spirit-killing comforts.

In addition to the qualities desired by Mircea Eliade for the young adult, St. Isychios the Sinaite would say that a young man should always be in a state of watchfulness. But what exactly is watchfulness?

"Watchfulness is the way of all virtue and the commandment of God. It is also known as calming the heart. It is also the guard of the mind, being perfected to the point of being emptied of all delusion"⁵¹².

"Watchfulness is the fixing of the thought firmly and placing it in the inner gate of the heart, so that it may watch the coming thieving thoughts and listen to what the murderers say and do (...)"⁵¹³.

Therefore

"watchfulness is the struggle of the mind for the peace of the heart"⁵¹⁴.

Mircea Eliade represents the voice of those Romanians who felt and manifested the Romanian spirit. They urge today's generations to stop living through "the tragedies of other nations".

Whether it's a complex, lack of knowledge, ignorance, is obvious that young adults are no longer connected with the Romanian tragedy.

If Mircea Vulcănescu said that we must aim for soul unification⁵¹⁵, this presupposes something more basic: the realization that the war of national

⁵¹² „Trezvia este calea a toată virtutea și porunca lui Dumnezeu. Ea e numită și liniștea inimii/isihia. Iar desăvârșită până la golirea de orice nălucire, e tot ea și pază a minții.”, in St. Hesychius of Sinai, Cuvânt despre trezvie și virtute (I, II) [“A word on watchfulness and virtue (I, II)”], in ***, *Filocalia [Philokalia]*, Vol. IV, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Orthodox Biblical and Missionary Institute, 2010, p. 56.

⁵¹³ „Trezvia este calea a toată virtutea și porunca lui Dumnezeu. Ea e numită și liniștea inimii/isihia. Iar desăvârșită până la golirea de orice nălucire, e tot ea și pază a minții.”, in *Ibidem*.

⁵¹⁴ „trezvia este războiul minții pentru pacea inimii”, in Radu Baltasiu, *Pentru o Românie unită în secolul XXI. Elementele unei posibile doctrine naționale. Economie, securitate, tineri și Biserică [Towards a united Romania in the 21st century. Elements of a possible national doctrine. Economy, security, youth and Church]*, Bucharest, Predania Publishing House, 2022, p. 74.

⁵¹⁵ See Mircea Vulcănescu, „Generație” [“Generation”], in *Criterion*, Year I, No. 2, pp. 3–4.

reunification, through which the “generation of fire” has passed, means a great deal for us, those of today. Just as the fire of battle cleansed the Romanian territories of the visible enemies of the nation, the spiritual fire that made possible the unhesitating sacrifice of Romanian heroes must cleanse the Romanian soul of all the tendencies that would take advantage of it.

We could say, in another way, to avoid having more corrupt people in a bigger Romania, and to have more Romanians (in living and feeling) in a Romania that is complete.

PRESIDENT OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY – AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY’S YOUNG ADULTS

Socialization, the harmonization of the individual with the model offered by society, can take place both by referring to a model from the past and to one from the present. If we have written above about Romanian and not only Romanian models of the past, we will discuss a present model of the person of acad. Ioan-Aurel Pop, president of the Romanian Academy, praised by the theologian Stelian Titus Gombos:

“We listened and watched yesterday, with much interest, with the same interest as always, the formidable and impeccable speech of the President of the Romanian Academy – Professor Ioan Aurel Pop, delivered in the Aula of the High Scientific Forum, on the occasion of the Anniversary Session dedicated to the National Day of the Romanian Language, celebrated, since 2013, every year, on August 31!

And, as every time, I met and met again the same elegant and distinguished gentleman, the same prominent personality, the same intellectual of the highest class, the same accomplished orator, the same prestigious professor, the same extremely attentive host, with the same noble and dignified air, the same impeccable appearance, the same princely attitude, the same masterly behavior, all in one and the same person: Professor and Academician Ioan Aurel Pop – whom God and our Centenary year has given us as the most beautiful and blessed gift offered to our Romanian nation, by placing his reign at the head of the Romanian Academy, in the year of grace 2018!

Yes, really, beyond all these and many other qualities or virtues of his, who is, in fact, for me Academician Ioan Aurel Pop?!

Beyond the career historian, the sturdy intellectual, the honest teacher, the correct leader, he is the calculated and well-mannered man, the true Christian, the convinced family man, the principled comrade, the kind, affable and highly educated gentleman, the impeccable speaker, the unmistakable communicator, the warm, sincere, noble, well-mannered and generous person, extremely polite and sociable, altruistic, supportive and empathetic!

In other words, Mr. Professor Ioan Aurel Pop has all the qualities or virtues of a public person, extremely involved, articulate and connected to (all) historical, political, economic, social, cultural, intellectual and community realities of the time, of the moment and (of) the society or community in which we all live and work!

More than that:

Academician Ioan Aurel Pop has a keen pedagogical, didactic and social awareness, a perception, a lucidity, a clear-vision and a panoramic or overall picture, both at macro and micro level, regarding the course of our society, human, Romanian and not only, extremely conclusive, eloquent and effective!

So, Mr. Professor Ioan Aurel Pop, whom I, for one, know, appreciate, admire, esteem and cherish since 2012, when he was our brilliant Rector at the prestigious 'Babes- Bolyai' University of Cluj-Napoca, has the intelligence, refinement, reason, vision, composure, wisdom and discernment of an undeniable leader, true, genuine and authentic, so necessary and, indeed, indispensable to our entire society, Romanian, cultural, educational, academic and civic, for which I personally wish him, very sincerely, to continue to have much success and blessed growth in all his rich activity, as well as in all his activities, actions, endeavors, achievements and his intellectual, cultural, academic and public projects, carried out for the good, real and undeniable, of us all! Amen!

May God watch over them and continue to help them in everything good and blessed! Amen!"⁵¹⁶.

⁵¹⁶ „Ascultam și vizionam ieri, cu mult interes, cu același interes ca, întotdeauna, discursul formidabil și impecabil al președintelui Academiei Române – domnul profesor Ioan-Aurel Pop, susținut în aula înaltului for științific, cu prilejul sesiunii aniversare dedicate Zilei Naționale a Limbii Române, sărbătorită, din 2013, în fiecare an, la data de 31 august!

Și, ca de fiecare dată, și acum, am întâlnit și regăsit același domn, elegant și distins, aceeași personalitate proeminentă, același intelectual de clasă superioară, același orator desăvârșit, același profesor prestigios, același amfitrion extrem de atent, cu același aer nobil și demn, cu aceeași ținută impecabilă, cu aceeași atitudine princiară, cu același comportament magistral, toate într-una și aceeași persoană: profesorul și academicianul Ioan-Aurel Pop pe care Dumnezeu și anul nostru centenar ni l-a dăruit ca drept cel mai frumos și binecuvântat cadou oferit națiunii noastre române, prin așezarea domniei sale în fruntea Academiei Române, în anul de grație 2018!

Da, chiar așa, dincolo de toate acestea și multe alte calități sau virtuți ale sale, cine este, de fapt, pentru mine academicianul Ioan-Aurel Pop?!

Dincolo de istoricul de carieră, de intelectualul robust, de profesorul onest, de liderul corect, el este omul calculat și cumpătat, creștinul mărturisitor, familistul convins, camaradul principalist, cavalerul amabil, afabil și foarte educat, comunicatorul impecabil, oratorul inconfundabil, persoana caldă, sinceră, nobiliară, manierată și generoasă, extrem de politicoasă și de sociabilă, de altruistă, de solidară și de empatică!

Altfel spus, domnul profesor Ioan-Aurel Pop are toate calitățile sau virtuțile unei persoane publice, extrem de implicată, de articulată și de conectată la (toate) realitățile istorice, politice, economice, sociale, culturale, intelectuale și comunitare, ale vremii, ale momentului și (ale) societății ori comunității în care trăim și ne desfășurăm activitatea cu toții!

Mai mult decât atât:

Domnul academician Ioan-Aurel Pop are un ascuțit simț pedagogic, didactic și social, o percepție, o luciditate, o clarviziune și o imagine, panoramică ori de ansamblu, atât la nivelul macro cât și micro, cu privire la mersul societății noastre, omenești, românești, și nu numai, extrem de concludente, elocvente și eficiente!

Așadar, domnul profesor Ioan-Aurel Pop, pe care eu, unul, îl cunosc, apreciez, admir, stimez și prețuiesc încă din anii 2012, atunci când era rectorul nostru strălucit la prestigioasa Universitate „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca, are inteligența, rafinamentul, rațiunea, viziunea, cumpătarea și înțelepciunea și discernământul unui incontestabil lider, adevărat, veritabil și autentic, atât de necesar și de-a dreptul indispensabil întregii noastre societăți românești, culturale, educative, universitare și civice, drept pentru care, personal îi doresc, la modul foarte sincer, să aibă parte, în continuare, de mult succes și de binecuvântat spor în toată bogata sa activitate, precum și în toate activitățile, acțiunile, demersurile, realizările și proiectele sale intelectuale, culturale, academice și publice, desfășurate pentru binele, real și incontestabil, al nostru, al tuturor! Amin!

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Dumnezeu să-i poarte de grijă și să-I ajute în continuare în tot lucru cel bun și binecuvântat! Amin!”, in Stelian Titus Gombos, „Academicianul Ioan Aurel Pop!” [“The Academician Ioan Aurel Pop!”], in *Facebook*, August 30, 2024, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/stelian.gombos/posts/pfbid0XFM1RJ48MSjr6iBxeHoAsRAPax4CQzcDu2LhPjDZmrH4iZhaGshSyMRdXDe4fdegl?rdid=ZLb2spWMupOUJaOY>, Accessed on September 2024.

BOOK REVIEWS

TESTIMONY TO THE ENDURING: CARPATHIAN SHEPHERDING, TRADITION AND CONTINUITY

Florentina Teacă⁵¹⁷

ABSTRACT

*This material is a review of the collective volume *Carpathian shepherding, tradition and continuity*, published by the Ethnologic Publishing House, Bucharest, in 2022, coordinated by Lucian David and Ionuț Semuc, with the collaboration of Ioana Baskerville, Iulian Vlad, Laura Jiga Iliescu. In its 450 pages, it brings together valuable contributions on all aspects of traditional shepherding (complex relationships between people, animals and ecosystems; rituals and social practices, animal care and husbandry, management of land, forests and water resources, and management of natural hazards, etc.) from almost all areas in Romania where transhumant pastoralism is found (what is surprising about transhumant pastoralism is the extremely small number of villages practicing it; they are all Transylvanian, spread over a relatively narrow area, starting from Brețcu and Covasna and extending along the Transylvanian Subcarpathians through Săcele, the Branului region, the Oltului and Mărginimea Sibiului, as far as the Hațeg region), in a context in which (at the time the book was published) the Carpathian transhumance, part of traditional pastoral life, was included in the National Inventory of Living Intangible Cultural Heritage, the first step towards inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.*

Keywords: shepherding, Carpathian transhumance, pastoral traditions.

CONTEXT OF THE BOOK

On March 30, 2022, 10 European countries, including Romania, have submitted to UNESCO the multinational dossier *Transhumance, the seasonal movement of herds*, to be inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The process of preparing the nomination dossier was coordinated by the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport, in collaboration with counterpart institutions in Albania, Andorra, Austria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Andorra, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy and Romania. This nomination is the extension of the *Transhumance element, the seasonal movement of herds along migratory routes in the Mediterranean area and the Alps*, inscribed in 2019 on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by Austria, Greece and Italy⁵¹⁸.

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⁵¹⁸ Ministry of Culture, „Comunicat de Presă – Dosarul multinațional «Transhumanța, strămutarea sezonieră a turmelor» depus la UNESCO” [“Press Release – The multinational dossier ‘Transhumance, seasonal herd displacement’ submitted to UNESCO”], in *Cultura*, March 30, 2022, Available at: <http://www.cultura.ro/dosarulmultinationaltranshumantastramutareasezoniera-turmelor-depus-launesco>, Accessed on June 18, 2024.

The submission of the application is the result of a close collaboration, started in 2020, between heritage experts, livestock professionals, communities bearing the element and associations of transhumant herders from the 10 countries, demonstrating once again that intangible heritage brings together, from local to international level, countries and communities, inspired by the common desire to promote and safeguard transhumance, the element shared by all involved.

The elaboration of the dossier at the national level was carried out through a sustained research, documentation and inventory of the element, coordinated by the National Commission for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the specialized scientific body under the Ministry of Culture. The working group was composed of members of the National Commission for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, researchers from the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore “Constantin Brăiloiu” and professors from the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest.

The field research, which demonstrated the current existence of active transhumance routes in various areas of our country, was carried out by PhD. Lucian David, senior researcher grade II at the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore “Constantin Brăiloiu” of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest and Prof. PhD. Iulian Vlad from the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Bucharest⁵¹⁹.

Until December 5, 2023, when *Transhumance, the seasonal displacement of herds*, was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, several volumes were produced, the result of documentation and research of the phenomenon, most of them written or coordinated by PhD. Lucian David.

This is also the case of the collective volume *The Carpathian Shepherds, tradition and continuity*, published by the Ethnologic Publishing House, Bucharest, in 2022, coordinated by Lucian David and Ionuț Semuc, with the collaboration of Ioana Baskerville, Iulian Vlad, Laura Jiga Iliescu. The work is opened by a *Foreword* signed by the academician Sabina Ispas, who considers that the synthesis offered by the collective volume *Carpathian Shepherding, Tradition and Continuity* is a valuable achievement, whose elaboration and printing, at this time, is absolutely necessary, emphasizing that

“shepherding has always occupied a prominent place in the concerns and cultural expressions generated by it, within the Romanian community”⁵²⁰

being assumed as an ethnic identity landmark.

⁵¹⁹ Ministry of Culture, „Transhumanța carpatică, parte a vieții pastorale tradiționale, în inventarul național al elementelor vii de patrimoniu cultural imaterial” [“Carpathian transhumance, part of traditional pastoral life, in the national inventory of living intangible cultural heritage”], in *Cultura*, October 23, 2020, Available at: <http://www.cultura.ro/transhumantacarpaticapartevietiipastoraletraditionaleinventarulnationalal-elementelor-vii>, Accessed on June 18, 2024.

⁵²⁰ „păstoritul a ocupat, totdeauna, un loc bine marcat în preocupările și în expresiile culturale generate de acesta, în cadrul comunității românești”, in Sabina Ispas, *Cuvânt înainte [Foreword]*, in Lucian David (coord.), *Păstoritul carpatic, tradiție și continuitate [The Carpathian Shepherding, Tradition and Continuity]*, Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2022, p. 10.

VOLUME CONTENT

Acad. Sabina Ispas appreciates that

“in order to establish a complete model of the Romanian identity it is necessary to take into account all the information provided by the numerous scholarly sources in which are analyzed: the position of pastoral activity in Romanian culture, the complex functions that the occupation fulfills and the results of its realization, the deep meanings expressed in the spiritual plane, the ritual values, the aesthetic ones and the perspectives of evolution with a higher value in the life of contemporary man and many other objectives to be thought for the strategies of the future”⁵²¹.

These are precisely the themes that the collective volume *Carpathian Shepherding, Tradition and Continuity* highlights in its 21 studies.

In the first of these, signed by Lucian David, entitled *Elemente de continuitate ale păstoritului carpatic [Elements of continuity of Carpathian shepherding]*, starting from the premise that ethnographic phenomena and processes have endured over the millennia even if they have not been recorded in writing, due to the fact that they have been experienced and transmitted by social memory from generation to generation, the author (one of the representatives of the “new generation”, which methodologically combines applied research with fundamental research) gives a comprehensive description of the Romanian pastoral landscape and its specific concepts: pastoral settlements, forage base, age of occupation. It also produces one of the most complex and well-developed pastoral typologies among those found in the specialized literature, identifying four types of pastoralism in Romania: local, pendulatory, transhumant (with several subtypes) and pastoral swarms. At the same time, he makes an inventory of the “sheep trails”, recalling all the attempts to map them made over the years by Romanian and foreign geographers and ethnographers. The section which focuses on *sustainable development models*, without which traditional shepherding will decline, is not without importance. It concludes that rural dwellers must be aware that the traditional micro-farm (individual farm) is part of the landscape and part of the cultural heritage; they can use it effectively to obtain income from dairy and meat products (from the family surplus), from agro-tourism, etc. The practice of shepherding must adapt to the new socio-economic and political times and must evolve from a millennia-old occupation into an agro-cultural phenomenon⁵²².

Anamaria Iuga, Cosmin Marius Ivascu, Alina-Sorina Biro are the authors of the study *Livestock and meadows. Relations of interdependence at the level of*

⁵²¹ „pentru a stabili un model complet al identității românești trebuie să se țină seama de toată informația pe care o furnizează numeroasele surse savante în care sunt analizate: poziția pe care o ocupă activitatea pastorală în cultura românească, funcțiile complexe pe care le îndeplinește îndeletnicirea și rezultatele realizării ei, sensurile profunde exprimate în plan spiritual, valorile rituale, cele estetice și perspectivele de evoluție cu valoare superioară în viața omului contemporan și multe alte obiective ce urmează a fi gândite pentru strategiile viitorului.”, in *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁵²² Lucian David (coord.), *Păstoritul carpatic, tradiție și continuitate [Carpathian Shepherding, Tradition and Continuity]*, Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2022, p. 46.

cultural landscapes in Romania, which emphasizes that in the (temporal and physical) path they follow, the two practices, shepherding and pasture management, are intertwined and are united in achieving the same goal: the welfare of people and animals⁵²³.

About *Aspects of Traditional Pastoralist Dress. From document to ethnographic object – structures and meanings*, Georgiana Onoiu speaks, based on the analysis of the questionnaires of folk costumes in the archives of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore “Constantin Brăiloiu”, on observations on some objects of folk costumes and textiles from the collections of the National Village Museum “Dimitrie Gusti”, as well as on the study of specialized works, focusing in particular on the Sibiu Margin, as a landmark area, highlighting the fact that the shepherds’ clothing brings to our attention symbols that are found in the communion of man with nature, with the cosmic space.

Ioana Baskerville is the author of the following study, *Transhumance as Intangible Cultural Heritage*, detailing the European mechanism for promoting intangible cultural heritage over time. Until now, shepherding as such has not been part of the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, but there are many other elements that are circumscribed to it, covering various aspects of this traditional occupation in many parts of the world⁵²⁴, with many elements illustrating socio-cultural, artistic or economic aspects of shepherding, such as music or traditional crafts, included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. At the time of the book’s publication, when the *Transhumance* dossier, *the seasonal movement of herds*, had not yet been inscribed on the Representative List, the author emphasized the need for legislative initiatives and multifunctional, integrated cultural-agricultural-ecological safeguard measures, which are all the more valid now, after the inscription. Otherwise,

“we risk losing the chance to preserve for future generations the reality of the ‘mioritic space’ and the transhumance routes”⁵²⁵.

A brief summary on the history of the national transhumant shepherding is provided by the study *Transhumance, an integral part of Romanian national pastoralism. Plurivalent occupational element, economic, ecological, social and cultural-identity*, signed by Iulian Vlad, Mirela (Stanciu) Cărătuș, Marius Laurian Maftei, all three university professors in the field of Agricultural Sciences, who draw attention to the vulnerability and risks of the current national transhumance, concluding that “modernism must miraculously combine with the archaic”⁵²⁶ to lead to sustainable development or the basis of a specific rural economy.

Alina Bojoga’s material, *Terminology of pastoral constructions in the south of the country*, analyzes in detail two lexical fields, *pastoral constructions* and *pastoral*

⁵²³ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

⁵²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

⁵²⁵ „riscăm să pierdem șansa de a păstra pentru generațiile viitoare realitatea «spațiului mioritic» și a drumurilor transhumației”, in *Ibidem*, p. 98.

⁵²⁶ „modernismul trebuie să se îmbine în mod miraculos cu arhaicul”, in *Ibidem*, p. 139.

objects, based on data provided by linguistic atlases, collections of dialect texts and glossaries. It reveals the richness of terminology, the plurisemantic nature of some words, the existence of a wealth of synonyms; a comparison with the southern Danubian dialects shows that shepherding was the basic occupation of the native population. The following study, *Pastoral terms inherited in the Aromanian dialect*, by Nicolae Saramandu and Manuela Novaci, is in the same line of thought. It analyzes the autochthonous lexicon (substratum) and the Latin lexicon (stratum) in the Romanian dialects from the perspective of linguistic geography by comparing them with Italian dialects and concludes that there is a remarkable continuity between Latin and Romance languages, which shows that shepherding is an ancient basic occupation of the Romance peoples. Through the Romanian shepherds from the north and south of the Danube, Latin pastoral terms were transmitted into Greek, Bulgarian, Slovenian, Serbian, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Ukrainian, and Hungarian. This shows that shepherding was a basic occupation of the Romanians, practiced in evolved forms, which imposed themselves on the peoples with whom Romanians came into contact⁵²⁷.

Daniela Băbu signs the material *A perspective on the representation of memory and remembrance. The lived and transmitted experience: childhood and the first transhumance as seen through the eyes of the last sheep herder of a family of Hungarians from Novaci, Gorj*. Starting from the premise that the recovery of memories, the subjective positions of the narrators in relation to the events experienced, both individually and collectively, can provide data of cultural interest about the social environment, family life, and how the present is perceived in relation to the past⁵²⁸, the author turns to the memories of her father, Gheorghe Băbu, wishing to discover the lesser known about “her own traditional culture”. Over the course of several years, she collected in a notebook everything her father told her, using a kind of emotional *blackmail*: “if you help me with my chores, I’ll tell you (...)”⁵²⁹. Reading the memories of the shepherd from Novaci, transcribed with the pronunciation preserved, we discover many of the challenges of shepherding, the same in every corner of the country: the beginnings, the hardships of childhood in conditions of poverty and lack of food, apprenticeship, initiation into the trade, the desire to breed sheep, the obstacles of the long transhumance routes, the secrets of physical endurance, pastoral celebrations. Gheorghe Băbu’s humorous style of storytelling, together with the author’s explanations (who follows and describes the reactions of the storyteller), make the reader not want to put the book down! The text is supplemented by family photos, except for the winter, because

“he didn’t have the sense to photograph us in the wilderness; who could have burned himself in winter posing shepherds in a blizzard?”⁵³⁰.

⁵²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 193.

⁵²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 196.

⁵²⁹ „Dacă mă ajuți la muncă, îți voi povesti (...)”, in *Ibidem*, p. 197.

⁵³⁰ „n-avea cin’ să ne fotografiează-n pustiu; cui să-i fi ars iama de pozat ciobani pe viscol?”, in *Ibidem*.

Field documents on the everyday religiosity of shepherds in the mountains. Examples from the Southern Carpathians is the following study, by Laura Jiga Iliescu, who notes that

“a profession of dynamic people, shepherding has its own dynamic and is still alive”⁵³¹.

But herds on alpine pastures are becoming fewer and fewer, and the transportation of animals on the major transhumance routes is mostly by car. These changes have multiple consequences, including the dilution of a specialized and highly complex repertoire of knowledge that articulates the most diverse information. Implicitly, the expressions of religiosity manifested in direct connection with mountain nature are caught up in this dynamic of re-evaluations, transformations or forgetting, whose rapid pace places the research into the culture of shepherding and mountain culture in the register of emergency ethnology⁵³². The study presents a corpus of transcripts, resulting from field investigations in the area represented by the Sibiu Margin and sub-Carpathian Oltenia, dealing with specific ways of behavior and the particular religious vision to which the seasonal residence of shepherds in the mountains or their travel on the road predisposes or supports. They are grouped according to the stages involved in the shepherds' temporary displacement from their community of residence: departure from the village, opening of the sheepfold, the period spent in the mountains, descent and reintegration in the village.

The following two contributions are dedicated to pastoral celebrations. *Cosmic Christianity at the Ruptu' Sterpelor Pastoral Feast*, by Ciprian Coc, describes, with a wealth of details and striking photographs, an ancient custom, carried out on the eve of the Christian feast of St. George, on the Văratec and Secu peaks in the Lapus Mountains, by the Botizan shepherds. It is an early summer pastoral custom, a “pagan-Christian symbiosis, evident in the Maramureşen pastoral celebrations”, which takes place both under the sign of the “cross of the Ruptu' sterpelor” and of a “May Tree, a Tree of Life”, which, according to the author, signifies *the head of spring* and comes from ancient, pagan times, demonstrating a cosmic Christianity. Both are erected by the shepherds of Maramureş in the space around the sheepfold (where women are not allowed to enter, except for young girls, who decorate the lathes, because in their innocence they can do no harm to the sheepfold).

In midsummer, on St. Elijah's Day, every year, from ancient times until today, the shepherds of Covasn hold their traditional feast: Sântilia. This pastoral custom is detailed in the following study: *Nedeia mocănească a voineştenilors – past and present*, author Florentina Teacă. The Nedeia mocănească from Voineşti is one of the many pastoral celebrations that prove the antiquity and staunchness of the Romanian sheep herders in the Carpathian area. Initially seen as a *fair for girls*, Sântilia had several purposes: to mediate idylls, to unite destinies, to forge alliances and, last but not least, to unite the borders between Romanians here and Romanians over the mountains, borders forcibly imposed by the rulers of this world, but ignored

⁵³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 217.

⁵³² *Ibidem*, p. 218.

by the inhabitants of the pastoral villages. Today, the custom of the Sântiliei has taken on a new character, based on the traditions inherited from the ancestors, and has been transformed into a staged performance that symbolically respects the ceremonial of a traditional peasant wedding.

Shepherding in Mărginimea Sibiului. Past, present and future, authors Radu Săgeată, Mihaela Persu, Bianca Mitrică, Nicoleta Damian, Irena Mocanu, highlight the dynamics of this occupation in a region of the Carpathians representative for pastoral activities, the Sibiu Margin, analyzed from early feudalism to the present, highlighting future trends.

Ilie Moise, author of the following study, *Shepherding in the Sibiu Marginimea. Modificare de peisaj cultural*, looks from a different perspective at the changes in shepherding in the Mărginimii area, namely through the prism of the changing cultural landscape, especially in the post-Decembrist period. It emphasizes the attempt of the Siberian communities, by all means, to strengthen local and regional identities, promoting both natural and cultural heritage (traditional architecture, gastronomy, crafts and specific folk customs). The large number of village monographs, together with the 8 historical monument churches, 10 village museums and 9 local or regional festivals, aim both to increase the number of tourists and to strengthen local identity⁵³³. An example worth following, we would add.

The Marginimea is also the subject of the following material: *Traditions and celebrations of the Margin sheep herders in the pendulums of transhumance*, signed by Rodica Popa Comaniciu, which highlights the fact that, in the pendulums of their transhumance, the Margin sheep herders have always respected a calendar of traditions and celebrations that they have inherited from generation to generation and that they have perpetuated with each generation, as a symbol of the continuity and perennality of the nation⁵³⁴. We learn about the annual Annunciation Fair, the occasion to meet with the members of the community of those who “had their wagons elsewhere”, about the *sheep climbing the mountain*, usually held immediately after the feast of Saints Constantine and Helen, the *shearing of sheep* before St. Elijah, the *choosing of the sheep* around the feast of St. Paraschiva and so on.

An extremely interesting study is offered by Marin Constantin: *Ethno-veterinary medicine of the transhumant sheep herders of the Mărginimea Sibiului: testimonies of the villagers of Jina, Poiana Sibiului and Tilișca*. After providing some bibliographical references on Romanian sheep ethno-medicine, including the *Monograph of the village of Drăguș in Țara Făgărașului*, written by Traian Herseni in 1944, the author follows up the Marginal Marginal villagers’ accounts of their experience in caring for sick sheep, describing symptoms and traditional curative practices (traditional folk remedies, from the time when medicines had not yet been invented). The conclusion is that the ethno-medicine of Marginal sheep farmers (and indeed of all sheep farmers everywhere) is inherited down to the present day between two ethical coordinates: magic or beliefs in creatures and actions that transcend

⁵³³ *Ibidem*, p. 332.

⁵³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 340.

human nature (things in which the interlocutors refuse to believe) and modern medicine with its system of experts, technical knowledge and pharmaceutical prescriptions (which the same interlocutors adopt, not without hesitation, as a way of use)⁵³⁵. The article identifies sheep herders' ethno-medicine with a discipline – customary – of curative practices and teachings resulting from the life experience of these people in caring for their own animals.

Andreea Buzaș conducts a “case study” on the evolution of a village representative for the ethnographic area of the Marginimii, in the article “*The Shepherds of Rășinari – between mobility and stability*”. The village of Rășinari, documented in 1204, which gave the European world Octavian Goga and Emil Cioran, is representative of what specialists have called pastoral civilization. In 1915, Victor Păcală published the famous *Monograph of the commune of Rășinari*, which was awarded a prize by the Romanian Academy in the same year. The volume, praised by Simion Mehedinți and Dimitrie Gusti, was of real service to the idea of unity and union of Romanians: at the Trianon Peace Conference, the Romanian Government prepared 200 leather cases in which a copy of the *Monograph of Rășinari* was inserted, and offered them to the participants as an argument for the need to recognize the 1918 Union. The ingenious way of structuring the material, which has become a classic, has turned it into an undeniable model for dozens, perhaps hundreds of village monographs. In Rășinari, too, the post-Decembrist period brought about a marked change in the cultural landscape, with sheep herders abandoning transhumant herding and turning, for the most part, to rural and cultural tourism. The study is accompanied by photographs, including from the Wallachian Open-Air Museum in Roznov pod Radhostem, Czech Republic.

Tilișca, another locality in the Margin Mountains with strong pastoral traditions, is the subject of the study signed by Andra-Florina Popa: *Toponymy of Tilișca in relation to transhumance*, which includes an extremely interesting glossary of the names of places in Tilișca, 95 in number.

Lucian David and Ionuț Semuc, coordinators of the present volume, are the authors of the study *Memory and Discourse. Roiri mărginene către vestul României*, an article realized within the framework of the research grant managed by the Patrimoniul Foundation, *Peisajul cultural carpatic. Sustainable development of pastoralism in the Sibiu Margin*. Field research carried out in 2020 shed light on the preservation in the collective memory of the herding carried out in the post-war period in the western part of the country. “Although partially truncated and affected by the passage of time”⁵³⁶, the information gathered nevertheless presents significant details. The study reproduces, through extensive quotations, the memories of the sheep herders from the Margin, many of whom remained and settled in the C.A.P.s in Banat.

Pastoral herding is an advanced stage of transhumance. These are of two types: *internal* (the shepherds, in the vast majority of cases with their families, settle for several years, usually more than ten years, in the lowland areas where they have been

⁵³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 361.

⁵³⁶ „Deși parțial trunchiate și afectate de trecerea timpului”, in *Ibidem*, p. 402.

transhumant) and *external*, when the shepherds have been hired to look after large flocks of sheep in remote areas, such as the Crimea, the Caucasus. The study by ethnographers Ligia Fulga and Carmen Marin, *Pastoral Roiries following the transhumance of Transylvanian sheep herders from Poiana Sărată in Bessarabia and Crimea*, based on field and archival research in 2019, resulting from the 2018 campaign, is about external roi, in Crihana Veche/Cahul, when a respondent testified that the ancestors of a family in the village came from Poiana Sărată, a locality now in Bacău County, but formerly part of the Transylvanian county of Treiscaune (now Covasna). The research was aimed at identifying the descendants of the families of Poiana Sărată's inhabitants who practiced transhumance in Crimea and Bessarabia, whose presence in the collective memory has remained known to this day. The stories of two families, Gheorghe Șerban and Micu-Tătaru, have been recorded, confirming the reasons why Transylvanian sheep herders traveled impressive distances to Crimea and the Caucasus: free land, the possibility of being owned by the people, and the accessibility of trade routes to the East.

We learn about *transhumant sheep herders from Mărginimea Sibiului in the Caucasus, Astrahan and Omsk* from the following study by Constantin Ittu, confirming the statement that

“the shepherds’ territory stretched without borders as far as Crimea and the Caucasus”⁵³⁷.

On their way to Russia, the sheep herders from the Transylvanian region stopped in Dobrogea. At a certain point, the Crimea became “overpopulated” with sheep herders from the Margin, so they moved on, a “small steps” departure, as the author puts it. The first stop was north of the area, in the area of the Kuban River, which flows north of the Caucasus. The documents mention marginal sheep herders in southern Russia, Georgia, Ossetia, Chechnya, Chechnya on the Caspian coast, Azerbaijan and Dagestan. The reasons that brought them to the Caucasus were the same reasons that drove them to the Crimea: the facilities offered by Tsarist Russia for colonization and development, free land in sparsely populated areas and exemptions from certain taxes. The ruin came with the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, when they were constantly exposed to looting by soldiers returning from the front. The agony came after 1927 and around 1930, when the communalization of the sheep farms⁵³⁸ took place, followed by the ordeal of arrests and deportations, thus ending a period of glory for the transhumant sheep herders of the Marginal Margin in the steppes of Russia.

The Carpathian Shepherding, Tradition and Continuity concludes with a review of the book *Transhumance*, by Nicolae Stan Petruțiu, from Salda, written by Ioana Crețu (b. Martin) and with an *Afterword* by Sabin Fărcaș, senior advisor at the National Agency for Mountain Areas, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

⁵³⁷ „până în Crimeea și Caucaz se întindea spațiul ciobănesc fără hotare”, in *Ibidem*, p. 423.

⁵³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 433.

CONCLUSION

It was necessary and expected the appearance of this volume which, in its 450 pages, brings together valuable contributions on all aspects of traditional shepherding (complex relationships between people, animals and ecosystems; rituals and social practices, animal care and husbandry, management of land, forests and water resources and natural hazards management, etc.) from almost all areas in Romania where transhumant pastoralism is found (what is surprising about transhumant pastoralism is the extremely small number of villages practicing it; they are all Transylvanian, spread over a relatively narrow area, starting from Brețcu and Covasna and extending along the Transylvanian Subcarpathians through Săcele, the Branului region, the Oltului and Mărginimea Sibiului, as far as the Hațeg region), in the context in which (at the time of its appearance) the Carpathian transhumance, part of traditional pastoral life, was included in the National Inventory of Living Intangible Cultural Heritage, the first step towards inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Through its documentary value, the book *Carpathian Shepherding, Tradition and Continuity* will be an important working tool for specialists interested in Romanian traditional shepherding, an encouragement for young researchers to look more closely at the subject.

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BOOK REVIEW – “TÂRGU MUREȘ 1990: BLOODY DAWN” THE 1989 – 1990 INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN THE NCSSA⁵³⁹ FILES. TUDOR PĂCURARU AND FLORIAN BICHIR, BUCHAREST, EVENIMENTUL AND CAPITAL PUBLISHING HOUSE, 2021

*Dragoș Burghelia*⁵⁴⁰

ABSTRACT

Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir capitalize, in the book “Târgu Mureș 1990: Bloody Dawn”, the information contained in the two volumes of the NCSSA File 091950 – th contribution of the “B” (counter-espionage) Office in Târgu Mureș to the Informative Bulletin – a daily material elaborated to inform the main decision makers of the Romanian state. The book is dedicated to “the Romanian officers, counterintelligence and anti-terrorism officers who, scorned by their own government, chose to do their duty to their Fatherland as best they could, under the boos of the hysterized crowd” and was published in 2021 by Evenimentul and Capital. On the basis of these documents, the authors reconstruct a detailed picture of the interethnic conflicts between 1989 and 1990, highlighting the complexity and depth of the tensions that marked that period. The book offers a unique insight into how these conflicts were handled, analyzing the reactions of both the authorities and the communities involved. It also emphasizes the essential role of the counter-espionage services in maintaining national order and security in the context of extremely tumultuous events. Through this book, Păcuraru and Bichir pay tribute to those who, despite difficulties and adversity, remained faithful to their mission to protect the integrity and stability of the country, while revealing the revisionist plans pursued by Hungarian intelligence services in recent decades.

Keywords: transition, espionage, revolution, conflict, Romanians, Hungarians, Transylvania.

The book “Târgu Mureș 1990: Bloody Dawn” – The 1989 – 1990 interethnic conflicts in the NCSSA files written by Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir was published in Bucharest, by Evenimentul and Capital Publishing House, in 2021. Tudor Păcuraru is a retired colonel of the Romanian Intelligence Services (RIS⁵⁴¹), a specialist in the analysis-synthesis of classified information while Florian Bichir is a Romanian historian and publicist, PhD in political science and PhD in theology. He is also a Scientific

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⁵⁴¹ Serviciul Român de Informații (SRI) [Romanian Intelligence Service (RIS)].

Researcher at the Center of European History and Civilization in Iași of the Romanian Academy and a member of the Romanian Commission of Military History. With this specialization, the two authors seek to offer a novel historical perspective on the historical dispute between Romania and Hungary over Transylvania, presenting historical information and data from the perspective of the intelligence and counterintelligence agencies, taking a complex and perhaps more difficult to accept approach, not being a classical narrative on the issues. Of course, always discussions about secret services and the behind-the-scenes plans of some political powers come with a dose of skepticism or suspicion, but the book includes numerous archival references, and the two authors have specialized expertise in this field.

Whether or not we choose to believe that Hungary's revisionist plans have spanned several generations based on a coherent and coordinated vision, the reality is that historical events have shown that Hungarian policy has always been directed towards the Carpathian arc, generating both open military and diplomatic conflicts as in 1919 – 1920 and 1940 and social tensions especially after 1989. The aspects and information presented in the book show that these conflicts were based on well-defined actions of the Hungarian intelligence services, aiming at the separation and redrawing of borders in Central and Eastern Europe. The authors present the *Virradat/Dawn* plan as the root of these revisionist efforts, a plan reiterated in several formulas from 1920 until the inter-ethnic conflict in Târgu Mureș on March 20, 1990. Thus, historical events are presented, including the disturbing moments in 1940 when, following the Vienna Diktat, the northern part of Transylvania was annexed to fascist Hungary, as well as the political underbelly of the communist camp when Hungarian political leaders constantly promoted a policy of eroding the Romanian legitimacy and authority in Transylvania, by cooperating with and drawing the Soviet Union into this sphere, especially thanks to Hungarian communists who were allegedly collaborators of the Moscow secret services:

“If the Virradat/Dawn Plan conceived by the minds of the Budapest leaders, schooled in the ‘Kominternist, KGB-ist and GRU-ist universities’ makes sense, then this sense can never be severed from the historical and geopolitical framework of the interwar period and ending with the collapse of the USSR and communism at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century”⁵⁴².

All this culminated in the bloody events in Târgu Mureș, and the authors try to offer a new perspective and new information on the hidden actions of the Hungarian Irredenta in those tense moments marked by uncertainty, lack of authority of the Romanian state and mass manipulation. The work is structured into 7 main chapters,

⁵⁴² „Dacă Planul Virradat/Aurora Zorilor conceput de mințile liderilor de la Budapesta, școlite în «universitățile kominterniste, KGB-iste și GRU-iste» are un sens, apoi acest sens nu va putea fi niciodată rup de cadrul istoric și geopolitic al perioadei interbelice și terminând cu colapsul URSS și al comunismului, de la începutul ultimului deceniu al secolului XX.”, in Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir, *Târgu Mureș 1990: Zori Însângerate. Conflictete interetnice din 1989–1990 in dosarele CNSAS [Târgu Mureș 1990: Bloody Dawn. The 1989–1990 interethnic conflicts in the NCSSA files]*, Bucharest, Evenimentul and Capital Publishing House, 2021, p. 5.

each containing a series of sub-chapters, as follows: *I. Imperiul scăpătat [The empire escaped]*; *II. Bacșișul slugilor [Tipping the servants]*; *III. Cântecele urii [The hate song]*; *IV. Terorism: mod de folosire [Terrorism: how to use]*; *V. Har-Kov*; *VI. Beția zorilor [Dawn drunkenness]*; *VII. Mahmureala zorilor [Dawn hangover]*. I have chosen to synthesize the main ideas, following the evolution of the *Virradat/Dawn* plan over the years, presenting its four iterations within the main chapters of the book, as well as the consequences of the latest version, namely the March 1990 events in Târgu Mureș.

VIRRADAT/DAWN PLAN – 1: THE ORIGIN

The first version of the *Virradat/Dawn* plan, the one that considers the vision of the inter-war period, is presented after a brief introduction in chapter I in the following sections, more precisely chapter II.1 where its origin and then its evolution and subsequent stages are presented.

The authors present that following the 1920 elections in Hungary, which later led to Horthy's rise to power, the army was instructed to implement the *Virradat/Dawn* plan. The name was inspired by a literary work, namely Petőfi's poem entitled "In Life and Death", which has been described as a "masterpiece of chauvinist romanticism", in which he states:

"Croats, Germans, Serbs and Romanians, Why do you all rush towards the Hungarian?
(...)/For you are nothing but ravens, filthy ravens, But the Hungarian still won't die.
God forbid! And even with your blood He will paint the dawn in the sky (...)"⁵⁴³.

According to the authors, the plan envisaged the occupation of Vienna and Graz in 1921, their subsequent annexation to Hungary and a surprise attack across the Romanian-Hungarian border, which was enshrined in the Trianon Peace Treaty. Following the Romanian Army's visit to Budapest in 1919, Hungary was left with a severely depleted military strength. Consequently, the officers in charge of formulating a plan were unable to come up with a viable strategy. Instead, responsibility was transferred to Section VI⁵⁴⁴, Espionage-Subversion, which formulated a series of recommendations. These included victimizing Hungary, activating the rising movements of the Hungarian minority, seeking an ally in the East (in particular, the army of the White Russian counter-revolutionary Denikin) and bribing a Western power.

France was chosen as a negotiating partner on the understanding that it would take control of the railroads and a significant part of Hungarian industry. In return, France was expected to support Hungary's demands at the Peace Conference and provide arms

⁵⁴³ "Te rác, te horvát, német, tót, oláhság, Mit marjátok mindnyájan a magyart? (...)/De a magyar még nem halotti test, Nem, istenemre nem! s hajnalt magának, Az égre a ti véretekkel fest.", in Petőfi Sándor, *Élet vagy halál! [Life or death!]* (Erdőd, September 30, 1848).

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

for 100.000 Hungarian soldiers to be deployed against the Bolsheviks. France remained steadfast, and the veteran Hungarian officers of the Hungarian army realized that, given the overwhelming military superiority of their adversaries, there was no possibility of conquering Northern Transylvania. As a result, the first Virradat/Dawn Plan was recorded in the archives of the 6th Section, where it was photographed by Mikhail Moruzov's SSI agents⁵⁴⁵. This is how the aforementioned details, together with other illustrative material, were unearthed and documented in the present volume.

VIRRADAT/DAWN PLAN – 2: IMPOSSIBLE TO IMPLEMENT

Subsequently, the authors present the second form of the plan, the vision and the evolution of the Hungarian leaders in accordance with it, but in the absence of a military force that could implement it. By the end of the 1930s, Hungary had amassed a military force of 30.000 men, a figure that was in line with the provisions of the Peace Treaty⁵⁴⁶. In addition, the country had concluded a treaty of friendship with the fascist state of Italy and had a prime minister who was particularly enthusiastic about the concept of “millennial Hungary”. This person was Count Miklos Horthy, at whose instigation the Virradat/Dawn Plan II was formulated, which entailed the occupation of Slovakia, Croatia and Slovenia (already part of Yugoslavia), Subcarpathian Ukraine and the whole of Transylvania. As Hungary did not have the resources to deploy mountain infantry, Section VI – Espionage-Subversion proposed to set up a series of blockades and checkpoints manned by Hungarian guerrilla units trained on Romanian territory. The aggression would have been launched under the pretext of activating the revolt movement of the Hungarian minority in the targeted states, the entry of Hungarian “stabilization” troops, the organization of a plebiscite in which the population would decide on self-determination and then on annexation to Hungary⁵⁴⁷.

The authors discuss the fact that despite the territorial gains made by the Horthyst regime, which may appear to have been a gift, given that not a single bullet was fired in 1940 to obtain them, they came to cost much more than the Hungarian leaders had anticipated, because, as the authors say, everything that seems free ends up costing a fortune. It is argued in chapter II.3 that the so-called gift was a victory without glory, as Horthy became a useful pawn of the Reich. As a result, he was forced not only to accept, but even to execute Adolf Hitler's “final solution” unreservedly with regard to Jews and Roma and in many cases to mistreat Romanian communities as well: 593.000 innocent citizens, including those from occupied Transylvania, paid with their lives⁵⁴⁸.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

⁵⁴⁸ ***, “Murder of Hungarian Jewry”, in *Yadvashem*, n.d., Available at: https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/fateofjews/hungary.html#narrative_info, Accessed on February 7, 2024.

That moment caused a collective traumatic moment identified in many areas of northern Transylvania, but particularly in areas where Romanians remained a minority, such as Covasna, Harghita and Mureș. Fear-anxiety seems to be the underlying feeling of most Romanians who survived in this area. It thus becomes part of the local ethnic identity: to be Romanian in such a region almost necessarily implies anguish that something will happen to the community to which you belong. The shock of the surrender of Northern Transylvania is still felt, passed down from generation to generation⁵⁴⁹.

Many Romanians were deported to Germany and Hungary in order to reduce the number of Romanians in Transylvania ceded to Hungary. In the spring of 1944, for example, around 25.000 Romanians were sent to Germany to be drafted into labor or combat detachments. The repressive policy of discrimination against Romanians in Northern Transylvania continued under the Soviet military administration from October 1944 to March 1945⁵⁵⁰.

It is also presented in this chapter that during the period of Hungarian domination five radio stations were set up with the aim of disseminating propaganda. The station in Nyíregyháza, which was directed against our country, used a strategy of demonizing Romanians, broadcasting slander, insults and threats in order to discourage resistance from the Romanian population in Transylvania. The concept of ethnic cleansing was promoted under the slogan

“the more we exclude the foreigners who have crept into our ranks, the better we will get along with ourselves”⁵⁵¹.

A parallel is drawn with the period after the 1989 transformations when the population of Harghita, Covasna and Mureș was subjected to a relentless propaganda campaign, including articles denouncing mixed marriages as a threat to the purity of the Hungarian bloodline. This was matched by a concerted effort by the Catholic and Reformed churches, with priests invoking the sanctity of the rite in their sermons.

The ratio of forces between Hungary and the states that were to be annihilated was now 1 to 25, which demonstrates the utopian approach adopted by Hungarian politicians. Consequently, the *Virradat/Dawn Plan – II* was hidden in the vaults of Section VI, from where it had been procured by agents of the Romanian Secret Intelligence Service. The detailed organization and modus operandi of the Hungarian espionage, counter-espionage, propaganda and counter-propaganda services, developed as a result of *the Virradat/Dawn Plan – II*, are described in detail in the

⁵⁴⁹ Radu Baltasiu, Gabriel Săpunaru and Ovidiana Bulumac, *Slăbirea comunității românești din Harghita-Covasna: raport de cercetare*, [The Weakening of the Romanian Community in Harghita-Covasna: research report], Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2013, p. 112.

⁵⁵⁰ Ioan Lăcătușu and Vasile Stancu, *Dictatul de la Viena și consecințele sale asupra poporului român*, [The Vienna Dictate and its consequences for the Romanian people], Sfântu Gheorghe, Eurocarpatica Publishing House, 2020, p. 43.

⁵⁵¹ „cu cât îi vom exclude mai mult pe străinii care s-au strecurat în rândurile noastre, cu atât ne vom înțelege mai bine cu noi înșine”, in Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir, *quoted work*, p. 39.

book “*Hungarian Espionage in Romania. 1918–1940*”, by Ioan Dumitru, published in 1990 at Concordia Publishing House⁵⁵².

VIRRADAT/DAWN PLAN – 3 REALIZED FROM THE CHANCELLERY OF EUROPEAN FASCISM

The Hitler-Stalin Pact was concluded on August 23, 1939. The authors claim that on the same day, Horthy instructed the Chief of the General Staff to present an update of the Dawn Plan. The third edition of the plan would thus have been presented to the Hungarian government in December 1939, by which time three of the necessary conditions had already been met. These were the enlistment of a major ally, the demonization of Romanians through radio propaganda and the establishment of the 5th column in Transylvania⁵⁵³. Consequently, the espionage-subversion compartment was tasked with preparing the sabotage of Romania’s critical infrastructure, destabilizing the Romanian Army and targeting mixed families (1.600 Romanian officials and officers who had established such families were inventoried). The dominant power in the West no longer relied on financial compensation; instead, Hitler’s Germany was prepared to offer pro-bono assistance. As the German army advanced towards Paris, Hungary was primarily interested in the original Treaty of Trianon. During the evacuation of the Treaty Archives from the French capital, Louis de Robien, the director of the archives, who was inclined towards collaborationism, handed over the original Treaty to the fascists, along with other agreements and protocols between Romania, France and Great Britain. In light of the evidence pointing to Romania’s collusion with the opposing camp, Hitler acted swiftly, forcing her to cede half of Transylvania. Chapter II.4 presents both the post-factum aspects after the annexation of Northern Transylvania, namely the Hungarian authorities’ approach to the administration of this territory, as well as the behind-the-scenes tactics of European diplomacy marked by the dominance of Nazi Germany and the Hungarian government’s collaboration with it. As a result of this political success, the authors argue that the *Virradat/Dawn* plan was partially realized without Hungary firing a single shot⁵⁵⁴.

In the aforementioned chapter II.4, a comparative analysis of the three Dawn plans is carried out, and it is emphasized that there were 18 common points throughout the different reiterations. These include: in order to achieve its goals, the Hungarian government attempted to form an alliance with a country in the East, to buy the support of another nation in the West, to promote irredentist ideas and to establish the “Fifth Column”. It has also tried to promote the concepts of self-determination and autonomy, create lists of friends and enemies, engage in ethnic

⁵⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 40.

⁵⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

cleansing, set up terrorist and sabotage units, invent a pretext for aggression, launch military threats, try to introduce “observers” to conduct a plebiscite, infiltrate institutions and influence politicians in the targeted countries. An analysis of the situation in 1989 – 1990 and how these common elements came together at that time is also proposed⁵⁵⁵.

THE INITIATORS OF THE VIRRADAT/DAWN PLAN – 4 REPRESENTED. ELEMENTS OF SOVIET INFLUENCE

Beginning with Chapter III the situation is presented in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union and how it influenced Europe. At the same time the authors hypothesize certain links between Hungarian political leaders and Soviet secret services. They argue that in 1990, two politicians, Szűrös Mátyás and Gyula Horn, were in power in Hungary and from the perspective of Western observers, they were considered reformists. However, the Western press in the 1960s and 1980s took a negative view of Mr. Szűrös, citing his attendance at a Moscow institute headed by Andrei Yanuarevich Vashinsky, former USSR Prosecutor General Andrei Yanuarevich Vashinsky, and the fact that in November 1956 he was sent to Szolnok, where János Kádár needed the help of more supporters to revive the Communist Party of Hungary. It is alleged that Mátyás Szűrös was a member of the Communist Party with a long history of involvement in the Soviet Union⁵⁵⁶. He held a post in the International Department, where he collaborated directly with the KGB and other intelligence agencies “at any time necessary” (according to Larry Watts quoted in the book).

With regard to the second political figure, the authors report that Gyula Horn was born into a communist family and was recruited by the GRU in 1954 while studying in the USSR. In addition, the Hungarian press had revealed his role as a member of the puppet brigades set up by the USSR as a repressive force in the aftermath of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In May 1989, the two held consultations in Moscow, where they were tasked with opening the border with Austria for East Germans. The book reports that they also discussed Romania, claiming that this country possessed nuclear weapons that posed a threat to Hungary. Another Moscow-educated Leninist, Kárpáti Ferenc, the defense minister who later admitted to sending “dozens of agents to Romania”, falsified the evidence. Kárpáti was in charge of coordinating the activities of espionage agents working against Romania⁵⁵⁷. He convened meetings in Balaton with General Stănculescu and a KGB colonel from Eastern Europe, during which discussions were held on Romania, as the Romanian historian reveals in the book *În sfârșit adevărul [At Last, the Truth]*

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

by A. M. Stoenescu, in which the subject of the fate of communism was broached, as well as the fact that Romanians reject on principle everything that comes from Moscow.

The authors claim, however, that the Soviets were not fooled by the theory of the atomic bomb. In 2005, former Warsaw Treaty Secretary General I.P. Aboimov confirmed that

“Hungary requested our intervention in Romania in the hope of resolving the Transylvania problem”⁵⁵⁸.

Gorbachev tried to mediate between the warring parties, facilitating a meeting in Bucharest between Miklós Németh, Gyula Horn and Ceausescu. The Hungarians were extremely firm, asserting that Transylvania was rightfully theirs and that they would pursue international mediation on the matter. What is more, Horn did indeed spread this information, claiming that Romanian officials had informed him that Romania would soon be producing medium-range missiles. This was accompanied by speculation in the Western press that Romania was preparing for a nuclear war with its neighbors. This theme of demonization was very effective at the time, as more recent history has shown.

WORKING WITH WESTERN LEADERS

In connection with the *Virradat/Dawn Plan – 4* the authors state from chapter III.2 onwards that the Hungarian leaders had no difficulties in identifying a potential ally in the West. This person was, the authors argue, the French leader François Mitterrand as he was particularly dissatisfied with Ceaușescu due to the fact that the latter did not provide sufficient financial support for the French leader’s election campaign. As a result, upon taking over the presidency, the first foreign dignitary invited to Paris was János Kádár, and the inaugural foreign visit was to Budapest. Moreover, he broke a taboo by going to an eastern country (Hungary) without having made the “trip to Moscow” that none of his predecessors had dared to do, thus marking his refusal to accept the tutelage of the Soviet Union over Eastern Europe. But, at the same time, France continued to cooperate and trade with the USSR, particularly in the acquisition of natural resources such as Russian gas⁵⁵⁹. Mitterrand assured Hungarians that politically he would “change the situation”⁵⁶⁰.

The Socialist Party considers him the last great president of France. However, the details of his controversial past, including his involvement in the French

⁵⁵⁸ „Ungaria a solicitat intervenția noastră în România în speranța rezolvării problemei Transilvaniei”, in *Ibidem*, p. 56.

⁵⁵⁹ Marie-Claude Smouts, “The external policy of François Mitterrand”, in *International Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, 1983, p. 162.

⁵⁶⁰ Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir, *quoted work*, p. 58.

collaborationist militias, pressuring the minister of justice to delay investigations into the Vichy regime's police chief and obstructing inquiries into the collaborationist regime's involvement in the Holocaust, have diminished his legacy somewhat. In any case, his latent fascist tendencies manifested themselves in his reprehensible behavior towards Romania.

“HUNGARIANS WILL DRINK ROMANIAN BLOOD AT EASTER”

In Chapter III.3 “The Voice of Hatred”, those voices dominated by hatred and violence are presented in detail, mentioned in detail and in punctually, thanks to documents extracted from the archives of the NCSSA. After Mitterrand publicly adopted an anti-Romanian stance, Szűrös allegedly stated that all Hungarians living abroad should form a unified “great Hungarian nation”. The authors present statements and data taken from the files in the NCSSA archive on the actions and conceptions of ethnic Hungarians in Mureş County in the context of the inter-ethnic tensions at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990. Thus, it is stated that Romanians were presented as people that lack work ethic, are prone to cowardice, dishonesty, and the Orthodox Church is considered backward, passive and representative of an uncultured people, reviving the medieval idea of the Hungarian civilizer⁵⁶¹. The authors reveal that following a period of intense heat, the Romanian counter-espionage services in Târgu Mureş, isolated by their own government and hampered by the lack of trust of their own people, began to pass on information indicating that a significant number of Romanians in Târgu Mureş had received written instructions to evacuate the city with their families. The director Hunyadi András urged the actors of the Hungarian section to be prepared to act, including the use of force, until all Romanians and Jews were driven out of Transylvania. Another person named Szász Etelka from the Glove Factory stated according to the NCSSA files that “the Hungarians will drink Romanian blood at Easter”⁵⁶². Doctors Bartha András András and Nagy Endre from Sovata called on ethnic Hungarians to demand the departure of all Romanians from the town. Benedek Imre, a doctor and university professor, also declared at the time that he would only teach in Hungarian. In addition, Brassai Zoltán, the director of the medical faculty, indicated that he would only accept Hungarian students for exams.

The quotes from the NCSSA files continue and anarchist elements with criminal backgrounds are presented who later ended up in the CFSN, advocating the removal of Romanians from positions of responsibility at the Mureş Medicines and Textile Factory. Medical professionals such as Kecsí Károli, Szabó Árpád, Piros Fráncisc and Doczi Balázs are cited as having refused to provide medical care to patients of Romanian ethnic

⁵⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 62.

⁵⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 63.

origin, including those who had suffered injuries on March 20–21, 1990. In another example, Ástalos Sándor, a designer at Metalotehnica, made the following remark:

“It won’t be long before you Romanians will be on your knees begging us Hungarians not to kill you all”⁵⁶³.

Similarly, Professor Gabos Dezideriu from Albești is quoted as saying that the struggle of the Hungarians in Romania would persist, even if force had to be used, until victory was achieved. The authors state that three hundred volumes were delivered from Hungary to the Book Distribution Center in Mureș, with a preface that read

“It would be prudent for Hungarians to persevere and avoid the pitfalls of cowardice”⁵⁶⁴.

“It is imperative that you demand autonomy and organize yourselves, since you constitute a formidable force”⁵⁶⁵.

The book gives examples such as Bereczki Ana, who had returned from Hungary to Târnăveni accompanied by a group of 12 young Hungarians who were flying Hungarian flags on their vehicles and were disseminating anti-Romanian and irredentist propaganda. Also, Kincses Mária Adrienne, a former nurse at the hospital in Târgu Mureș, who called a meeting of all Hungarian staff, proposed that all training should be conducted in Hungarian and spoke about the need to re-establish the Hungarian autonomous region. The ethnic Hungarians from mixed families were excluded from the meeting.

Matters known by the population of Târgu Mureș at a colloquial level are supported by the authors with evidence from the NCSSA archive and with documents from the files concerning investigations and surveillance from that period. In most institutions and enterprises, calls were made for the elimination of Romanians and the banning of the Romanian language, and ethnic cleansing lists were drawn up. Most of those responsible for these actions supported them because they were under the impression that “Hungary is with us”⁵⁶⁶. Mátyás Szűrös himself had given impetus to this feeling. For example, the authors demonstrate that it was impossible to attack 39 remote police outposts almost simultaneously, as it happened in 1989–1990, without professional coordination.

HUNGARIAN CITIZENS PRESENT IN TÂRGU MUREȘ AS “RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVES”

The volume continues by detailing the events of March 1990 in Târgu Mureș in Chapter IV. “Terrorism: How to Use it”. Specific episodes are selected, and moments considered key by the authors in the equation of the tensions of those moments. One

⁵⁶³ „Nu va dura mult până când voi, românii, veți fi în genunchi și ne veți implora pe noi, maghiarii, să nu vă omorâm pe toți”, in *Ibidem*, p. 71.

⁵⁶⁴ „Ar fi prudent pentru maghiari să persevereze și să evite capcanele lașității”, in *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶⁵ „Este imperios necesar să cereți autonomie și să vă organizați, având în vedere că voi constituiți o forță formidabilă”, in *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

of these moments is related to the fact that at the Continental Hotel in Târgu Mureș, the World Red Cross rented a room, and a group of members of the organization “Asklepios”, who declared themselves representatives of the same institution, were also accommodated⁵⁶⁷. The authors claim that these persons were in fact Hungarian citizens who were collecting and passing on information about the violent actions that took place on March 20 and 21. Information and misinformation was disseminated, including the claim that the genuine World Red Cross vehicle was attacked, and its crew killed. The organization’s Geneva headquarters denied the claims, saying its staff was still alive. This puts forward the theory that the persons in question were members of the AVO (former Hungarian secret service) and were related to Hungarian employees of the PTTR Mureș⁵⁶⁸. They were apprehended while listening to technical conversations at the check table through which the special circuits of the Ministries of Interior and Defense and the Intelligence Section were passing.

The authors of the book argue that the initiators and sponsors of the information-operational and image aggression against Romania were the Hungarian politicians Gyula Horn and Mátyás Szűrös, who were involved in the communist movement and had links with Soviet espionage, these aspects being known to the Romanian counter-intelligence services. General Ferenc Kárpáti is also considered to have ties with the GRU⁵⁶⁹. Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir go on to claim that the Romanian services also list Király Károly as a person with Soviet influence, seconded by Mihai Șora (a person removed at the same time as Ana Pauker from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prevent access to secret documents), the individual who, from his position as Minister of Education, contributed to formalizing the Hungarian objective of separating education on ethnic grounds in Transylvania⁵⁷⁰.

It is presented in the paper as noteworthy that, despite the involvement of Soviet-affiliated individuals in initiating the fourth edition of the plan, Gorbachev unequivocally rejected the claims presented by the Horn-Szűrös couple regarding Transylvania. Its aim was to destabilize the Ceausescu regime and facilitate its collapse. Given the unexpected absence of a crucial element of the *Virradat/Dawn* plan, the two retaliated by accelerating the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and recalling Hungarian students from Moscow. They also initiated steps for the Dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, which coincided with Sergiu Celac and

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 99.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 100.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

⁵⁷⁰ On February 3, 1990, the Minister of Education, Mihai Șora – at the request of some Hungarian teachers of the “Bolyai” High School – telegraphed an order to the County School Inspectorate and the Mureș County Council of the FSN that a new high school should be established from the Romanian classes of the “Bolyai” High School, which, starting with the second term, would temporarily move into the building of the school of sub-engineers, in Nándor Bárdi, *Primele forme de autoorganizare a maghiarilor din România, 1989–1990 [The First Forms of Self-Organization of Hungarians in Romania: 1989–1990]*, Cluj-Napoca, Documenta et studia minoritatum, Institute for the Study of National Minorities Problems, 2014, p. 246.

Stănculescu's efforts to facilitate the presence of Romanian students at the Institute of International Relations and the "Frunze" Academy in Moscow, while Romania was also engaged in negotiations for a Political Treaty with the USSR. The Kremlin showed no inclination to destabilize Iliescu's pro-Soviet regime or to empower the nationalist forces that emerged through the "Vatra Românească" organization.

THE "VATRA ROMÂNEASCĂ" ORGANIZATION WAS SUPERVISED BY THE SECURITATE, AND NOT SET UP BY IT

In chapter V.5, the authors talk about the organization Vatra Românească Union, and in this context, they consider it noteworthy that even today there are people who claim that the Union was created by the Securitate and that it is responsible for the violence that took place in March 1990⁵⁷¹. However, an analysis of the documents published by the NCSSA and presented in the volume shows that Vatra Românească was, in fact, the target of intelligence officers. The Mureș County Intelligence Section (SJI) was instructed by the central government in Bucharest to "pay attention" to the UVR Conference scheduled to take place in the town. The SJI subsequently issued a report on the matter. From SJI's pre-conference briefing, it can be inferred that the agents had selected the three initial names: the persons in question were Radu Ciontea, Ioan Sabău-Pop and Vasile Țîra⁵⁷². As one of the book's authors, Tudor Păcuraru, is an intelligence analyst, he gives a more detailed account of the report. In a relatively small town, intelligence cadres never participate directly in actions. If they had to send four cadres, this indicates that

"at that time, in the environment of the Vatra Românească Union, there was no human intelligence apparatus in contact with SJI Mureș"⁵⁷³.

We are therefore left to wonder where the "thousands of secret service people" are who allegedly created it. These people would have existed exclusively in Hungarian propaganda. Radio Kossuth was the first to make accusations against Vatra Românească in connection with the violence in March. The following day, a group of intellectuals from Gyula, who identified themselves as both Hungarians and Romanians, issued a statement on the same station. They claimed that the events had been provoked by former Securitate fighters. In addition, the Hungarian radio station Radio Kossuth was used to disseminate false information. The agent Király Károly, a carpenter studying at the Central School of Comsomoliks in Moscow, was responsible for spreading false news that the UVR included activists, Manichaeists, secessionists and legionnaires. Former legionnaires were there at the time, but the authors claim elsewhere: SJI Mureș reported that one later became president of the

⁵⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 127.

⁵⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 131.

⁵⁷³ „la acel moment, în mediul Uniunii Vatra Românească, nu exista un aparat uman de informații în contact cu SJI Mureș”, in *Ibidem*.

PSD at the local level, Sergiu Căunescu in Târgu Mureș, and others were infiltrators in the same party's organization in Câmpia Turzii. The agents gave all of them their names and backgrounds – proof that the subject was part of the intelligence gathering score – but there is no document in the background material that forms the basis of the volume that proves the penetration of the UVR by the legionaries⁵⁷⁴.

“The Vatra Romanian Union is made up of secessionists and legionaries and is perceived as a threat to Romanian democracy”⁵⁷⁵.

This opinion is presented by the authors as being spread by Hungarian propaganda both inside and outside Romania's borders. In the last three decades, this view has gained significant momentum, to the extent that many of those who advocate it are unaware of the implications of their actions for the victims. The continued focus on presenting this union in a negative light by Hungarian propaganda can be seen as a means of compensating for their own failures. This is particularly evident in the context of the formation of Vatra Românească in March 1990, which emerged as a key form of collective self-defense for Romanians. The formation of the Vatra Românească Union was a spontaneous reaction to the dissolution of the state, which was unaware of the real situation in Transylvania. The union's numerous branches prevented the realization of some of the objectives of Hungarian chauvinism at the local level for a long time.

FROM THE DAY OF KÁROLY KIRÁLY'S APPOINTMENT AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF CPUN, THE ROMANIAN COUNTER-OPERATIVES KEPT SILENT

Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir ask whether officials in Bucharest could have had a more comprehensive understanding of the details needed to make the most informed decisions at key moments in 1990? Apparently, from the moment then-President Iliescu appointed the Soviet-Hungarian agent Károly Király as vice-president of the CPUN (a position equivalent to second-in-command), the counter-espionage operatives in Târgu Mureș had not communicated with their superiors for over a month⁵⁷⁶. It was felt that sending further information would be unwise, given the risk of it reaching a foreign agent of influence. In February 1990, only a few brief notes were sent because Mr. Király was in Budapest receiving treatment for leukemia. It was later discovered that he was not actually ill, but rather had gone to coordinate with Hungarian intelligence on the upcoming events in Târgu Mureș, which the initiators hoped would serve as a catalyst for a civil war in which Transylvania would become a territory to be pacified by foreign military forces⁵⁷⁷.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 128.

⁵⁷⁵ „Uniunea Vatra Românească este formată din secesioniști și legionari și este percepută ca o amenințare la adresa democrației românești”, in *Ibidem*, p. 129.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 123.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 174.

Uncovering details of the fourth edition of the *Virradat/ Dawn of Dawn* plan in the paper, we note that the authors argue that a new operational approach was introduced, building on the knowledge of the previous model and incorporating elements of Soviet espionage and subversion culture. This approach was shaped by the fact that many of the officers who ran the AVO had studied at the KGB's Dzerzhinsky Academy. It is worth noting that when Hungary assumed the role of chairman of the NATO Counterintelligence Committee, a significant international controversy arose. This was due to the fact that the head of Hungary's National Security Service had spent considerable time, some six and a half years, at the KGB Academy.

THE "POGROM" THEORY WAS LAUNCHED LONG BEFORE THE BLOODY EVENTS

The book presents a number of clues that the events in Târgu Mureş were planned in advance. One such clue was Sütő's appearance on Hungarian television on March 20, in which he denounced the "pogrom" to which the Hungarian population was subjected. This happened shortly after a street clash between Romanians and Hungarians. The writer appeared healthy and in good spirits on TV, while in reality, at the time of the broadcast, Sütő András was in hospital after having injured his eye the previous evening. Apparently, the interview in which he spoke emphatically and convincingly about a "pogrom" had been recorded a few days earlier when there were indeed high tensions in Târgu Mureş. However, at the time of the broadcast, the streets of the city were still quiet and peaceful.

The authors also mention some inflammatory statements made by lawyer Kincses Előd ("Be vigilant, if the army is not with you, disarm them!") and Jakabffy Attila ("Now, let's get them, there are many of us!") in connection with the 10.000 Hungarian tourists who came to Romania on a Tuesday, March 20, "for recreation". The book also presents the possible actions of the 400 from Bicske⁵⁷⁸, the authors talk about the process of buying influence in Roma communities and compromising the UDMR through AVO actions, about the disappearance from the journalist Dorin Suciú's footage of the sequence in which "a detachment of solid individuals armed with short batons" broke the cordon of gendarmes that separated the Hungarian and Romanian demonstrators and many other issues that can be further investigated by reading the book published in 2021 by Evenimentul and Capital.

CONCLUSIONS. IMPORTANCE

In conclusion, "Târgu Mureş 1990: Bloody Dawn" by Tudor Păcuraru and Florian Bichir provides a meticulously detailed account of the interethnic conflicts of 1989 – 1990, based on extensive documents from the NCSSA archives. The

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

authors highlight the complex and deep-rooted tensions of the time, offering a unique insight into how these conflicts were managed by both the authorities and the communities. The book emphasizes the essential role of counterintelligence services in maintaining national order and security during these tumultuous events. Through their work, Păcuraru and Bichir pay tribute to the dedication of the Romanian officers who, despite significant challenges, fulfilled their duty to protect the country. This narrative not only enriches our understanding of a turbulent historical period, but also honors the endurance and commitment of those who served.

While the book provides invaluable information through detailed accounts, first-hand testimony and previously classified documents, it is important to recognize that some of the allegations presented may be difficult to accept, and some of the plans described may seem conspiratorial or exaggerated at first glance. This is all the more natural considering that these plans were allegedly conceived and implemented by secret services with specific, occult methods of operation, hidden from public view and contrary to the generally accepted narrative. However, the fact that this book is based on archival sources lends it credibility and underlines its relevance. These issues, though controversial, are essential to understanding the full scale of events and their implications. As such, they deserve in-depth analysis, debate and discussion, as illustrated in the book, in order to fully grasp the complexity of the ethnic conflicts and their wider impact on post-communist Romania.

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