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Transylvanian Communities Subjected to Collective Traumas and Retorsions in 1944–1947

Reflections on Post-1989 Politics of Memory and Transitional Justice in Romania

In the time of the Second World War, territorial dispute and the policy of "coercive reciprocity" actively induced by the governments of two neighbouring states – Hungary and Romania – had their tragic impact upon the communities of Transylvania. In that region, Hungarians, Romanians, Germans and Jews had cohabitated for centuries. Transylvania, splitted as a consequence of the Second Vienna Award between Hungary (Northern Transylvania) and Romania (Southern Transylvania), in the year 1944 was the scene of four major successive events that redefined the fate of all its communities: the German military occupation of Hungary, the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania, the successful change of allies made by Romania, the passing of the Soviet military war front. The historic documents recorded the atrocities and traumas, in a period of time marked also by the state of war between Hungary and Romania. In that context, collective guilt and punishment were used also by the Soviet military authorities, and the new Romanian Government: that included deportation of German nationals, interning camps, sequestration of properties and other discriminatory legislative measures introduced against Hungarians and Germans. On the other hand, the atrocities made by the so-called "Maniu Guards" were followed by Northern Transylvania being used by the Soviet Union as a tool of political blackmail for establishing a Communist-led government in Romania. The traumatic experiences of the communist totalitarian regime had their impact on the Romanians and

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the national minorities – Hungarians, Germans, Jews, etc. Before and after 1989, the reflections in the collective memory of the historical past were used and abused by conflicting political legitimating discourses. The memories of those collective traumas are also part of the contemporary politics of memory, as were to be addressed also by post-1989 transitional justice and reconciliation process. The present study tries to analyse some aspects of these complex realities.

INTRODUCTION

In the present study, written as part of the Minority Policy Research Group's effort to address the complicated phenomena of immediate post-WWII political usage of "collective guilt", analysed in the context of the political transitions in Central and Eastern Europe, and the enduring impact of these realities on present day state–minority relations in our region, I tried to construct a case study focusing mainly on the Hungarian community in Romania. While I analyse the sources regarding the 1944–1947 historical realities, I also had to assess the new context of post-1989 narratives based on present-day politics of memory, and the involved communities' identity discourses. I also had an interest to integrate reflections on the impact of these phenomena on the general process of transitional justice in post-1989 Romania.

To address these complex realities, this study reunites three levels of analysis: first, the *referential level,* reconstructing the historical realities that had their direct formative impact upon all Transylvanian communities between 1944 and 1947. These experiences were influenced by the usage of "collective guilt" and "collective punishment" generated in the closing period of the war and the immediate post-WWII era. Also, these experiences structured state – national minorities as well as contending political elites – national minorities relations in immediate post-WWII Romania. After constructing the referential level, based on critical analysis of historical sources, which led us to answer the question of what happened from a historical perspective, we proceeded to build the second, *symbolic level,* aimed to answer the question of

how historical realities are remembered and represented as part of the "collective memory" of the communities involved, integrated in their present-day identity narratives. These representations are also part of the politics of memory discourse of the current political elites, represented by state organised memorial events, educational materials and manuals, media, etc. This part of our analysis is also to argue the relevance of concurring political legitimating discourses, which polluted the context of present-day interpreting of the historical events. The third level of analysis dedicated to these complex phenomena is to focus on their impact on post-1989 *transitional justice and reconciliation process*. That is a very complex issue that might represent the subject of an entire separate study. One must be aware of the relevance of discursive construction of a political community, which is to integrate also the national minorities' perspective of the frequently traumatic common experiences of the 20th century in all Central and Eastern European nation states. By that very complex process of re-evaluating our common past, it is important to identify the victims, as well as the responsible decision-makers and perpetrators, completed by the identifying and legal codifying of rights for reparatory claims. This entire process needs active political will in order to become a strong-built reconciliation process between all parts, and a real "Healing of Memory".

COLLECTIVE TRAUMAS AND CONFLICTING MEMORIES OF SECOND WORLD WAR TRANSYLVANIAN COMMUNITIES

The Hungarians, as well as the German communities (including Saxons and Swabians), were settled mainly in three regions: Transylvania, Partium (a separate region, built mainly of Szatmár and Bihar counties), and Banat, which before 1918 were the Eastern, relatively underdeveloped parts of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. Those regions were incorporated in the Kingdom of Romania after the Peace Conference following the First World War. For the new nation state, these territories were an important source of economic and social modernity, dominated by towns with certain industrial

and communication infrastructure. The rural Transylvania was dominated by the ethnic Romanian community, although the cities and towns were until the second half of the 20th century still dominated by Hungarian, German and Jewish ethnic communities. The rural population was driven by a market-aimed production of goods (using bank loans, networks of associations, transport of goods through railways, etc.) towards preparing the grounds of capitalistic mentalities and bourgeois ways of life in the first decades of the 20th century.

The concurring Hungarian and Romanian nation-building processes and the repeated resettling of the international system in the first half of the 20th century already led to three successive changes of the Hungarian–Romanian borders, directly involving Transylvania: first in 1918–1920, as Transylvania was integrated in the interwar Romania, then in 1940–1944, when Transylvania was split in two halves (Southern Transylvania remained part of Romania, Northern Transylvania was reintegrated in Hungary), and once again in 1944–1947, when Northern Transylvania occupied by the Soviet Army was disputed, and finally regained by Romania. These geopolitical changes led to conflicting experiences of Transylvanian communities. The Romanian elites of Transylvania, confronted with the consequences of the Second Vienna Award (30 August 1940), rethought their priorities in terms of reuniting with their interwar political rivals from the previous decades in order to restore the Romanian nation state's sovereignty over the entire region. As a consequence, the inner Romanian political debate over the controlling of local resources and panels of administrative and political influence was suspended after 1940, and the anti-Hungarian agenda became a national priority.

In the meantime, the Hungarian community in Transylvania had to meet the challenge of being half-cut by the Second Vienna Award: the Northern Transylvanian community had to meet the restoring of Hungarian authority, which was a process not free of diverging perspectives.[1] The post-WWI generations of Transylvanian Hungarians that affirmed their political beliefs in the late 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s were not all embracing the

[1] Sárándi 2016.

conservative beliefs of either the interwar Hungarian National Party[2] or the new post-1940 Hungarian central government and its local representatives. For them, expressing their frustrations towards the social and economic challenges in the 1930s was relevant. The critical narrative sometimes appeared in agrarian, socialist and even communist forms of public discourse. The need for economic and social reform in the once again Eastern peripheries of the Hungarian Kingdom was dominating their agenda. In Southern Transylvania, the local Hungarian community became deposed by all its political and economic influence, without any position to negotiate with the central government: that was a consequence of the post-Second Vienna Award relations between Romania and Hungary, marked by the policy of "coercive reciprocity".[3] That Hungarian community was once again seen by the Romanian central government as an inner source of destabilising the state that had to be put under surveillance and neutralised.

As early as 22 November 1940, Marshal Ion Antonescu declared to Adolf Hitler that Romania was to be a trusted ally of Germany in a war against the Soviet Union.[4] On 22 June 1941, the same political and military leader of Romania gave a daily order to the Romanian Royal Army for specifying that they entered into war with the Soviet Union also in order to regain all territories lost in 1940, especially referring to Northern Transylvania. Later in July 1941, the Romanian Royal Army was ordered to pass the Dniester river and advance on Soviet territory even after regaining the territories lost by Romania a year before. The decision was motivated with the Romanian claim for Northern Transylvania as it could be a result of its loyal dedication in support of Germany's war effort on the Eastern Front of the Second World War.[5] That was the logic that influenced the decision of Hungary to enter into war against the Soviet Union, allied with Germany following 27 June 1941. Hungary and Romania competed for Transylvania as both were allied with Germany in the Second

[2] Murádin 2019.
[3] L. Balogh 2013a; Lönhárt 2008: 157–161.
[4] Constantiniu 2002: 181.
[5] Constantiniu 2002: 98–99.

World War. Both tried to impress their major ally by formulating cries against each other on the basis of negative treatment of nationals subjected by the other state as minorities after the Second Vienna Award. The traumas heightened on the level of local Hungarian and Romanian communities in Transylvania, as in Berlin, there were worried considerations regarding the enmity between their two wartime allies. Romania considered to exit the Second Vienna Award: that was a unilateral decision, officially communicated to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin and Roma on 19 and 29 September 1941.[6] It was followed by the decision to deploy in Transylvania a German–Italian Commission (named Altenburg–Roggeri), which had made inquiries about the claimed atrocities and traumas of the local Romanian and Hungarian communities between 17 and 27 October 1941. In this way, Germany and Italy tried to keep the relation between Hungary and Romania under control.[7] Transylvanian communities were already subjected to the two states' territorial dispute and "coercive reciprocity" policies during the Second World War.

The turn of the military fate against the Axis Powers' alliance on the Eastern Front in 1943 led to parallel secret talks and separate peace projects of both Hungary and Romania, which led to German military occupation plans "Margarethe I" aimed against Hungary, as well as "Margarethe II" against Romania.[8] The first plan was put into action on 19 March 1944, as a result of which Hungary's sovereignty was severely breached.[9]

One of the most severe consequences was the Holocaust in Hungary, the major impact of which was also present in Transylvania, carried out in close cooperation by the Hungarian authorities and the German occupier together from April to July 1944. The role of Prime Minister Döme Sztójay, and its government's ministers and administration servants is unquestionable: László Endre and László Baky[10] were two of those dedicated and convinced

6 L. Balogh 2023b: 152.
7 L. Balogh 2013b: 104–105.
8 Traşcă 2005: 223–228.
9 Ránki 1968.
10 See the most recent analysis in Veszprémy 2019; Kádár–Vági 2013.

anti-Semites whose role in organising and perpetrating the Holocaust are undeniable and convincing for anyone studying the issue. However, decades after the holocaust, the new politics of memory focuses mainly on the German occupier's responsibility, represented on the ground in 1944 by members of the RSHA, led by Edmund Veesenmeyer, especially deployed for coordinating the Holocaust in Hungary, overshadowing the Hungarian state officials' responsibility. The immediate post-war moment was marked by István Bibó's study[11] on the sources and post-1944 presence of anti-Semitism in Hungary after the Holocaust. Decades later, Róbert Győri Szabó could publish an excellent analysis shedding light on the obscure motivation of Communist Party related officials in prolongation and political usage of anti-Semitic convictions and feelings in Hungary after 1945.[12]

At the same time, the Marshal Ion Antonescu-led Romanian political decision-makers decided in late 1943 to end the concentration and labour camps network and repatriate the surviving deportees from the "Trans-Dniestrian" ("Transnistria") territory,[13] a former Soviet Union land under Romanian military occupation, where the Holocaust was organised and perpetrated after 1941.[14] From November 1943 to March 1944 there was a direct effort by the Romanian Government to cover up the Holocaust, which was then only partly revealed by the post-WWII trials on genocide and crimes against humanity.

The only immediate post-WWII monograph on the Holocaust in Romania, authored by Matatias Carp[15] in 1948, never reached the public; it was banned and hidden in the secret fond of state libraries as early as the year of its publication. The copies that had already been sent to bookshops were ordered to be returned and destroyed.[16] In the official post-1948 hegemonic historical narrative imposed by the communist regime, the communists and

[11] Bibó 1986 [1948]: 621–797.
[12] Győri Szabó 1997.
[13] Solonari 2021.
[14] Ioanid 2019: 291–367, for the redeployment of survivors from Transnistria after the end of 1943 see Ioanid 2019: 446–457.
[15] Carp M. 1993 [1948].
[16] Wiesel et al. 2005: 342.

their "fellow travellers" were considered the main victims of the forced labour and extermination policies during the Second World War, thus falsifying the historical truth on the Holocaust. This was the case with the Mihail Roller-led Romanian historical discourse of the Stalinist era, as well.[17] In the later period of the communist regime, the Nicolae Ceauşescu-led new nationalist discourse also eluded to face the reality of the Romanian Holocaust. The Transnistrian scenery was overshadowed by a "historical narrative" in which the Holocaust was present only in Northern Transylvania, carried out by the "Horthyst-Fascist Hungarian occupier". This turned all attention away from what happened in Romania under the Marshal Ion Antonescu-led political regime between 1941 and 1944, identifying only the responsibility of the Hungarians for the Holocaust in 1944. From the late 1970s and through the 1980s, a "selective rehabilitation" and reintegration of ultra-nationalist and often anti-Semitic personalities in the Romanian cultural scenery of the Ceauşescu era took place. In the 1980s, a silent recuperation even of Marshal Ion Antonescu's figure was part of that contorted reality, which provoked the reaction of Soviet officials.[18]

The post-1945 transitional justice was represented by special courts, which were instituted on the basis of the Soviet model, and were named People's Tribunals. With the notable exception of the trial of the leaders of the Marshal Ion Antonescu regime in May 1946, these special courts focused mainly on the Northern Transylvanian Holocaust, and less on the same realities perpetrated under Romanian authority during the Second World War. The press campaign surrounding these trials insisted on the collective guilt of Germans and Hungarians for crimes against humanity and atrocities during the Second World War. Analysing the process of post-war transitional justice, it may be observed that there is a major quantitative difference between the activity of the People's Tribunal in Kolozsvár–Cluj (relevant for the cases

[17] Wiesel et al. 2005: 343–344.

[18] Wiesel et al. 2005: 350–354. See the reactions stirred by Marin Preda's *Delirul*. The works signed by Iosif Constantin Drăgan, Mihai Fătu and Ion Spălățelu, Gheorghe Buzatu are to be focused on for an analysis of these realities of late Romanian Communist regime's narrative on Marshal Ion Antonescu's regime and Holocaust.

regarding Northern Transylvania under Hungarian authority before the fall of 1944), compared with the People's Tribunals for the territories of Romania including Southern Transylvania. The People's Tribunal in Kolozsvár–Cluj had 481 sentences pronounced of which 370 were of Hungarian nationality, 83 of German nationality, 26 Romanians and 2 of Jewish identity (for collaboration), consisting of 30 death penalties and 52 hard labour for life, as also a total of 1,204 years of prison sentences pronounced.[19] That is to be compared with the People's Tribunals for the rest of Romanian territories including Southern Transylvania, with a total of 187 sentences pronounced, 48 death penalties of which only 4 were executed, the others commuted to hard labour for life, most of them pronounced "in absentia" of the convicted persons.[20] For example, at the trial of the responsible individuals for the Odessa and Dalnic pogroms, held at the People's Tribunal in Bucharest and closed on 22 May 1945, only one death sentence was pronounced, later commuted to life prison (for General Macici, who later died in prison in 1950), and the remaining 28 sentences were for prison between one year and for life.[21] Most of those sentenced in the following period of time were released by the amnesties pronounced in 1962 and 1964.[22]

An important element of the post-1989 new politics of memory was the interest of the new generation of historians for the Holocaust in Romania. They reached an important and symbolic success by blocking the public campaign, which aimed to rehabilitate Marshal Ion Antonescu as a "national hero". That campaign was assumed publicly in the 1990s by leading figures of the ultra-nationalist extreme right political parties, also associated with the Ceauşescu regime's propaganda in the last decade of the Communist regime, like Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Adrian Păunescu, Iosif Constantin Drăgan, Gheorghe Buzatu, etc. In 2000, Corneliu Vadim Tudor entered the final turn of Presidential

[19] Wiesel et al. 2005: 320.
[20] Wiesel et al. 2005: 320–321.
[21] Wiesel et al. 2005: 320.
[22] Wiesel et al. 2005: 321.

elections, but his success was blocked by a negative vote, generating electoral gain for its counter-nominee, Ion Iliescu.

As elected President of Romania, the same Ion Iliescu made a decree in 2003 for the establishment of an International Committee Investigating the Holocaust in Romania. The committee led by Elie Wiesel made its Final Report in 2004.[23] Following its official enactment, the Holocaust organised and perpetrated by the Romanian Government between 1941 and 1944 became clear to the public, including the events in Transnistria, the pogroms in Iaşi, Odessa, etc. That event led to a major change in the previously hegemonic discourse, which only focused on the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania. Since 2005, the new politics of memory assumed the responsibility of Romanian nationals for the Holocaust, instituting the study of that historical event in the public education network, editing manuals, supporting also the initiatives of Holocaust Memorials in different cities of Romania.

OBJECTS OF SOVIET POLITICAL INTEREST, SUBJECTS OF COLLECTIVE TRAUMAS AND PUNISHMENTS: TRANSYLVANIAN COMMUNITIES AND THE PASSING OF THE SOVIET MILITARY WAR FRONT

As a direct consequence of the successful turn of sides executed by the Romanian Royal Army, led by King Michael I on 23 August 1944, and the failure of Regent Miklós Horthy-led Hungary to leave the German alliance on 15 October 1944, a state of war occurred between Romania on one side, and Germany allied with Hungary on the other side. Transylvania became the scene of war and destruction.[24]

The passing of the Soviet military war front through Transylvania from September to late October 1944, produced turmoil and collective traumas: people seeking refuge, heading towards West; deportations by the Soviet

[23] Wiesel et al. 2005: 7.

[24] Ravasz 2002.

occupying forces on the basis of ethnic identity of individuals subjected to punishment as a community accused by "collective guilt", such as the case of the German ("Swabian") community deported to the Soviet Union's forced labour camps, mainly in the Donbas area and from the Szatmár region (the historical Northwestern frontier zone of Transylvania);[25] local atrocities which had an ethnically relevant interpretation already in that period, like those involving the so-called Maniu Guards in the region named traditionally Székelyföld – Ținutul Secuiesc (Szeklerland, Eastern part of Transylvania).

Right after the signing by Romania of the Treaty of Armistice with the Allied Powers on 11 September 1944, in the context of active war between Romania on one side and Germany allied with Hungary on the other side, parallel with the advancing of the Soviet and Romanian armies in Transylvania, the General Sănătescu-led Romanian Government had instituted measures for interning in special camps the Hungarian and German male population between the age of 16 to 60 years. That measure had rooted in the decision to enact collective punishment against Germans and Hungarians as "foreign nationals belonging to an enemy power". The Government also considered to withdraw the citizenship of those seeking refuge from the advancing war front in parallel with the withdrawal of German and Hungarian military from Transylvania, identifying them as "presumed enemies" ("inamici prezumați").[26]

The properties and goods of the "presumed enemies" were sequestrated and put under the control of a special commission directly set by the Romanian Government, on the basis of Act 498 of 3 July 1942 regarding the regime of individuals related to enemy states, being at war with Romania. Act 644 of 19 December 1944 completed the series of decrees on Hungarian and German properties and goods that entered under Romanian state control, which remained as such even when those seeking refuge returned to Transylvania after the passing of the war front, becoming subjects of collective punishment. As a direct consequence, an important part of the Hungarian and German communities lost all resources for living, and they were also excluded from

[25] Pintilescu 2020: 421–427; Baier 2019: 149–172; Gheorghiu 2019: 173–186.
[26] Vincze 1999: 29–32; Vinţeler–Tetean 2014: 346–347.

the land reform enacted in Romania on 23 March 1945. All the properties of Hungarian and German individuals, together with all state-owned properties of Hungary and Germany came under the control of the CASBI (Casa Bunurilor Inamice – House of Enemy Goods), an institution organised officially by Decree 91/1945 of 10 February 1945.[27]

Through complementary legislative measures issued on 25 April 1945, the new Communist-led government of Petru Groza maintained the control instituted by CASBI, and the loss of properties and goods owned by individuals who were seeking refuge from Northern Transylvania in Fall 1944, even if they returned to the region in 1945. The economic effects of instituting collective punishment against the Hungarian and German communities in Transylvania lasted at least until 1953 – a period when the nationalisation of properties had already been enacted in Communist-led Romania. In this way, all goods were definitely lost by those who suffered of the consequences of the collective discriminatory legislation instated in 1944–1945.

The passing of the war front led to other collective traumas, which were later used by the Soviet Union in its direct political interest. Following the advance of the Soviet Army in Sepsiszentgyörgy – Sfântu Gheorghe, Csíkszereda – Miercurea Ciuc, Gyergyószentmiklós–Gheorghieni (September 1944), Marosvásárhely – Târgu Mureş (in early October 1944), the Romanian authorities were already set to be re-instituted. On 10 October 1944, a Commission for the Administration of the Liberated Transylvanian Territories began its activity, led by a close relative of Iuliu Maniu, Ionel Pop, who was nominated by the Romanian Government. On 11 October 1944, as the Soviet Army entered Kolozsvár–Cluj, neither the Romanian Royal Army, nor the representatives of the Romanian administration were allowed by the Soviet Military Commandment to be deployed there.[28] The Soviet authorities later ordered the withdrawing of Romanian local administrative bodies also from the parts of Northern Transylvania, where they were already allowed to settle in September–October 1944. That was followed by the episode

[27] Vincze 2000: 20–23.

[28] Vincze 1999: 30–31.

of special administration of Northern Transylvania under Soviet military authority[29] – which was a side-effect of direct Soviet interfering in the political build-up of Romania beginning with the fall of 1944. The aim of that action was revealed to the central Romanian authorities on 12 November 1944, and it was followed by the claim that the return of Romanian authorities in Northern Transylvania could happen only after a "real democratic" government was set up in Bucharest. The "democratic" nature of that future government had to meet the Soviet criteria, as defined by Stalin.

The question of Transylvania became the tool of political blackmail against the Romanian Government, installed by King Michael after the successful turn of arms on 23 August 1944. With that major event, the traditional political elite could re-legitimate itself, eluding a communist takeover as the Soviet Army advanced through Romania. That evolution had to be "corrected" in favour of Soviet political interests: they sustained the forming of a political coalition led by the Communist Party, which contested the government that resulted from Romania's change of sides of wartime alliances. Paradoxically, the Communist Party was part of the coalition government, and also contesting it through direct action against its local administrative bodies, taking control over the regions of Moldova and Northern Transylvania in the immediate aftermath. By ousting the official Romanian government's administrative bodies, deployed to Northern Transylvania as the war front advanced towards West,[30] the Soviet commandment aimed to use the re-establishment of Romanian authority over that region as a bargaining chip for the establishment of a new, Communist-led government in Romania. This finally materialised on 6 March 1945 by the forming of the Petru Groza cabinet,[31] without any democratic consulting of the Romanian people. That reality conflicted with the terms of the Yalta Agreement concluded by the Allies on 11 February 1945.

[29] For the special administration set under Soviet Military control in Northern Transylvania see Sălăgean 2002; Țârău 2005; Nagy–Vincze 2004; Lönhárt 2008: 166–179.

[30] Vinţeler–Tetean 2014: 302–306.

[31] Țârău 2005.

Analysing the historical records regarding that period of time, which directly impacted the inter-ethnic realities in Northern Transylvania, one has to observe that the Soviet military commandment had referred to anti-Hungarian atrocities in direct relation to the decision taken to oust the already set Romanian administration from Northern Transylvania.[32] Those events are also represented in the collective memory of the Hungarian community as a collective trauma that marked its identity narrative since 1944 – recalled as the terror of the "Maniu Guards". The most known atrocities happened in Szárazajta – Aita Seacă, Csíkszentdomokos– Sândominic, the wave of terror later reaching Egeres–Aghireş (Kolozs–Cluj county) and Gyanta–Ginta (Bihar–Bihor) county. The Maniu Guards constituted also the subject of an investigation at Romanian government level, as Prime Minister General Sănătescu directly questioned Ionel Pop, the leader of the Commission for Establishment of the Romanian Administration in the Liberated Territories of Transylvania, already at the meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 13 November and then on 20 November 1944.[33] The events reconstructed by the historians, revealed in studies published after 2006, show that in the first weeks of September 1944, in the pages of the Romanian Peasant Party-related periodicals named *Tribuna* and *Ardealul,* a series of articles were published, which instigated for a revenge campaign against the Hungarian community in Northern Transylvania.[34] In September 1944, already 9 paramilitary units of "volunteers" were formed in Brassó–Braşov, Bucureşti, Petrozsény–Petroşani.[35] The editors of the periodical *Ardealul* had the initiative to form the Iuliu Maniu Corp of Volunteers, led by Mihai Popovici and Ionel Anton Mureşeanu. Constantin Puşcariu, Gabriel Ţepelea, Corneliu Coposu, Leon Botişiu and Ion Groşanu were also involved in the organising activity. According to the periodical *Ardealul,* the Corps of "Volunteers" was re-uniting 5,400 individuals; other sources mentioned an even

[32] The Official Record of the meeting of the General Sănătescu-led Government on 13 November 1944. In Ciucă 2012: 164–177.

[33] See the official records in Ciucă 2012: 164–181, 270–271, 274–275, 283.

[34] Benkő 2012: 119.

[35] Benkő 2012: 119.

greater number, 17,000.[36] Between 1 September and 17 October 1944, several armed groups of volunteers were directed towards the Hungarian-inhabited Northern Transylvanian territories, led by unit leaders Cornel Bobancu, Ion Groşanu, Captain Bădulescu, Mihail Depărăţeanu, Alexandru Rupa, Constantin Dudescu, "lieutenants" Barză, Marieş and Nestor, etc.[37] In the meantime, the periodical *Desrobirea,* edited by Valer Ceuca, supported by Victor Cerghi Pop and Eugen Sibianu,[38] related to the re-established Romanian authorities in Northern Transylvania, began a press campaign for a sustained military action against Hungarian "partisans" in the back of the already advanced war front, followed by the actions of the "volunteer units" of former gendarmes and policemen fled from Northern Transylvania to the territory that remained under Romanian sovereignty after 1940. The historical records have shown that the "volunteer unit" led by Gavrilă Olteanu was directly involved in the atrocities against Hungarian civilians in Szárazajta – Aita Seacă, Csíkszentdomokos–Sândominic, Gyergyószentmiklós–Gheorghieni, which set an atmosphere of a "reign of terror" in the Székelyföld – Ţinutul Secuiesc.[39]

These circumstances, marked by collective trauma experienced by the Hungarian community in Transylvania, were even decades later interpreted by the collective memory of that community as a historical moment when they became existentially threatened. The traumas were not outspoken, and were not followed by steps of representative leaders of the Romanian national majority towards symbolic exemption by and reconciliation with the Hungarian community, prior to 1989.

Already in late 1944, the intervention of the Soviet military commandment, motivated by its political interest, created the perception among the Hungarian community that its existential interest was saved by the Soviet interfering. After that, the Soviet military intervention led to a successful political blackmail, instituting in March 1945 a Communist-led government in Romania. A new

[36] Benkő 2012: 120.
[37] Benkő 2012: 120.
[38] Benkő 2006: 214.
[39] Benkő 2006: 214–221; Benkő 2012: 122–126, 130–134.

discourse emerged on the collective traumas experienced in Transylvania in the fall of 1944. The Romanian Communists were to be identified as a political partner for the Hungarian minority's representatives, as well as the warrantors of Romanian national interest, because they succeeded in re-establishing Romanian sovereignty over the entire region of Transylvania after March 1945. At the Peace Conference of Paris in 1946, the Soviet Union sustained the Romanian new government as a rightful sovereign and a warrantor of the inter-ethnic pacifying in Transylvania. That discourse was mirrored by the Hungarian community's pro-Communist leaders' narrative after 1945.

The memory of the atrocities made by the "Maniu Guards", and the claim for moral justice for the victims were an important part of the post-1989 identity narrative of the Hungarian national minority's representative leaders in Romania. There were also public efforts to integrate the memory of those events as part of a new post-communist politics of memory. The publishing of a White Book[40] regarding the collective traumas of the 1944–1945 period, edited by Hungarian intellectuals after the new atrocities, which happened in March 1990 in Marosvásárhely – Târgu Mureş, was an important part of the symbolic discourse of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. Memorials were to be inaugurated only after one more decade in public squares of the localities where the atrocities had happened.

Stalin rewarded the establishment of a Communist-led government in Romania by deciding to return Northern Transylvania under the sovereignty of the Romanian state, announced by his telegram issued on 9 March 1945. That historical moment was symbolically marked by the Communist-led government's first meeting on 13 March 1945 in Kolozsvár–Cluj. The festivities dedicated to the "return of Transylvania to Romania" were set in the presence of King Michael, and the delegations of the embassies of the Allied Powers. On that occasion, a memorandum was handed to Petru Groza arguing for the integration of already set regional self-governing bodies in the new Romanian state administrative system. It showed that one of the indirect consequences

[40] Gál et al. 1995.

of the Soviet ingerence in 1944–1945 was the flourishing of an autonomist discourse in Northern Transylvania, an important idea in the agenda of the post-war local Hungarian elite. Parallel with the idea of a possible partial revision of the Hungarian–Romanian borders at a future peace conference, some of the Hungarian leaders showed a certain interest for territorial autonomy, viewed as an administrative solution for integrating the part of the Hungarian community, which was to remain in Romania.

In 1945, a new legitimising discourse was inaugurated by the Communist-led government in Romania: it promoted the government as the "pacifier" of inter-ethnic relations, representing "warranty for real democracy and peaceful integration" of the Hungarian community, and for the legal codifying of its collective rights in the future – an illusion projected by the official propaganda on all its channels. That led to the myth of a Communist-led new regime representing a trustful political ally for the Hungarian community, and of Prime Minister Petru Groza "a true friend of the Hungarians".[41]

But the CASBI was functioning unaltered after the Communist-led government was established in Romania. Act 645 of 14 August 1945 stipulated that even those who had been Romanian citizens prior to the Second Vienna Award (30 August 1940), and who had been seeking refuge in Northern Transylvania, even if they never renounced their Romanian citizenship, were not to automatically regain their right to their properties. Instead, they were to be paid by the new owners a price set in very inflated 1945 currency that worth nothing as compared with the nominal value of the properties lost.[42]

In contrast, the traditional Romanian political parties – forming the political opposition to the establishment of the communist regime, and first of all the Iuliu Maniu-led Romanian Peasants' Party – was the subject of political propaganda, which demonised them as "war mongers", "blood thirsty", "ultra-nationalist", "pro-Fascist" and "xenophobic". This image served well the Communist-led government in isolating, de-legitimising, then eliminating its main opposition from public life. That discourse, referring to the "Maniu

[41] Vincze 1999: 71–77.

[42] Robotos 1997: 78.

Guards", led to the idea that the National Peasants' Party and its leader Iuliu Maniu were responsible for the ousting of the Romanian authorities from Northern Transylvania by the Soviet Military Commandment in Fall 1944. In turn, the Communist-led coalition was the only warranty for regaining the entire Transylvania by Romania after the Second World War.

The trial of Marshal Ion Antonescu and the leaders of the wartime political regime was an important part of the post-1945 transitional justice. The Communist-led government was concerned by the possibility of symbolically associating the political parties of the opposition with the belated wartime regime accused of treason, economic disaster, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and collaboration with the German wartime "occupier" of Romania. That political aim was served by calling Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the National Peasants' Party to testify in front of the People's Tribunal in that trial held in May 1946.[43]

In the time between the election fraud of 19 November 1946 and the ousting of King Michael of Romania on 30 December 1947, the communists eliminated the political opposition. Iuliu Maniu and the leaders of the National Peasants' Party were caught in a trap set in June 1947 by the communist-controlled Secret Services. They were arrested and attempted to leave Romania and form a government in exile. From that moment on, Iuliu Maniu and the National Peasants' Party was accused with "conspiring against National interest", "serving foreign power interference".[44] After that moment, leading representatives of the new political regime stated publicly that the same leader of the political opposition was involved also with the atrocities in Northern Transylvania in the fall of 1944. For decades, that became part of the discourse aimed to de-legitimise Maniu's political legacy, and to frame a negative image of the political alternative to the Communist-led government as part of the enduring politics of memory. In this way, the entire public discourse for at least four decades was set to change the collective memory of the Romanians in accordance with the interest of the communist regime.

[43] See the deposition of Iuliu Maniu in the trial of Marshal Ion Antonescu in Cracă 1995: 261–302.

[44] Ciucă 2001.

THE HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN ROMANIA

Public opinion about the collective traumas experienced by the Hungarian community in Romania in the times of the communist regime was overshadowed by the post-1989 discourse, which had established a reinterpreting of history in which the Hungarian community was directly involved in and benefited of the establishment of a Communist-led government in 1944–1945. There was no place for the sufferings and collective traumas of the Hungarians, which were dominant elements of that community's collective memory regarding the decades of the belated Romanian communist regime.

The new politics of memory as set after December 1989 was dominated by a discourse that identified those responsible for the establishment and perpetrating of a totalitarian regime as being foreign to the Romanian nation: the Soviet occupier, as also Hungarian and Jewish ethnic minority-related elements. According to that discourse, the Romanian ethnic majority was identified primarily with the role of the victim.

The analysis of the historical process that led to the establishing of a communist regime in Romania, assuming the responsibility of representatives belonging to the Romanian ethnic majority, and integrating in that new discourse also the collective traumas and suffering experienced by the national minorities of Romania between 1944 and 1989, was inaugurated after entering the new millennia. After winning the elections of 2004, the new President of Romania, Traian Băsescu set by a presidential decree a Committee for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania. The Final Report of that Presidential Committee was edited in 2006. It was to be the central document of a legislative act, which identified the communist regime as criminal, which led to the reinterpreting of legal responsibilities, also of the necessity of moral and material compensations for the victims.

That moment marked also the end of the former politics of memory, which had put the responsibility for the communist regime on national minorities and led to a more well-balanced and historical evidence based narrative on

the realities of that era. However, the role played by a part of the Hungarian political representatives in the establishment of the communist regime in Romania between 1944 and 1947 is still a controversial issue in contemporary historiography. As there is interest to analyse the political options of the representatives of the Hungarian national minority in post-WWII Romania, one must not overlook that the local Hungarian community's experiences in first half of the 20th century, having been for the first time integrated in the new Romanian nation state, have also influenced the community's post-1944 identity discourse and perspectives.

Between 1918 and 1922, the traditional leaders of the Hungarian community were set to build an organisation, which was conceived as a representative, integrating and inner structuring frame of all the community: the Hungarian Union, holding the economic, social and political functions of the former Hungarian state institutions, a representative and an integrative body in constitutional terms of the Hungarian community in the new Romanian a state. The Hungarian Union was not to be reduced to the status of a political party, but it was designed to integrate the Hungarians from the territories of the new Greater Romania as a state-constituting national community with collective rights. Also, it had to integrate the different plural political options of the Hungarian community, serving as an "inner parliament" of that national community. The leaders of the Hungarian community wanted to claim collective rights granted by the new Wilsonian world order. But the Hungarian Union was banned by the Romanian Government, and the Hungarian community's political integration had to be reframed on the basis of a political party: the Hungarian National Party (Országos Magyar Párt).

The Hungarian elites were constantly attentive towards the traditional churches and the educational system in the native language as the two main pillars of a strategy of ensuring the cultural reproduction of the community. There was no legal frame for keeping the Hungarian-language schools within the general state-subsidised educational system in the interwar Romania – the state granted and organised only Romanian-language education for all citizens. Education in the Hungarian language became possible only as a tolerated

network of schools subsidised by the traditional churches, assimilated as a secondary structure of private education without the right to graduation and issuing diplomas. Under these circumstances, the traditional churches of the Hungarian community had to organise and sustain the educational system in Hungarian language, the main pillar of the cultural reproduction of the very identity of that community.

The radical land reform introduced in Romania also had its impact, furthering a generalised sense of instability and frustrations.

The Hungarian elites in Transylvania were following with interest the tensions between the local Romanian elites vs. the central political and administrative elites in the interwar years. The local Romanian elites were frustrated by gradually losing control over the region's resources, frustrated by the policies of the ruling National Liberal Party centralising policies. Organised around the old cadres of the Romanian National Party, a representative structure of the ethnic Romanians of Transylvania, led by Iuliu Maniu, united with the National Peasants' Party in 1926, and created the main opposition force to the ruling National Liberal Party. But they could form government only after the economic depression had harshly impacted Romania, claiming decentralised administration, pro-middle class economic policies, and favouring a new agrarian-industrial profile for the economy, with a certain openness to the Western financial investors. After 1932, due to the interventions of King Charles II and marked by inner conflicts, the National Peasants' Party had definitely lost ground in front of the national centralising elites, and an increasingly authoritarian monarchy.

The 1930s also witnessed the rise of political radicalism, including not only radical right-wing organisations, but also the communist party and its "fellow travellers". That ideological projection was evaluated by some Hungarian intellectuals as an opportunity for eluding the clash between antagonist nationalisms, identified as such through the lenses of their own specific interpretations of Soviet reality, constructed on the basis of propaganda resources. Before the Second World War, Marxism–Leninism was embraced as a political discourse of challenging the authority of the state. The political ideas of the

Transylvanian rooted political activists of the Communist Party were deeply embedded in the illusory image of equalitarian socialism and of a vision about a Soviet Union learned from propaganda leaflets. They believed that after the setting of a Communist regime, the country will be the home of peacefully coexisting nations. They believed in the model of the Soviet Union, but they were seduced by a political propaganda set image of a never existing "reality".[45]

The post-1945 realities of Romania were defined first of all by the process of political regime change, and the subsequent social, economic and cultural transformations, which had their impact through a wide range of empiric experiences on every part of the contemporary society. These experiences included dislocation, restriction, persecution, limitation, mobilisation, indoctrination, etc. All that process developed under the aegis of coercive measures of a gradually established totalitarian regime. These transformations between 1945 and 1947 led to a centralised totalitarian state, following the Soviet model, enacted through policies that after 1948 had their impact on all parts of the society, including individuals belonging to national minorities in Romania.

However, the first direct experiences in 1944–1945, after the passing of the Soviet war front, were perceived in a very different register. Initially, the communist leaders put in place a so-called National Front strategy, announcing a program of post-war national rebuilding, combined with a call for unaltered sovereignty over the regained territories, and a new land reform (enacted on 23 March 1945 by the new Communist-led government) to build their new image anchored in larger Romanian national claims.

In parallel, a new discourse was assumed by the new Communist-led government: Petru Groza, an important representative of the new regime, propagated a discourse about assuming the integration of different national minorities, preserving their collective identity through state-subsidised educational and cultural institutions, codifying these national minorities collective rights as part of a future political reality, and even the confederating of all neighbouring nation states and the "spiritualisation of the frontiers".[46]

[45] Vincze 1999: 263–269; Lönhárt 2008: 140–147.

[46] Lönhárt 2008: 227–248.

The Communist Party also devoted considerable attention to mobilising different parts of the society through mass organisations, representing various groups, which still nurtured the representation of their particular interests, by integrating them into a system of goals suitable to the criteria of the National Front strategy. The Hungarian People's Union (Magyar Népi Szövetség, hereinafter MNSZ) – a mass organisation of the Communist Party – was actively supported to gain a hegemonic position inside the Hungarian community. The Communist Party treated the MNSZ as the only representative organisation of the Hungarians, whereas the leaders of the MNSZ intended to use the collaboration with the Communist-led government for promoting their interest to represent the Hungarian national minority in a Communist-led new Romania. They were controlled and directed from within by members of the Communist Party of Romania, present in the leadership of the MNSZ, and by outside pressure paired with the insistence on unity of interest, as well as various obliging gestures.

The leaders of the MNSZ tried to build a certain political capital by offering support to the Communist-led coalition in the key moment of late 1945, when the new Communist-led government of Romania, set up as a result of Soviet political pressure and direct political interference, was put under international pressure for not being representative. The MNSZ released an official positioning act, edited on 17 November 1945 in Marosvásárhely – Târgu Mureş, which recognised the unaltered Romanian sovereignty over all territories regained in 1944–1945, claiming that the interests of the Hungarian community inhabiting also those territories were best to be served by granting rights and institutionalising the integration of the national minority in the new "real democratic" constitutional-legal frame of Romania.

The new Communist-led government, aiming to elude any discussions on a partial revision of borders at the following peace conference, switched the paradigm of public debate to a political and legal integrating of the Hungarian ethno-cultural minority in Romania. These were the motivating ideas behind the public narrative of the Groza Government on institutionalising collective

rights and integrating the network of educational and cultural institutions of the Hungarian community in Romania before 10 February 1947.

That strategic collaboration was later evaluated as having been exceptionally beneficial for the Hungarian community.[47] The official discourse on optimising inter-ethnic relations had been promoted instead of the traditional territorial controversies, institutionalising through the new constitutional-legal framework the collective rights of ethnic Hungarians, guaranteeing representation and equal status for that community by political means in Romania.

The Hungarian-language educational network, subsidised by the Romanian state, was also institutionalised in the immediate post-war years (including the establishment of the Bolyai University of Kolozsvár–Cluj). That was seen as of vital importance for the cultural reproduction of the Hungarian community in Romania.

For all that in change, the MNSZ offered an official declaration on behalf of the Hungarian community in Transylvania, integrated in the documentation presented by the Romanian delegates at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946. By that strategic alliance, they succeeded to build up and preserve an entire network of cultural and economic institutions, to position their representatives in the administrative bodies at local and regional level, and to change an important part of the legislation regarding the minority's interest.

These were the cornerstones of their plan to integrate the Hungarian national minority in the post-1945 Romania. In that regard, the MNSZ was a double faced political organisation: on the one hand, it assumed the representation of a national minority, on the other hand, it served as a mass organisation of the Communist Party, inducing the mobilisation of the Hungarian community for sustaining the new regime. That second function, which gradually became the single relevant identity after the political regime change became consolidated.

In the meantime, the Communist leaders changed their paradigm and became very interested in building a new Romanian national legitimacy. The party changed its name already in October 1945 (from the Communist Party of

[47] For an evaluation of the Groza Government's policies towards the Hungarian community see Lönhárt 2008: 227–301.

Romania to Romanian Communist Party), and received the ethnic Romanian worker Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej as its new leader, nominated by Stalin, as the group of leaders who recently returned from Moscow stepped back for a while. Part of that new image of the Romanian Communist Party was also the idea that it had regained Transylvania for Romania. That was reinforced by the government's active engagement in dissolving the special administrative structures built under the Soviet military controlled administration of Northern Transylvania, stigmatising the autonomist group, consisting mainly of left-wing Hungarian intellectuals, social-democrats and communists (represented by Lajos Jordáky, István Lakatos and Géza Pásztai, etc.).[48]

An unpredicted reality was the activation of political opposition to the leaders of the MNSZ after the act of official positioning issued on 17 November 1945. That declaration regarding the Transylvanian question unleashed a wave of protest in the first half of 1946. The "internment camps" instituted in the fall of 1944 were still not disbanded – the one set in Barcaföldvár–Feldioara, near Brassó–Braşov, led to an increased state of anxiety and indignation that marked the post-war Hungarian public opinion. The issue of citizenship of those who fled as the war front passed in the fall of 1944 but later returned was still not resolved before 1947. The impact of the new land reform law of 1945 was negatively perceived from the perspective of Hungarian individual, communitarian and institutional interests. The Hungarian properties and goods remained sequestrated on the basis of the CASBI. These realities formed a main stream of Hungarian public opinion that had led to an open demonstration on 30 June 1946 against the leaders of the MNSZ, which promoted their "success" as an ally of the Communist-led government of Romania. That open act of defiance was set as a counter-demonstration to the official closing act of the congress of the MNSZ held in Székelyudvarhely – Odorheiu Secuiesc.

In that moment, inside the Hungarian community all the prerequisites existed for a real public debate on the strategy to be adopted for representing the community interest. These contesting groups organised around the leaders

[48] For a profile of that group see the introductory study to Nagy–Vincze 2004.

of the traditional cultural and economic organisations: Áron Márton, bishop of the Roman Catholic Church of Transylvania, Pál Szász, Ede Korparich, Ádám Teleki, Alajos Boga, Géza Nagy, etc. They had contested the MNSZ's legitimacy as the sole representative of the community. Áron Márton criticised the MNSZ's "success propaganda" as counterproductive and opposed publicly the communist regime's educational policies.[49] There were also contacts with the traditional Romanian political parties – the National Peasants' Party and the National Liberal Party –, which remained sporadic, and the negotiations for an agreement before the 1946 elections were unfinished.

But those who represented alternative positioning had never reunited; they were kept on the periphery of the official media, and soon eliminated from public life. They failed to counterbalance the overwhelming influence in the public media of the MNSZ sustained by the Communist-led government, which kept dealing with the alternative groups from a dominant position. In the end, the MNSZ succeeded in gaining the votes of the majority of the Hungarian community at the elections held on 19 November 1946. The leaders of that mass organisation were changed, those who raised real concerns – as Gyárfás Kurkó, the first President of the MNSZ – were eliminated, subjected to political repression. The later nominated leaders remained loyal to the Romanian Communist Party until the dissolving of the organisation in 1953.

By signing the peace treaties in Paris on 10 February 1947, the unaltered sovereignty of the Romanian state upon the entire territories lost to Hungary in 1940 was once again re-established. The Communist-led new People's Republic of Romania was set up as soon as the monarchy was abolished, and King Michael of Romania was dethroned on 30 December 1947. After that moment, the Hungarian community's economic, cultural and social associations came under the control of the MNSZ, which was reduced to the role of a Communist-led mass organisation. These structures were gradually dissolved in the centralised structures of the party-state.

[49] See also Marton–Nemes 1996: 139–151; Fülöp–Vincze 1998: 60; Lönhárt 2008: 318–320.

That was happening in parallel with the process of redefining the new institutional cadres set to integrate the Hungarian minority in the new People's Republic of Romania: after adopting the 1948 constitution, an administrative reform following the Soviet model was introduced. The country was divided into regions and their subdivisions, the "raions" in 1950–1951. Then, as a structural part of a new 1952 Constitution, a Hungarian Autonomous Region was established in 1952. That meant that in Romania, the Soviet model of "administrative integration" of the Hungarian national minority was introduced as a consequence of the consolidation of the communist regime. All illusions of the post-1944 transitory period were fading, as frustration heightened because of the new social, economic and cultural policies of the one party-state in Romania.

The leaders of the Romanian Communist Party decided that the institutionalisation of control over the Hungarian national minority had to enter a new phase, which meant: total subordination that was to be carried out in the shortest time possible. The MNSZ – since it could not set its own agenda of representing the Hungarian minority, and it could act only as a "mass organisation" for mobilising the Hungarian community to engage in the project of a "new society" – was finally forced to disappear in 1953. That was the logical conclusion of a newly established totalitarian regime that considered its primary interest the annihilation of any alternative source of legitimacy and autonomous identity, be it collective or individual.

In the trials set on stage in 1949 and again in 1952, members of the communist leadership also became victims of the repression, along with the leading personalities of the traditional political, ecclesiastical, economic, cultural elite. One can see the parallel between the imprisonment and trial of Áron Márton, the Roman Catholic bishop of Transylvania, and Gyárfás Kurkó, former leader of the MNSZ. From that moment on, the one-party system, the party-state's central government and its local bodies were to be the only institutional cadres for any political representation.

The nature of the Romanian political regime throughout the 1950s remained in its key elements a Stalinist totalitarian regime, most influenced by the Soviet

model.[50] The forced industrialisation and urbanisation process, mainly consisting of planned re-location of a major part of the population from the rural landscape to the new urban peripheries, settled in state owned new quarters of blocks-of-flats, working in state-owned new industrial plants, was the core of transforming a dominantly rural society into an industrialised socialist society. That was coupled with a "cultural revolution", which aimed to create a "new communist conscience" – based on class identity, and solidarity with the Soviet Union – to be institutionalised as a hegemonic identity narrative of the society. The end of the communist social engineering project had to be the creation of a "new man", anchored in a "new working class", subject of the new "socialist society". Establishing centralised state control over the educational and cultural institutions was carried out as part of a developing "cultural revolution" that had to meet the main aims of social engineering plans. That also entailed the de-structuring of all traditional cultural and educational institutions, and eliminating the traditional cultural elites and value system. All of that, as part of the social engineering process, had to result in a new society of individuals, dispossessed from all means to preserve and reproduce their traditionally inherited identities and values.

Projected and planned through the hegemonic control of the party-state, that process also led to a total intolerance by the ruling power elite towards traditional national symbols, as well as religious, regional and local identities, as alternative sources of a self-defining collective identification.

In concordance with that ideologically-based plan of social engineering, the Hungarian minority was to be redefined not as a community with a self-organising dimension and subject to collective rights, but as a set of individuals viewed as citizens of the new Romanian People's Republic. All citizens were projected as one political nation, constructed of individuals with an identity defined only according to the ideological categories of "social class" and "class warfare". Regarding the cornerstones of that new identity narrative, the syntagm "national in form, socialist in content" defined precisely the relation between

[50] Tismăneanu 2005.

the values to be assimilated by all members of the society, and the national language and culture, tolerated only as forms of communicating the new content. The outcome had to be a mass society identified with the ideological call, integrated in the "socialist nation" without any specific individual or collective differentiation. The only specificity of language – the members of the former Hungarian national minority being referred to as "Hungarian-speaking workers" in the second stage of the communist regime in Romania – was to be tolerated for a transitory period on the road to communism.

CONCLUSIONS

By analysing the role and the complex relation of different representative groups of the Hungarian community to the establishment and consolidation of the communist regime in Romania, one has to observe the discrepancy between the facts confirmed by the analysis of the historical records, showing plural options and opposing political actions, and the discursive collective blaming of that same national minority as a whole of being responsible for the setting of that totalitarian regime. The author of this present study considers that one cannot conclude based on the tactical motivation of a group of the political representatives of that Hungarian community in 1944–1945, even if they gained a dominant position in relation to other groups inside the Hungarian community, that the nominated national minority had embraced or benefited only of the establishment of the communist regime in Romania. On the contrary, by analysing the historical records, one has to realise that there were collaborators and victims within the Hungarian community, and the final logic of the process itself meant the elimination of the representatives of that community's interest in the paradigm of a totalitarian communist regime. The repressive dimension is also relevant regarding the Hungarian community, already in the 1950s, which intensified in the later decades, before 1989, with the Nationalist Neo-Stalinist self-legitimation of the system. As a concluding idea, we have to see the complexity of options and trajectories of

groups and individuals under the new communist regime, equally relevant for the Romanian society, as well as for the Hungarian minority. Collective guilt and blaming based on ethnicity is totally non-relevant and in contradiction with the historical records-based analysis of the establishment and functioning of the communist regime.

As analysing the current historiography, one has to assess the post-2006 turn, which led to a much complex and fair view of the historical realities. The current general view of the most recent analysis stated that individuals and groups of the Hungarian community as a national minority, as also those belonging to the Romanian national majority itself, can be both identified with victims and also the perpetrators of the Communist regime – a historical reality which is to be assumed in its complexity. Assuming publicly that historical reality is a prerequisite for a reconciliation process to become possible.

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