
Béla Pomogáts

Post war search for ways and loosing them

Abstract

Following the coup of 23 August 1944 – almost within hours - the Romanian army joined the Soviet Army invading the country and together with them participated in the military actions against Hungary. The new leaders in Bucharest accepted to hand over power of the eastern Romanian territories to the Soviet Union well aware of the fact that they would be able to seize the entire Transylvania. The Romanian government thus had a complete historical victory: repeating the achievements after World War I. they finished World War II. again with the victors; though with heavy losses could reconstruct Great Romania created after WW.I.

Historical changes

A new turn in the fate of the Hungarians of Transylvania could be expected in the third year of WWII. after the heavy defeats of the German army and their allies on the Eastern front. Nichifor Crainic, the editor of the right-wing periodical *Gîndire*, later to become the minister of propaganda of the Antonescu government, formerly in good contact with Hungarian authors, after the war as an extreme right-wing politician spending almost 20 years in prison, still wrote enthusiastically in his memoirs published in 1991 about the military determination of the German Reich and how appreciatively Hitler mentioned the determination of the Romanian army.¹

The Bucharest government (like the Budapest one too) wanted to call for an armistice from the western powers, especially in consideration of the British prime minister, Winston Churchill's idea, the plan of the advance of the British – US armies in the Balkans, especially to

¹ Nichifor Crainic: *Zile albe, zile negre. Memorii*. Bucuresti, 1991, Durandin, Catherine: *A román nép története*. Ford. Saly Noémi, Szántó Judit, Tófalusi Ágnes. Budapest, 1998. 304

forestall the Soviet army and prevent their occupation of the whole territory of Central and Eastern Europe. This otherwise promising plan faltered on the determined resistance of the Soviet government and the leniency of the Americans and soon was abandoned; by the spring of 1944 it became evident that the Soviet Union would occupy Central Europe. This was the time when the conditions of armistice offered to Romania were decided. The conditions were: 1. Romania was to cut off every connection with Germany and the Romanian army was to participate in the military operations on the side of the allied forces. 2. Romania was to reconstruct the Romanian – Soviet borders drawn by the 1940 agreement . 3. the Soviet Union found the Vienna agreement unjust and is ready to lead a campaign together with the Romanians against Hungary and Germany, to give back Transylvania or part of it to Romania.²

The events followed one another in speed: in August 1944 the Soviet army broke through the Romanian front and started its offensive against Bucharest. Urged by his military and political counsellors King Michael decided to dismiss Antonescu from power and accepting the conditions given by Moscow concluded an armistice with the Soviet Union. Antonescu, misjudging the possible reactions of the military staff and army, believed that the young monarch would not be able to make the military power line up with him. This event led to the 23. August coup; the soldiers supporting the king took the marshal in custody – though up to this point he inevitably enjoyed authority and power. General Sanatescu formed a government that immediately called for an armistice from the Soviet government and the western allies. The Romanian army went over to the Soviet army within hours and together they participated in the military events against Hungary. The new Bucharest authority agreed to give up the eastern territories of Romania and new well that the whole of Transylvania will be theirs. It is true the relationship between the Soviet command and the Romanian army and administration was not the best; the Soviet soldiers did not make much difference between allies and enemies. The Bucharest government could boast with another historical success: at the end of both world wars managed to be at the

² Durandin, Catherine op.cit. p. 313

side of the victors and though with losses but reconstructed Great Romania created after WWI.

The politicians and generals grouped around the king turned the Romanian army against their former ally, nevertheless could not retain their power; in the first government following the change of sides there was the representative of the Communist party and King Michael was forced to form a government with Petru Groza as its head that enjoyed the confidence of Soviet leaders. In the course of the November 1946 elections the mandates were divided between the left wing association (347), the National Peasants' Party lead by Maniu (33), the Liberals (only 3); during the elections there were severe frauds (in several constitutions the ballot boxes were simply stolen and the counts came from different ones). The Communists took over the power and soon King Michael had to leave the country; first the leaders of the right-hand parties were imprisoned then those of the social-democrats too (Maniu among them) and Romania came under the rule of a Soviet type Communist party. All this was similar what happened in the other Eastern European countries. In Romania too the non-Communist politicians were executed, imprisoned or pushed out of power even those Communist leaders (e.g. Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, Ana Pauker and the Hungarian origin Vasile Luca) who stood in the way of the 'Sovietization' of the country or were merely assumed to do so.³ Finally the power went to the simplistic thinking Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej who very carefully tried to loosen the bonds between Bucharest and Moscow. This all defined the situation of Hungarians of Transylvania who soon found themselves at the bedrocks of their history and though they have achieved important results in the past two decades they could not completely make up for their losses in the rapidly arriving dictatorial era.

The Soviet army and the large (about 200 thousand strong) Romanian one occupied the region of Transylvania and Seklerland, re-annexed to Hungary in 1940, within a couple of month. At the beginning of September the Hungarian military command made a desperate effort to obstruct the immensely superior force by advancing

³ Lucrețiu Patrascanu was executed in 1954, Ana Pauker was expelled from the Party in 1952, Vasile Luca was imprisoned in 1952; later all three of them were rehabilitated.

to the Carpathians; the attempt quickly failed and the Hungarian army (2. and 3. army) reaching Torda and Temesvár respectively was destroyed by the Soviet armoured units. The Hungarians cleared out of Kolozsvár on the request of several leading members of Transylvanian Hungarian public life, especially that of Count Béla Teleki, thus the capital of Transylvania fell into the hands of the occupying Soviet and Romanian army without harm. The combined army had already occupied Seklerland at the beginning of September and by the end of the month they entered Hungary at Battonya and Makó through the borders delineated in the Paris agreement in 1922. The Romanian army as the auxiliary of the Soviets were participating in the military activities in the territories of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Germany too. They behaved the same way as the Soviets did with violent actions against civilians and looting. This did not help the matters in the Hungarian – Romanian relationship that otherwise was promoted by the Romanian leadership and especially by prime minister Petru Groza.

The Soviet and Romanian army marching into Transylvania were followed by irregular armed forces, the so-called Maniu guard that terrorized the inhabitants in Seklerland and the Partium, e.g. in Egeres and Szárazajta in Co. Kolozs axed down the Hungarians and mass murdered civilians in Gyanta, Co. Arad. (this incident were depicted in Pál Köteles's novel *Hotel Kárpátia* published in 1989). The incoming Romanian administration too terrorized the Hungarian and German inhabitants, many thousands of them were taken to concentration camps, one of which was the notorious one in Földvár in Co. Brassó; the Soviet army too deported Hungarians and Germans to the lagers east of the Carpathians. One of the many victims of this time was the talented young scholar László Mikecs whose memory has been preserved by the poem *Álom-rekviem* [Dream requiem] by Zoltán Jékely. In the last months of the war the Hungarians of Transylvania had more casualties than during the entire war; the Germans (Saxons) of Transylvania, whose men of military age, but many women too, were deported to the inner regions of the Soviet Union; they could never recover these losses.

The Hungarians living in Transylvania, but the entire Hungary itself, were defenceless during the events happening at the end of the war. The armistice with Romania of August still allowed for some

leeway for the Hungarian foreign policy when it promised 'part of Transylvania' to the Romanians. There were plans prepared in the Hungarian prime minister's office and ministry of foreign affairs about the possibilities of preserving at least a small region, e.g. Nagyvárad, Szatmárnémeti and Zilah and to gain guarantee of the self-government for Seklerland in the peace agreement. The ideas failed because Romania was strategically important territory in the south-eastern Europe for the Soviet Union that wanted Romania compensate for the eastern areas annexed to the Soviet Union, moreover since the spring of 1945 there was a Soviet-friendly Communist government in power – all in all a more important partner than Hungary where a bourgeois government was elected with great majority. At first the western powers, that during the war rejected the second Vienna decision as one made by their enemies, Germany and Italy, showed willingness to re-draw the borders delineated in Trianon in Hungary's favour. Finally they decided not to start fruitless debates with the Soviet Union about a region they had already accepted as the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Thus the peace agreement signed in Paris on the 10th of February 1947 reconstructed the Hungarian – Romanian border established before the 'second Vienna decision'.⁴ On the 4th of February Romania signed a contract with the Soviet Union, followed by the Hungarian – Soviet, Bulgarian – Soviet and all the other East – Central European agreements of cooperation. That year the 'Sovietization' of the region was completed. That also settled the political place of Transylvania and the public and political situation of the Hungarians of Transylvania.

After the reconstruction of the Romanian empire Hungarians of Transylvania had arrived into the direst situation of their history. As was already mentioned, the regular Soviet and Romanian army was followed by irregular groups that committed mass murders against Hungarians in Seklerland and Transylvania. In order to assure peace in the hinterland the Soviet command ordered out the Romanian army as well as the Romanian administration from the region and formed a Hungarian – Romanian joint administration from the local members of the Communist Party; thus the Romanian Teodor Vescam and Edgár Balogh got roles in the management of Kolozsvár. That

⁴ Fülöp Mihály: *A befejezetlen béke*. Budapest, 1994. pp. 159-166 [Unfinished peace].

committee was successful and (mainly the Communists) initiated to form Northern Transylvania into a kind of independent 'Soviet republic', however, after the Groza government took up power, the Soviet leaders restored the Romanian administration in the whole territory of Transylvania. At the time Bucharest still wanted to pacify the Hungarians of Transylvania – as could be seen from the facts that besides the reconstructed Romanian university, the Soviet occupation command agreed to the creation of an independent Hungarian university in Kolozsvár and also several Hungarian colleges, the Hungarian network of schools were maintained and in the villages with Csango inhabitants Hungarian-language schools were opened. The later development showed that these steps were made out of mere tactics: the government wanted to show up as a democratic system that satisfies the rightful wishes of the minority groups; and since the stand point of the Romanian government was completely backed by the Soviet politics, Hungary had no chance even to keep a few towns along its eastern border, neither the creation of autonomy in Seklerland, not even an agreement upon the protection of minorities corresponding the one made after WWI.

In spite of the disadvantageous historical events the Hungarians of Transylvania were still a considerable factor, they represented more than 25% of the inhabitants of the area given to Romania and in the more important towns e.g. Kolozsvár, Nagyvárad, Arad, Szatmárnémeti, Marosvásárhely they were in the majority⁵. It is noteworthy to add that the Romanian government did not allow Romanian citizenship to more than 200 thousand Hungarians and at the end of the war Hungarians of similar magnitude fled to Hungary. The statistics below (given in thousands) shows the ethnic distribution of Transylvania according to the census between 1948 and 1977.⁶

⁵ The Romanization of the Hungarian towns and cities belonged to the strategical priorities of the Romanian political system, therefore the system of 'closed cities' was created where special permit of the authorities was necessary if someone wanted to settle down there. In spite of these regulations in 1977 there were 85 thousand Hungarians living in Kolozsvár, 82 thousand in Marosvásárhely, 36 thousand in Temesvár, 34 thousand in Arad, 76 thousand in Nagyvárad, 48 thousand in Szatmár. In: *Hetven év. A romániai magyarság története*. Szerk. Diószegi László and R. Süle Andrea. Budapest, 1990. p. 53. [Seventy years. The history of Hungarians in Romania]

⁶ *Ibid.* 53.

	1948		1956	1966	1977	
Population	mother tongue	mother tongue	nationality	mother tongue	natio nality	nationalityand mother tongue
<i>According to numbers (thousand persons)</i>						
Romanian	3572	4081	4052	4570	4559	5321
Hungarian	1482	1616	1559	1626	1597	1651
German	332	373	368	374	372	323
Jewis/jiddis	30	10	44	1	14	8
Gypsy	-	38	78	32	49	44
<u>Other</u>	<u>165</u>	114	131	117	129	153
<u>Total</u>	<u>5761</u>	623	6232	6720	6720	7500
<i>According to percentage</i>						
Romanian	65,1	65,5	65,0	68,0	67,9	70,9
Hungarian	25,7	25,9	25,0	24,2	23,8	22,0
German	5,8	6,0	5,9	5,6	5,5	4,6
Jewis/jiddis	0,5	0,2	0,7	x	0,2	0,1
Gypsy	-	0,6	1,3	0,5	0,7	0,6
<u>Other</u>	<u>2,9</u>	1,8	2,1	1,7	1,9	2,1
<u>Total</u>	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

* of these 34 059 'other mother tongue and nationality'

In the publication quoted above László Sebők has presented the demographic situation of Hungarians in Romania; there is another Figure that shows the data to be found in ecclesiastical matriculae and other estimates that can help compare and complete the data of the official state statistics.⁷ According to these sources (census and other estimates) the number of the Hungarians in Romania was as follows:

⁷ Ibid. p. 58.

Number of Hungarians in Romania according to census and other estimates

In thousands

	1956		1966		1977			1985	
	C	B	C	B	C(A+N)	C(N)	B	B	V
Trasyvania of today	1616	1616	1626	1735	1651	1686	1910	1970	2100**
Moldavian Csángós	17	60*	8	60	6		50	50	60
Bukarest	15	70	11	70	8	21	70	70	50***
Other Regat	6	40	7	40	6		50	60	
Romania Total	1654	1786	1952	1905	1671	1707	2080	2150	2210

C = Census

B = Estimates

V = Estimates based on ecclesiastical data

(A+N) Mother tongue and nationality

(N) Nationality

* Based on the documents of the past Magyar Népi Szövetség [Hungarian Folk Association]

**Together with the non-Roman Catholic Hungarians in the Regat

***Only the Hungarians of the Bucharest Roman Catholic bishopric

After the 1945 political change Hungarians participated proportionally to their number in the Romanian political life. This could happen because there were relatively few Romanians in the Romanian Communist movement, Hungarians (Hungarian Jews) and Ukrainians dominated, e.g. László Luka finance minister and vice premier was also Hungarian of nationality and origin. The Romanian party functionaries constantly complained about this fact and by the beginning of the 1950s the representatives of the Hungarians were gradually pushed out of leading state and party functions; and after 1952 the former Hungarian leaders and those who returned from their Moscow emigration were expelled from the party and imprisoned for long years, it became apparent that the Bucharest leaders opened the

road for the traditional Great Romanian nationalism and aims at the 'Romanization' of the multi-national Romanian society.

The Hungarians of Transylvania managed to build up a remarkable net of organizations; thus the Hungarian university in Kolozsvár was preserved under the name of Bolyai University and there were 184 Hungarian (mostly denominational) secondary schools, many primary schools and kindergartens. On the 6th February 1945 the Bucharest government published the so-called Nationality Statute that declared the equality before the law of every Romanian citizen and promised certain collective rights especially relating to the use of the mother tongue: in the regions where the 30% of the inhabitants were speaking a minority language there would be right to free language use. On the 6th of August 1945 there was an additional law published that defined more detailed the rulings of the Nationality Statute and prohibited discrimination against ethnic, linguistic and religious communities; ruled on the right of the use of the mother tongue in private and public sphere, described the duties of civil servants and the equality of right of minority educational institutions. Among the results of the 'opening' in nationality policy was the foundation of the *Magyar Népi Szövetség* [Hungarian Popular Union (HPU)] that would have had the task to become the unified political and cultural representative of the Hungarians in Romania but due to the changes in Bucharest politics it could not fulfil its task.⁸

Magyar Népi Szövetség (HPU) was established in Brassó on the 16th October 1944 as the successor of the *Romániai Magyar Dolgozók Szövetség* [Hungarian Workers' Association of Romania] and soon integrated the North-Transylvanian left-wing organizations. Its elected president was Gyárfás Kurkó, a well-known personality of the Transylvanian workers' movement from Seklerland (and Bishop Áron Márton's cousin). The first congress was held in the presence of Prime Minister Petru Groza and László Luka, the secretary of the National Democratic Front, in Kolozsvár in May 1945. As the preparation for the congress a memorandum was sent to the Bucharest government on the 12th of March containing the most impor-

⁸ *Autonómisták és centristák. Észak-Erdély a két román bevonulás között* (1944. szeptember – 1945. március). Összeállította Nagy Mihály Zoltán és Vincze Gábor. Csíkszereda, 2004. 336-341. [Autonimists and Centrists. North-Transylvania between the two Romanian occupations (November 1944 – March 1945)]

tant requests of the Hungarians of Transylvania, claiming that HPU, owing to its aims and national character of its organization was first of all qualified for striving for the equal rights of the Hungarian nation and the safeguarding of its special cultural interests. Therefore its main concern was that the nationality policy of the new government should be adequate in creating national equality and peace between the nations. One of the prerequisites was that the government should keep close contact with the mass movements of the Hungarian people and thus be constantly informed about the national and cultural situation, complaints and requests of the Hungarian nation.⁹

The memorandum continued with the summary of the requests of the Hungarians in Romania: representation in the Bucharest government, administrative offices with Kolozsvár head quarters, the preservation of the democratically elected self-governments in North Transylvania, the acknowledgment of Hungarian as an official language, the closing down of the labour camps, the indemnity of the harm done by the Maniu-guards, that the Hungarians who left because of the war could freely return, free language use from primary school to university, independent higher education centres in Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely, the state support of the Hungarian Churches, the maintenance of the Hungarian National Theatre in Kolozsvár, a special cultural committee for the educational and cultural questions, the right of free employment for the Hungarians of Transylvania and the assurance of their livelihood, the democratic control over the execution of the land reform law, the free use of the Hungarian tricolore and Hungarian Anthem, etc. There were items unusually for the present-day reader, e.g. 'We want the immediate release of those North-Transylvanian schoolchildren who were interned during their summer holiday in South-Transylvania.' By the quirkiness of history maybe this latter request is the only one completely fulfilled.

In the document *Ezt kívánjuk, ehhez ragaszkodunk* [This is what we want, what we insist upon] practically repeated the above requests of HPU. The decision of the congress summed up the rightful requests of the Hungarians of Transylvania:¹⁰

⁹ Ibid. 336.

¹⁰ Kurkó Gyárfás emlékére. Szerk. Lipcsey Ildikó. Budapest, 1987. pp. 55-56. [In memory of Gáspár Kurkó].

‘In the interest of the friendly cooperation between the Romanian and Hungarian nations the HPU in Romania considers the following as the most urgent to be regulated in a democratic country:

- a) the settlement of citizenship, considering the special situation
- b) the return of non-fascist migrants
- c) respect for the usage of the mother tongue
- d) the classification of the democratic civil servants in North Transylvania
- e) the inclusion into administration of Hungarians in South Transylvania
- f) the guarantee of Hungarian language public education
- g) state support for the Hungarian university education in Kolozsvár
- h) satisfactory solution for the relocation of the population overflow of Seklerland
- i) supervision of the redistribution of land with guaranteeing the national equality of right
- j) the abolition of the laws discriminating against nations, races and religions

The HPU of Romania is willing to assist the government by experts and organizations in aid of the complete and quick realisation of the above questions in the spirit of the congress’.

It was evident for Gyárfás Kurkó and the leaders of HPU that the nationality rights already obtained and further ones in the future could only be maintained in determined struggle. This probably was the background of the presidential speech at the general assembly of the HPU in Kolozsvár on the 6th of September 1945 that summoned the Transylvanian Hungarians to persevere in their struggles. In this speech Gyárfás Kurkó expressed the importance of Hungarian unity and declared that the nationality existence meant constant fight. The Hungarians must know that that they had only one way and that was HPU that could protect their nationality rights. That was where all Hungarians belonged whatever their political affiliation was, be it Trade Unions based on class war, the Communist Party, Social Democratic Party or any other mass organisation. All Hungarians fighting for progressive ideas should be active in the parties and in HPU too, to achieve freedom of nationality. As a valiant uniform organization of a nationality they were on equal footing with the National Demo-

cratic Front, the democratic organisations among them especially with the Communist Party.¹¹

The Union on the rise seemed to have a promising future; this was what the events of the following years predicted too. Between the 3rd and 5th of June 1945 the Union accepted a detailed minority bill on the congress at Székelyudvarhely; during the autumn elections of the national assembly more than 500 thousand voters voted for the independent Hungarian slate and the Bucharest parliament received 29 Hungarian members, among them Károly Kós and Sándor Kacsó. HPU had achieved important results in the Hungarian education and higher education as well as in development of Hungarian theatrical life (besides the Hungarian opera and theatre in Kolozsvár new companies were established in Marosvásárhely, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Temesvár and Nagyvárad). It seemed that the Hungarian nationality community and its culture could develop unhindered and HPU was its organiser.¹²

The leaders of HPU, Gyárdás Kurkó himself too, made many compromise for the government in Bucharest in the hope that thus the equality and the partial self-government of the Hungarians of Transylvania could better have been realized. Thus the Committee of 100 acting as the leaders of HPU assured the Romanian government of their complete trust on the 18th November 1945 meeting of the Union held in Marosvásárhely. The background was provided by the promises made by the government and Petru Groza personally about the Central European confederation, the Hungarian-Romanian customs union, the abolition of compulsory passports and thus the ‘lightening’ of borders, all plans unfulfilled. The only decision the Union could make was that they were not competent in questions relating the borders that decision belonged to competence of the peace conference.

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 64-65.

¹² On the Hungarian Popular Union: Balogh Edgár: *Hídverők Erdélyben*. Budapest, 1985. [Bridge builders in Transylvania]; --: *Férfimunka. Emlékirat 1945-1955*. Budapest, 1986[Memoirs]. Katona Szabó István: *A nagy remények kora. Erdélyi demokrácia 1944-1948. I-II*. Budapest, 1990 [Time of great expectations. Democracy in Transylvania 1944-1948] Tóttössy Magdolna: *A Magyar Népi Szövetség története 1944-1953. I-II*. Csíkszereda, 2005. [The history of the Hungarian Popular Union 1944-1953]

After the signing of the Paris peace agreement the Bucharest leaders felt to be in winning position and there began the withdrawal of the earlier concessions. In November 1947 HPU was forced to agree to the discontinuation of the network of independent Hungarian co-operatives. Gyárfás Kurkó, who was adamant in representing the Hungarian interests was dismissed from the chairmanship and the post was taken by the more lenient Sándor Kacsó (who, as a former interned, had had personal experience about the aggression of the Romanian authorities). Other Hungarian organizations of long historical standing were also dissolved: the Hungarian Economic society of Transylvania, the Transylvanian Museum Association, the Transylvanian Scientific Institute, then those university professors were dismissed who had come teach at the university as Hungarian citizens e.g. Marcell Benedek, Gyulá László, Béla Zolnai; later Vencel Bíró and Lajos György were also dismissed though they were Romanian citizens. The Hungarian Writers' Society of Romania was merged with the Romanian one, the independent Hungarian Institute of Art in Kolozsvár discontinued as well as the Hungarian technical and agricultural higher education. Already in 1947-1948 the governmental strategy carried out its actions with the aim of the complete discontinuation of the independent Hungarian culture in Transylvania and in the long run the Hungarians of Transylvania too.

The Hungarians of Transylvania were greatly disappointed when they could not save anything of the results of the 1940 border corrections. It played no role at all that in the North Transylvanian areas and in Seklerland the Hungarians lived in proportional majority in spite of migrations. Their majority was not less than that of the Romanians who were considered in the Trianon agreement and were given the whole area of South-Eastern Hungary. The second disappointment happened around 1948-1949, when the Bucharest policy by forceful or manipulative means let or made erode the minority rights preserved or acquired after 1944. It is true there were not many who could have foreseen what turns the minority political developments would take between 1944 and 1949; the representatives of the Transylvanian left wing were deceived by the political change in Romania that had promised complete equality of rights and there was indeed hope that at least partially these promises would

have been fulfilled. After all it was the left wing change that staved off the greatest menace threatening from the Romanian right wing, that of complete loss of Hungarian rights and expulsion. That was history's trap that caught the democrats who sincerely cared for the case of Hungarians and felt responsible for their future Sándor Kacsó, Ferenc Szemlér, László Szabédi, Edgár Balogh, József Méliusz, Lajos Jordáky, Gyárfás Kurkó among others. Károly Kós, too, was a public office holder as member of the national assembly for a short time but fairly early retired and remained active as an architect and architectural theoretician. Many of the above mentioned persons were later imprisoned and most of them had to face their illusions that directed their earlier activities.

Those were justified by the events who from the beginning looked at the developments sceptically. There are documents written by the spiritual leaders addressed to authorities during the process of the peace talks testifying early concern. Below there are just two of them. The first one was signed by Áron Márton Roman Catholic bishop, János Vásárhelyi bishop of the Reformed Church, Ede Korparich chairman of the Transylvanian Co-operation 'Hangya', István Lakatos leader of the Hungarian section of the Social Democrat Party and Pál Szász president of the EMGE on the 8th of May 1946 in which they wanted to draw the attention of Imre Nagy, Prime Minister of Hungary to the consequences of the historical change would cause to the life of the Hungarians of Transylvania, The petition stated that the Hungarians of Transylvania, as every free nation that still had preserved its vital instinct wanted to live together in its own country together with its own race, follow its own way of life. They understood that the Romanians had the same wishes but they adhere to their own rights.

The years spent under Romanian rule had proved that the Hungarians of Transylvania were deprived of their basic human rights albeit the Romanian authorities repeatedly solemnly promised it and pledged to it before international forums. The Hungarians had already had experience with every kind of Romanian political systems but none of them offered them bearable living situations. The time they had to suffer the deepest, severest losses economically too, was when they were ruled in the name of democracy everybody had attached such hopes to.

Therefore, the Hungarians of Transylvania expected the Hungarian government to do everything in their power to achieve a reconstruction of the territory satisfactory for the Hungarians of Transylvania. In the case the Great Powers would decide that a large portion of the Hungarians of Transylvania remain outside the borders of Hungary, the Hungarians of Transylvania expected the Hungarian government to do everything in their power to achieve the respect of the national, cultural and economic rights of the masses and the maintenance of their economic and cultural goods should be preserved by the Great Powers effectively and institutionally. They expected the Hungarian properties in Transylvania not to be treated as alien property since that would have further weakening effect on the Hungarians of Transylvania.¹³

The other historical document is the letter of Áron Márton written in Gyulafehérvár addressed to Minister President Petru Groza on the 28th January 1946. In this letter he wrote about the young Hungarians taken for forced labour, the fate of Hungarians in the labour camps, the rampage of the Romanian irregular troops, that the Hungarian men were carried off to POW camps in the Regat, about the hate inducing campaigns of the Romanian press against Hungarians and also that the priests of the Romanian Churches were forcing the Hungarians to change their religion. Then the bishop explained the legislation excluding Hungarians from the land reform, that Hungarian properties were sequestered, the law on citizenship discriminating against Hungarians and all the other legislations that made impossible for the Hungarians of Transylvania to come to terms with the situation they came into and find their place in the Romanian state. The letter ended with: 'I want to stress that I do not speak in the name of the Hungarians; I do not have any authorization for it. But I am in full knowledge of the feelings and situation and I am certain that the facts described in the present letter are true. I have contact to every layer of Hungarian society, I know what is there in the villages as well in the cities, I know what the intelligentsia is thinking and what the working class people. God created

¹³ Nékám Sándornak, a bukaresti Magyar Misszió vezetőjének jelentése 1946. május 5-én. In: Történeti kényszerpályák – kisebbségi realpolitikák. II. kötet. Csíkszereda, 2003. 68-69. [Report of Sándor Nékám, chairman of the Hungarian Mission in Bucharest 5. May 1946. In: Historical forced ride – minority real politics]

me a Hungarian thus the fate of my race cannot be indifferent to me. My vocation as priest obliges me to morally consider the problems. The Hungarians living under Romanian rule are not in a situation suitable to the requirements specified by the charter of UN as the organizing principle of peaceful co-existence.¹⁴

Bishop Áron Márton's letter, hidden for a long time, is a proof that the events soon to occur could not have been a complete secret for those with foresight. The events themselves, however, surpasses even the most pessimistic visions of the future: with 1948 there began the severest historical ordeal of the Hungarians of Transylvania.

¹⁴ Márton Áron levele Petru Groza miniszterelnökhöz. Gyulafehérvár, 1946. január 26. In: Történeti kényszerpályák – kisebbségi reálpolitikák I. pp. 43-46. p. [letter of Áron Márton to Minister President Petru Groza. Ibid.]